

Inspection of a good school: Stratford School Academy

Upton Lane, Forest Gate, London E7 9PR

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 October 2022

Outcome

Stratford School Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where pupils learn successfully in a calm and supportive environment. Pupils take pride in their work and in their school. Leaders have organised the school over the two sites so that pupils are effectively in one of two smaller schools. This helps teachers and leaders to know their pupils well, so that they can meet pupils' needs in the classroom. Pupils behave well around the school and show respect to adults and to each other. Bullying is rare but is dealt with quickly if it does happen. Pupils feel safe in the school.

The curriculum across all year groups is carefully organised and delivered by teachers who have strong subject knowledge. This means that pupils achieve well and are prepared for the next steps in their education or training. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils access a range of activities beyond the classroom. After-school opportunities include cookery club, drama club and a range of sporting activities. An active school council is involved in whole-school decision-making, including helping with the redesign of social spaces.

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

Pupils follow a carefully considered curriculum from Year 7 to Year 11. Leaders have made sure that teaching follows a logical sequence, and that important subject content is regularly revisited. This helps pupils to learn more and to remember more. Pupils achieve strong outcomes. Leaders supplement the curriculum for older pupils with additional teaching activities, including a very popular Saturday school. Most pupils with SEND follow the same broad curriculum as their peers. A small number of pupils with more complex needs follow an adapted curriculum, which is taught by very well trained staff.

In lessons, teachers regularly refer to previous learning and pupils are encouraged to recap and recall earlier content. Teachers check pupils' understanding frequently. On

occasion, some teachers do not systematically check pupils' understanding, so mistakes are not spotted quickly. Pupils with SEND are very well supported in lessons. Teachers benefit from very detailed information and guidance on how best to meet the needs of these pupils.

Reading is prioritised across the school. Pupils are encouraged to read widely. Recently refurbished libraries on each site are busy with pupils at lunch and breaktimes. Those pupils who need additional help with reading are quickly identified and receive a range of targeted support delivered by trained staff.

Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning, demonstrated by high levels of attendance. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is calm and orderly. Leaders and teachers have very high expectations and lessons are not disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils say that bullying is very rare and that when it does happen they trust their teachers to deal with it effectively. Discriminatory language is not tolerated.

Leaders ensure that pupils' wider development is prioritised. Pupils are taught how to look after their physical and mental well-being, including how to eat healthily. Leaders map out the curriculum to make sure that pupils learn about issues such as relationships in an age-appropriate way. Careers education becomes more detailed as pupils get older. Year 11 pupils benefit from individual careers advice and are well informed of the options that they have beyond school. Pupils are encouraged to take on leadership opportunities, such as joining the school council. A school magazine, 'Hoot', is produced by pupils. Leaders ensure that pupils from all backgrounds can access trips and after-school clubs.

Governors share leaders' very clear vision for the school. Governors and leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for further development. They use information carefully to check the impact of any initiatives. Leaders welcome scrutiny and look beyond the school for independent review of their work. Staff benefit from carefully considered training opportunities, and early career teachers are very well supported. Staff are proud to work at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have prioritised safeguarding across the whole school community. To reassure themselves further, leaders commission regular external reviews of their safeguarding procedures. The safeguarding team makes sure that all staff are appropriately trained. Leaders work closely with outside agencies, including local authorities. Leaders are tenacious in securing help for the most vulnerable pupils.

Staff know how to identify risks and how to report any concerns, no matter how small. Pupils have a trusted adult to whom they can talk if they have any concerns.

Pupils have been taught how to keep themselves safe, including how to stay safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On some occasions, teachers' checking of pupils' understanding is variable. This means that sometimes misconceptions can go unchallenged, and pupils do not learn the intended curriculum content. Leaders should continue to strengthen classroom practice so that misunderstandings are identified and addressed swiftly, enabling pupils to consistently learn more and remember more in all subjects.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2014.

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

Unique reference number	136978
Local authority	Newham
Inspection number	10240192
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1512
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Hamilton Pruim
Headteacher	Craig Hewitt
Website	www.stratfordschoolacademy.com/
Date of previous inspection	23 May 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school operates on two nearby sites, with a broadly equal number of pupils in all year groups on each site.
- On occasion, the school makes use of registered alternative provision for a very small number of pupils. Currently, there are a few pupils attending New Directions and Education Links.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical educational qualifications and apprenticeships.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history, art and design and religious education. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked to teachers and pupils.

Inspectors also visited a range of lessons in other subjects and looked at pupils' work and curriculum documents.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team and members of staff, including early career teachers, as well as with a range of pupils.
- Inspectors looked at the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding and supporting pupils' welfare and well-being. This included looking at case studies and reviewing the school's single central record of pre-employment checks.
- The lead inspector met with leaders responsible for SEND, careers education, reading, behaviour and attendance and pupils' wider development.
- The lead inspector also met with members of the board of trustees, including the chair of trustees, and with the school's improvement partner.

Inspection team

Bob Hamlyn, lead inspector

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