

Inspection of a good school: Oaklands School

Old Bethnal Green Road, Bethnal Green, London E2 6PR

Inspection dates:

23 and 24 March 2022

Outcome

Oaklands School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school which serves its community well. All pupils are welcome, and their diversity is celebrated. Staff share a commitment to provide the best possible education for pupils. Pupils flourish here, they achieve well and progress successfully onto higher education, apprenticeships and employment.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils. This motivates pupils and they show positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils are polite and friendly. They behave well, both in lessons and outside of lessons. Bullying is rare. When it does happen, leaders deal with it effectively.

Pupils enjoy school and feel safe here. They like their teachers and say staff are always there to help them. Teachers have high ambitions for pupils and the work they set reflects this. Pupils respond well to those ambitions. They show a determination to succeed.

Leaders give high priority to pupils developing a global perspective on life. They provide pupils with a wide range of activities to enrich their education. These include visits abroad to places such as Rwanda as well as to places of cultural significance in London.

This is a school whose ethos is truly reflected in the pupils – they work hard, show kindness to all and take up opportunities to broaden their experiences.

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

Leaders and governors are restless in their pursuit of excellence. They want the very best for the pupils here. Staff share this purpose and enjoy the collaborative staff culture. They feel well supported by leaders who engage with them about matters of workload and well-being.

Leaders see their role as raising pupils' aspirations. They have designed an ambitious curriculum. The curriculum provides pupils with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed. It reflects the diverse world in which they live and helps them to understand their

place in history.

The curriculum is broad and balanced. In Years 7 to 9 pupils study a wide range of subjects. This gives them a good foundation on which to build. It allows them to make well-informed choices for GCSE subjects. Leaders support pupils in making those choices. They encourage pupils to follow their interests and ensure that they study a balanced range of GCSEs. In the sixth form, leaders adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' needs and interests. Leaders think creatively, providing sixth-form courses to attract students with different aspirations.

Topics are taught in a logical order. This means that pupils build their knowledge and skills in increasing depth and complexity over time. They make connections between new learning and what they have learned before. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They explain new information and ideas well and check pupils' understanding before moving on to the next stage of learning.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They identify these pupils' needs accurately and provide appropriate training for staff. This helps teachers to adapt the curriculum to meet these pupils' needs.

Leaders have established a common approach for checking pupils' learning at the end of units of work. Pupils receive structured guidance at these points on how to improve their work. This helps them to produce work of high quality. In a few subjects, some teachers do not use a wide range of strategies to check pupils' work more regularly. Such checking would further strengthen the embedding of pupils' knowledge and understanding.

Leaders are developing their approach to literacy. They want to build on the good practice already established. They know how vital reading, writing and oracy are to pupils' achievement. Pupils at an early stage of reading, including those who speak English as an additional language, receive the help they need to become fluent readers. Pupils read for pleasure during tutor time and take part in reading challenges.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive. Teachers provide pupils with work that interests them and challenges their thinking. Leaders do not tolerate low-level disruption in lessons. Pupils say that disruption in lessons is rare. Teachers are consistent in how they address any instances of poor behaviour.

Leaders have developed a well-designed and informative programme for pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about issues such as relationships, mental health, online safety, equalities, and diversity. Teachers encourage discussion and debate and pupils value this. Pupils receive careers information and guidance from Year 7 through to the sixth form. Work experience and careers interviews inform pupils' choices about their future. Leaders give high priority to pupils' cultural development. There are many trips and visits both at home and abroad. Pupils celebrate events such as International Languages Day and Bangladesh Independence Day.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. They provide regular training for staff which ensures that staff are alert to signs of concern in pupils. Staff report any concerns swiftly. Leaders engage with parents and carers and provide information for them with regards to local safeguarding risks. Pupils receive appropriate education about potential risks, including online safety. Safeguarding leaders meet every week with pastoral leaders of each year group. They identify and keep a close eye on any pupils who are at risk. Leaders work effectively with external agencies including the local authority. They secure the help pupils at risk require.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, some teachers do not adhere to the school's assessment policy with regard to the use of a wide range of formative assessment strategies. This means that some teachers are not providing pupils with regular opportunities to reflect on their work and make necessary corrections. Leaders should ensure that all teachers use a suitable range of assessment strategies, both to check pupils' understanding and to help them embed the new knowledge they have learned.

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 evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2013.

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	100972
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	10211304
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	943
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Peter Sherratt
Headteacher	Simon Ramsay
Website	http://oaklands.towerhamlets.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	31 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses no alternative provision.

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 of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the leadership team, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: science, English, history, and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also spoke with additional groups of pupils about behaviour and personal development.
- Inspectors met with the school's designated safeguarding lead. They looked at safeguarding documentation and record-keeping, including the single central record. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered 178 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, 79 responses to the staff survey and 19 responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Ian Rawstorne, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Bob Hamlyn

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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