

Inspection of an outstanding school: West Lea School

Haselbury Road, Edmonton, London N9 9TU

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 2023

Outcome

West Lea School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have the highest aspirations for pupils. Pupils join the school with a wide variety of complex needs. Relationships between staff and parents are strong and pupils come to school with smiles on their faces.

Leaders do not accept any barriers to what their learners can do in the future. An ambitious academic curriculum sits alongside the provision for pupils' personal, social and communication development. The curriculum is highly individualised to meet the needs and goals of each pupil. The way the school supports pupils' personal development is exceptional.

Leaders' expectations for pupil behaviour are equally high. Pupils know they are here to learn. Pupils of all ages in the school are encouraged to regulate their behaviour and join in with lessons. The mood in lessons across the school is calm and purposeful. Breaktime is full of the sounds of laughter.

Enrichment activities are planned to help pupils gain confidence and develop increased independence. Pupils take part in regular educational outings and residential stays. All pupils in Year 10 complete the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. They plan and undertake expeditions and volunteer in their community. Students in the sixth form plan educational city breaks. They book transport and accommodation and consider the places they want to visit.

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

All pupils study a broad range of national curriculum subjects. Pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 study for suitable qualifications across different subjects. These include English and mathematics. Students in the sixth form continue to gain useful qualifications. Many move on to the school's internship programme, and access local work placements.

The academic curriculum is new. Leaders have sequenced the curriculum in each subject to build pupils' knowledge, piece by piece, over time. Teachers have the flexibility to adapt pupils' learning to suit the pupils in the class, but the learning outcome remains the same. For example, pupils in Year 5 and 6 were taught about high and low pitch in science. Pupils explored this concept through games, songs and playing with instruments. Some pupils developed their ideas further to consider how this links to vibrations.

Teachers deliver the new curriculum with confidence. They have a strong understanding of the subjects they teach. They plan opportunities for pupils to revisit what they have previously learned. They explain new concepts clearly with a focus on subject vocabulary. Teachers carefully help pupils to explore new concepts. For example, pupils studying art in Year 10 and Year 11 made pinch-pots from clay. They explored a variety of artists and techniques to inform their own designs.

Leaders have prioritised reading. Pupils of all ages in the school take part in daily phonics lessons to develop their reading fluency. They love to read books as a class. These include books from diverse authors and genres, including poetry and Shakespeare. Staff have been trained to deliver the phonics programme with confidence. They model new sounds clearly and demonstrate how to blend these. Pupils who need additional reading support receive individual sessions, which help them to improve their accuracy and fluency.

Staff consistently apply the school rules to 'be ready, be safe, be kind'. Pupils quickly develop strong routines of positive behaviour. From the early years onwards, pupils are encouraged to recognise their emotions and those of others. They are taught the importance of looking after their mental and physical health. All activities support pupils to develop their language and communication skills. Pupils learn how to work and play together. They are encouraged to listen and take turns. Older pupils engage in educated discussions about global issues, including climate change.

Classes are organised to match both the academic and language and communication needs of each pupil. Teachers are highly attuned to the learning needs of each pupil in the class. Supporting adults in the classroom bring further expertise. Many pupils receive support from school-based and external professionals. Support is tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of each pupil.

Pupils take part in a range of enrichment activities, including dance and drama clubs, sports tournaments and choir. Pupils like to take on leadership roles in the school. They elect school council representatives from each class. Pupils take part in regular school productions. They make costumes and props and perform at the local theatre. Leaders ensure that all pupils can access the range of opportunities on offer to develop pupils' talents and interests.

Pupils begin to learn about a range of careers and start developing skills for life as early as the Reception Year. At all ages, pupils take part in educational visits to various places of work. They hear from a range of speakers and are guided to think about what they might like to do in the future. Older pupils are taught how to make applications and take part in mock job interviews.

Students in the sixth form are exceptionally well prepared for adulthood. The majority of these students progress onto the school's highly successful pre-employment pathways. They are exceedingly well positioned to enter into employment when they leave the school.

Leaders have introduced a lot of changes in the school in recent years. Staff have worked hard to implement these changes. The redesigned curriculum and new behaviour policy have been swiftly embedded. Staff are proud of their work. They appreciate the efforts of leaders to reduce their workload and support their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The deeply embedded culture of safeguarding runs through every aspect of school life. All staff are acutely aware of the risks that their pupils may face. Leaders ensure that staff know how to spot signs that pupils may be experiencing harm. Leaders are relentless in securing the help that vulnerable pupils and their families need. They work effectively with a range of external agencies, as well as using their own in-house therapeutic team.

The personal, social and health education curriculum teaches pupils about what constitutes risky behaviours and how to recognise potential danger. Pupils are taught about age-appropriate themes, including sexual harassment, consent and the law, in a sensitive manner. Leaders particularly emphasise learning about online safety as a key area of potential vulnerability for their pupils.

Background

When we have judged outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 outstanding in February 2018.

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	102067
Local authority	Enfield
Inspection number	10269074
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	426
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	59
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Fr Nigel Asbridge and Marion Rodin
Headteacher	Paul Quinn
Website	www.westleaschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in September 2021.
- The school caters for pupils with a range of complex needs, including some pupils who have autism spectrum disorder. All pupils have an educational health care plan.
- The school is made up of six school sites organised by the age of the children who attend. Primary-aged pupils attend school at The Meridian Campus. This campus is made up of two schools, located at 174 Dysons Rd, N18 2DG and Springfield Road, New Southgate, N11 1RR. Pupils aged 11 to 14 years attend the Haselbury Campus at Haselbury Rd, N9 9TU. Pupils age 14 to 16 years attend the Learning for Life Campus at Broomfield School, Wilmer Way, N14 7HY. Pupils in the school sixth form and who take post-18 internships study at the Horizon Campus at St Marys, Lawrence Road, N18 2HN and attend classes at Enfield College, High Road, N15 4RU.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.

- 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.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the CEO of the school, the Directors for Education, heads of school for the various school campuses and members of the wider senior leadership team. The lead inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the co-chairs, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors evaluated the quality of education through deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science and art. They met with curriculum leaders and visited a sample of lessons across the school sites. They also met with pupils to discuss their learning and reviewed the work of pupils.
- To evaluate the safeguarding arrangements of the school, inspectors met with safeguarding leaders, reviewed safeguarding documents and scrutinised the procedures for the recruitment of new members of staff.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers, pupils and staff, including through responses to Ofsted's online parent survey, Parent View, and through the staff and pupil online surveys.

Inspection team

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