

Inspection of a good school: Friars Primary Foundation School

Webber Street, Blackfriars, London SE1 0RF

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 February 2024

Outcome

Friars Primary Foundation School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are enthusiastic about coming to this friendly, nurturing school where everyone is respected and made to feel welcome. Their behaviour and the pride they have in their school reflect the school's values. These are integrated into all aspects of the school's work. Pupils are happy, safe and well looked after here, parents and carers agree.

Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They are confident to take on responsibilities. For example, older pupils support younger pupils through the 'buddy reading' programme. Pupils appreciate the well-designed outdoor area where they can climb, play and explore together. Bullying is rare. Pupils are confident that if it happens, it is dealt with promptly.

The school has high expectations of what all pupils can achieve. Pupils study a wide range of subjects, and they enjoy their learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) follow the same curriculum as their peers and receive extra help where needed. Pupils achieve well. Their learning is enhanced by various educational visits, including trips to museums and local places of interest. Pupils welcome the range of school clubs they attend, such as music and pottery.

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

The curriculum is ambitious and meets the requirements of the primary national curriculum. In most subjects, the school has given careful thought to the knowledge pupils should learn from early years to Year 6. This helps pupils to build their knowledge over time and make connections between learning in different subjects. The governing body receives relevant training which helps governors to carry out their statutory responsibilities effectively. The governing body works closely with school leaders. Together, they ensure that staff's workload and well-being are considered when making decisions, as are the views of parents and pupils.

Pupils have opportunities to practise previous learning so that they are ready to learn more difficult concepts. For example, in mathematics, children in the early years learn to count to 20. In Year 2, pupils use this knowledge to count money in notes and coins. By Year 6, they use algebra to solve written mathematical problems.

In some subjects, the curriculum is not as well developed as other subjects. Where this is the case, the school has not identified precisely what pupils need to know and remember. This makes it harder for pupils to recall important subject knowledge, including vocabulary, which they need for new learning. As a result, some pupils do not acquire a secure and deep understanding in these subjects.

Staff check carefully what pupils have learned and address any gaps in knowledge. The school accurately identifies the needs of pupils with SEND at an early stage and communicates these to staff. Staff make helpful adaptations to the planned curriculum and use external support as necessary to help pupils with SEND learn well.

The school encourages pupils to love reading and teaching pupils to read is treated as a priority. All staff are trained in the teaching of phonics and children learn phonics from the start of Reception. Pupils at the early stages of learning to read, including those with SEND, have regular opportunities to practise their reading using books matched to the phonic sounds they are learning. This helps pupils to develop their phonics knowledge and read with increasing fluency. Pupils who struggle with reading have daily support to catch up quickly.

Pupils behave extremely respectfully. They work well together and help each other to learn in lessons. Attendance rates are improving. The school works closely with parents to encourage regular attendance.

The school promotes pupils' personal and broader development well. For example, older pupils are taught to keep themselves healthy by running a mile each day. Staff ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to participate in a range of clubs, educational trips and activities. These help to widen pupils' experiences and develop their cultural awareness. For example, children in the early years visit the seaside, pupils in Years 5 and 6 enjoy the annual residential trip and all pupils celebrate 'International Week'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the essential knowledge which pupils are expected to learn and remember is not identified clearly. This affects how well pupils develop their subject-specific knowledge over time. The school should ensure that the essential knowledge which pupils need to learn in these subjects is identified and sequenced carefully.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2018.

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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	100855
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	10293209
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	187
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Maddy Webb
Headteacher	Joanna Wratten (Acting Headteacher)
Website	friarsprimaryschool.com
Dates of previous inspection	16 and 17 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been significant changes to the senior leadership team since the previous inspection.
- The acting headteacher and two acting deputy headteachers have been in post since January 2023. This is a temporary arrangement pending the appointment of a substantive headteacher. Governors had started this process at the time of this inspection.
- The school provides before- and after-school wraparound care on site.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision provider.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of the school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector held meetings with the acting headteacher and

other school leaders.

- The inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body, and spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector spoke to some pupils about their views of the school, behaviour and safety.
- The curriculum in science was also discussed as part of this inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector observed behaviour in lessons and at other times of the school day, including in the playground and the dining hall.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and pupils' wider development and the school's evaluation and development plan which outlines leaders' evaluation of the school.
- The inspector considered the views of pupils, parents and staff through discussion and responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Pamela Fearnley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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