

Inspection of a good school: Leytonstone School

Colworth Road, Leytonstone, London, E11 1JD

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 September 2021

Outcome

Leytonstone School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils value the positive relationships they have with staff. Teachers tell pupils to 'bring their smile' when invited to attend after-school clubs. They see themselves as part of an extended family. Pupils feel safe in school and feel they can ask adults for help if they need it. They appreciate how lessons are taught step by step to make sure they understand new learning.

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils who, in turn, feel that teachers help them to do their best. They are happy to ask for help if they need it and receive staff mentors if it would benefit them. Behaviour in lessons and at unsupervised times can be lively but a restorative approach helps teachers manage it well. Pupils say that bullying is rare. They know staff deal with it if it does happen.

Leaders want to prepare pupils for the wider world. They provide good opportunities for cultural enrichment, for example the 'Leytonstone Canon' of books. Each form picks a reading book from a selection chosen by each subject. They read this together and discuss as a form. Pupils appreciate this start to the day.

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

All pupils have access to the full breadth of national curriculum subjects at key Stage 3. Nearly all subject plans are consistent in their depth of planning and ambition. They identify the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn. This builds gradually from Year 7 to Year 11 and helps pupils' learning. For example, in Year 11 French, pupils could draw on vocabulary about school life that they learned in Year 7. In design and technology, although the timetable rotates around cooking, graphics, textiles and resistant materials, pupils can talk about the connections between the different disciplines. Pupils appreciate this careful sequencing. It means that they know and remember more.

The school's well-considered approach to assessment links directly to the knowledge and skills identified in each subject curriculum plan. Pupils are assessed as to whether, or not,

they have successfully acquired the planned curriculum content. Support is provided for those who have gaps in their learning. This means that pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve. The one subject where this approach to the curriculum and assessment is not as strong is religious education. Here, some over reliance on GCSE assessment requirements leads parts of the curriculum being planned heavily on what pupils need to know in order to pass the examination. This leads to a lack of depth in pupils' knowledge of a wide range of world religions.

While English Baccalaureate (EBacc) entry level is below average, it is because, in the past, few pupils have not continued studying a modern foreign language. The planned curriculum in languages is very strong. Teaching in both key stages 3 and 4 is well sequenced and successfully builds on prior learning. Leaders have introduced Spanish to pupils in Years 7 and 8 in addition to French. Pupils then choose one language to continue in Year 9 and the options process for this year will now include languages in two option blocks.

Teachers use a varied and effective range of strategies to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Careful monitoring helps identify where specific subject guidance is required. A small number of readers join the school below their reading age. One-to-one teaching for some and small group intervention for others helps these pupils to catch up.

Leaders, including governors, are considerate of staff workload and well-being. They seek and respond to feedback and make changes as a result. This is appreciated by staff. Leaders have a clear vision of what they want a Leytonstone pupil to achieve. They give careful consideration to pupils' broader development, for example opportunities in the school's pupil parliament. Pupils had access to remote enrichment opportunities during periods of lockdown. These included online cooking clubs, chess and crafts. Access to clubs continues and the number of opportunities is increasing this year.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have clear systems in place to identify the needs of pupils. Staff are clear about how to report concerns. Leaders know their pupils well. They have taken a strategic approach in responding to the school's context. Leaders have invested in resources to support the mental health of pupils. This is in response to an identified increased need in recent times.

Leaders are reflective and are prepared to adapt their practice if required. For example, leaders have received and conducted training on identifying and responding to harmful sexual behaviour. They are proactive in working with a variety of agencies.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- An over reliance on GCSE requirements in religious education means pupils do not learn sufficiently deep knowledge in key Stage 3. As a consequence, pupils are less confident in their understanding of religions not covered at GCSE. The curriculum planning and sequencing in religious education needs more consideration in order to give pupils broader and deeper subject knowledge.
- Leaders have improved key stage 3 provision for modern foreign languages. They have ensured that the curriculum is well planned and have added Spanish as an alternative to French. However, not enough pupils go on to take a foreign language at GCSE. Leaders should ensure that this improves, so that a significantly greater number of pupils benefit from taking the full range of EBacc qualifications.

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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 15 and 16 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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

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| Unique reference number | 103101 |
| Local authority | London Borough of Waltham Forest |
| Inspection number | 10199853 |
| Type of school | Secondary Comprehensive |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision | |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 971 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Fiona Sinclair |
| Headteacher | Jessica McQuaid |
| Website | http://www.leytonstoneschool.org/ |
| Date of previous inspection | 15–16 June 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- There is a new headteacher since the previous inspection. This headteacher has been in post since September 2019.
- The school currently uses three alternative providers as part of its educational offer.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors spoke to the headteacher and members of the senior leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator, the school improvement partner at the local

authority, the chair of governors and a selection of governors. Inspectors also spoke with the headteacher at one of the alternative provisions the school used.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: design and technology, modern foreign languages, religious education and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lesson, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- Inspectors checked the school's single central record, met with the designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils.
- Inspectors looked at 261 responses on the pupil survey, 50 responses on the staff survey and 75 free-text responses on Parent View.

Inspection team

Sophie Healey-Welch, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Terry Millar

Ofsted Inspector

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