

Leaways School

18 Theydon Road, Clapton, London E5 9NZ

Inspection dates

9–11 October 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The quality of education at Leaways School has declined since the previous inspection. However, the new leadership team has an accurate understanding of the areas that require development.
- The arrangements for keeping pupils safe are effective.
- The curriculum is suitable. It meets the needs of pupils who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties, and who typically have also had a disrupted educational history. Leaders are currently planning an expansion of the curriculum to offer pupils a wider range of accredited pathways.
- Leadership and governance are effective. Leaders regularly check compliance with the independent school standards, which are met.
- The staff team is united and wholeheartedly supports the school's leadership.
- Pupils attend well. Their attendance rates are very often better than when compared to attendance rates at their previous schools.
- The quality of teaching is typically good. A new programme of monitoring and staff development is starting to have a positive impact on further improving the quality and consistency of teaching across the school.
- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils enjoy a range of trips, events and assemblies.
- Pupils' outcomes are good overall. However, the school's academic assessment system is new and it is therefore difficult to show current pupils' progress over time.
- Additional adults are not used consistently well to support pupils' learning.
- Pupils do not have daily access to outdoor space for fresh air, recreation and play.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and pupils' outcomes, by consolidating the new systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and measuring pupils' progress over time.
- Improve the curriculum by developing accredited pathways for secondary-aged pupils in line with the school's plans, thereby providing a wider variety of suitable learning options.
- Improve pupils' personal development and behaviour by ensuring that pupils have more regular access to outdoor space for recreation and play.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The school has experienced considerable turbulence since the previous inspection. There has been a significant turnover of staff at all levels. Other than the headteacher, all members of the leadership team are relatively new to their posts. Despite this, leaders have worked effectively with a highly supportive staff team to ensure that the quality of education is good and that all the independent school standards are met.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs. It includes all the required areas of learning and, at key stages 2 and 3, is based on the national curriculum. Pupils at key stage 4 have a range of qualification options, including English, mathematics, science, history, geography, home-cooking skills, physical education, music and motor mechanics. A strong careers programme includes regular work experience. Pupils also enjoy the range of sports offered, which include kayaking, cycling, swimming, boxing and fitness workshops. Pupils with an additional diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder are provided with a tailored and effective learning experience in the school's 'ARC' provision. Leaders are currently working to enhance the curriculum offer further, especially in relation to new accredited pathways. They intend to offer courses such as construction, bicycle maintenance and art, so as to more effectively prepare pupils in key stages 3 and 4 for their lives after Leaways.
- Leaders are strongly committed to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The curriculum is enriched with regular activities, fundraising events and trips. During the academic year to date, pupils have enjoyed museum and exhibition trips, visits to the local city farm and trips outside of London to the south coast. They have also supported charities by hosting coffee mornings and lunches. Displays around the school exemplify pupils' study of democracy and the different political parties, health, fitness and nutrition, and role models from diverse backgrounds. As a result of the school's effective work in this area, pupils are being well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The quality of teaching is good and improving as a consequence of the new and increasingly effective system used for monitoring lessons and pupils' work. This is linked to a relatively new system for coaching teachers and providing tailored professional development. Leaders know that the quality of teaching is not yet entirely consistent across subject areas and know where the weaknesses are. They are working hard to consolidate their monitoring system so as to facilitate greater consistency and quality.
- The school's assessment system, which is new this term, is likely to meet the school's needs in accurately identifying and recording progress for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. It already demonstrates a significant improvement on the previous system as it will take account of the small steps of progress pupils make, and because assessment information will be more regularly and robustly moderated.

Governance

- The Kedleston Group's governance structures are effective.
- Governance is delegated to national leads, who regularly audit the school in key areas, such as compliance with the independent school standards, safeguarding and quality of

education. These audits provide helpful, detailed and impartial challenge, support and advice to senior leaders, which feed into regular governance meetings.

- Those responsible for governance are clear about the school's strengths and areas for development.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's systems to ensure that pupils are kept safe are understood by staff. Leaders offer staff, pupils, parents and carers an 'open door' so that concerns can be raised quickly and dealt with appropriately.
- Leaders take effective action to minimise risks to pupils, including when they attend alternative provision.
- The school's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures reflect the most recent statutory guidance and are published on the school's website. All relevant staff training, including in relation to especially pertinent matters such as gang membership, 'county lines' and online safety, is up to date and regularly checked by designated leaders.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is typically good because teaching successfully enables pupils, who have generally had disrupted educational histories, to re-engage with learning.
- Teachers generally combine a patient, positive approach with high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. Where teaching is most effective, sharp, individualised planning produces activities which capture pupils' imaginations, challenge them and motivate them to work hard.
- Teachers develop pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills well, especially in the primary and ARC provision.
- Pupils have excellent relationships with staff, whom they trust. However, support staff are not consistently well deployed to improve pupils' progress.
- The school has very recently started using a new system to identify pupils' starting points in all subjects and assess their progress. It is therefore too early to judge the impact of the system on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good, including when pupils attend alternative provision.
- Pupils say they feel safe at Leaways. This is because there are always staff members available who pupils trust to look after them and to listen. They say bullying is rare.

- Pupils are taught well about how to keep themselves safe, including online and in relation to gang membership, drugs, sexual exploitation and truancy.
- The school monitors pupils' social and emotional development using an online system. This shows that pupils typically make good personal progress, especially in relation to their engagement with learning, their social skills and their emotional well-being.
- The timetable does not allow for consistent daily time outside the school building for outdoor play and recreation. This means that some pupils do not go outside during the school day. Both staff and pupils identify this as a problem.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils understand and comply with the school's clear expectations. They enjoy earning 'respect points' and vouchers.
- Incidents of serious misbehaviour are dealt with safely and effectively. Staff know pupils well and are effectively trained in de-escalation. As a result, staff are clear about pupils' 'triggers', likes and dislikes, and so incidents are typically dealt with at an early stage.
- Until recently, the rates of fixed-term exclusion were too high. A whole-school focus on reducing exclusions has been highly successful and the number has declined rapidly this term.
- The attendance and punctuality of the vast majority of pupils are good. Where attendance falls below the school's high expectations, staff work hard to support pupils to improve, including through home visits and referrals to the relevant external agencies.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils typically arrive at Leaways with poor self-esteem and gaps in their education. The school prioritises getting to know pupils, ensuring that they feel safe and finding out what their interests are. Teaching and support are tailored to meet their specific needs. As a result, pupils make significant personal progress.
- The school's information and the work in pupils' books show that, from their typically low starting points, pupils make good academic progress, including in reading, writing and mathematics. Primary-aged pupils make good progress across the curriculum and especially so in the ARC. Pupils in key stage 4 also make good progress overall, as reflected in the range of relevant qualifications most pupils achieve.
- Pupils are well prepared for their next steps, thanks partly to the school's effective approach to careers education. Of the Year 11 pupils who left the school in July 2018, almost all are now successfully studying in college placements or are training as apprentices.

School details

Unique reference number	137808
DfE registration number	204/6003
Inspection number	10054302

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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.

Type of school	Day school for pupils with SEMH
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	7 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	63
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	The Kedleston Group
Chair	Paul Brosnan
Headteacher	Richard Gadd
Annual fees (day pupils)	£53,000
Telephone number	020 8815 4030
Website	https://kedlestongroup.com/leaways
Email address	leaways@kedlestongroup.com
Date of previous inspection	1–3 December 2015

Information about this school

- Leaways School is an independent special school in the London Borough of Hackney.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan, primarily for their social, emotional and mental health needs. Some have additional diagnoses and needs, such as autism spectrum disorder.
- Pupils are placed by a range of local authorities.
- The school is part of, and governed by, The Kedleston Group, which is overseen by a board of directors and led by a chief executive officer (CEO).

- The school currently makes use of one alternative provider: Ilderton Motor Vehicle Project, Deptford, London SE8 5HB.
- The school's most recent inspection was a material change inspection in July 2016, when the recommendation to amend the school's age range to seven to 18 was accepted and implemented by the registration authority. The school's most recent full standard inspection was undertaken by Ofsted in December 2015.
- At the time of the inspection, there were no pupils on roll aged 17 or 18. The school does not operate separate sixth-form provision.

Information about this inspection

- This full standard inspection took place with one day's notice.
- Inspectors observed learning in all areas of the school alongside senior leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's information about pupils' progress and attendance. They also considered a wide range of pupils' work and leaders' monitoring information.
- Inspectors considered the seven contributions to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors had several meetings with a wide range of key people, including all members of the leadership team, the CEO and the director of quality and compliance.
- Inspectors met with all staff. They also considered the 31 staff survey responses.
- The lead inspector spoke by telephone with three representatives from placing local authorities.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including policies, logs, evidence of staff training and information related to safeguarding and health and safety.
- Inspectors also toured the premises and considered additional information and evidence in relation to the independent school standards.

Inspection team

James Waite, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Sarah Murphy-Dutton

Her Majesty's Inspector

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