

Inspection of Platanos College

Clapham Road, London, SW9 0AL

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 October 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected seven years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school and the wide range of opportunities to follow their interests, both in lessons and through clubs, workshops, and other events. Leaders want the curriculum to reflect new and modern subjects. This is so it is relevant to pupils' future study and employment. Teachers set high expectations of what pupils can learn and do and they help pupils to achieve.

There are strong relationships between pupils and adults. This helps to make a school community which is focused on learning and a pleasant atmosphere around the school. Adults set high expectations and pupils develop positive attitudes to learning. Pupils behave well and there is very little bullying. If there is, adults respond and take action. Pupils feel safe and learn how to stay safe in a variety of contexts.

Pupils personal development is promoted through the 'Portfolio for Life'. This is the school's own curriculum delivered through lessons, tutor time and assemblies. It includes personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and as well as relationships and sex education. Pupils are taught to understand themselves, their community and wider society. The course encourages pupils to develop into confident and considerate young people. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop and use their leadership skills in school.

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

Leaders are developing an ambitious and relevant curriculum for all pupils. Pupils can study a wide range of arts and digital arts subjects, including animation and photography, from Year 7 onwards. Pupils with an aptitude can study further mathematics. In Years 10 and 11, a high proportion of pupils study for the English Baccalaureate. This prepares pupils well for further study.

Subject leaders have developed detailed curriculum plans. Key concepts are well sequenced, so that pupils can build on prior learning. Leaders and teachers make sure that pupils go over work, so that they can remember it easily. For example, pupils learn and practise phonics in Spanish. As a result, pupils pronounce sounds accurately and with confidence. In art, teachers break down work into component skills and knowledge. This helps pupils improve and develop their work.

Pupils choose 'taster option' subjects to study in Year 9 to help them decide whether they want to pursue the subject further in Years 10 and 11. This limits their opportunities to cover other subjects in depth in Year 9. The scope of design and technology, and food technology curriculums in Years 7 to 9 is limited. At present, pupils cannot study geography after Year 9. Leaders plan to introduce this subject for September 2022.

Teachers and teaching assistants check that pupils understand the work. They adapt what they are doing to help pupils learn more and remember more. Pupils achieve well, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders ensure that weaker readers are well supported. Pupils told inspectors that lessons are, occasionally, disrupted but that everyone follows the behaviour policy.

The provision for pupils' personal development is strong. Leaders provide a wide range of clubs for pupils, including music, drama, and dance clubs. Leaders make sure that all pupils benefit from these extra opportunities.

Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. There is a comprehensive careers programme, which meets pupils' needs and aspirations. Leaders make sure that post-16 providers can talk to pupils and give them information about courses.

Pupils who attend alternative provision are well supported. They settle well and make progress in their chosen courses. Leaders are committed to making sure that pupils have the best possible experience. If a pupil moves onto the roll of the college, leaders and staff continue to monitor their progress and look out for them.

Trustees articulate the school's role in the community and their vision for its future. Senior leaders and trustees are taking steps to build the school's future leadership team. They oversee safeguarding effectively. Trustees closely monitored leaders' response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including remote education. However, trustees have not held leaders to account for the overall quality of education with the same diligence.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders identify pupils who are at risk and work effectively with external agencies to make sure they get support. As part of the curriculum, leaders work effectively to raise pupils' awareness of risk and staying safe.

Leaders make sure that the required checks are made on all staff and recorded on the single central record. Trustees check this regularly. Leaders are knowledgeable about the process of safer recruitment.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subjects are not covered in sufficient depth at key stage 3 because of the 'taster option' arrangements. This is also the case for design and technology and food technology. Geography is not currently available after Year 9. Leaders should review the curriculum, and make sure that the balance of breadth and depth in

subjects is aligned with their ambition for pupils. It is clear that leaders are already taking action and that some of this work was delayed by COVID-19. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.

- Leaders' and trustees' oversight of the quality of education is not as strong as other aspects of their work. They have not made sure that in all respects the school's curriculum meets their ambitions for pupils. Trustees have not sufficiently challenged leaders about curriculum decisions. Trustees and leaders should take action to ensure that pupils study a broad range of subjects in depth in Years 7 to 9.

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

Unique reference number	136450
Local authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	10203915
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	955
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Humroy Whyte
Headteacher	Judette Tapper (executive headteacher), Mona Taybi (headteacher)
Website	www.platanoscollege.com/
Date of previous inspection	10-11 December 2014

Information about this school

- Platanos College is a member of the Platanos Academy Trust.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 11 receive information about the full range of education and training options open to them. This includes opportunities for a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school uses alternative provision. These are Lambeth College, 45 Clapham College Southside, Clapham Common SW4 9BL; Westminster Kingsway College, 211 Grays Inn Road, WC1X 8RA, part of the Capital City College Group; Roots and Shoots, The Vauxhall Centre, Walnut Tree Walk, SE11 6DN.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 met with the executive headteacher, the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- The lead inspector held remote meetings with a group of trustees and also with a member of the local parent advisory board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, history, art and Spanish. Inspectors visited classes, looked at subject plans and pupils' work. They met with pupils and held discussions with teachers and subject leaders.
- Inspectors also visited classes in mathematics, geography and business studies and looked at subject plans in 'The Portfolio for Life' (PSHE).
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead, reviewed the single central record and records of safeguarding and behaviour. Inspectors talked with staff about the impact of their safeguarding training and to pupils about how safe they feel in school. Inspectors visited a remote safeguarding workshop for pupils. The lead inspector discussed safeguarding with the trustees and considered evidence received by email from the chair of trustees.
- Inspectors visited tutor time, an assembly, and observed pupils around the school at break and lunchtime. An inspector visited Lambeth College, to talk to pupils attending the alternative provision. A remote meeting was held with the member of staff at Westminster College responsible for the pupils attending the alternative provision.

Inspection team

Janet Hallett, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Annabel Davies	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ian Morris	Ofsted Inspector
Vikram Gukhool	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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