

Inspection of East London Science School

The Clock Mill, Three Mill Lane, Bromley-By-Bow, London E3 3DU

Inspection dates: 23–25 June 2021

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders aim to offer pupils an academic education with a strong focus on the sciences. This is what attracts parents and carers and pupils to this school. However, leaders do not have sufficiently high aspirations for all pupils. Sometimes, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not receive the support they need to learn well. Leaders have not made sure that all pupils' additional needs are identified and planned for effectively.

Pupils do not currently have lessons in religious education (RE). The programme for pupils' personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is poorly planned and taught. Consequently, pupils do not build up their knowledge and understanding effectively in these subjects.

Some pupils told inspectors that they enjoy school and feel safe. However, a number of pupils do not share this view. Many have concerns about staff absence and the number of cover lessons they have. Some pupils feel unable to talk to staff if they have concerns. Others feel that when they do raise concerns, staff do not listen. Leaders are not doing enough to address these issues.

Leaders and staff do not manage pupils' behaviour consistently or effectively. This includes incidents of bullying. In lessons, pupils do not routinely listen to their teachers. Staff do not deal quickly with disruption in classrooms. This distracts pupils and means that they cannot learn what the teacher has planned. Poor behaviour after break and lunch sometimes delays the start of lessons. A significant number of pupils said that bullying is a problem. They felt that staff were not good at resolving issues.

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

Leaders and governors want pupils to experience an academic education. However, they do not ensure that pupils' personal development is promoted effectively. Leaders have not made sure that pupils are routinely taught RE or have relationships and sex education (RSE). These gaps in the curriculum mean that pupils do not develop the knowledge they need to succeed in modern Britain.

Leaders and governors have failed to identify and address significant weaknesses in the school's work, including in respect of safeguarding. Leaders' capacity to bring about the improvements urgently needed is limited.

The provision for pupils' personal development is weak. There is no clear curriculum for PSHE education. Pupils do not learn enough about consent, healthy relationships and diversity. They are not receiving the information they need to be prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils in Years 10 and 12 have received too little support with careers and their next steps after leaving school. Many pupils are frustrated by this.

In Years 7 to 11, some pupils with SEND are not receiving the support they need to learn successfully. Staffing issues have led to weak leadership of the provision for these pupils. Leaders have not made sure that all staff have accurate information about the pupils they teach. Sometimes, pupils' needs are not planned for and met sufficiently well. When staff are fully informed about pupils' barriers to learning, support is better and helps pupils to develop their knowledge. However, this is inconsistent.

In the subjects that are taught, leaders have thought about the knowledge they want pupils to know and remember. For instance, in English, classics and Latin, subject leaders have planned learning to develop pupils' knowledge over time. However, the curriculum is not implemented well in all subjects, including in the sixth form. Some teaching does not build well on pupils' prior understanding. This limits pupils' readiness to learn new knowledge and ideas. For example, in science, pupils struggled to understand the concept of 'the limit of proportionality' because they had not learned about proportionality before.

From the start of Year 7, pupils are placed into classes based on their ability. Lower-attaining pupils are not routinely supported to remember the knowledge they have learned before. Sometimes, teachers do not fill gaps in pupils' knowledge before moving on to new subject content. Leaders want to promote pupils' reading. For instance, Year 7 pupils read with their tutors every morning. However, pupils do not arrive on time and this disrupts these sessions.

Leaders want pupils to be successful in the GCSE and A-level examinations they will take in the future. Teachers test pupils every half term in formal exams. Teachers also plan revision lessons in the week before the exams. This means that pupils spend a lot of time taking and preparing for exams each term, rather than learning subject content. Leaders intend to change the way they check on pupils' learning. However, leaders' plans are at a very early stage.

In the sixth form, teachers assess students regularly. However, they do not use assessment information well to identify and address gaps in students' knowledge. This stands in the way of students achieving highly.

In key stages 3 and 4, pupils behave poorly in lessons. In some classrooms, pupils struggle to remain focused on the work that teachers have set. In others, pupils talk over the teacher or other pupils. Teachers do not manage this effectively. As a result, low-level disruption escalates and prevents pupils from learning.

Sixth-form students demonstrate more positive attitudes. They typically focus well on their studies and are motivated to learn. Pupils in Year 11 are currently learning from home and preparing for their sixth-form courses. There is a wide range of extra activities for pupils to take part in, for example, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Pupils appreciate the experiences on offer.

Many staff feel that their workload is unmanageable. Teachers find the six rounds of internal examinations burdensome. Leaders have done too little to support teachers

to overcome the challenges associated with teaching across three separate school sites. Early career teachers do not feel supported by leaders, for example with training and managing behaviour. Support for teachers varies too much from department to department.

Leaders' communication with staff and parents is poor. Both staff and parents commented on this. Parents are particularly disappointed that there have been no parents' evenings since the start of the pandemic.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders' and governors' work to promote pupils' safety and well-being is weak. Leaders have not made sure that all required pre-employment checks on staff have been made. The checks that have been carried out are not always recorded correctly, and in accordance with the statutory guidance. Governors have not acted in a timely way when safeguarding concerns have been raised. These failings risk pupils' safety.

The safeguarding policy omits important detail on specific risks to pupils' welfare, such as peer-on-peer abuse. Safeguarding training for staff is not fit for purpose. Although staff attend annual training, they are not given clear information on the risks that pupils face locally. This means that staff lack the knowledge they need to identify pupils who may be vulnerable to abuse or harm.

The poorly planned PSHE education curriculum means that pupils are not taught enough about how to keep themselves safe. Pupils do not have an age-appropriate understanding of risks to their welfare. They do not learn about what they can do if they feel unsafe or are worried about the safety of their peers.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders and governors have been too slow to spot and rectify weaknesses at the school. This means that pupils are not receiving an acceptable standard of education. Leaders must ensure that they evaluate the school's work accurately and take effective action to address the areas that need to be better.
- The culture of safeguarding is poor. This puts pupils' welfare at risk. As a matter of urgency, leaders should improve their oversight of safeguarding arrangements. This includes making sure that all the required pre-employment checks are made, including for governors and school leaders. Leaders must ensure that records of these checks are up to date and accurate. They also need to make sure that the safeguarding policy meets statutory requirements and includes information about contextual safeguarding issues. Staff need training in how to identify and report

risks to pupils' safety. Leaders need to plan and put in place a curriculum that teaches pupils how to stay safe.

- The curriculum does not include RE. As a result, pupils do not develop their understanding of different beliefs and values. Leaders must make sure that the teaching of RE resumes and that they carefully plan what they want pupils to know.
- Leaders have not ensured that the needs of some pupils with SEND are being fully met. Leaders have not accurately identified some pupils' needs. Information about pupils' barriers to learning is not shared with all staff. This means that some pupils with SEND do not receive the support that they need to learn well. Leaders must make sure that pupils' additional needs are assessed correctly. They should ensure that all teachers are fully informed about pupils' needs and use this information effectively to adapt the delivery of the curriculum.
- Pupils take internal examinations every half term. These examinations are preceded by a period of revision. This reduces the time given to teaching the curriculum, which in turn leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge. It also increases teachers' workload unnecessarily. Leaders should review assessment systems and make sure that whole-school approaches fully support the delivery of the curriculum, including in the sixth form. Leaders should consider teachers' workload when making decisions about how to check on pupils' learning.
- Leaders have not made sure that the curriculum for RSE meets government guidance. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, do not have access to well-planned, comprehensive PSHE education or careers programmes. These weaknesses mean that pupils' personal development is not adequately catered for. Leaders must plan and implement a curriculum that prepares pupils for life in modern Britain and supports their future plans for education, employment and training. Leaders must ensure that the RSE curriculum meets statutory requirements.
- Behaviour in key stages 3 and 4 is poor. Pupils do not listen to teachers in some classes and this is not dealt with effectively. Some staff do not feel supported by leaders with behaviour management. Poor behaviour disrupts pupils' learning. Leaders must support and train staff to implement the school's behaviour policy effectively.

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	139834
Local authority	Newham
Inspection number	10196655
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of students in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	653
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	107
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Kevin Hinde
Principal	David Perks (Principal) Mark Taylor (Acting Principal)
Website	www.eastlondonscienceschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was absent from school during this inspection. The school is currently being led by the acting principal, who had been in post for two weeks. In his substantive role, the acting principal is one of the vice-principals of the school.
- The school uses two alternative providers.
- The school operates on three sites. The lower school is at the Clock Mill, Three Mill Lane, London E3 3DU. The upper school is at Navigation Road, London E3 3JW. The sixth-form site is at Hilda Road, London E16 4NQ.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the acting principal, vice-principal and other senior leaders. Inspectors met remotely with the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: English, history, mathematics, classics and science (physics, chemistry and biology). Inspectors visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work, met with pupils to discuss their learning and met with subject leaders and teachers.
- Through discussions with leaders, the chair of governors, pupils and staff, inspectors considered how effectively pupils are safeguarded. Inspectors also looked at records related to safeguarding, including records of pre-employment checks carried out before staff are appointed.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 and spoke to pupils during lesson visits. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and at playtimes was observed.
- Pupils in Year 11 and Year 13 were not attending on site during the inspection. However, leaders arranged for inspectors to speak to a group of Year 13 students.
- Inspectors spoke to staff about behaviour and about their workload in school. Inspectors looked at 28 staff responses, 87 parent responses and 95 pupil responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

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