

# Inspection of Mulberry Academy Shoreditch

Gosset Street, Bethnal Green, London E2 6NW

---

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 September 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 10 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.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Excellence describes many aspects of Mulberry Academy Shoreditch and what it provides for its pupils. For example, there is a huge range of out-of-class activities aimed at enriching pupils' learning and experiences. These include skiing trips, overseas visits, the STEM Academy and many after-school clubs and activities. Opportunities for pupils and sixth-form students to learn about career options, including universities, support leaders' aim to ensure that all leave school well prepared for the future.

Other examples of excellence include the programmes for pupils' and students' personal development and the excellent level of care provided by all staff. A highly positive ethos pervades the school. Pupils have a strong understanding of British values as well as their own heritage. They are respectful of others, behave very well and know that their teachers will always be there for them. Pupils were clear that bullying, including homophobic and racist bullying, is not tolerated. Any concerns are dealt with swiftly. Pupils feel safe and are kept safe.

Overall, the curriculum is designed well to help pupils learn but there are a few subjects where it is not as ambitious. In most subjects, pupils achieve aspirational goals. However, pupils' progression through the curriculum is less strong where leaders' curriculum thinking does not set out clearly what is to be learned. Leaders are not complacent and have pinpointed accurately where improvements are needed.

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

The school does many things extremely well. With the unswerving support of senior leaders and governors, the executive headteacher has steered the school with passion and expertise through difficult times to become a community in which pupils and staff are proud to be a part. This has not been a straightforward task, but leaders have done it with compassion, care and attention to detail.

The care shown by senior leaders to pupils and staff is a particular strength. This includes the house system and the work of heads of years. Leaders work successfully to ensure that everyone benefits from the education the school provides, including in the sixth form. For example, exclusions are extremely rare and leaders do their utmost to ensure that learning is a top priority for all. Staff, too, praise leaders for the support they receive and the care for their well-being and workload. As some staff noted, 'love and care' underpins the approach of senior leaders.

The school's work to ensure that pupils in Years 7 to 11, and students in the sixth form, develop their understanding of life in modern Britain is high quality. The personal, social and health education programme covers a wide variety of important topics that includes physical and mental health, anti-bullying, online safety and

keeping safe. Careers education is comprehensive and the school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. Nearly all pupils go on to college, training or a job when they leave school.

The attention to the well-being and care of pupils is complemented by a curriculum with academic rigour. In English and science, for example, the curriculum is planned most effectively to build pupils' knowledge. Pupils are able to tackle increasingly complex work as they get older and make connections between different bits of knowledge. This means that pupils are not just repeating facts but increasingly understanding the complexity of the world.

The way leaders have enabled teachers to develop their classroom practice has been a key reason for improvements to pupils' learning. For example, the emphasis on helping pupils to remember what they have learned in the past and apply it to new work, guides much of what happens in classrooms. Teachers check frequently that pupils have remembered prior learning and recap subject content regularly to reinforce that memory. This focus on recapping learning helps to ensure that pupils can recall important facts when they need to and apply these to increasingly difficult work. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), who are identified and supported well by teachers and teaching assistants.

There are a few subjects where the curriculum is not planned as effectively as it is elsewhere. Occasionally, it is unclear what teachers want pupils to learn. When this happens, the curriculum in these subjects is not as ambitious as it could be. Well-founded plans to use a phonics programme for the small number of weaker readers in Years 7 and 8 have not been fully implemented and embedded. Leaders are rightly putting this at their forefront of their work to ensure that all pupils access the curriculum confidently.

Governors and trustees carry out their roles effectively. The arrangements for governance are strong with clear duties for the school's local governing board. As a result, leaders are held to account and given support in equal measure.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safety and well-being of pupils takes centre stage. Leaders and governors put safeguarding at the top of their agenda. Procedures to identify pupils who may be at risk are secure and staff know the signs that someone may be suffering in silence. Leaders ensure that pupils get help quickly through their strong links with external agencies.

The procedures used to check the suitability of staff are robust. Records are up to date and include all staff, including governors. Policies and procedures take account of current guidance and are responsive to community concerns. Staff have a strong understanding of the local safeguarding issues. Their training is up to date and renewed regularly.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are a few subjects where the curriculum is not planned as effectively as it is elsewhere. Leaders need to continue their already successful work to ensure that all curriculum thinking sets out clearly the essential content they want pupils to learn and in what order. Aims need to be suitably ambitious for all pupils, so that expectations are high for all. This includes reading, where the implementation of well-founded plans for a phonics programme needs to be further embedded.

## 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.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137789
<b>Local authority</b>	Tower Hamlets
<b>Inspection number</b>	10245821
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1358
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	500
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Jane Farrell
<b>Executive Headteacher</b>	Ruth Holden
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.mulberryacademyshoreditch.org">www.mulberryacademyshoreditch.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11 and 12 December 2012, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Mulberry Academy Shoreditch is a school for pupils aged 11 to 19 in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. It is part of the Mulberry Academy Trust.
- The school uses alternative provision that is registered with the DfE.
- Careers guidance meets the requirement of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

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

This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: science, English, languages, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at and spoke to leaders about some other subjects, including reading, mathematics, drama, and design and technology.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, and with senior leaders, staff, pupils, the chief executive officer and chair of the Mulberry Academy Trust. Inspectors also met the chair and members of the local governing body.
- Meetings were held with the safeguarding lead, and inspectors scrutinised school records of the safeguarding checks on adults working in the school.
- Inspectors considered the views of 82 members of staff who responded to the Ofsted staff survey. They also considered 70 responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey and 52 written comments by parents.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils to discuss their views about many different aspects of their school. There were no responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Brian Oppenheim, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Bruce Goddard	Ofsted Inspector
Debbie Lebrett	Ofsted Inspector
Gaynor Roberts	His Majesty's Inspector
Bob Hamlyn	His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2022