

Inspection of a good school: New River College Primary

Cloudesley Square, London N1 0HN

Inspection dates:

20 and 21 June 2023

Outcome

New River College Primary continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils' academic achievement and personal development. Leaders work closely with families and outside professional organisations to ensure that pupils are well prepared to start at the school. Pupils settle in quickly, make friends and grow in confidence.

At breaktimes, pupils are lively and happy, playing games and interacting positively with each other and staff. Lessons are generally calm and focused. Staff recognise promptly if pupils are becoming unsettled and know exactly the approach needed to help each pupil return to their learning swiftly. Pupils are considerate to each other. Older pupils enjoy reading books together, helping each other if they get stuck. Pupils show caring attitudes, for example if anyone is not feeling well.

Pupils are proud to take on positions of responsibility. 'Equality and diversity pupil ambassadors' talked about their work, which includes encouraging others to be nice to each other, especially if there is ever any rare incident of unkindness. Leaders ensure that pupils know to talk to a trusted adult in school if they are worried about anything. Pupils are safe in school.

Pupils frequently have opportunities to go on educational visits to museums, theatres and parks to enrich their learning and broaden their experiences.

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

Leaders design a curriculum that enables each pupil to close gaps in their prior learning. Leaders carefully take pupils' starting points into account. They help pupils to gain knowledge and skills in a broad range of subjects. Leaders have set out clearly the key content that they expect pupils to be taught. Pupils have regular opportunities to revisit and build on prior learning. Leaders are further refining the curriculum in a few subjects, to identify in greater detail the specific knowledge that pupils need to know securely before moving on to more demanding content.

Leaders ensure that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are met. They identify strategies for each pupil to help them to engage with their learning and be able to access the curriculum successfully. Leaders ensure that teachers and learning assistants provide pupils with highly personalised support. Pupils are generally attentive in lessons. Teachers use a wide range of resources and thoughtful explanations skilfully which motivate pupils and encourage them to want to learn more. For example, in mathematics, pupils in Years 5 and 6 developed their understanding and use of line graphs by observing their teacher construct a line graph representing everyday scenarios of earning and spending money.

Leaders have chosen a new scheme for the teaching of early reading. Most staff have received training so that they use phonics to help pupils learn to read. Teachers check regularly and identify any pupils who are falling behind with their reading. Pupils receive frequent additional help and guidance so that they develop their use of phonics and build reading fluency. The phonics scheme is in an early stage of being fully established across the school. Training is ongoing to ensure that all staff have a high level of expertise to support pupils with phonics across the curriculum.

Staff provide guidance to parents and carers on how to support their child's learning at home, including through regular reading. Teachers make sure that pupils read books that help them to practise the sounds they have been taught. Pupils here are inspired to read more because they enjoy daily storytelling. Leaders have invested in high-quality texts so that books are relevant to pupils, reflect their experiences, interests and cultures and enrich pupils' learning across the curriculum.

Pupils' wider development is encouraged throughout the curriculum. Staff promote teamwork in physical education and music classes. They encourage healthy eating in cooking lessons. Leaders prioritise personal, social, health and economics (PSHE) education for all pupils. Pupils are taught about key themes in a well-considered and age-appropriate way. From early on, pupils are encouraged to reflect on, for example, what makes for friendly and unfriendly situations, the impact of their behaviour on others, and to develop coping strategies when needed. Well-planned activities across the curriculum help to boost pupils' speech and language, and social and emotional skills. Pupils are taught the benefits of listening well, being patient and taking turns.

Staff provide pupils with opportunities to find and develop new interests and talents. They provide strong guidance to pupils that helps them to think positively about their futures and to aim for careers in which they would excel and be fulfilled.

Leaders, including the governing body, consult staff and find ways to help with workload and well-being. Staff are appreciative of the leadership of the school because leaders are approachable and responsive to their concerns.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders know up-to-date safeguarding requirements. They make sure that staff are suitably trained. Staff know pupils well and are able to spot the least sign that a pupil might be at risk of harm. Staff are clear about the processes to follow to report any concerns.

Staff are alert to local risks to pupils and are highly considerate of the vulnerability of pupils. Leaders work closely with outside agencies to support pupils and their families. Pupils are taught about ways to keep safe, including online. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of risks, including grooming and data security.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have chosen a new scheme for the teaching of phonics. Some staff have not completed the required training. Leaders should continue with the planned programme of training to ensure that all staff supporting pupils with early reading have the necessary expertise in teaching phonics.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2013.

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

Unique reference number	100388
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	10255533
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	17
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sean McLaughlin
Headteacher	Nigel Smith (executive headteacher)
Website	www.newrivercollege.co.uk/nrc-primary/welcome-primary
Date of previous inspection	20 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, two heads of centre have been appointed. There is a new chair of the governing body.

Information about this inspection

- 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.
- The inspectors held meetings with school leaders, including the executive headteacher, other senior leaders, the chair of the governing body and seven other members of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and PSHE education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also considered the curriculum in some other subjects and looked carefully at the personalised curriculum for individual pupils.

- The inspection of safeguarding included meetings with leaders with responsibility for safeguarding, looking at records relating to leaders' work with outside agencies, review of leaders' pre-employment checks of staff, consideration of relevant parts of the curriculum, and talking to staff, parents and pupils.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff and parents in responses to online surveys. Inspectors also looked at staff surveys carried out by leaders.

Inspection team

Amanda Carter-Fraser, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Annabel Davies

His Majesty's Inspector

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