

Inspection of a good school: Education Links

90 Chandos Road, Stratford, London E15 1TT

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 September 2022

Outcome

Education Links continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like coming to this school. They say it is not like the other schools that they have been to. They like the smaller class sizes and the additional help and support that adults give them when they need it. At all sites of the school, pupils feel safe. They say that bullying hardly ever happens, and when it does, staff deal with it straight away.

Pupils have had difficult starts to their education. They move to this school because they have significant social and emotional needs. Often, they need extra help to manage their feelings and emotions. The school staff get to know pupils very well and make them feel welcomed and cared for. Over time, pupils make progress in both their behaviour and their academic work.

Some pupils attend the school for just a few days. Other pupils stay for longer periods. Leaders and staff have high expectations and have made sure that the curriculum is right for all pupils.

Teachers make sure that lesson activities are interesting and help pupils to progress through the curriculum. Pupils learn to prepare for their next steps after they leave the school. This includes careers lessons that prepare them for work or college.

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

Leaders have constructed a well-sequenced curriculum which is ambitious for all pupils. English and mathematics are priorities because most pupils have fallen behind where they should be when they start at the school. Pupils have extra reading lessons so that they can access other curriculum subjects. They also have additional mathematics interventions.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They deliver lessons that use pupils' interests as starting points. For example, when learning about Shakespeare's sonnets in English, pupils compared his writing to well-known, modern rap lyrics. Pupils enjoy their lessons

and contribute well to class discussions. This develops their emotional literacy as well as their understanding of the academic subjects they study. The curriculum lacks depth in a few practical subjects because there are too few practical activities which would help pupils to secure knowledge in their long-term memory.

The school caters for pupils with a very wide range of needs across six sites. Pupils at all the school sites achieve well. They learn to manage their feelings and emotions as well as developing their knowledge of academic subjects. At some sites, specialist approaches for pupils with social and communication needs are used, including introducing and developing communication strategies for pupils who may not communicate verbally.

Throughout the school, pupils behave very well. Sometimes, pupils need help to manage their emotions. When this happens, adults support pupils with respect and consideration for their dignity at all times. Any disruption to lessons is managed calmly and considerately, so that pupils can return to learning as soon as possible.

The curriculum includes opportunities for pupils' social and cultural development. Lessons include visits to important features such as the Globe Theatre, the Olympic Park and other local parks and open spaces. Pupils learn how to camp, shop and cook for themselves, and undertake work experience as part of a well-thought-out careers programme. Pupils have some lessons that will help them in their future lives, but teachers do not consistently receive sufficient guidance on developing pupils' independence and the skills they need for adulthood.

Staff like working at the school. They feel like it is 'one big family'. Staff feel that leaders listen to them and that they can be creative in the classroom. Relationships between adults and pupils are warm and nurturing. Adults understand the needs of the pupils very well and they notice quickly if a pupil needs support.

Leaders identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities very well. Many pupils join the school with needs that have not previously been diagnosed, or where their frequent school moves have made identification difficult. Leaders ensure that the right support is put in place without delay.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Staff are vigilant. They are well trained and know why the vulnerable pupils who attend the school may be even more at risk than others. Designated safeguarding leads maintain careful records and they are persistent in ensuring that the right support is in place.

Pupils at the school feel safe. The curriculum helps pupils learn how to protect themselves from dangers online and in the community and how to get help if they need it. Pupils learn about safe and appropriate relationships.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some practical subjects, pupils are not provided with sufficient opportunities to practise their skills. This prevents them from securing knowledge in their long-term memory. Leaders should sharpen the curriculum to ensure that teachers provide practical activities which help pupils to secure knowledge in their long-term memory.
- Teachers do not receive sufficient guidance and training on developing pupils' independence and the skills they need for adulthood. This means that staff are ill-equipped to support pupils as they prepare for adult life. Leaders should ensure that all staff receive training and guidance on this aspect of their work.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2017.

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	141139
Local authority	Newham
Inspection number	10240420
Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	84
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Arfa Butt
Principal	Sandy Davies
Website	www.education-links.org
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 July 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has additional campuses at 1a Queens Road, Plaistow E13 9AL and 84 High Street South, East Ham E6 6ET.
- The school is responsible for the Newham Late Arrivals Programme (NewLAP), based at Newham College London.
- The school is responsible for high needs provision for pupils with complex autism, commissioned by the local authority and based at Gainsborough Primary School, Gainsborough Road, London E15 3AF.
- Leaders do not use any 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, the curriculum manager, the personal development and well-being manager, the student services manager, the student placement

manager and the school business manager. Inspectors also met with the chair of governors (who is also chair of the trust board).

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English; personal, social and health education; and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at some examples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in computing, science and physical education and looked at samples of pupils' work in these subjects.
- When inspecting safeguarding, inspectors held discussions with the designated leads for safeguarding, the chair of governors and the headteacher. They scrutinised the single central record of school staff and looked at a sample of personnel files. Inspectors also talked to pupils and staff and looked at a sample of safeguarding records.

Inspection team

Gary Pocock, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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