Inspection of an outstanding school: Thomas Buxton Primary School

Buxton Street, Bethnal Green, Thomas Buxton Primary School, London E1 5AR

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 March 2023

Outcome

Thomas Buxton Primary School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in this welcoming and supportive school. Pupils are happy and say they feel safe here. Staff take time to get to know pupils and their families well. Parents and carers say they value the additional support that staff provide.

There is a broad and ambitious curriculum for all pupils. Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school. As a result, they achieve well. This is especially true the longer pupils remain in the school. New pupils are made to feel welcome. Those new to the country are supported to learn English and make rapid progress.

Pupils are taught to value and respect each other. Pupils have many varied opportunities to develop their skills and talents and have their voices heard. They take on roles of responsibility with great pride and growing confidence. Pupils also take part in competitions, visits to the local area and the cultural and historic sites of London.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including online. Pupils learn many skills for later life, including public speaking and managing a budget. Pupils are very well prepared for their next stage in their education.

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

Leaders have designed a broad, rich and ambitious curriculum from early years to Year 6. The important knowledge that pupils need to learn is carefully planned and sequenced. Leaders have thought about exactly what knowledge they want pupils to learn. This is broken down into small steps and teachers regularly check what pupils know and remember before moving forward. Pupils know the routines well and can explain their learning across the curriculum.

Teachers make sure that pupils contribute in lessons and take responsibility for their learning. Pupils are not afraid to give an answer or share their opinion. They know it is ok to make mistakes and that adults make them too. Pupils learn how to explore complex,

philosophical questions and the big issues of our time. As a result, pupils develop their critical thinking skills in sophisticated ways.

Leaders have thought about how to enrich the curriculum and make learning meaningful for pupils. For example, pupils' learning about current and resistance in science is supported by practical sessions where they experiment with circuits. In history, pupils use their knowledge of housing in the 1600s to build a replica of the Great Fire of London. Pupils look forward to the 'Buzz Days', which extend their learning in individual subjects. Effort and achievement are celebrated in weekly assemblies and pupils enjoy sharing their home learning projects with staff and parents on the 'pick and mix' days.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. There are clear routines in place and pupils are focused on their learning in lessons. There is no time wasted. Pupils understand the behaviour policy and are clear about the expectations. All adults are fair and consistent and encourage pupils to reflect on their own behaviour. Pupils support each other to learn and improve.

Pupils approach learning to read with enthusiasm and commitment. Staff are well trained and deliver the phonics programme with skill and precision. From the beginning of Reception, pupils are supported to learn from their different starting points. Progress is regularly checked. Older pupils say they enjoy independent reading and that they make time to read at home as well as at school. There is a sharp focus on vocabulary, which is taught systematically. Parents are invited to observe reading lessons so they can support at home. They can also attend reading sessions at school, which they value.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive high-quality, targeted support. Teachers make skilful adaptations so that these pupils can learn alongside their peers. Some pupils have high levels of need and access a bespoke programme alongside their academic learning. They are taught skills for life, including using public transport and the basics of shopping and budgeting. Staff, parents and pupils are proud of the progress they make.

Provision for pupils' personal development is exceptional. Pupils have a deep understanding of their rights and the difference they can make in their school community and the wider world. They are encouraged to play an active role in the running of the school through roles such as school ambassador and peer mediator. External speakers and organisations are carefully chosen to spark pupils' imagination and encourage ambition. Pupils are taught about the risks they may encounter and how to keep themselves safe. This learning starts in Nursery and develops with increasing complexity as pupils grow and mature.

Staff enjoy working at this school and care deeply about their community. Leaders place great emphasis on the well-being of staff and have taken steps to reduce their workload. Staff say they feel cared for and value the support and mentoring in place. They appreciate the opportunities they have for ongoing professional development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong, embedded culture of safeguarding in this school. Staff take pupils safety and well-being very seriously. They receive regular training and updates and have a detailed knowledge of the signs that indicate pupils may be at risk of harm. Staff are confident to report any concerns, and these are addressed quickly. Leaders responsible for safeguarding work closely with the local authority and wider agencies to ensure that pupils and families get the support they need.

Pupils are taught about personal safety through the personal, social, health and economic education curriculum. They have a good understanding of risk and know who are 'safe and trusted adults' they can talk to, as well as other ways they can report concerns. This helps pupils to feel safe at school.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in January 2017.

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	100930
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	10240852
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	437
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Md Pervez Qureshi
Headteacher	Lorraine Flanagan
Website	www.thomasbuxton.towerhamlets.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 January 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- School leaders do not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team. The inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work. Other subjects were also considered as part of this inspection.

- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector looked closely at safeguarding records, procedures and processes. They talked to leaders, governors, other staff, and pupils about safeguarding at the school.
- The inspector considered responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents. The inspector also considered responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Polly Haste, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector

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