

# Inspection of Morpeth School

Portman Place, Bethnal Green, London E2 0PX

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Inspection dates: 8 and 9 March 2023

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

This school was last inspected nine 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.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

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

Pupils have rich opportunities to broaden their experiences and to build their confidence at this school. Leaders provide a broad and varied curriculum. Leaders ensure that every pupil has the chance to receive instrumental music lessons and go on residential outings and on visits to universities.

Pupils are safe and happy. Leaders regularly survey pupils' views and respond to what they say. For example, leaders have responded to pupils' feedback to improve pupils' experience of lunchtimes. Pupils appreciate being listened to by leaders and comment they feel they are taken seriously.

Sixth-form students speak very highly of their experience of education here. They benefit from expert teaching and excellent pastoral care. Leaders provide many varied experiences to students, including outings, visiting speakers and opportunities to learn about their next steps.

Pupils are generally well behaved. Leaders deal with bullying or aggressive behaviour swiftly and effectively when it does occur. Pupils are typically respectful and focused on their learning, although, occasionally, behaviour disturbs pupils' learning in class and can sometimes be unsettled around the school.

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

Leaders provide a highly ambitious curriculum to all pupils. Pupils study a wide range of subjects. Many pupils study the English Baccalaureate range of subjects for GCSE, including French, Spanish and Bengali. Pupils, parents and carers comment that they value the range of subjects on offer and feel that pupils are very well prepared for their next steps as a result. In 2022, published academic outcomes appeared lower than the national average. This is due in part to pupils sitting some GCSE examinations in Year 9 and 10, earlier than is typical. This means that their results are not all counted in the Year 11 published national assessments for 2022.

Curriculum leaders are experts in their subjects. They work closely with teachers to choose the essential knowledge pupils should learn. Leaders have broken the curriculum down into small chunks, carefully designed to build pupils' knowledge over time. However, leaders do not check as carefully that pupils in all classes have learned the content in the planned curriculum securely. As a result, some pupils' grasp of key curriculum knowledge and skills is not as steady.

Leaders provide very regular opportunities for teachers to discuss the best ways to teach their subject. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They use it well to present new information clearly. They encourage pupils to articulate their thinking. In some cases, teachers ask pupils to attempt work without first checking that they know the important information needed to complete the task. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge, which prevents them from understanding new

content. Sixth-form students' knowledge develops strongly over time. Teachers have expert subject knowledge. They check students' understanding and extend it further with precisely chosen next steps. Students are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the subjects they study.

Leaders make reading a high priority. All pupils are expected to read often, including during lessons and form time. Leaders identify pupils who need extra help with their reading and provide carefully targeted support. The library is a vibrant and popular place, with a large and interesting collection of books for pupils to read. A team of pupil librarians works with leaders to enthuse pupils about reading through a diverse range of events and initiatives. Sixth-form students are encouraged to read as much as they can about the subjects they study, including ambitious texts that deepen their learning.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are quickly identified, and their needs are well understood. Leaders and teachers ensure that pupils with SEND are well supported to follow the planned curriculum. Leaders include pupils with SEND in all aspects of school life.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They have recently introduced new approaches, which is helping to improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes further. These changes are in their early stages, but they are already having an impact. Teachers focus on supporting pupils to understand the impact of their actions on themselves and others. Typically, pupils demonstrate respect for staff and their peers and behave calmly and sensibly so that learning typically proceeds uninterrupted. Leaders are working hard to make sure that new approaches are adopted routinely by all staff.

Throughout their time at the school, pupils are exceptionally well taught about life in modern Britain. Leaders have planned an expansive curriculum to teach pupils how to be safe, encourage them to lead healthy lives and how to identify healthy and safe relationships. Pupils study sensitive topics in considerable detail, including gender and the significance of consent. Leaders prioritise teaching pupils about differences between people and the importance of respect and valuing all people equally. Pupils are encouraged to talk about these issues with a great deal of sensitivity and maturity.

Leaders have created a strong community among the staff team, who work together very effectively. Staff comment that their well-being is important to leaders, who consider their workload carefully. They are proud to work at this school. The governing body and the headteacher share a strong focus on continually improving all areas of the school's work.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safeguarding team has strong expertise. The team meets daily to share information and to check that everything is being done to keep pupils safe. All staff receive regular training, much of which is highly specific to the school's context. They report concerns without delay.

Leaders have created strong partnerships with a wide range of external services. There is much help available for pupils. Leaders offer support at the first signs that a pupil may benefit from it.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. For example, they have been taught about criminal exploitation and how to keep themselves safe from it. Pupils have a wide range of people they can talk to if they are worried.

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

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

- Leaders do not check systematically that the planned curriculum is being taught in its intended detail. As a result, some pupils follow the intended curriculum in detail, whereas others follow it less securely. Leaders should check systematically that all pupils in all classes follow the curriculum as intended.
- Occasionally, teachers do not check carefully that pupils have the prior knowledge required to attempt tasks that involve learning new concepts that build on or use what has come before. As a result, pupils are sometimes unable to learn new content without guessing or using trial and error. Leaders should ensure that teachers routinely identify any gaps or misconceptions before moving on to new learning.
- Leaders have recently introduced new approaches to further improve the approach to managing pupils' behaviour. Leaders should continue to reinforce new approaches so that they are routinely adopted by all staff.

## **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>	100967
<b>Local authority</b>	Tower Hamlets
<b>Inspection number</b>	10265828
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<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>	1,544
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	359
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Allen Zimbler
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jemima Reilly
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.morpethschool.org.uk">www.morpethschool.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	8 and 9 May 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher has taken up post.
- The school has a much higher proportion of pupils with SEND than the national average.
- Through its careers programme, 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 makes use of one alternative provision: London East Alternative Provider.

## 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 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 these subjects: English, science, mathematics, music, geography and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work, spoke to teachers, and spoke to some pupils about their learning. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects and visited lessons, where they spoke with pupils and reviewed their work.
- Inspectors considered the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding and supporting pupils' health and safety, as well as their welfare and well-being. This included looking at case studies and reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Inspectors also met with leaders with responsibility for the sixth form, SEND, reading, behaviour and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors met with members of the local governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils.

## Inspection team

Rebecca Iles-Smith, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Andy Webster	Ofsted Inspector
Lauren Thorpe	Ofsted Inspector
Bruce Goddard	Ofsted Inspector
Karlene Dampha	Ofsted Inspector
Christian Hicks	Ofsted Inspector

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