

Hackney New School

Downham Road, Hackney, N1 5AA

Inspection dates 9–10 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher and senior leaders have created a culture of high ambition which has resulted in good teaching and the good achievement of pupils.
- Pupils from all significant groups represented in the school make good progress across the range of subjects taught, and many make rapid progress.
- Teachers question pupils well and plan interesting lessons which help them build successfully on prior learning.
- The rich curriculum is enriched by a wide range of opportunities for pupils to consolidate or expand their learning in the school’s distinctive daily timetable.
- Pupils benefit from excellent opportunities to pursue their moral and cultural education. Leaders make sure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to participate in the cultural activities on offer. Fundamental British values are promoted well.
- Leaders ensure that robust procedures for safeguarding are understood by staff and implemented well.
- Pupils get along well together and are motivated to view learning in a positive light.
- Governors hold leaders to account very effectively for standards and for upholding the school’s founding values.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers and other staff do not all apply the behaviour policy in the same way. This is particularly the case when they are helping those pupils who still need strong guidance with the standards of behaviour expected of them.
- Some teachers do not provide consistently effective advice to help all pupils make outstanding progress.
- Leaders do not always make sure agreed policies are applied consistently when checking on the impact of teachers’ work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out observations in 17 lessons and enrichment activities, three of which were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, some middle leaders, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the pupil counselling service that is used by the school. A telephone conversation was held with the deputy headteacher of a local school which provides one pupil with alternative education.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work during lesson visits and during a separate scrutiny of a range of books. They also looked at some of pupils' work held electronically, including in music.
- Inspectors sought the views of pupils informally and through formal discussions.
- Inspectors considered a range of documents held by the school, including information about achievement and documents related to safeguarding. Policies were looked at, along with records of the work of governors.
- Inspectors looked at 31 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and met with a number of parents. They considered the 16 responses received to the distribution of the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Andrew Wright, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Vanessa Ward

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hackney New School is a free school, established in 2013. It is registered to provide education for pupils from the ages of 11 to 19. However, the school currently has pupils only in Year 7 and Year 8.
- A new site, adjacent to the current premises, is due to be occupied by the school in September 2015.
- Approximately half of the pupils attending the school are eligible for additional government funding intended for disadvantaged pupils. This is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or receive planned additional support is above average.
- The proportion of pupils belonging to minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average.
- The school uses an extended day to provide a wide range of enrichment activities and support with homework preparation. Sporting activities are carried out at a neighbouring park, and at local athletics and swimming facilities. Pupils are provided with laptop computers to help them with lessons in all subjects.
- The school has a special focus on music and provides resources to enable all pupils to learn to play a musical instrument.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it raises standards still further by:
 - providing consistently effective advice to pupils in lessons
 - including more precise and regular comments to pupils on the quality of their written work and literacy skills in all subjects.
- Ensure the behaviour policy is applied effectively by all staff so that pupils:
 - receive consistent guidance on how to uphold the behaviour expected of them
 - become increasingly capable of making the right choice about how to behave for themselves.
- Increasing leaders' contributions to raising standards by:
 - checking even more rigorously to make sure all agreed policies are implemented consistently.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher ensures that the values central to the school's culture are clearly communicated to all. Her determination to ensure all pupils are well prepared for the opportunities and responsibilities of their future lives ensures that they achieve well and benefit from good teaching.
- Senior and middle leaders plan effective priorities for further improvement. They also adapt plans when outcomes indicate this is necessary. For example, leaders refined the way that attainment on admission of pupils was checked when they realised this needed to be more accurate.
- The director of music takes effective action to ensure there is equality of opportunity for all pupils. Her passionate leadership is securing effective teaching which leads to pupils' rapid progress from variable and often poor starting points.
- The leader with oversight of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs has implemented insightful plans for improvement. These are based on accurate and skilful identification of needs and result in very positive outcomes for these pupils.
- Suitable policies have been created and are kept under close review. However, leaders do not always check rigorously enough that all of these policies are implemented consistently.
- Leaders keep track of pupils' progress regularly and thoroughly. They make sure teachers use this information to plan lessons which enable pupils to make sustained good progress from their starting points. Teachers say they receive extensive, relevant training to improve their skills further. When checking on the quality of teaching, helpful advice is given and performance is evaluated using a wide range of evidence. However, leaders do not always check closely enough whether all teachers are providing guidance and advice to pupils in accordance with agreed policies.
- The structure which leaders have created for the school day allows pupils to benefit from activities which extend or secure their understanding in a wide range of subjects. The curriculum provides a broad range of themes and areas for study which are supplemented by daily enrichment sessions. This enrichment successfully promotes equality of opportunity and widens pupils' horizons.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is strong. Pupils attend lessons dedicated to the core values of the school which are successful in helping them understand morality. For example, pupils learn how charities with both Christian and Islamic beliefs help tackle poverty. Opportunities to broaden pupils' cultural understanding are evident in all subjects taught. For example, pupils are expected to learn and make accurate use of musical terms. Leaders also ensure pupils are offered good advice about the choices they need to make in the next stage of their education. Through this, they gain a good understanding of fundamental British values.
- Leaders make sure funding for disadvantaged pupils is put to effective use. As a result, these pupils achieve as well as others with similar starting points. Leaders also make sure funding is used to ensure all pupils have the opportunity to participate in the wide range of cultural experiences on offer.
- Leaders systematically and thoroughly check on the work of the school to keep pupils safe so that statutory safeguarding requirements are met.
- Parents are confident in the work of leaders. Nearly nine out of every 10 parents who responded to the online Parent View questionnaire would recommend the school to others. Parents told inspectors that they admired the steps leaders have taken to celebrate the diversity of the community it serves.
- Leaders provide resources during the school day to make sure all pupils can have healthy food and drinks.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a wide range of skills which they augment with well considered training to help them understand all of the information they are given about the work of the school. They provide effective challenge to school leaders, both in relation to the achievement of pupils and to the extent which the school lives up to its founding values. For example, governors have made sure that achievement evidence gathered by the school is rigorously moderated through links with local successful schools. They play a key role in maintaining other external links, such as those which exist with the Hackney Learning Trust.
 - Governors understand the impact of funding on particular groups of pupils and take the necessary steps to assure themselves that teachers' pay is linked to positive outcomes for pupils. They systematically and regularly check up on the safeguarding procedures for which they are responsible. They have not been involved in recruitment, other than in relation to the most senior leaders. They recognise that this will change as the school grows. As a result, governors intend to undergo safer recruitment training

imminently.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Leaders expect pupils to behave well and most pupils live up to these high expectations. This leads to the calm, purposeful atmosphere seen around the school. Positive attitudes towards learning are demonstrated by the vast majority of pupils.
- The behaviour policy is clear and relevant to the needs of pupils. Teachers have had training to help them implement this policy. Leaders and staff celebrate and encourage good behaviour in imaginative ways. For example, the school has developed a system where pupils can save up positive behaviour points and exchange them for a range of rewards. However, there are occasions when the policy is not implemented consistently, particularly on the infrequent occasions when some pupils lose concentration and interrupt learning. Some staff and pupils indicated to inspectors that they have noticed this.
- Pupils are punctual, and well prepared, for their lessons. They take care of their equipment and take pride in the school environment, which they help to create and maintain.
- Pupils enjoy their break and lunchtimes, even though space is limited. They get along well with one another and share the wide range of activities the school provides in a collaborative and inclusive manner. Pupils say instances of bullying and other discriminatory behaviour are rare.
- Records of behaviour concerns kept and carefully monitored by the school's pastoral team indicate that pupils' behaviour has improved over time. There have been some fixed-term and permanent exclusions. A small number of pupils are being educated in alternative settings, both within school and at other establishments as a result of their unacceptable behaviour. Some of these pupils are making a success of occasionally returning to their usual class.
- Pupils attend well. Any absences which persist are robustly challenged by leaders.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe and happy in school. Parents have confidence that their children are safe. Bullying is rare and acted on effectively when it is reported. However, some pupils told inspectors that adults could do even more to help them feel safe from bullying.
- Pupils understand how to stay safe in a range of situations they are likely to encounter, including when they use the internet. The school provides information and events to enable parents to support this work.
- School leaders ensure that checks on the suitability of staff are carried out and recorded thoroughly. Staff are well trained in recognising and acting on any safeguarding concerns. Pupils appreciate the 'SOS' email address provided by the school, which they can contact if they feel the need to.
- A counselling service provides weekly support to pupils who either refer themselves to it or who the school chooses it for. The large number of self-referrals evident indicates the high levels of trust pupils have in the work of the school to maintain their well-being.
- The challenges of the current, temporary school site are well managed. Equipment and activities are checked to make sure they are safe. A small number of pupils are educated in other schools. Leaders check up on the safety and attendance of these pupils well.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects and of the abilities of their pupils. They use this to plan interesting work and explain the intentions for learning in lessons very clearly. As a result, pupils make good progress and some make very rapid progress from all starting points. Teaching is not outstanding because teachers do not always give pupils very effective advice about how to improve their work as consistently as they might.
- In English, teachers inspire pupils to enjoy a wide range of literature and pose challenging questions to probe understanding and deepen thinking for more-able pupils. They provide the time and means for pupils to refine and improve their work; although the advice given to help pupils improve their writing is not always as effective as that provided for other literacy skills. Pupils make good progress in their reading and are encouraged to read their own work to one another.
- Most pupils make good progress in mathematics because teachers explain new ideas clearly and effectively. Teachers persist in helping pupils who need more time or help to grasp mathematical

concepts. They provide additional opportunities to practice during enrichment and preparation time in the afternoons if this is needed.

- Music is taught very well. The music teacher enables all pupils to regard themselves as musicians, whatever their starting point. She promotes the enjoyment of music, which contributes significantly to the rapid progress pupils make in this subject.
- Support staff offer effective help and encouragement to both weaker learners and the more able. Those who support pupils who have difficulty managing their behaviour and feelings are successful in ensuring that these pupils continue to participate in learning.
- Teachers provide good resources and support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. These enable them to make the same good progress as others. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also benefit from skilled teaching which takes account of their particular needs. These pupils make at least similar progress to others in the school as a result.
- Across other subjects, teaching is consistently good. Teachers question pupils effectively and use achievement evidence well to set appropriate work. The teacher of art has used enrichment time to motivate some of the more reluctant artists to develop skills in graphic design. Modern foreign language teachers use computer-based assessments to help pupils understand how well they are progressing. However, teachers do not always help pupils develop their skills by giving precise suggestions about how they could improve.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils join the school in Year 7 with skills in many subjects, including English and mathematics, which are below those expected for their age. In some subjects, such as music, these are much lower than expected. Pupils make good progress from these starting points, and often make rapid, sustained progress.
- The school's own evidence indicates that this good progress has enabled all pupils in Year 8 to catch up and often exceed the attainment expected for their age in English and mathematics. However, some pupils in Year 7, particularly in mathematics, have made minimal or no progress from their starting points since joining the school. Leaders have recognised this and taken steps to help these pupils catch up. Some work seen in pupils' books during inspection did not reflect the highest standards of achievement of which pupils may be capable.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve at least as well as other pupils, given their starting points, because their needs are quickly and precisely identified and supported when they join the school.
- Disadvantaged pupils who receive additional funding achieve as well as other pupils in English, mathematics and science as a result of well considered support and detailed, regular checks on their progress.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make progress which is similar to, and often better than, other pupils.
- In science, methods of identifying the attainment of pupils as they join the school have been revised to improve their accuracy. Work seen during inspection indicates that progress in science is good. Pupils benefit from the clear advice they receive about how they can improve their scientific investigation skills. They also make good progress in understanding the links between different scientific subjects.
- Pupils make sustained, rapid progress in music as a result of skilful teaching and effective assessment. The music teacher records pupils' performances and uses them to help pupils understand the progress they are making. These recordings demonstrate how pupils quickly improve and refine their musical skills.
- A scholar programme, which the school provides for pupils who exhibit particular talents and abilities, is successful in promoting their good achievement. Leaders keep track of their progress as a particular group.

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 pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils 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 pupils' needs. Pupils 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 pupils 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	139595
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	450103

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andreas Wesemann
Headteacher	Lesley Falconer
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	02076177181
Email address	info@hackneynewschool.org

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