

Name of School:	Fitzjohn's Primary School
Headteacher/Principal:	Rob Earrey
Hub:	Camden
School type:	Primary
MAT (if applicable):	Not applicable

Date of this visit:	26/05/2021
Estimate at last QA Review:	Effective
Date of last QA Review:	23/01/2019
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	04/12/2018

1. Information about the visit

In place of a QA Review, Fitzjohn's Primary School was visited by a Lead Reviewer and an Advanced Reviewer who spent two days reviewing the following area with them:

- Leadership at all levels, with an emphasis on middle leadership.

Meetings were held with the inclusion leader, governors, pupils, teaching assistants, teachers and subject leaders for science, design and technology, computing, mathematics, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), physical education and art.

2. Information about the school

Fitzjohn's Primary School is an average sized, one-form entry school in the London borough of Camden. It is situated in an area of low social deprivation. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school is lower than the national average. Pupils are from a range of ethnic and social backgrounds, despite the school being situated in a fairly affluent area. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) is higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils with an education, health and care plan is higher than average, partly due to the reputation the school has built for effective SEND provision.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been in post for several years and the latter works on a part-time basis.

3.1 Leadership at all levels, with an emphasis on middle leadership – What went well

- Middle leaders value highly the support they receive from senior leaders who are actively involved at all levels. Every leader spoken with commended the support afforded to them from the headteacher and deputy headteacher. They praised the headteacher's approachability and his visible, 'hands on' style of leadership. Year 6 pupils appreciate the amount of time that the headteacher gives up in order to support the end of year productions.
- Some subject leaders believe that they have autonomy with which to develop their role as a leader and, in some cases, they have created a clear strategic plan of next steps. These could be used as examples to share with other staff. Some subject leaders make suggestions for improvement. For example, the idea to use

electronic folders for subject leaders has now been implemented across the school.

- Some middle leaders spoke of their previous involvement in monitoring activities, such as book looks and were genuinely interested to hear other ways of developing their input, such as discussing pupils' work with the teacher and a group of pupils rather than scrutinising work in isolation. Generally, subject leaders are enthusiastic about wanting to develop their monitoring and evaluation skills and would appreciate more guidance and structure on how and when to do this.
- Support staff described the supportive, positive ethos where mutual support is woven throughout the fabric of the school. During the periods of lockdown, guided reading sessions continued online and teaching assistants (TAs) taught guided reading sessions on a one to one basis with individual pupils. TAs enjoy meeting with the inclusion leader every fortnight. These meetings provide training opportunities, such as for autism and dyslexia, and also serve as a valuable vehicle to share ideas and best practice. During these meetings, support staff raise any concerns which also makes them feel valued and listened to. TAs work with higher attaining pupils as well as those who need extra support, giving teachers chance to monitor progress of the lowest 20% of pupils themselves. TAs run their own phonics interventions which are successful in narrowing gaps. They play a big part in pupils' well-being and help with friendship issues as well as anxieties resulting from the consequences of the lockdown periods. Although TAs receive clear instructions and direction from teachers, they are keen to be more actively involved in curriculum decision-making. The TA who led on the implementation of the zones of regulation spoke proudly of how this strategy is improving some pupils' emotional literacy and ability to self-regulate.
- Governors are extremely proud of Fitzjohn's Primary School. They hold senior leaders to account by raising challenging questions with them, such as, 'why is this cohort's data not showing more pupils as greater depth writers?' The headteacher actively encourages such depth of challenge so that there is complete transparency about school improvement. There are excellent relationships between school and its parents, demonstrating the positive partnership that benefits each pupil.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the diversity, depth and breadth of the curriculum. For example, they spoke about the interactive creative days such as when parents come into school to share aspects of their religion through cooking. Subject leaders share the improvements and progress in their subjects during governors' meetings. During governors' day, those who are linked to subject areas come into school to look at pupils' work and speak to the pupils. Governors are aware of the need for the development of middle leaders to be a high priority on the school development plan and how their own monitoring of impact should be linked to this.
- Pupils are absolutely delighted to be back at school! They are immensely proud of their school and the sense of fun that pervades every day. Pupils hold various

leadership roles, such as a school counsellor, guided reading monitor and house captain. They are very enthusiastic about reading both at home and at school and spoke at length about the different types of books and authors they enjoy. Pupils' cultural capital is enhanced through a variety of clubs and opportunities to visit other places.

- The headteacher's attention to maintaining staff well-being is meticulous and staff appreciate the letters and notes of encouragement and praise that they receive from him.
- The recently qualified teacher is shadowing the mathematics leader in the leadership and development of the mathematics curriculum. Together they make a very effective partnership. This strategy is developing succession planning and building capacity for the future. They are thoroughly enjoying the Camden training on Maths Mastery and have shared with individual staff the 'ready to progress' criteria. They have devised a useful mathematics action plan that shows clear objectives and time scales. Their efforts during the lockdown periods kept mathematics lessons fun and appealing. Parents valued guidance, such as how to use mathematical vocabulary to continue their children's learning at home. Leaders have introduced working walls across the school using stem sentences to aid pupils' memory. They have analysed any knowledge gaps caused by the lockdown periods and are making appropriate adaptations to the curriculum, such as giving more time to reinforce basic skills.
- The science leader is enthusiastic and has aspirations to develop science throughout the school. She has developed many external links which provide her with increased knowledge, ideas and resources. She meets on a termly basis with other science leaders in the Camden hub. She is proactive in researching resources that will appeal to both staff and pupils, for example 'Explorify' which uses interactive fun strategies to develop scientific vocabulary. The science leader has arranged learning observations in every class before the end of term in order to be well prepared to develop the curriculum in September.
- The EYFS leader is proud of the early years team because staff demonstrate purpose and passion. The curriculum is purposefully based on children's interests. For example, staff send home a survey to find out from parents what children are interested in. As a result of a parent revealing that her child was interested in undersea creatures, staff went out of their way to find books and poems on this theme which spurred the pupil on to write. Frequent and effective communication with parents results in productive relationships so that parents are actively and confidently involved in their children's learning. For example, the 'stay and play' sessions and the App 'Evidence me' provide parents with useful information about how their children are doing at school. Attendance at curricular workshops such as phonics, mathematics and writing is high. The success of remote learning helped parents to support their children's learning at home and staff received many positive comments about how appreciative parents were. The early years team is well trained and full advantage is taken of courses run by the Camden hub. Staff have identified the key changes in the new curriculum and are writing

new targets to share before the end of this term. The emphasis is on readiness for implementation in September. Another strategy that is under review is the transition from Reception to Year 1 with the emphasis on maintaining continuous provision in Year 1.

Quotations:

Subject leaders:

'The school is a family, a community where everyone is welcomed and welcoming'.
'We never feel on our own. The headteacher says that no question is ever too silly'.
'The school is a 'collaborative, kind place'.

Teaching assistants:

'We feel like we do 'a good job to the best of our ability'.
'We know how to support the pupils we work with because we know each family and child so well'.

Governors:

'The school is like a family. It is not about conforming to any particular type and the headteacher ensures that each pupil's individuality is encouraged and respected'.
'The headteacher is 'an incredible community-maker'.

Pupils:

'We appreciate the headteacher's fantastic magic shows!'
The headteacher is amazing! He makes everything in the school such fun!
'We have collaboration and community in our classes which makes it easier to talk'.

The inclusion leader:

'I talk to teaching assistants in exactly the same way as I talk to teachers'.

Parents:

'I knew how to help my child at home because of the teacher's help'.
'If I didn't understand I knew that all I had to do was contact the teacher for support'.
'Staff went above and beyond. They were wonderful'.

3.2 Leadership at all levels, with an emphasis on middle leadership – Even better if...

...middle leaders were able to engage in continuing professional development to improve their understanding of the features of effective leadership.

...middle leaders were actively involved in self-evaluation and monitoring across the school, through a clearly defined and well-articulated strategic monitoring schedule, so that all leaders knew when to focus on different aspects of the subjects they lead. This would provide a comprehensive structure for the whole year.

...pupils could articulate the language of learning with more understanding, conviction and confidence.

...teaching assistants had greater involvement in the planning process so that they developed a deeper understanding of curriculum outcomes as well as the next steps in pupils' learning.

6. What additional support would the school like from the Challenge Partners network, either locally or nationally?

- Hayley Potter, the Advanced Reviewer for this consultancy, has already shared relevant documentation from Bengeworth CE Academy that will support the EBIs. Bengeworth CE Academy is also able to support the work on transition from Reception into Year 1 as this is one of its Areas of Excellence.

This visit will support the school's continuing improvement. The main findings will be shared within the school's hub in order that it can inform future activities.