

# Inspection of a good school: Stewart Headlam Primary School

Tapp Street, Stepney, London E1 5RE

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Inspection dates:

22 and 23 March 2022

## **Outcome**

Stewart Headlam Primary School continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a section 5 inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a section 5 inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are polite and friendly. They play happily with their friends at breaktimes. This school is a joyful and harmonious place for pupils to learn.

Leaders are ambitious for their pupils in all subjects. The well-planned curriculum means that leaders' high expectations are realised. Leaders' work to support and improve pupils' spoken language has been particularly successful. Pupils explain their work confidently and fluently when talking to peers and adults.

Pupils behave very well. Pupils said that they feel safe because staff listen to them when they have concerns. Staff help them deal with any worries. Pupils show respect for others and enjoy helping out their peers, both in and out of the classroom. Pupils know what bullying is. They were clear that it rarely happens at school. Adults make sure that any issues are resolved swiftly and effectively.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, pupils regularly enjoyed a wide range of visits to enrich their learning. These have included, for instance, trips to London museums and the Olympic Park. Leaders have started to reintroduce educational trips. For example, children in Reception Year recently visited London Zoo.

Parents and carers are positive about the school. They are very complimentary about the work that staff do to help their children achieve well.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders have designed a well-thought-out and ambitious curriculum. They have made careful decisions about what pupils need to learn and when. Staff are well trained to deliver the planned curriculum. For example, staff tailor their teaching to meet the needs

of the mixed-age classes. They revisit key concepts and help pupils develop essential skills. In all curriculum areas, learning starts successfully in early years. For example, children grasp the basics in reading and mathematics quickly. They are well prepared for learning in Year 1.

Over time, pupils build up their knowledge very well in a wide range of subjects. Teachers plan learning to help pupils make sense of and apply key ideas and concepts. Staff are clear about what pupils need to know and remember and how this prepares pupils for their subsequent learning. In mathematics, for example, pupils apply their knowledge to help them solve real-life mathematical problems. Pupils also learn how to use their mathematical knowledge, for instance of coordinates and graphs, to help them with new learning in subjects such as science and geography.

Teachers plan and deliver interesting lessons that both deepen pupils' understanding and encourage pupils to think hard. Teachers regularly check how well pupils have remembered what they have learned. They use this information to adapt and plan future learning. Pupils are focused on their learning in lessons and achieve well.

Leaders constantly seek to refine the curriculum, informed by their assessment of pupils' needs and prior learning. In music, for example, leaders have identified that pupils have gaps in their knowledge and skills following periods of remote learning. Leaders are taking effective steps to amend the curriculum with the aim of helping pupils to catch up quickly. Amendments include, for instance, additional opportunities for pupils to practise their knowledge and compose their own music.

Leaders are quick to identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, the provision of support is highly effective. Teachers make suitable adaptations so that pupils with SEND have full access to the curriculum. Staff work with pupils in class and outside lessons to support them in their learning.

Leaders have ensured that reading is a whole-school priority. Children in early years develop their reading skills right from the start. Skilled staff deliver well-planned daily phonics sessions. Children quickly learn to recognise letters and sounds. They have lots of opportunities to practise blending sounds together to form words. Books are carefully matched to the sounds that pupils know. Less confident readers are given extra support to help them catch up quickly.

Pupils develop a genuine joy of reading. They like exploring different types of texts outside lessons in the 'reading challenge'. Pupils are proud to receive certificates that celebrate their achievements in reading. Leaders ensure that pupils have high-quality texts to choose from in the well-stocked book corners in each classroom.

Leaders promote pupils' broader development well. For example, pupils enjoy learning about different faiths and backgrounds. They are taught about how people's beliefs can influence how they live. Pupils also have a range of opportunities to take on responsibilities across the school.

Governors have provided leaders with valuable support in their work to drive improvements across the school. They have achieved this while managing the challenges of bringing together two school communities through a hard federation of the governing bodies. Staff said that leaders listen to their views and are considerate of their well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong safeguarding culture. Staff use their knowledge of pupils to quickly identify any welfare or pastoral concerns. All staff know to report these concerns immediately using the agreed school systems. Staff receive regular training in safeguarding from experienced leaders. Leaders are quick to act when they have a concern about a pupil's welfare. They are relentless in pursuing additional support and information from external agencies when needed. Robust procedures are in place to check that staff are suitable to work with pupils. Pupils are taught about how to stay safe, including when online.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Owing to periods of remote learning, the music curriculum has not been taught as effectively as leaders expect. Pupils have developed some gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should continue with their plans to ensure that the music curriculum enables pupils to catch up quickly and achieve as highly as they do in other subject areas.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2017.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	100923
<b>Local authority</b>	Tower Hamlets
<b>Inspection number</b>	10211307
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	279
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Lindsay Gray
<b>Headteacher</b>	Judy Knapett (Executive Headteacher)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stewartheadlam.towerhamlets.sch.uk">www.stewartheadlam.towerhamlets.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	31 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The governing body formed a hard federation with another local school, Hague Primary School, in 2019.

## Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the executive headteacher and the head of school, who is also the leader with designated responsibility for safeguarding. The inspector held discussions with subject leaders and teachers.
- The inspector held a meeting with members of the governing body, including the chair. The inspector met with the school improvement partner and the director of primary education from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at

curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector listened to some pupils read and spoke with pupils at break- and lunchtimes. Other subjects, for instance music, were also considered as part of this inspection.
- The inspector considered information relating to safeguarding, including the school's single central record of staff suitability checks.
- The inspector spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day and took account of responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey.

### **Inspection team**

Sara Morgan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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