

Inspection of Thomas Fairchild Community School

Forston Street, Hoxton, London N1 7HA

Inspection dates: 5–6 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders want pupils to do well and achieve their best. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do is rising. Pupils learn the skills they need in reading. However, in some subjects, teachers do not plan carefully enough what pupils need to know and learn.

Leaders have improved behaviour and exclusions are decreasing. Routines at the beginning of the day are calm and movement around the school are orderly when supervised. However, in some lessons and during playtime pupils' behaviour is not well managed. Pupils told us that staff deal with bullying quickly on the rare occasions it occurs.

This is a welcoming school where pupils feel safe and happy. The environment is vibrant and stimulating. Pupils enjoy the experiences that are offered, including the extra-curricular trips and clubs. For example, all classes recently visited London Zoo. Pupils attend clubs ranging from drumming and ballet to canoeing. Leaders provide these opportunities to broaden pupils' horizons.

The early years is a strength of the school. Children get a good start to their education in the Nursery and Reception classes. They learn to work independently and achieve well.

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

Although the school has clear weaknesses in the quality of education provided, leaders are tackling them effectively. For example, they have quickly got to grips with identifying the priorities of the school. They are implementing plans on the basis of their evaluation. Leaders' work is beginning to secure clear improvements in reading. As a result, pupils' achievement is improving.

Changes have been implemented in the leadership team. Leaders are supporting teachers, many of whom are new, by putting into place clear strategies for teaching reading and writing. This is helping pupils to learn concepts in the right order and build new knowledge. However, the curriculum in mathematics is not taught as well as it should be. The order in which topics are taught has not been well thought through. Not all staff have the subject knowledge to teach mathematics well. As a result, pupils do not always learn the knowledge and skills they need to achieve well. Pupils do not apply their mathematical knowledge to solve problems in different contexts.

Leaders have started to design and develop a curriculum that is suitable for the pupils and one which reflects the diverse community. Pupils speak with confidence about appreciating other cultures, as well as celebrating similarities and difference in their beliefs. However, in subjects such as art and design, science and geography,

the intended learning is not well planned. Some subject leaders do not have a thorough understanding of their subject and how the content should be organised and taught. Teachers are unclear about the knowledge and skills pupils need to learn. Consequently, many pupils do not achieve well in these subjects.

The subject knowledge of teachers is sometimes not strong enough, resulting in pupils' learning needs not being well met. Some pupils describe this as 'confusing' and it leads to gaps in their learning over time. Some pupils find it challenging to refer to or draw on their previous learning and this is hindering their progress. Training for staff has been provided. However, some teachers' understanding is not yet secure in improving pupils' learning.

Reading is a strength of the school. Leaders have prioritised reading and a clear programme for developing reading skills is in place. Staff are well trained and teach early reading well. Children are introduced to the school's programme promptly on starting school. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully. The reading books match the sounds being taught and ability of the pupils. Pupils who experience difficulties learning to read are swiftly identified and additional support provided. Leaders are fostering a love of reading and have invested in purchasing 'core books' to support the topics being taught. Pupils appreciate that they are able to keep the core book at the end of each unit of study.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons is variable across the school. Some pupils lose concentration quickly when they are unsure of what they are required to learn. During playtime, some behaviour goes unchallenged or unnoticed by adults. Expectations of behaviour by some staff are not high enough.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. They are in class, learning with their peers and building their self-esteem.

Children in the early years enjoy learning in and out of the classroom. The staff offer well planned and purposeful activities that engage and interest the children. Routines are well established and pupils have developed independence, concentration and engagement in activities well. Adults model language carefully and use questioning effectively to prompt children's learning and deepen their understanding. Parents and carers comment frequently on their child's achievements and many attend the weekly 'House Reading' session. Teachers use their knowledge of what children can or cannot do to inform their planning and to address any next steps of learning. As a result, children achieve well.

Governors know what the school does well and where the improvements need to be made. They are holding leaders to account more and are verifying information presented by leaders through regular visits. The majority of staff surveyed feel well supported by leaders. The Hackney Learning Trust provides additional and useful support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school keeps detailed records of the suitability of staff to work in school. These records are organised well and checked regularly by leaders.

Leaders take their responsibility for the care of pupils seriously. Staff are aware of the community they serve and the potential risk to its pupils.

Staff receive up-to-date training in safeguarding. Staff and pupils know what to do if they have a concern. The school works well with external agencies in safeguarding vulnerable families and pupils.

Pupils learn about being safe in different situations, including online and road safety. The school's personal, social, health and economic education programme contributes well to this.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The mathematics curriculum is not taught as well as it should be. Some teachers do not understand the approach and structure in place for teaching mathematics. As a result, some pupils struggle to use and apply their knowledge in different contexts. Leaders need to provide the relevant teachers with the support and training they need to improve their subject knowledge and confidence in teaching mathematics effectively.
- The curriculum in some subjects is not sufficiently well developed to build pupils' knowledge. Curriculum plans for art and design, geography and science do not support teachers in building pupils' knowledge and skills sequentially, so that pupils remember key ideas and draw on previous learning. Some teachers are unclear about what pupils have learned in the past. Leaders need to ensure that the content of all subject plans is chosen carefully, is well sequenced and that the curriculum end points are clearly identified.
- The effectiveness of subject leadership is variable. Leaders need to ensure that all subject leaders are well trained and supported to fulfil their roles effectively.
- Pupils come off task easily when work does not match their learning needs. This results in some low-level disruption, which prevents pupils from learning as well as they should. Pupils' behaviour in the playground can sometimes go unchallenged or unnoticed. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the knowledge and skills to manage behaviour well, in and out of the classroom. Leaders need to make sure all members of staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and learning.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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

Unique reference number	100243
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	10121512
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	281
Appropriate authority	Hackney Learning Trust
Chair of governing body	Dona Henriques
Executive Headteacher	Caroline King
Head of School	Tanveela Haider
Website	www.thomasfairchild.hackney.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 December 2017

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Soaring Skies Federation. It joined this hard federation in September 2018, having worked in partnership with the fellow school for the past three years.
- The Head of School took up their post in January 2020.
- There has been a significant decrease in the number on roll.
- The school has a language resource centre accommodating 10 pupils.
- Since the last inspection, there have been considerable changes in staffing, including staff in leadership positions. A number of teachers have recently joined the teaching profession as newly qualified teachers.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the executive headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and other members of staff.

- We met with the chair of governors and the local authority school improvement adviser.
- We observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including during playtimes, lunchtimes, breakfast club and after-school club/playscheme.
- We gathered the views of pupils through formal and informal discussions.
- We considered the 16 responses to the Ofsted survey for staff.
- We considered the 13 responses to Ofsted's parent questionnaire, Parent View, and the 14 free-text responses. We also gathered the views of parents at the start of the day.
- We scrutinised a range of school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding documents and behaviour logs.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, geography, art and design. In doing so, we visited classes across the year groups and reviewed pupils' work. We spoke to pupils about their work, listened to them read and met with teachers whose lessons were visited.
- We visited all lessons accompanied by a senior leader.
- We looked at published information on the school website.

Inspection team

Lascelles Haughton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Morrison	Ofsted Inspector
David Bryant	Ofsted Inspector

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