

# Leaways School

Independent school standard inspection report

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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.<sup>1, 2</sup>

## Information about the school

Leaways is a day special school which provides alternative education for up to 75 male and female students aged 10 to 17 years with emotional, behavioural and social difficulties. The school, which opened in January 2012, is situated in Clapton, east London. It admits students who have missed significant amounts of education through absence and all students need to make good the lost time by taking externally validated courses, often a year later than usual. There are currently 22 students on roll of whom 21 have statements of special educational needs.

The school believes 'that every young person is an untapped source of talent which can be used to raise confidence and self-esteem'. It aims 'to allow every student to achieve success and to find their place in society'. This is the school's first full Ofsted inspection.

## Evaluation of the school

Leaways School provides a good quality of education and, in a short time since it opened, is demonstrating success in meeting its aims. Students at the school make good progress in their learning as a result of largely good teaching. The curriculum is good and developing rapidly to meet the challenging needs of its students. Provision for the welfare, health and safety of students, including safeguarding, is good. In particular, the integration of outreach, family liaison and classroom support roles is a key strength of the care provided for students. The school meets all regulatory requirements and is making good progress with the implementation of its comprehensive and systematic plans to excel.

## Quality of education

The curriculum is good. All students are taught a wide range of subjects which cover all of the required areas of learning. The curriculum has many positive features including the high quality of provision for English and mathematics. Students are taught a number of practical subjects and they demonstrate interest and engagement, for example, in food technology, design and technology and music. Opportunities are available for some students to study construction or motor mechanics through effective links with a local college. The school has ambitious

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<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents).

<sup>2</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents).

plans to widen the range of vocational subjects available in order to respond to the needs and aspirations of the students. For example, steps have already been taken to improve the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) together with media studies. Personal, social and health education (PSHE), together with science, creative arts and humanities subjects, form an effective core for themed elements of the curriculum, where students study integrated topics related to self, world and community. Such provision makes learning more coherent and meaningful. The science taught is effective in developing students' knowledge of basic biology and physics but opportunities for students to carry out investigations are too limited.

Students also value the opportunity to take part in regular physical education (PE) and recognise the contribution this makes to their physical fitness as well as the development of new skills, for example in badminton and football. Students are studying for suitable external examinations at a number of different levels, including entry level qualifications, functional skills in literacy and numeracy, and a combination of GCSE full and short courses. BTEC accreditation in food technology and a sports leader's award illustrate the breadth of opportunities which have been developed within the school in the short time since opening.

The school is sensitive to the disruption and anxiety experienced by many students in previous educational settings. As a result, it manages the induction of new students skilfully. Good account is taken of the requirements of students' statements of special educational needs and individual education plans are produced which guide the work of staff through specific and meaningful targets for both personal and academic development. The school's outreach work, including home and family liaison, is exemplary, enabling reluctant students to gradually increase their attendance in full-time education on site.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good overall. Provision is not outstanding because learning outcomes are not yet outstanding. In most lessons teachers are clear about what students must achieve and they make sure that students are similarly clear. Where teaching is effective lessons move along at a good pace, no time is wasted, and staff provide sufficient discipline in a sensitive way to ensure that students remain focused and achieve success. These good lessons are characterised by good questioning which challenges students to think deeply and to organise their ideas systematically. The teaching of mathematics, for example, is exemplary and students enjoy their work, respect the good humoured but disciplined relationship with staff and rapidly achieve new learning. In English lessons, students are challenged to organise their thoughts, to distinguish between fact and opinion, and to explain their ideas orally before starting to write. Food technology lessons are a buzz of productive activity in which students are proud of the recipes they produce. Classroom support assistants provide particularly effective role models when they join in the learning, test their knowledge against that of the students, and help students to manage the practical tasks of the lesson. Students strive to achieve the points available in the school's reward system, particularly when they know exactly what is required of them to achieve success.

A minority of lessons are satisfactory rather than good because although the students progress satisfactorily the pace is too slow and the focus on the planned outcomes is not sharp enough. Procedures for the assessment of students' progress have developed rapidly and now provide a successful framework for staff to understand the extent of progress being made. The staff set ambitious targets for individual students, particularly in English and mathematics. These are appropriate to enable students to make up lost ground and to understand what they can realistically achieve. The evidence obtained and recorded, particularly since the start of the current school year, demonstrates that the majority of students are making good progress in their learning.

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

The school makes good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students. Students recognise that they are making progress in managing their relationships with others and in controlling their verbal responses to difficult situations. They are aware of the academic and personal development targets that they are working towards. The school's arrangements for the pastoral support of students and their families are excellent. A dedicated team of support workers combine roles in home-school liaison, outreach work, mentoring and classroom support. They understand students' needs and the challenges that they present and ensure that relationships throughout the school are based on mutual respect.

Behaviour is good. Students mostly acknowledge the reasons why they may have failed in previous schools and are positive about the support and challenge which they are now receiving. Attendance for the majority of students is good and there is little unauthorised absence. Persistent absence among a small minority of students is a key focus of the work of the support team.

Students have increasing opportunities to take on responsibility, for example through the recently formed student council. They are taught to be reflective about differences in lifestyle, in culture and beliefs within both the local and global communities. Students can identify how the school encourages them to develop healthy lifestyles and good levels of physical fitness. Themes within the PSHE programme ensure that students learn about the rights and responsibilities of an active citizen. They are taught to respect diversity and to challenge stereotypes. The majority of students understand the values and expectations promoted by the school and make a good effort to conform.

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

Arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of students are good. The school's policies follow government guidance with provision to be reviewed annually to ensure their currency. The company recruitment policy is implemented rigorously and all staff are made aware of the school's high expectations of staff. Staff are trained to the required levels in child protection, first aid and fire safety. The designated person for child protection is clearly identified and staff have a consistent

approach to safeguarding the interests of those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Policies for the management of behaviour and for the prevention of bullying provide a clear context for systematic implementation by all staff. All aspects of premises health and safety are kept under review, including the required routine checks on fire safety. Levels of staff supervision around the school are excellent and based on a suitable ratio of adults to students.

### **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

All of the required checks on the suitability of staff and proprietors are completed rigorously. Details of all of the required checks are maintained in a suitable single central register.

### **Premises and accommodation at the school**

The school occupies former factory premises. The proprietor has refurbished the premises and ensured that they provide a suitable environment for safe and effective learning. There are a number of teaching spaces of various sizes, including specialist facilities for teaching food technology, design and technology, ICT, music and art. A suitable space has been identified for the teaching of more specialised science. There is no outside space on site but the school has made suitable arrangements for play and recreation for all students, including regular physical education lessons at nearby facilities.

### **Provision of information**

The required information about the work of the school is available for parents and carers through the school's prospectus and its website. Parents and carers are made aware of the availability of all school policies, on request, or by download from the website. A good summary of students' attainment and progress in all of the subjects studied is sent home at the end of each academic year, together with a termly summary of progress and targets in each subject.

### **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The school's arrangements for the management of any complaints meet statutory requirements.

### **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

### **What the school could do to improve further**

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Increase opportunities for students to undertake scientific investigations.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching is at least good in all subjects taught at all key stages.
- Improve the attendance of the small number of persistent absentees, including the elimination of any unauthorised absence.

## Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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### The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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## School details

<b>School status</b>	Independent		
<b>Type of school</b>	Special school for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties		
<b>Date school opened</b>	January 2012		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	10–17 years		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 17	Girls: 5	Total: 22
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 16	Girls: 5	Total: 21
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 2	Girls: 3	Total: 5
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£50,400		
<b>Address of school</b>	Albany House 18 Theydon Road Clapton London E5 9NA		
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8815 4030		
<b>Email address</b>	info@leawaysschool.co.uk		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Richard Gadd		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Kedleston Schools (London) Limited		

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



30 November 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Leaways School, London, E5 9NA**

I would like to thank you for your welcome when I visited your school recently. In particular, I would like to thank those of you who took time to talk with me and to show me your work during lessons. My inspection judged that Leaways provides you with a good quality of education and that all government requirements are met. The school has achieved a lot in a short time since it opened and you have made your contribution to its success. I was particularly pleased to see the high quality of relationships between students and staff. Your teachers and support workers care very much about your education and work very hard to enable you to develop as responsible young people. Most of you work hard and are able to see the improvements which you have made in your work and behaviour since joining the school. You have good opportunities for practical work in a number of subjects and you clearly enjoy these. You also benefit from high quality teaching in English and mathematics.

I have asked the headteacher, proprietor and other staff to give you more opportunity to undertake investigations in science and to make sure that the quality of teaching is good in all of your lessons. You can do a lot to help the staff to make sure that you get the best out of your education. I know that many of you have made good improvements in your behaviour and are much better at getting along with other students and adults. The staff will be pleased to see you continue these efforts. Attendance at the school is good but a small number of you have poor attendance. I would like you to cooperate with the staff to make sure there is no unauthorised absence and that you are always in the right place at the right time. I would like to wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Young  
Lead Inspector