

Inspection of The Stonebridge School

Shakespeare Avenue, London NW10 8NG

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 July 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this school. They said they like making new friends and that adults help them if they are sad or worried. Pupils value the lessons as well as the several workshops that teach them about risk, staying safe and how to look after their mental health.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. These expectations are consistently met, from early years upwards. Pupils and staff have strong working relationships. Pupils respect diversity, and all get along well with each other. This leads to an orderly and respectful learning and social environment. Staff deal effectively with the occasional misbehaviours, including bullying.

However, expectations for pupils' academic achievement are not high enough. In several subjects, leaders have not given enough thought to the curriculum and its implementation. This means that pupils do not, as a matter of routine, achieve as well as they should. On the other hand, the early years curriculum is ambitious. Staff have the expertise to ensure that children develop their knowledge and social skills well. Children are, therefore, well prepared for entry into Year 1.

Leaders provide a range of enrichment activities beyond what is taught in the classroom. Even so, they do not ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to take part in these experiences.

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

The teaching of reading has a high priority. Staff are well trained to deliver the school's phonics programme, starting in the early years. Leaders have put in place strong systems to identify pupils who fall behind. There is a comprehensive programme of extra support for pupils who need to catch up. This includes mid-year arrivals who are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. As a result, pupils quickly become confident and fluent readers.

Curriculum thinking and delivery are well embedded in a few subjects, such as music, physical education and writing. Staff have strong subject expertise, and use this well to help pupils understand and remember important knowledge. Leaders' work to improve pupils' achievements in writing has been notably successful. This is because leaders provided staff with ongoing training and support in how to teach writing effectively and systematically, from Reception to Year 6. In the early years, the curriculum is well sequenced to support children in their learning and development. With teaching and support from experienced and skilful staff, children learn and build up knowledge successfully.

In several other subjects, however, pupils' achievements are not as strong as they should be in Years 1 to 6. This includes in mathematics. There are several factors behind this. Past and present curriculum thinking is not secure, clear and established, with leaders making many changes and experimenting with different

commercial curriculum schemes. In some cases, leaders plan to introduce new schemes again in the next academic year. Some leaders have not got enough subject-specific expertise. Some have not identified what knowledge they want pupils to know and when, or agreed expectations for how pupils should go over and revise their prior learning. This means that pupils do not gain and remember key knowledge in the longer term. Furthermore, in some instances, leaders have not ensured that teachers have the subject expertise required to teach all subjects effectively. This also means that, on occasion, there are deficiencies in assessing what pupils know and whether they understand what is taught. As a result, sometimes, their misconceptions are not routinely identified and addressed.

There are suitable arrangements in place to identify and cater for the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff make appropriate adaptations to their teaching. Pupils with SEND can, therefore, access the same curriculum as their peers.

Children in the early years follow well-established routines. They pay attention to adults, for example during whole-class teaching sessions. During other activities, they share and collaborate well with their classmates. They spend their time in purposeful activities. Older pupils are keen to learn and try hard. Any low-level disruption is quickly addressed by teachers.

External visitors to the school make a strong contribution to the provision for pupils' personal development. These include, for example, theatrical and orchestral performances, artists and authors. Leaders organise a broad range of extra-curricular activities and educational outings. Examples include clubs at lunchtimes and after school, and visits to museums and the seaside, as well as a residential trip in Year 6. However, leaders do not do enough to make sure that all pupils are able to take part in these opportunities. They do not actively encourage or check pupils' participation, meaning that take-up of some activities is low, especially for pupils with SEND and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. For example, few pupils with SEND attend the extra-curricular clubs provided. Similarly, leaders do not check that all classes have had the opportunity to take part in trips to places of interest. These instances show that leaders do not promote equality and inclusion as well as they should.

Staff have mixed views about leaders' expectations. Some feel the workload is reasonable. Others feel that there are too many changes and onerous demands.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained in safeguarding procedures. They have frequent reminders and opportunities to recap their knowledge, for example by considering safeguarding scenarios. Staff are alert to any signs that are concerning and report these to safeguarding leads. Leaders have established links with a range of external agencies, including charities and family welfare services. They refer pupils and their

families, when appropriate, so that they get the help they need to support both their safety and welfare. Leaders manage allegations against staff effectively and ensure that there are suitable vetting procedures in place when recruiting new staff.

Pupils and parents are provided with workshops to help them to understand risk, to learn how to avoid danger and to find out where to seek help.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In several subjects, leaders have not identified clearly what they want pupils to know and when. This means that pupils do not build up and deepen their knowledge and understanding of core subject concepts. Leaders should ensure that, across the subjects, they think about exactly what knowledge they want pupils to know and when, and how they are going to develop and deepen pupils' conceptual understanding.
- In some subjects, leaders and teachers lack sufficient subject expertise and knowledge of how to teach the subject effectively. This means that pupils do not gain knowledge as well as they could. Senior leaders should support subject leaders and teachers to gain the subject and pedagogical expertise that they need to deliver the curriculum successfully, and to be aware of and address any misconceptions.
- In some subjects, approaches to ensuring that pupils embed key knowledge in their long-term memories are inconsistent. This means that pupils forget some important core subject knowledge over time and do not achieve as well as they could. Subject leaders should consider exactly what they want pupils to remember long-term and support teachers to consistently select the most appropriate strategies and adaptations to bring this about.
- Leaders' provision for pupils' personal development, while broad, does not routinely promote equality of opportunities for all pupils as effectively as it should. Leaders should encourage a higher uptake of clubs and positively promote high uptake for pupils with SEND. They should ensure that all year groups have equal opportunities for educational trips, focusing in particular on removing barriers to participation for pupils with SEND and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

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	101521
Local authority	Brent
Inspection number	10242038
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	286
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Tara Furlong
Headteacher	Michelle Anderson (Head of school)
Website	www.stonebridge.brent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there has been a high turnover of leaders and other staff. The number of pupils on roll has significantly decreased.
- The school formed a soft federation with another local school in September 2021. The executive headteacher, two associate headteachers and another teacher from this school were seconded to The Stonebridge School. The school's deputy headteacher was appointed as head of school at the same time. This interim soft federation arrangement comes to an end on 31 August 2023. Governors have appointed a new interim headteacher and interim deputy headteacher, who will take up their posts from September 2023.
- There have also been some changes to the governing body. The current chair was appointed in June 2022.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative education.

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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, physical education and history. Inspectors held discussions with leaders and teachers, visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and held discussions with pupils. Inspectors also considered other subjects as part of the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke with the head of school, other senior leaders, and the chair of governors and two other governors. They also spoke with a local authority representative.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including information related to safeguarding and the checks carried out before the appointment of staff. Inspectors looked at records of pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors had formal meetings with staff and with pupils. They spoke with parents in the playground and took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also considered the responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

David Radomsky, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Teresa Neary	Ofsted Inspector
Rutinderjit Mahil-Pooni	Ofsted Inspector

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