

# Thomas Fairchild Community School

Forston Street, Hoxton, London N1 7HA

## Inspection dates

5–6 December 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, too many pupils have not made the good progress of which they are capable by the end of key stage 2.
- Leaders' actions have not secured rapid and sustained improvements in reading and mathematics. As a result, too many disadvantaged pupils underachieved in 2016 and 2017.
- Leaders do not have a consistent and precise enough overview of pupils' progress from their starting points to enable them to provide more robust challenge.
- Assessment information is not used precisely enough by some teachers in the classroom to meet pupils' needs, especially those of the most able.
- Comprehension skills and particularly inference skills are not taught consistently well in reading. Similarly, reasoning skills are not taught consistently well in mathematics. This results in pupils making slower progress in some lessons.
- Since the previous inspection, governors have not analysed and evaluated the impact of pupil premium funding sufficiently well. The difference in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally has not diminished fast enough.

### The school has the following strengths

- The committed and passionate leadership team is clear about what needs to be done and improvements that have been put in place are beginning to take effect.
- The early years is well led. Good teaching and provision ensure that children engage in their learning and enjoy their start to school life.
- The early impact of the formal partnership arrangement with a local school is positive. There is much sharing of good practice.
- The new governing body has a good understanding of key priorities and pupils' performance. Initial bold actions are already having the desired impact.
- Pupils' behaviour and personal development are good. Most pupils behave and attend well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is actively promoted.
- Parents are confident that their children are safe and well cared for.

## Full report

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

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects, especially English and mathematics, by ensuring that:
  - teachers match work to pupils' levels of ability with greater accuracy so that they are sufficiently challenged, particularly the most able
  - inference skills are taught consistently well in reading, and reasoning skills are taught equally well in mathematics.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
  - ensuring that leaders have a deeper understanding of assessment information and use it to analyse the progress of pupils from their starting points
  - analysing more precisely the impact of the different strategies and actions taken to improve the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils.
- An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how leadership and management can improve in this area.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have not ensured that the pace of improvement has been swift enough. As a result, too few pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils' attainment is now tracked with greater accuracy. Leaders know about pupils' current standards in English and mathematics across the school. However, leaders do not routinely track the progress of pupils against their starting points in all year groups. As a result, they do not have a well-developed understanding of the progress pupils make over time. This limits the quality, depth and usefulness of leaders' self-evaluation.
- Leaders and governors' evaluation of the impact of the strategies used to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is not sharp enough. Consequently, too many of these pupils have underachieved in English and mathematics since the previous inspection. However, differences in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are now beginning to diminish at a steady pace.
- Leaders understand the urgency needed to raise pupils' achievement, particularly in reading and mathematics in key stage 2. The priorities that leaders have identified for improvement are accurate. Where action is taken, there is a positive impact on teaching, learning and pupils' progress. For example, the actions arising from regular meetings to discuss pupils' progress have resulted in better outcomes for some pupils not on track to meet their targets.
- The newly formed leadership team working across the two schools is determined to improve standards and provide every opportunity for pupils to achieve their very best. They have correctly identified what needs to be done to improve outcomes for pupils. However, many of the changes have recently been introduced so they are not yet fully established in order to bring about consistency in teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- The use of pupil premium funding requires improvement. Funding is used in a variety of ways, particularly in supporting pupils' social and emotional well-being. It is also used to support engagement with families and to ensure that this group of pupils is given equal opportunity to access all that the school has to offer. However, it is not used effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as they could.
- The quality of teaching and learning is now monitored effectively using a range of information. Teachers are supported to improve their practice through individualised training. Whole-school training is correctly focused on improving literacy and numeracy.
- Pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum. They have access to a full range of subjects which are taught through topics. These are supplemented by visits and a full programme of extra-curricular activities. The curriculum makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It also enables them to understand and develop the fundamental British values required for life in modern Britain. Pupils take full advantage of these clubs and activities which they enjoy.

- The primary school physical education and sport funding is used well. Pupils benefit from a commitment to good teaching and say how much they enjoy sport and find lessons fun. Pupils recognise the value of physical activity as a part of being healthy.
- The school is well supported by the local authority. This has been helpful to leaders in addressing priorities to improve pupils' outcomes and aspects of teaching and learning.
- The school is led by an experienced senior leadership team and a dedicated, passionate executive headteacher. They have been honest and sincere about their shortcomings. Leaders are clear about what now needs to be done and are determined to improve rapidly.

### **Governance of the school**

- Since the previous inspection, governance has not been effective in evaluating the full impact of the strategies used to raise pupils' achievement, particularly that of disadvantaged pupils. This is partly because leaders did not provide governors with detailed information about pupils' progress across the curriculum. As a result, governors' challenge to school leaders has not been sharp enough.
- This situation has now been reversed. The governing body has been reorganised as one body for the two federated schools since the start of this academic year. Governors are knowledgeable about the quality of teaching and information about pupils' assessments. They challenge school leaders and ask pertinent and searching questions to find out why some aspects of the school's work are weaker.
- Through their focused school visits, governors gain quality information about key aspects of the school's work: for example, safeguarding, performance management and the quality of provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Governors know what needs to be done to improve the effectiveness of the governing body and have started putting it into action.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that the appropriate checks are carried out on all members of staff and volunteers before they are able to work with pupils. The identity of visitors is carefully checked. Visitors are provided with information on the actions they should take if they have a concern about the welfare of a pupil.
- Staff are trained regularly to an appropriate level and understand the procedures to follow should they have any concerns about a pupil's well-being. Referrals to the appropriate agencies are made and followed up swiftly. There are many pupils in the school with complex needs. The school works well with health partners and social services to design and deliver appropriate provision.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and social media. They also know how to keep themselves safe outside school. Supervision in the playground is good and makes sure that pupils are safe. Parents agree that pupils are safe in school.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently effective across all year groups. For example, sometimes teachers provide activities that flit from topic to topic rather than deepening most-able pupils' learning and understanding or extending their skills and knowledge.
- Although teachers set 'apprentice' and 'practitioner' challenges for pupils in many lessons, the work does not match the ability of the individual pupil consistently well. This limits pupils' opportunities to further develop their knowledge and understanding. As a result, not enough pupils are sufficiently challenged in their learning, or attain well enough, especially the most able.
- The teaching of inference skills to boost standards in reading, and reasoning skills to raise achievement in mathematics, is a high priority across the school. However, these skills are not taught consistently well. Sometimes teachers do not explain or model the skills well enough using the text or context provided. On other occasions, some teachers do not check well enough the progress pupils have made in applying the appropriate skill. As a consequence, many pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Most teachers use questioning skilfully to check pupils' understanding of the key ideas and concepts. In lessons where pupils make strong progress, teachers change learning activities in response to pupils' feedback to accelerate their progress.
- Teaching assistants provide appropriate support for the pupils they work with. They make effective contributions to pupils' development, particularly the pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. They use good prompts and questions to make pupils think, and make sure that they do not do all of the work for pupils.
- There is good consistency in the standard of phonics teaching. Many pupils in key stage 1 learn and apply their early reading skills well. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they briskly move pupils on when they judge the time to be right.
- There are many chances for pupils to use and extend their writing skills across different subjects. Grammar, punctuation and handwriting are taught well. As a result, the quality and presentation of pupils' writing have improved and a higher proportion than previously are achieving the standards expected for their age.
- Teachers consistently use the school's policy to provide pupils with feedback that will help them to improve their work. Pupils' work shows that the majority take teachers' guidance on board and make steady progress in English and mathematics as a result.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- Pupils are happy and enjoy school. They say that they feel safe in school and the vast majority of parents who responded to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that their child is well cared for.
- The school’s values form part of the curriculum and underpin relationships between all members of the school community. Pupils respect one another’s differences and support each other well. Racist incidents are extremely rare.
- Leaders and staff provide effective support for a number of pupils who arrive at the school requiring additional support for their social and emotional well-being. Some of these pupils have experienced considerable emotional upheaval.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and this is confirmed by school records. If an incident occurs, pupils have confidence that adults will deal with it effectively.
- Pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to take on posts of responsibility. There is a strong school council which is vigilant in ensuring that the school is as environmentally friendly as possible. Some older pupils act as ‘buddies’ to younger pupils.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and well mannered towards each other and to adults, including visitors to the school. They move in and around the school building sensibly and safely. As a result, the school is a calm, orderly and purposeful place to learn.
- The school is implementing a new behaviour policy which is on the way to being embedded. This has resulted in a short-term spike in the number of fixed-term exclusions. Pupils understand that the bar for good behaviour has been set at a higher level and they agree that this is a good thing.
- The systems for checking absence are rigorous and conscientiously applied. Good attendance is rewarded and has a high profile in school. As a result, pupils’ attendance has improved and is now comparable to the national average. Pupils who are persistently absent are monitored closely. The leadership team has worked hard with this group of pupils and their parents, and has had some notable successes.
- Most pupils demonstrate good behaviour for learning during lessons. However, where teaching is less strong, some pupils lose interest in what they are learning and become restless. This is the case with younger pupils in particular in key stage 1.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- In 2016 and 2017, too many pupils underachieved in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Pupils’ attainment was below average. For example, a high proportion of disadvantaged pupils did not achieve the expected standard in reading and mathematics. In addition, pupils who had SEN and/or disabilities, as well as the most able, did not make sufficient progress in English and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.

- Disadvantaged pupils at key points throughout the school attain less well than other pupils nationally. At the end of Year 6, the differences in attainment are not diminishing quickly. The pupil premium has not been used well enough to raise the achievement of these pupils across the curriculum.
- Many pupils have not made enough progress in honing their inference skills in reading and their reasoning skills in mathematics. This includes disadvantaged pupils who comprise the majority in the school, and the most able. As a result, the proportion of pupils who achieve the high standard in reading and mathematics is below the national average.
- The school's information about pupils' achievement shows that current pupils are making better progress in all year groups. Scrutiny of pupils' work in English and mathematics confirms that this is the case. For example, pupils in key stage 1 learn how to construct sentences and apply them in a wide range of contexts. Pupils in upper key stage 2 have good opportunities to consolidate their skills in using different operations in mathematics. As a result, over time, current pupils are making steady progress. This includes disadvantaged pupils and the most able.
- Pupils have good opportunities to practise their writing skills in a wide range of contexts. For example, pupils bring what they have learned in history to life when they design 'story mountains' based on a recent episode in history that they have been taught.
- Pupils use their phonics skills well to read and decode new words. Standards in phonics in Year 1 are broadly average. Most pupils are good at blending sounds together when they read unfamiliar words. By the end of Year 2, most pupils reach the expected standard for their age.
- Pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics varies across subjects and year groups. Inspectors saw examples of some good-quality work where pupils are making reasonable progress.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 is stronger than that in key stage 2. In 2017, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in English and mathematics was close to the national average. Similarly, a broadly average percentage of pupils attained greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Leadership of the early years is good. The early years leader has a detailed overview of the effectiveness of what is on offer and a clear vision of how to further improve provision. She and her team provide a rich and stimulating learning environment. Both inside and outside areas are set up to enliven children's curiosity so they can explore different areas of learning.
- Teaching is effective in supporting children to develop their knowledge and understanding of number, and their use of language. The teaching of phonics is strong and children are using their understanding of letter sounds to read simple words.
- Most children start in the early years with skills and knowledge below those typically seen for their age. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception was broadly average in 2016 and above average in 2017. Close

analysis of performance information shows that from their different starting points children make good progress and are well prepared for learning in Year 1.

- Leaders know that there is further work to do to improve the outcomes of boys, especially in reading and writing. Activities are chosen carefully by adults to sustain the engagement of boys and to promote their language and communication skills. As a result, achievement gaps are diminishing.
- Children's behaviour is good. They play and learn happily with each other and share resources willingly. Children show resilience and sustained concentration when accessing the different learning activities.
- Relationships with parents are strong. Parents who spoke to inspectors are very positive about the early years setting and feel welcomed when they bring their children to school each day.
- Arrangements for safeguarding in the early years are effective and all welfare requirements are met. Risk assessments are in place and the early years site is secure.



## School details

Unique reference number	100243
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	10037665

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	394
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paddy Cassidy
Executive headteacher	Caroline King
Telephone number	020 7253 9469
Website	<a href="http://www.thomasfairchild.hackney.sch.uk">www.thomasfairchild.hackney.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:cking@colvestone.hackney.sch.uk">cking@colvestone.hackney.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	7–8 March 2013

## Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- More than half the pupils are supported through the pupil premium, This is much higher than the national average.
- There are two forms of entry from Reception to Year 6. Two different groups of children attend the morning and afternoon sessions in the Nursery.
- Almost all pupils are from ethnic backgrounds other than White British. The major groups are of African, Bangladeshi, Turkish, Caribbean and Indian heritage.
- The majority of the pupils speak English as an additional language and this proportion is above the national average. A very small proportion of pupils are at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well above the national average.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school became part of the Soaring Skies Federation when it entered into a formal arrangement with Colvestone Primary School on 1 September 2017. The two schools now have one governing body. However, the two schools have been working together within a less formal arrangement since September 2014.
- The executive headteacher, who is also the headteacher of Colvestone Primary School, has been in post since September 2014. There is a full-time head of school at Thomas Fairchild who has been in post since January 2016.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 22 lessons. Some of this learning was observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also looked at pupils' work in lessons and jointly with senior leaders as a separate activity.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and held discussions with groups of pupils. Inspectors also talked informally with pupils around the school and in the playground.
- Inspectors considered the 14 responses to Parent View and the 23 responses to the questionnaire for staff.
- Meetings were held with five governors, including the chair of the governing body, and with a representative of the local authority. Meetings were also held with leaders responsible for mathematics, English, science, assessment and tracking, and provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents. These included information about pupils' attainment and progress, the school's reviews of its own performance, checks on the quality of teaching and improvement plans. Inspectors also examined safeguarding documentation and various records of pupils' attendance and behaviour.

## Inspection team

Nasim Butt, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Matthews	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Jones	Ofsted Inspector

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