

# Space Studio West London

Letchworth Avenue, Feltham, Hounslow TW14 9PE

## Inspection dates

16–17 January 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
16 to 19 study programmes	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders have created a calm, safe and productive learning environment where pupils work collaboratively with each other, their teachers and industry mentors. Expectations are high. Leaders and staff share the school's unique vision.
- Leaders encourage project-based learning with industry professionals, and work placement opportunities are numerous. A high focus on developing pupils' employability skills prepares pupils effectively for life in modern Britain.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and regularly assess pupils to ensure that they plan suitable activities. They routinely give advice on how pupils can improve their work or set challenges. Leaders, however, do not systematically check that pupils respond to this feedback or attempt extension tasks as required by the school.
- Excellent working relationships with teachers ensure that pupils receive ongoing support and guidance about their work. As a result, current pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils are genuinely interested in their studies and work hard, both in class and during independent study periods. They are proud of their school and their achievements since starting at Space Studio West London.
- Attendance, though slightly below the national average, is improving. Leaders continue to focus on improving the attendance of identified pupils.
- Initially, some students followed 16 to 19 study programmes that did not meet their academic abilities and consequently, in 2017, they did not make good progress. Leaders have been quick to redress this situation. Better information, advice and guidance ensures that students are now on the right post-16 courses.
- Trust leaders and the governing body hold leaders sufficiently to account. They were quick to intercede following below-average examination results in 2017. As a result, they have improved the standard of teaching and made changes to the curriculum to ensure that pupils are studying appropriate subjects.
- School leaders, while being reflective, do not systematically analyse the impact of their actions on pupils' outcomes. At times, this impedes the progress some pupils make.
- Parents, though generally complimentary, would like further opportunities to be involved in the school and their children's education.
- Pupils do not use their communication and numeracy skills well enough across all subjects and the core project, which slows their progress.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management, by:
  - ensuring that school leaders analyse systematically the impact of their actions and initiatives on pupils' progress and subsequent outcomes, so that they can make any necessary changes quickly and effectively
  - fostering further opportunities to involve parents and carers in the education of their children.
- Ensure that all pupils and students in the sixth form make at least good progress from their starting points by leaders:
  - continuing to support identified pupils and students to attend school more regularly
  - continuing to check that pupils have the right information, advice and guidance so that they start courses that they have the academic ability to succeed in, particularly post-16
  - checking systematically that all pupils respond to advice, guidance or challenges posed by their teachers, as required by the school's policy, and intervene quickly when this is not the case
  - ensuring that pupils and students are taught to use their numeracy and literacy skills learned in English and mathematics lessons across all subjects and in their core project.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Trust and school leaders share a vision for the school which they have created. They have a clear rationale for the learning environment they have developed and all staff share their high aspirations for pupils and for the students in the sixth form.
- Trust and school leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the strengths of this new school and what still needs to be done to improve it further. They are quick to acknowledge that the 2017 GCSE and post-16 outcomes were not good enough. Leaders have carefully analysed the reasons for this, including the poor quality of teaching in some subjects and inappropriate advice and guidance for students choosing post-16 courses. They have been quick to redress the situation, including the recruitment of some new teachers, changes to the curriculum and better information, advice and guidance for pupils. As a result, current pupils are making good progress from their starting points.
- Middle leaders are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and share leaders' commitment to creating a distinctive learning environment. They participate in checks undertaken by senior and trust leaders to ensure that the quality of teaching in their departments is typically good. Consequently, they know where there is strong teaching and where to offer further support. Together, leaders at all levels have ensured that there is a consistent whole-school approach to giving pupils feedback, providing them with advice on how to improve their work and setting further challenging activities. However, senior and middle leaders do not check systematically enough that pupils are responding to this advice or attempting the tasks set, in line with the school's policy. As a result, some pupils make less progress than their peers do.
- The school actively recruits pupils from a wide range of schools and provisions. Leaders have rightly prioritised the importance of accurate baseline assessments when pupils arrive in Year 10 or at other times throughout the school year. Pupils undertake a number of assessment tests to determine their strengths and inform staff of any gaps in their knowledge. School leaders routinely and accurately check pupils' progress.
- Staff at all levels benefit from being part of the Aspirations Academies Trust. They have access to a number of professional development opportunities linked to their performance targets. Where relevant, teachers work collaboratively across the schools to share best practice and ensure that their assessments of pupils' work are accurate.
- Leaders are proud of the curriculum they have designed. While specifically focusing on mathematics, science and engineering, it offers a range of GCSEs, A levels and vocational qualifications. All post-16 students participate in the Engineering Education Scheme. They design and undertake an extended project, producing something that can be publically displayed, such as a product, publication or presentation. Links with local and national businesses and engineering companies ensure that work-experience opportunities are relevant and enhance pupils' skills and expertise. Employability skills are taught and promoted as part of this curriculum and effectively prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. Extra-curricular opportunities are linked to these projects, but are also planned to meet pupils' interests or to encourage them to acquire a new skill, for instance playing a new sport.

- The personal, social, health and economic education, and citizenship programmes, provides opportunities for pupils to discuss some of the issues and rewards of life in modern Britain. This includes understanding the diverse nature of British society, the rules and laws to abide by, and how democracy works. The curriculum, assemblies, visits and external speakers promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on British values, their personal actions and the subsequent impact. Staff at all levels are committed to equality of opportunity and to ensuring that all pupils have access to the range of experiences available.
- Throughout the school, leaders exploit information and communications technology (ICT) and the media as effective teaching resources. Pupils use tablets and their mobile phones to support their learning. Leaders are vigilant in ensuring that there is adequate security to protect pupils online and that pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. Pupils have regular opportunities to reflect on the influence of the media on society and challenge perceptions or stereotypes.
- Leaders, including governors, are clear about how they spend funding to support those pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and those pupils who are disadvantaged. School leaders provide regular information to trust leaders on the performance of these groups of pupils. However, they do not analyse systematically enough the impact of their actions on these pupils' progress to inform future, strategic actions.
- The SEN coordinator ensures that individual pupils who have SEN are monitored closely to ensure that their academic, social and emotional needs are met. They work closely with parents in order to share information. All staff undertake regular training so that they have a range of strategies when working with individual pupils who have SEN.
- Parents are generally very complimentary about the school and the progress their children have made. Typical among their comments were: 'Every child has been given 110% respect, irrespective of who they are or their background, from the moment they arrive'; and 'This school is really forward thinking and has the well-being and success of its students at heart.' School leaders publish a weekly electronic bulletin and send home half-termly reports on pupils' progress. However, leaders admit that further work could be done to encourage more parental involvement in the school.

## **Governance of the school**

- The managing director and deputy managing director of the trust, together with the director of education for the west London trust board, hold school leaders to account for the standard of education they are providing. In response to the below-average performance of the 2017 examination cohorts, they immediately put in place actions to address identified issues. They are confident that the changes are now having a positive impact on pupils' progress. They have also increased the regularity of their scrutiny and monitoring of the quality of leadership, teaching and learning at the school. They have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the school and what still needs to be done. The principal is part of the west London trust board, which offers challenge and support to the participants. In this way, the principal and other school leaders are suitably managed to ensure that they provide an appropriate standard of education.
- The local advisory board (LAB) deals with the policies and procedures unique to the

studio school. Board members are clear about their responsibilities and how they differ from the trust board. They know the school well and are honest about what it still needs to do. Together, both the LAB and trust leaders work closely together to challenge and support the principal and vice-principal.

- Trust leaders and the LAB understand their statutory responsibility to keep pupils safe and ensure that training and recruitment checks are of the highest quality. The school, though new and undersubscribed, is financially viable and resources are managed well.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Checks on the suitability of staff to work at the school are in line with statutory guidelines and records are well kept. The site is secure, compact and well maintained. Procedures for visitors and students arriving to study from Rivers Academy are robust. Risk assessments, particularly for practical activities in science and engineering, are appropriate and adhered to.
- Staff are well trained, vigilant and know their responsibility to keep pupils safe. Staff spend considerable time with pupils during lessons, working with them in the independent study areas, and socialising and eating with them during the breaks. The school is deliberately compact with low pupil numbers, so everyone is known well. Relationships between staff and pupils are highly positive. Consequently, any signs of neglect, abuse, or social and emotional turmoil are quickly picked up and responded to in a timely manner.
- Leaders and school staff know the prevalent risks in the wider community including, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, knife crime and drugs. They are aware of the need to guide pupils away from the possibility of radicalisation or extremism. Leaders and staff ensure that there are regular discussions about these issues and that they have the latest safeguarding guidance. Students in the sixth form talked about the helpful information they had received from staff about keeping themselves safe.
- Those responsible for safeguarding at the school are well trained and are quick to ask for relevant support from external agencies. They benefit from the wider experience of leaders across the trust, to ensure that procedures, policies and processes are appropriately robust.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- The long school day has been organised into three lengthy teaching sessions and a final hour-long class. Pupils do not receive work to do at home, but are expected to complete tasks set by teachers, revise and complete their core project investigations and production during the allocated independent learning time. This time is also used productively for teachers to provide one-to-one or small-group intervention sessions for those needing extra support or simply needing additional guidance. The open layout of the building means that pupils in key stage 4 and students in the sixth form work seamlessly together. Leaders and staff have established a hard-working learning ethos that is sustained throughout the school day.
- Pupils trust their teachers and know that they have high expectations for them. Irrespective of their starting points, pupils work hard. They are genuinely interested in

their studies and want to do well. They work effectively in groups, hypothesising, investigating, designing and developing products and presentations. They have pride in their work and are keen to succeed. They are quick to ask each other and their teachers for help should they need it.

- Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subjects and committed to the pupils they teach. Small class sizes mean that every pupil is known very well. Teachers accurately assess pupils when they arrive in their subject areas and regularly check the progress that they are making. They design initial activities that consolidate prior learning and remind them of key facts and vocabulary. They then give them opportunities to develop their skills, working either in groups or individually. Planning includes activities that stretch the most able; pupils were keen to attempt these tasks. Pupils are taught to be resilient in their learning and encouraged to 'have a go', even if they do not quite have the skills to be successful in the task. Though the sessions are long, tasks are varied and teachers make effective use of ICT to engage and motivate pupils.
- Teachers consistently apply the school's feedback policy. Teachers highlight where pupils' work could improve or clarify any misconceptions. Where pupils have a good grasp of the activity, teachers sometimes suggest a 'challenge task'. Many pupils routinely respond to this feedback and, consequently, make good progress from their starting points. However, a minority of pupils repeatedly fail to complete the set extension work as required by the school. Middle and senior leaders, until recently, have not routinely checked where this is the case and addressed it.
- Pupils know what they need to do to improve and are clear about what they want to achieve. Regular assessments ensure that they know what they are doing well and what needs more practise. Parents receive regular reports, which show the progress their children are making. Pupils are well motivated and focused on their learning.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Every pupil is known well. Staff encourage everyone to reach their potential in a safe and supportive environment. Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare and that if it did occur, staff would deal with it swiftly. Pupils trust the adults they work with and all could name individuals they would turn to, should they have a concern or an issue. They know how to keep themselves safe, both in school and in the wider community. Pupils and staff said, unanimously, that they enjoyed coming to Space Studio each day.
- Pupils are encouraged to work with a range of mentors, employers and industry professionals and do so in a mature and effective way. Employment experiences and opportunities help prepare pupils for adult life and effectively support their social and cultural development.
- Pupils receive ongoing information, advice and guidance, both through explicit careers sessions and through their links with industry professionals, universities and mentors. As a result, many pupils are clear about their future aspirations and the pathways

needed to achieve these.

- Leaders promote healthy lifestyles through the sports facilities on site, human biology in science and the high quality of food available, for example.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' conduct around the school site is quiet and purposeful. Independent study areas promote diligence and concentration. Staff and pupils work alongside each other, sharing ideas and supporting each other. During breaktimes, pupils socialise together, eat with their friends and teachers, play sport or catch up on their work. The transition between these times and formal lessons is seamless.
- In lessons, the vast majority of pupils work diligently, completing tasks to a good standard and working collaboratively with their peers. Pupils listen carefully to each other's ideas and show due attention. They are willing to help each other and are keen to succeed.
- Pupils show respect and tolerance towards each other, staff and visitors. They are very proud of their school and their achievements. During the inspection, they were keen to share with inspectors how well they were doing, how much they enjoyed school and how much they valued their teachers' help and advice.
- Of those pupils who were spoken to, all were pleased that they had chosen to leave their previous school to attend Space Studio. They value highly the opportunities they have been given and work diligently and hard.
- A minority of pupils still do not attend as regularly as they should. For some, this is due to the complexities of long distance travel to school. Leaders are aware of the reasons for some pupils' poor attendance and have in place a number of procedures that are beginning to have an impact. As a result, attendance has improved and is now just below the national average.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Current pupils make good progress from their starting points. On entry into Year 10, leaders assess pupils' academic ability carefully and accurately. Pupils arrive from a number of different provisions, some with gaps in their education, knowledge and skills. Some have made limited progress since they left Year 6 or are working at a level lower than in Year 6. Aspirational targets are set based on key stage 2 results, where available. Baseline assessments and aspirational targets are shared with all staff so that they can plan accordingly. Leaders carefully track the progress of all pupils, including the most able, disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, to make sure that they are making the progress necessary to at least come close to, if not exceed, their aspirational targets.
- During the inspection, pupils' work from a range of subjects was scrutinised with school leaders. This showed clear evidence of pupils making good progress. Some pupils were achieving at a very high standard and demonstrating accelerated progress from their starting points. Others, having made slower progress overall in their secondary



education, are achieving well enough now at key stage 4 to achieve nationally expected GCSE outcomes. In all cases, there was demonstrable evidence of pupils making good progress from their baseline starting points at Space Studio School.

- Pupils' work in books and portfolios, and their knowledge about the subjects they are studying, showed that pupils not only make good progress, but also are genuinely interested in their learning. Activities are often challenging and require pupils to think carefully, problem solve and hypothesise. Pupils show pride in their work and are keen to develop and deepen their learning.
- In particular, pupils are keen mathematicians and enjoy the school's specialism of science and engineering. Many achieve well in these subjects as a result.
- Pupils are encouraged to read a range of texts, both for pleasure and for research purposes. They gain access to information through a range of physical texts and online.
- In English, some pupils start Year 10 with very limited writing skills and poor spelling, punctuation and grammar. However, they make good progress over time, so that by Year 11 many are able to communicate clearly and accurately for different audiences and purposes.
- While pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are used effectively in English and mathematics lessons respectively, some pupils are not able, or do not see the value of, transferring these skills to other subjects. This is seen, for instance, in their not being able to utilise data in geography or evaluate a science experiment in a fluent and accurate way. Leaders accept the importance of pupils being able to do this, particularly as they progress on to level 3 courses post-16 and in their core project work.
- Leaders at all levels acknowledge that outcomes in 2017 were not good enough. Pupils overall, disadvantaged pupils, and in particular the most able pupils, made below-average progress across a range of subjects compared to all pupils nationally. Overall, a lower proportion of pupils gained grade 5 or above in English and mathematics than found nationally in 2017. Attainment at grade C or above at GCSE was also below the national average in science and well below in languages and humanities.
- Leaders' analysis of these outcomes indicates a number of factors, which limited the progress that pupils made. These include poor teaching in some subjects, and issues linked to the timetable. However, given pupils' generally weak prior knowledge and understanding on arrival at the school, it is notable that the vast majority of Year 11 pupils made at least one grade improvement from their Year 10 baseline assessments in mathematics, English and science. The majority of these pupils have now started suitable sixth-form courses at Space Studio.



## 16 to 19 study programmes

**Good**

- Leaders have created a small, supportive and growing sixth form that encapsulates the ethos and culture seen across the rest of the school.
- Students are highly ambitious, work very hard and have a clear idea of their future prospects and aspirations.
- They are proud of their school and their achievements to date. They arrive punctually, dress smartly and are keen to start work quickly. They respect each other and the staff that support them. They are enthusiastic learners who value highly the support they receive from their teachers. As one student said, 'Every teacher knows every student.' Another remarked, 'Teachers have a lot of trust in us and what we can achieve.'
- Every student has a personalised study programme. While many study mathematics, sciences and engineering A levels and BTEC National Diplomas, many also opt for the wide variety of courses available at Rivers Academy. This flexible programme of courses ensures that pupils' aspirations and interests are met.
- As in the rest of the school, high priority is given to developing students' employability skills. Students continue to undertake project work leading to the Industrial Cadet Gold award. They work closely with industry professionals and mentors, taking up opportunities for work experience and placements. Some in Year 12 are also undertaking the extended project qualification. Visits to higher education fairs and universities are regular, with one on the day of the inspection. Consequently, students are given a range of practical information, advice and guidance to inform their destinations when they leave. Allocated time each week prepares them for the next stage of their education, employment and training. Careers advice and help with university and apprenticeship applications ensure that students receive appropriate support.
- Outcomes in 2017 for the small, initial cohort were not good. Leaders' analysis of individuals' performance indicates that some students opted for courses that they did not have the academic ability to achieve well on. It also shows that they experienced some weaker teaching and that insufficiently high priority was given to the emotional and social well-being of some students to enable them to sustain their studies appropriately.
- Current students in Year 12 are making good progress from their starting points. Leaders have changed the admissions criteria for some courses or changed the structure. For example, a three-year A level mathematics course is now offered to those needing more time. Leaders rigorously check the quality of teaching to ensure that it is consistently at least good. The majority of Year 12 students attended Space Studio in key stage 4, so understand the ethos, culture and structure of the school day. Students were able to demonstrate to inspectors the progress they have made since September and were positive about the challenge and support they receive.
- Information provided by school leaders indicates that the majority of the small group of students in Year 13 are on track to achieve their expected targets. Leaders have put in place a range of one-to-one tuition to ensure that they receive maximum support to achieve this. Many have applied for apprenticeships or university; some have already received realistic offers.

- Leaders are beginning to have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the 16 to 19 provision. However, their analysis of the impact of their actions on students' progress, achievement and destinations, could be more strategic and contemplative.

## School details

Unique reference number	142126
Local authority	Hounslow
Inspection number	10041956

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

Type of school	14 to 19 studio school
School category	Academy studio school
Age range of pupils	14 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	178
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	81
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mandy Lancy
Principal	Andrew Morgan
Telephone number	0203 696 8140
Website	<a href="http://spacestudiowestlondon.org">http://spacestudiowestlondon.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@spacestudiowestlondon.org">office@spacestudiowestlondon.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The Space Studio West London opened in September 2015 as a mixed non-denominational studio school for students aged 14 to 18 years old. Pupils join the school in Year 10 and Year 12.
- The school focuses on science and mathematics, working with local, national and international organisations such as the National Space Centre, the European Space Agency, the UK Space Agency and the aerospace industry based in and around neighbouring Heathrow Airport.
- The school is sponsored by the Aspirations Academies Trust, which operates another

studio school in Banbury.

- Two thirds of pupils are boys.
- Over one-third of the pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is above average.
- Almost three quarters of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is higher than the national average.
- No pupils attend alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment across year groups and subjects. They watched an assembly, visited tutor groups and listened to pupils reading. They talked to pupils and students in the sixth form during lessons, independent study and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors spoke to the director and deputy director of the trust, the director of education for the west London schools' board and the chair of the local advisory board. They also spoke to the principal, vice-principal, middle leaders and staff.
- Inspectors took account of the 11 responses to the staff survey and 20 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- The inspection team scrutinised a wide range of documentation including: records related to pupils' behaviour and attendance, minutes of meetings, information on the progress made by pupils, the school's self-evaluation and the school's assessment system. Inspectors also reviewed safeguarding records, policies and procedures, including referrals to external agencies.
- Inspectors, alongside school leaders, scrutinised current pupils' work both at key stage 4 and in the sixth form.

## Inspection team

Helen Matthews, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tim Williams

Ofsted Inspector

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