

Inspection of a good school: Langdon Park Community School

Bright Street, Poplar, London E14 0RZ

Inspection dates:

13–14 February 2020

Outcome

Langdon Park Community School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is a harmonious place. Pupils are courteous and happy. They understand and aim to follow the school's four principles. These encourage pupils to be professional, inclusive, a good learner and knowledgeable. Regular assemblies remind pupils about these principles. Teachers and pupils use them in conversations during lessons and around the school.

Pupils behave well during lessons and social times. Staff deal quickly with any behaviour issues, including bullying. Pupils appreciate this. They said that the calm, safe and caring atmosphere is one of the things they like most about their school.

Leaders and teachers expect all pupils to succeed in everything they do. Pupils achieve highly in English and Spanish. However, in some other subjects, leaders have not planned pupils' learning well. This is because some teaching is not focused on ensuring that pupils understand and remember important concepts. This prevents pupils from achieving as well as they should.

Pupils like the wide range of extra-curricular activities the school offers, both during the week and at weekends. They particularly enjoy attending clubs for sports and science. These activities encourage pupils to explore different interests and talents.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Pupils do not learn effectively in all subjects. Pupils' GCSE and A-level results have not been strong over the last two years. Senior leaders have looked closely at the reasons for this. They have begun to make important changes to the way subjects are planned. Leaders intend to make sure that pupils develop their knowledge progressively. This includes making sure that pupils study content in a logical order. While leaders have made a successful start, their work is at an early stage.

Pupils learn well in English and Spanish. In the sixth form, students also learn particularly well in chemistry. This is because, in these subjects, staff have high expectations and plan pupils' learning carefully. Teachers select activities which enable pupils to apply what they have previously learned. In Spanish, for example, pupils confidently practise using a range of tenses and phrases, both in their spoken and written work. Teachers introduce new content step by step. They help pupils to link new knowledge to what they already know.

The strengths we found in English and Spanish were not evident in some other subjects. Some subject planning is incomplete and not as developed as in English and Spanish. In music, for instance, leaders have not identified what pupils should learn and when they should learn it. Subject plans for science, history, art and geography provide staff with guidance on what they should teach and when. However, leaders have not made sure that teachers follow these plans consistently. This leads to gaps in pupils' understanding. Some teaching does not enable pupils to grasp important ideas securely. These weaknesses mean that pupils are not prepared effectively to study more demanding concepts in the future.

Most teachers have strong subject knowledge. Leaders provide staff with support to improve their teaching expertise. This includes guidance on how to check if pupils are learning well. Despite this guidance, some teaching does not help pupils to recall and remember important information. Sometimes, pupils' errors or misconceptions are not corrected. This prevents pupils from learning well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) also do not learn effectively in some subjects. This is because teachers do not adapt subject planning to meet pupils' needs.

Aspects of the key stage 3 national curriculum are not covered in sufficient depth. Pupils choose their GCSE subjects at the end of Year 8. Those pupils who do not continue to study geography after Year 8, for example, do not learn this subject in enough detail. Leaders plan to address this by September 2020.

Pupils work well together in lessons. Teachers and pupils said that lessons are not disrupted by poor behaviour or bullying. The number of fixed-term external exclusions has reduced over the last two years. This is because leaders and teachers insist on high standards of behaviour at all times, including in the sixth form.

Leaders provide a wide range of experiences to support pupils' wider development, including for sixth-form students. Leaders check which pupils attend the clubs and outings. However, leaders lack reliable information on whether disadvantaged pupils have equal access to extra-curricular activities.

Leaders make sure that pupils choose GCSE and A-level qualifications that support their future aspirations. Leaders keep a close eye on pupils who leave the school.

Teachers welcome leaders' work to reduce their workload and support their well-being. They value how leaders give them time to share effective practice with colleagues.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils and staff agree that the school provides a safe and caring environment. Staff training for safeguarding is up to date. Staff understand their responsibility to take prompt action if they have concerns about pupils' welfare.

Leaders make sure that pupils are aware of risks in the local area and know how to avoid them. Pupils told us that they are always reminded how to stay safe, including when they are online.

Leaders work well with external agencies and ensure that pupils receive support when they need it. Leaders also commission independent reviews to check the suitability of safeguarding procedures. Leaders respond promptly to feedback and ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subjects are not planned well. Some plans are incomplete or unclear. Leaders have not identified what they expect pupils to learn and how pupils should develop their knowledge progressively. Some teaching does not introduce pupils to content in a helpful order. Pupils find it hard to link new ideas with what they already know and understand. This means that pupils do not achieve well. Leaders should ensure that plans set out what knowledge pupils should study. They should ensure that plans enable pupils to build up their knowledge and skills successfully. Leaders should also ensure that teachers use these plans effectively.
- Many teachers do not routinely check that pupils understand what they have learned. As a result, gaps in pupils' knowledge are not identified and quickly resolved. Pupils struggle to grasp concepts securely and remember important knowledge that they will need for their future learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers check pupils' understanding and adapt planning to enable all pupils to learn well.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 29–30 June 2016.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	100966
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	10134716
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,015
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Helen Witty
Headteacher	Nicholas Langham
Website	www.langdonparkschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	29–30 June 2016

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed. The chair of the governing body was appointed in January 2020.
- The school uses the London East Alternative Provision.

Information about this inspection

- We held meetings with the headteacher and other school leaders, including the leaders with responsibility for the provision for pupils with SEND. We also met with governors and held a telephone discussion with the local authority representative.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: English, geography and science. We spoke with subject leaders, teachers, pupils and sixth-form students. We visited lessons, spoke with pupils and students, and looked at their work. We also considered other subjects as part of the inspection.

- We looked at safeguarding arrangements by checking documents and policies, including the single central record of checks on staff suitability. We considered information regarding behaviour, including exclusions, and information about pupils who have recently been taken off the school's roll. We also looked at the school's website and a range of other documents.
- We spoke to pupils and staff about school life, including opportunities for pupils' wider development.
- We considered the 39 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff. We also considered the 69 responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils. There were too few responses to Parent View for us to analyse meaningfully. We considered one written comment submitted via Parent View.

Inspection team

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