

Eltham Hill School

Eltham Hill, London SE9 5EE

Inspection dates

15–16 January 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since the last inspection, standards in the school had dropped. The determination and rigour the new headteacher has introduced to the school has brought about significant improvement. There is an ambitious culture where pupils are encouraged and supported to achieve the best possible outcomes.
- The headteacher established a focus on 'Back to Basics' for teaching and learning. Lessons are well prepared, there is a positive climate for learning, and pupils' progress is tracked carefully. Additional support is provided where pupils fall behind. Pupils make strong progress.
- The leadership of the curriculum is a real strength of the school. Teachers research best practice and then adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils follow courses that prepare them effectively for higher education and employment.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding. There is an exceptional system of pastoral support for pupils. There is a wide range of lessons, assemblies and clubs where pupils' personal development is nurtured. Pupils and their parents and carers speak extremely highly of these opportunities.
- Leaders in the sixth form have brought about marked and rapid change. The courses offered to students have been altered, but are not yet fully established. Teaching is now good. Students make strong progress and they are well cared for.
- In previous years, pupils' progress by the end of Year 11 was, at best, average. The least able pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable. Many changes have been introduced to improve pupils' outcomes. However, a small number of teachers do not follow the new policies and practice.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To sustain the upward trend in students' and pupils' outcomes and progress:
 - leaders should continue regularly to evaluate the impact of changes to the curriculum, particularly in the sixth form
 - teachers should apply the school's policies consistently around teaching, learning and assessment
 - teachers should check the impact of any additional support to ensure that it is having maximum impact with the least able pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Since her arrival in the school, the headteacher has brought about rapid improvement. Together with her senior and middle leaders, she sets very high standards. There is an unrelenting focus on improving pupils' outcomes by improving the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils now make good progress.
- Staff are highly motivated. Teachers constantly reflect on their teaching practice and take every opportunity to improve. Leaders offer numerous training courses for all staff. Staff appreciate this training and 98% of staff who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire said they enjoy working at Eltham Hill School.
- The headteacher distributes leadership throughout the school. This leadership is evident across all the teams in the school, including senior leaders. All are confident in their roles. Pupils thoroughly enjoy leadership opportunities where they mentor younger pupils. There is a strong culture of developing training and leadership opportunities for all members of the school community.
- Senior leaders introduced a new curriculum. They developed this curriculum, after a great deal of research, to meet the needs of all pupils. This curriculum is already having a marked positive impact on pupils' outcomes. There is an exceptionally high number of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils. These include theatre trips, trips abroad, developing the arts, fundraising for charity, support for the local community and many more. A very high proportion of pupils take part in extra-curricular classes and events. This develops pupils' confidence and self-esteem to a high level.
- Pupil premium and Year 7 numeracy and literacy 'catch up' funding are used very effectively. There are clear plans and actions in place to ensure that disadvantaged pupils and pupils who join the school in Year 7 behind their peers strengthen their progress. These pupils make substantial progress, and are rapidly reducing the difference between their outcomes and national averages.
- There is a new inclusion team in place. The inclusion team introduced procedures which have had a marked positive impact on the progress of pupils with SEND. Leaders use funding for these pupils very well. The support for pupils with SEND is exceptionally strong.
- In assemblies and lessons, pupils are encouraged to develop the social, moral, spiritual and cultural aspects of their learning. Pupils and staff show great respect for others, particularly those who are less fortunate than them. There is a strong family atmosphere across the school because of this ethos.
- Leaders support pupils to develop positive attitudes, good attendance and excellent punctuality. Together with the pupils' improving outcomes, pupils are prepared very well for life in modern Britain.

Governance of the school

- Governance is a strength of the school. Governors are committed and knowledgeable.

- Governors provide effective support and challenge to leaders.
- They have high aspirations and ensure that leaders improve pupils' progress. Governors check the use of additional funding, such as pupil premium funding, to ensure that it is used effectively.
- They visit the school regularly and meet with pupils to ascertain their views. Recently they made changes to the toilets in response to requests from pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are appropriately trained. They follow school procedures to keep pupils safe and are highly vigilant. Pupils and their parents say that the pupils feel safe in school.
- Leaders ensure that appropriate checks are made before they appoint new staff. Rigorous checks are made prior to school trips, and medical and other health and safety procedures are effective.
- In the past, information about pupils who left the school before the end of key stage 4 and 5 was not carefully monitored or recorded. Since the arrival of the new headteacher, these records have been overhauled, and are now meticulous and clear. There has also been a marked reduction in pupils leaving the school before the end of key stage 4.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use information about pupils' abilities to plan effective lessons that develop pupils' skills and deepen their understanding. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. They enjoy their learning, and make strong progress.
- Teachers establish regular routines in lessons and pupils know what is expected of them. This ensures that pupils' learning is sustained over time. Pupils thrive in this environment, and are eager to develop new skills.
- Leaders have a thorough understanding of the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers who are new to teaching and those who have difficulties are given support to help them to develop as skilled practitioners. The quality of teaching is strong across all subjects and all key stages.
- Pupils value reading. They are supported in their choice of books to read. The English department disseminate a love of reading by teaching pupils in the bright and vibrant library, at least once a week. Leaders in literacy and numeracy promote the development of reading, writing and mathematics across other areas of the curriculum very effectively.
- The most able and average ability pupils are challenged in lessons by their teachers. They make strong progress. The least able pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable because sometimes the work set is too easy.
- A few teachers do not follow the school's policy on assessment. Pupils are allocated time to reflect and act on the guidance teachers give them about how to improve their work.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are highly confident and articulate. They can discuss challenging topics in a mature manner, showing respect for others' views.
- Pupils take great pride in their school. They were keen to explain how their experience in school has really improved since the arrival of the new headteacher. They enjoy mentoring younger pupils, attending the Rainbow Club, the Challenge Club and the 'Mind over Matter' programme. All these opportunities help them to cope with their own challenges, and support their peers.
- The school carefully develops pupils' physical and mental health. There is a very strong pastoral system which involves external providers where needed. Pupils speak highly of this support.
- There is a cohesive and well-planned programme of lessons and assemblies to inform pupils about British values. The strong careers advice and guidance programme begins in Year 7, and develops throughout pupils' time in school.
- Pupils have opportunities to meet with employers, undertake work experience and learn about a range of careers. They are exceptionally well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils would like some of the careers guidance to start earlier. Plans are already in place to do this.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. There is a calm orderly environment. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. They manage their own behaviour highly effectively. Pupils dress smartly, arrive on time for lessons and their work is neatly presented.
- Pupils' attendance, including sixth-form students, is well above national average. Persistent absence is below national average because of the support pupils are given, for example in breakfast clubs, to overcome any difficulties they have.
- In the past, the frequency of fixed-term exclusions was above the national average for similar schools. Leaders introduced a reflection room where pupils receive support to improve their behaviour. There is also a focus in assemblies and tutor time on praising pupils' excellent behaviour. Pupils' exclusions and incidents of poor behaviour are now at a very low level.
- Pupils are respectful and helpful to adults in the school. They say that bullying is rare, and is dealt with promptly and effectively by staff. Pupils know where to go for help when they need support.
- The school sets very high expectations for excellent behaviour. Teachers deal promptly and effectively with the very minimal amount of low-level disruption in lessons.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- There is an improving trend in pupils' progress and attainment in public examinations. From observations in lessons, looking at pupils' work in their books and by listening to pupils and their parents, it is evident that pupils make strong progress across a wide range of subjects. Disadvantaged pupils' progress is improving strongly in relation to pupils with similar starting points. The new curriculum and the strong focus on teaching and learning are responsible for this improvement.
- The progress of pupils in mathematics is at or above average across all year groups. Pupils' progress in English continues to be above average. This progress is sustained across all year groups.
- All students enrolled in the sixth form go on to higher education, apprenticeships or employment. Students' A-level outcomes in previous years were not strong; however, students' outcomes in vocational subjects were good. All current students in the sixth form make good progress.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The leadership of the sixth form is good. A full review of the curriculum was followed by significant changes to the courses on offer. Students' progress is checked rigorously, and additional support is put in place where needed. Students now make good progress.
- Leaders set high standards and hold staff to account for students' outcomes. Current students make strong progress because the academic courses have changed, appropriately. The quality of A-level teaching has improved, particularly in sciences and mathematics. Leaders ensure that students are placed on courses that suit their skills and abilities.
- Students' attendance is very high. The retention of students between Year 12 and Year 13 is good. Students appreciate the personal support and guidance they receive from their tutors. They are taught how to keep safe, to avoid local risks and to develop a healthy understanding of issues such as radicalisation and extremism. The support for personal development and welfare of sixth-form students is good.
- Students who need help with English and mathematics GCSE examinations in the sixth form are well supported. Their outcomes in past years, in these examinations, are above national average for similar pupils.
- Students' outcomes in vocational subjects have always been strong and continue to be so for current students. All students undertake appropriate work experience. Careers advice and guidance are detailed and wide-ranging. Students are given help with university and other applications. However, students did indicate that they would like support for applications to start earlier in Year 12 than currently.

School details

Unique reference number	100182
Local authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	10056702

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,112
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Butler
Principal	Erika Podmore
Telephone number	020 8859 2843
Website	http://elthamhill.com
Email address	info@elthamhill.greenwich.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 March 2014

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in September 2017.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons in key stages 3 and 4, in the sixth form and across a range of subject areas. They visited three assemblies. Inspectors carried out checks on pupils' books and talked to pupils about their work.
- Year 13 were sitting examinations during the inspection, so it was not possible to visit their lessons. Inspectors met with Year 13 students and reviewed their work.
- Inspectors met with pupils, teachers, middle and senior leaders, governors and representatives from the local authority. Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents relating to pupils' behaviour, safety, teaching and learning, and pupils' progress and attainment.
- There were 216 responses from parents, 94 responses from pupils and 84 responses from staff to the Ofsted online questionnaires.

Inspection team

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