

Inspection of Blue Gate Fields Junior School

King David Lane, Wapping, London E1 0EH

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 March 2023

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
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| The quality of education | Outstanding |
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| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
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| Personal development | Good |
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| Leadership and management | Good |
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| Previous inspection grade | Outstanding |
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This school was last inspected 13 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils here belong to a kind and caring school community. Leaders and staff show a genuine interest in pupils' well-being. They build strong, trusting relationships with pupils and their families. Pupils know that they are safe at school. They are happy here and enjoy school life.

Leaders believe every pupil can become whatever they want to be. They have the highest of aspirations for each individual pupil. Teachers bring learning to life for pupils through skilful teaching, storytelling and a rich arts curriculum. Pupils show an enthusiasm for learning and work hard in lessons. They show pride in their achievements and enjoy visits to museums and other places of cultural interest.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils meet these expectations most of the time. They behave well, listen attentively to teachers, and show respect for others. Bullying is rare. When it does happen leaders deal with it effectively. It does not persist.

Leaders provide a range of opportunities to develop pupils' interests in sport, music, and the wider arts. They can take on roles as school councillors, anti-bullying ambassadors and literacy partners. Pupils make a positive contribution to the life of this vibrant school.

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

Leaders have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. They have chosen content that both reflects pupils' backgrounds and opens pupils' minds to new worlds and experiences. The curriculum is well-sequenced. Pupils develop their knowledge and subject-specific skills in increasing depth and complexity. They revisit what they have learned before and build on that learning. Pupils enjoy the diverse range of trips and visits that enrich their studies. They learn to work and think like subject specialists such as mathematicians, historians, and designers.

Leaders ensure that teachers have the depth of subject knowledge they need to extend pupils' learning. They engage with research about effective teaching and use this to develop the quality of teaching. Teachers teach well. They present new information with clarity and precision. They check pupils' understanding through effective questioning. This helps pupils to secure their knowledge and understanding. It also gives them confidence to ask questions and contribute to class discussion.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders identify pupils' needs well. They provide the information and training staff require to meet those needs. Pupils, including those with SEND, achieve exceptionally well. They produce work of a high quality.

Leaders and teachers do not tolerate disruption to learning. They are quick to address any occasional disruption in lessons. However, some pupils' frequent absence from school is affecting the quality of their learning. They are missing too much of their education.

Leaders understand the fundamental importance of reading for pupils' future success. Pupils who join the school at an early stage of reading learn to read using phonics. They catch up with their peers quickly. As pupils move through the school, teachers help pupils to develop their reading fluency and comprehension. Pupils explore a diverse range of texts and poetry. Leaders also prioritise a love of reading. Pupils read for pleasure often and enjoy events such as author visits, poetry readings and World Book Day.

Pupils learn about important issues that affect their everyday lives. They have lessons about relationships, physical and mental health, and equality and diversity. Teachers help pupils to build their resilience and self-worth. They provide them with opportunities to discuss these important issues through 'time to talk' sessions.

Leaders are providing a high-quality education for pupils. They show a real commitment to working in partnership with parents and carers in meeting the needs of pupils. Governors fulfil their role well. They share leaders' ambition to do the very best for pupils and to prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education. Staff enjoy working at the school. Leaders prioritise staff's well-being and ensure that staff' workload is manageable. Staff value this greatly.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding. They provide staff with regular training. This ensures that staff are alert to the signs of risk in pupils. Staff report any concerns about pupils swiftly and appropriately. Leaders have developed in-school counselling services to support pupils' emotional well-being. They work well with external agencies and show persistence in securing the help pupils need. Leaders are knowledgeable about safeguarding issues, including those that are most prevalent locally. They seek to work with parents and families to keep pupils safe. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe too, including online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school is high and increasing. This means that a significant percentage of pupils are missing too much of their education. Leaders should ensure that they review their current approach to persistent absence and adopt a more rigorous and effective strategy so that the level of persistent absence falls.

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](#)' 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

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| Unique reference number | 100895 |
| Local authority | Tower Hamlets |
| Inspection number | 10255331 |
| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 7 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 348 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Robert Oakley |
| Headteacher | Sian Acreman |
| Website | www.bluegatefields-jun.towerhamlets.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 10 and 11 June 2009, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. |

Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the leadership team, other school staff, members of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history, and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also spoke with subject leaders for science and religious education.
- Inspectors met with the school’s designated safeguarding lead and members of the school’s safeguarding team. They looked at safeguarding documentation and record-keeping, including the single central record. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors spoke to additional groups of pupils in relation to personal development, and behaviour and attitudes.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted’s pupil survey and staff survey, and to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Ian Rawstorne, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Teresa Neary

Ofsted Inspector

Sukwinder Samra

Ofsted Inspector

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