

Inspection of a good school: The Bridge Academy

Laburnum Street, Hackney, London E2 8BA

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 February 2023

Outcome

The Bridge Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils. They ensure that their guiding principles of kindness, hard work and integrity are central to the school's culture. Leaders have developed a calm and orderly environment where pupils are safe. Pupils have access to a broad curriculum that is ambitious for all, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils behave very well in the school and are happy. They are focused during lessons and regulate their own behaviour well at all other times. Incidents of bullying and the use of discriminatory language are extremely rare. Leaders address these effectively when they occur.

All pupils take part in 'cultural-capital' days each year. These days allow pupils to experience opportunities beyond the classroom. Leaders provide many visits for pupils, including to museums, art galleries and outings to Kew Gardens and Hampton Court Palace. Leaders support pupils' musical opportunities. For instance, all pupils in Year 7 learn a musical instrument and they all receive a free instrument.

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

Leaders have developed a curriculum that meets, and in places exceeds, the scope of the national curriculum. They have ensured that the curriculum for all subjects builds pupils' knowledge progressively over time. For example, in history, pupils study the concept of 'empire' sequentially over time. This includes through learning about Ancient Rome and the Tudors in Year 7 and the British Empire in Years 8 and 9.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge and deliver lessons with clarity. Leaders identify pupils with SEND quickly. They provide effective support to ensure that the needs of these pupils are met. Teachers ensure that pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as others in the school.

Typically, teachers check pupils' understanding effectively. When this happens, pupils have a firm understanding of what they are learning and remember content taught previously. Occasionally, teaching does not check and address pupils' misunderstandings as effectively. As a result, some pupils are less secure in the knowledge, including of key vocabulary, that they need to be prepared for future learning.

Reading is treated as a priority in the school. All pupils take part in regular 'class reader' sessions. Teachers ensure that pupils have access to high-quality books. Pupils who require extra support with their reading are identified effectively by leaders. Teachers provide bespoke support for pupils who need to catch up with their reading. This support helps these pupils to build confidence and fluency in reading.

Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning in lessons. Low-level disruption is extremely rare. Leaders have robust systems in place if learning is ever interrupted.

Leaders have developed a wide-ranging and rich personal development programme. All pupils up to Year 9 take part in a weekly enrichment programme. They attend various clubs, which include cooking, dance and debating. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 study politics weekly, when they learn about democracy and rights and the role of Parliament. Pupils have access to a range of sports clubs, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and the 'Brilliant' club.

Leaders have developed a comprehensive careers programme that is supported significantly by the school's partnership with UBS. All pupils have access to a wide range of employers, and pupils in Years 11, 12 and 13 all receive externally provided careers guidance. Leaders provide high levels of support for students in the sixth form in applying to university and other post-18 options.

Leaders consider the health and well-being of staff carefully. They are conscious of the pressures of workload, and staff appreciated the strategies leaders have put in place to support them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have put in place secure systems to identify and support pupils' needs. Staff are well trained and vigilant in reporting safeguarding concerns. Leaders are timely in their response to any concerns. They work with a range of external agencies effectively to provide specialist support for their pupils.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe and encouraged to report concerns. There is a large team of trained safeguarding leaders in the school for pupils to turn to. Leaders understand the school's local risks and are reactive to challenges as they arise.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, teaching does not clarify pupils' misunderstandings clearly or ensure that pupils are secure in subject-specific vocabulary. This means that sometimes a small number of pupils are not ready to learn new content, or they do not commit knowledge to their long-term memory. Leaders should develop the expertise of all teachers so that they routinely address any gaps in pupils' understanding.

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 January 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.

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	131609
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	10268784
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,112
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	234
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nick Wright
Principal	Chris Brown
Website	www.bridgeacademy.hackney.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.
- The principal has been in post since 2015.

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, members of the senior leadership team and a range of staff. They also met with members of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, science, history and music. For each deep dive, inspectors spoke to subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum and visited lessons in some other subjects.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors spoke with the designated safeguarding leads, along with pupils and staff. Inspectors reviewed the record of pre-employment checks and other relevant documentation.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers, pupils and staff, including through responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

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