

Ian Mikardo School

60 William Guy Gardens, Talwin Street, London, E3 3LF

Inspection dates 26–27 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of students		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of students		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and students

This is an outstanding school.

- The headteacher, school leaders and governors have ensured strong improvement in all aspects of the school's work since the last inspection.
- Students' progress in English and mathematics, from low starting points, has been outstanding in the last three years. This is because of high-quality teaching and the use of exceptional resources, now more available in the new school.
- Additional funding for Year 7 students is helping them to progress extremely well in their reading.
- Students make outstanding progress in their listening, speaking and language skills. This is because of the excellent partnership between the school and external professionals.
- Teachers' marking of books ensures improvement in students' knowledge and skills. As a result, all students, including the more-able, are making outstanding progress.
- Support staff are highly trained and make a strong contribution to students' excellent progress.
- Systems to manage staff performance are rigorous and are clearly linked to securing students' rapid progress in all subjects.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding. The school is welcoming and supportive of students from all backgrounds. Students feel extremely safe and well cared for.
- Students' behaviour improves rapidly to outstanding, often from a poor start when they join the school. The consistently calm approach of all staff encourages students to completely change their attitudes.
- Middle leaders (who lead departments and subjects) check the quality of teaching and the progress students make in their subjects extremely well.
- A wide variety of planned lessons ensures that students develop exceptional skills in a broad range of subjects. This prepares students well for their next step in education or training.
- Excellent personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the heart of the school's success and underpins all of the school's strengths.
- Parents and carers appreciate the school's work to support their children. They feel that they are sufficiently informed and involved in their children's progress.
- The governing body holds the school robustly to account for its performance and management of finances. This has strongly contributed to students' achievement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in six lessons, all of which were jointly observed with the headteacher and a senior teacher. The inspector also carried out a series of short visits to other lessons across the school and listened to students read.
- Meetings were held with staff and students. The inspector met with the Chair of the Governing Body, the vice chair and four other governors, as well as a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the school's most recent survey of parents and carers and 15 responses to the hardcopy of the Ofsted questionnaire. The inspector also held informal discussions with three parents and carers. There was only one reply to the online Parent View survey. The inspector also considered 26 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspector observed the school's practice and looked at a range of documentation including its checks on how well it is doing, improvement planning and information on students' progress. The inspector also took account of documents used by senior leaders to check the school's work on attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Justina Ilochi, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ian Mikardo School is a special school for boys with severe and complex behaviour, emotional and social difficulties. All students have a statement of special educational needs.
- There have been substantial changes in what the school offers since the previous inspection. The number of students in the school has doubled following a period when the school was using a temporary site. The school is now occupying purpose-built accommodation on its original site as part of the Building Schools for the Future project.
- The school's curriculum is made up of two aspects: the subject curriculum and the social curriculum. The subject curriculum, introduced five years ago, is structured under five headings and led by a head of department. The social curriculum takes place during breakfast, break, lunch and after school.
- Almost all students are supported through the pupil premium. This additional government funding is for students who are looked after and for students known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school receives a small amount of additional funding for its students in Year 7.
- About a third of students are from a White British background and the rest come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. A few students speak English as an additional language.
- The school provides outreach for other schools in its community.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop closer collaboration between the heads of departments so students are given more opportunity to practise writing and problem-solving skills in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of students

is outstanding

- Students join the school with skills at levels well below those expected for their age. As a result of high-quality teaching, students make exceptional progress from their starting points. Students' achievement is strong throughout the school and exceptionally rapid at the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. As a result, by the time they leave, students' achievement in English and mathematics is outstanding. This has been so for the last three years.
- Current school data show that students in Year 11 are making outstanding progress in all subjects, but particularly in art. This is because of the support they receive from psychotherapists and other professionals who work closely with teachers to help students to manage their behaviour.
- Adults who provide one-to-one and small-group teaching for students who are eligible for additional funding are well trained and highly effective in their role. They make a very strong contribution to students' exceptional progress. Consequently there are no gaps between the progress of students eligible for additional funding and the very few who are not.
- The most able students make outstanding progress because teachers set tasks which are at the right level for them. They progress exceptionally well towards demanding and challenging targets during lessons. However chances to practise writing and problem-solving skills in all subjects are sometimes limited because heads of departments do not plan this provision collaboratively.
- Evidence from lessons and students' work shows that their progress is typically outstanding. There is effective support for developing students' literacy, numeracy and language skills.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teachers create a stimulating and welcoming learning environment which promotes high expectations of students' behaviour and achievement. Teachers have excellent relationships with students and know their classes extremely well. As result students' progress, particularly in English and mathematics is outstanding.
- Other adults make a very strong contribution to students' personal development and well-being. They play an important role in the outstanding quality of teaching in all year groups because they are well trained.
- Teachers make excellent use of high-quality resources which support the learning of students of all abilities and engage their interests. Students enjoy work-related lessons which develop their language and problem-solving skills exceptionally well and prepare them for their next steps in education or training.
- More-able students benefit from being given more demanding work. Their response to teachers' skilful questioning encourages them to listen carefully and speak confidently.
- Students eligible for the pupil premium or the Year 7 catch-up funding make outstanding progress like the rest of students. Students who initially struggle with reading in Year 7 are also making outstanding progress and closing the gaps with similar students in mainstream schools. This extra funding is used to employ trained adults who teach these students extremely well in small groups or one to one.
- Students are consistently given useful guidance about how to improve their work. Students' books confirm their improvement in knowledge and skills, particularly in English and mathematics.

The behaviour and safety of students are outstanding

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. Students are offered time for reflection in one-to-one sessions with psychotherapists and other professionals to promote their understanding of 'right and wrong'.
- Students have exceptionally well-developed social skills. Staff are adept at bringing students from different cultures together and developing their language and communication skills. An excellent example is the way staff and students interact every morning at breakfast.
- Attitudes to learning are excellent because staff respect students' dignity, well-being and developing independence. Students respond readily to the sensitive and calm approach from all adults, which helps them stay on task throughout lessons. As a result, they arrive happily in the morning, remain happy throughout the day and leave contented at the end of the day.
- Students value the many opportunities they have to take on important roles and responsibilities. They said they were particularly proud of their contribution to the planning of their new school site. They respect the fabric of the new building and its surroundings, saying they really like the new spacious accommodation and excellent resources.
- Typically, behaviour over time had varied, especially during the unsettled period when the school was being rebuilt. The school's strategies to improve students' behaviour are extremely effective. As a result, incidents of poor behaviour reduce drastically the longer students spend in the school.
- The school actively promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination effectively. The school has high levels of adult support and consistent routines throughout the day. Outdoor lessons and visits outside school are carefully checked to ensure that all students can take part. There have been no exclusions since the last inspection.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Students have an extremely well-developed awareness of different forms of bullying. Internet safety has a high priority, with students well supervised when they are online. Sometimes access is denied to some social networking sites.
- Students say that bullying sometimes occurs but they are confident in the school's ability to deal with it swiftly through 'conflict resolution'.
- Staff are insistent that all students attend school very regularly. Attendance in the last three years has been broadly average.
- Staff and the governing body check the site very carefully to make sure that students are kept safe. Parents and carers who spoke to the inspector and responded to the Ofsted questionnaire say they are extremely happy with the school's care for their children. This view was also confirmed by the students who met with the inspectors.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, backed by the governing body and a committed staff, has ensured that students are helped to make outstanding progress. Supported by senior leaders and governors, she has successfully led the school through a period of significant change.
- Leaders at all levels have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This has led to the elimination of weaker teaching, the excellent progress seen in students' work and the exceptional contribution of teaching assistants.
- Underpinning the positive picture of outstanding achievement is the strength of systems for checking students' progress. For example, the school has rightly identified that students' progress is linked closely to their attendance and behaviour. This focus has helped leaders to set the right targets which have improved teaching across the school.
- Middle leaders, who lead the subject curriculum, have successfully played a part in evaluating the quality of teaching in their areas. This has led to a unified approach to checking how well lessons are planned and linking this to students' progress. Therefore, middle leaders know they

need to communicate more across subjects and give students more chances to practise writing and problem solving. This is already part of the school's future planning for next year.

- The school provides a wide variety of lessons in its social curriculum during breakfast, break and lunch and off-site visits which students enjoy. This ensures that learning continues outside the classroom. As a result, the gaps in students' knowledge and skills are narrowing rapidly. The contribution of students to the wonderful displays in classrooms and corridors reflects their school experiences and their outstanding learning.
- The school's promotion of students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is exceptional. This is underscored by the school's core belief of 'come with a past, leave with a future'. Students celebrate the diversity of different cultures through a planned calendar of events throughout the year.
- The school works extremely well with parents and carers. Many of them, encouraged by the school, take full advantage of opportunities to help their children to read more widely at home. Without exception, parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire or spoke to the inspector said they feel that the school sufficiently informs and involves them in their children's learning.
- Supported by the local authority, the school offers help on effective behaviour strategies to mainstream schools in its local area. Evidence from feedback from these schools confirms the extremely positive impact of this support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body makes an extremely effective contribution to the quality of education the school provides. Governors pay close attention to the school's information about students' progress and performance. They know where the school is doing well and where it needs to improve. They also know how additional funding is allocated and are aware that achievement for those receiving it is outstanding. Governors have had relevant training about keeping the school under review. As a result, they have a clear awareness of how outstanding teaching links to pupils' achievement. They hold the headteacher robustly to account for the school's performance and the management of its finances, which are sound. Governors have overseen the pay policy for staff and have clear procedures for checking the link between how well staff perform and the salaries they receive. They have updated all school policies and have made sure that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its students' needs. This ensures that students are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its students' needs. Students are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its students an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	131598
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	439615
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of students	11–16
Gender of students	Boys
Number of students on the school roll	35
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Danyalle Brismead
Headteacher	Claire Lillis
Date of previous school inspection	9 March 2009
Telephone number	020 8981 2413
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