

# Inspection of Leaways School

18 Theydon Road, Clapton, London E5 9NZ

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Inspection dates: 16 to 18 May 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

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

Leaders think carefully about each pupil's specific needs. Leaders have high expectations for every pupil.

Leaders prioritise helping pupils to overcome barriers to their learning, including frequent absence or unsettled behaviour. Pupils rapidly develop positive and professional relationships with staff. Every member of staff knows each pupil well and provides them with support and encouragement so that pupils settle quickly into the school's routines. Pupils grow in confidence and their self-esteem is boosted as they take pride in their achievements.

Pupils are polite and welcoming. Staff are alert to pupils' reactions and behaviour and identify readily when a pupil might need support to understand and manage their emotions and thoughts. Staff support pupils calmly and effectively so that they have a happy and successful time here. Pupils are safe in school.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of educational activities and outings that support their learning. On Friday afternoons pupils spend more time on areas of the curriculum that they like best. For example, pupils developed their research and practical skills in design and technology (DT) and pursued their interests in animals when they worked together to plan and build a rabbit hutch.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. They have a clear overview of what they expect pupils to learn in each subject. Leaders have identified the key themes in each subject that pupils will be taught and continue to review the curriculum.

Teachers regularly help pupils to recall their prior learning. They frequently check pupils' understanding and put right any errors and misconceptions. Leaders have structured pupils' learning into small steps, which helps pupils' attentiveness and motivation. Pupils are generally settled in lessons and responsive to their teachers' expectations. On a very few occasions, where leaders have not fully structured the curriculum into suitable chunks of learning, pupils are less engaged in learning.

Leaders put together a personalised curriculum for each pupil, according to their special educational needs and/or disabilities. Specialist teams, including therapists, work in collaboration with teaching teams and help pupils to achieve well in different subjects. Leaders are ambitious to refine this work further to develop subject-specific strategies to support each pupil.

Staff review how pupils are doing in their social and emotional development and their academic achievement. Leaders ensure that all staff adapt teaching so that all pupils learn the same curriculum.

Leaders have a well-organised approach to the teaching of early reading and phonics. Leaders have invested in resources and ensured that all staff have been trained so that there is a consistent approach to teaching phonics. Pupils are given reading books that match the sounds they are learning. Teachers make sure that pupils learn and recall the meaning of technical words that they will encounter in upcoming texts.

There are many opportunities for pupils to read, in and out of lessons. Pupils develop a love of reading and are motivated to read by school competitions and prizes. Pupils participated enthusiastically in the recent spelling bee, cheering each other's successes and persevering admirably to overcome any nervousness and put right any mistakes.

A well-sequenced programme of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and relationships and sex education runs across each year group. Leaders adapt plans to ensure content is relevant to pupils. Themes include issues such as consent, drugs awareness, and being alert to different types of bullying. Leaders encourage pupils to build positive, respectful working relationships with others and to debate different points of view sensibly. Leaders promote healthy lifestyles and pupils' physical fitness through opportunities to take part in a range of sports. Participation in an externally accredited award scheme broadens pupils' experiences further. Leaders organise visits to museums, galleries and places of worship to help pupils gain further insight into different faiths and cultures.

Pupils receive impartial guidance on pathways to their chosen careers. Staff help pupils to build skills relevant to the world of work, for example by role playing telephone conversations in business contexts. Pupils develop independence and confidence. They are well prepared for their next steps.

Leaders, including the proprietor, ensure that there is a full programme of training so that staff are well prepared to fulfil their roles. Leaders have created a positive and mutually supportive working environment, exemplified by the daily opportunity for staff to discuss pupils' learning. Staff said that leaders are approachable and support their well-being.

Leaders, including the proprietor, know their statutory responsibilities, ensuring all the independent school standards are met. They also ensure compliance with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safeguarding team is suitably trained and provides information and training to all staff. Leaders work closely with a wide range of agencies to support pupils and their families. Staff check on pupils' safety and well-being, including when pupils are absent from school and when they leave the school.

Pupils are taught about risks to their safety and ways to keep safe. Leaders are highly aware of potential local risks and respond swiftly to any concerns, providing additional information and guidance to pupils. Leaders promote strong and positive links with the local community to help raise awareness of safeguarding.

The safeguarding policy takes account of current government requirements and is published on the school's website.

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

### **(Information for the school and proprietor)**

- Leaders' structuring of the teaching of the curriculum into precise steps is not fully developed in a few subjects. Occasionally, pupils are not as engaged with their learning where leaders' intended structure is not fully in place. Leaders should ensure that pupils' learning is carefully structured in all subjects.

## **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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137808
<b>DfE registration number</b>	204/6003
<b>Local authority</b>	Hackney
<b>Inspection number</b>	10254662
<b>Type of school</b>	Independent school
<b>School category</b>	Other independent special school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 17
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	65
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	None
<b>Proprietor</b>	Kedleston Group Ltd.
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Brosnan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alan Thomson
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£68,135
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8815 4030
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.kedlestongroup.com/our-schools-homes/day-schools/leaways-school/home">www.kedlestongroup.com/our-schools-homes/day-schools/leaways-school/home</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:leaways@kedlestongroup.com">leaways@kedlestongroup.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	9 to 11 October 2018

## Information about this school

- The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs and pupils with autism spectrum disorder. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school is part of the Kedleston Group Ltd. The school is overseen by a board of directors, led by the chief executive officer.
- Since the previous inspection there have been several changes to the senior leadership team, including a new headteacher.
- The school's previous standard inspection took place in October 2018, when the school was judged to be good. Since then, two additional inspections have taken place: a material change inspection in April 2019, to consider a proposal to increase the number of pupils to 100, and an emergency inspection in March 2021, at which time all the independent school standards that were checked were met.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

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 school leaders, including the headteacher, the chief executive officer and the regional director.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading and communication, DT, mathematics, and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also considered other subjects in the curriculum and looked at the personalised curriculum offer for a sample of pupils.
- The inspection of safeguarding included meeting with the leaders with responsibility for safeguarding, review of documentation, speaking with staff and pupils, and consideration of aspects of the curriculum that teach pupils about safeguarding.
- An inspector had a tour of the school site, accompanied by school leaders, to consider compliance with independent school standards relating to pupils' welfare, health and safety. An inspector visited an off-site activity for pupils at the local park.

- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documentation relevant to the school's work to meet the independent school standards.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers in responses to Ofsted's online survey, and spoke to a small number of parents on the telephone. Inspectors also looked at responses to the online survey completed by staff, and analysis of responses to surveys carried out by leaders of staff's and pupils' views.

### **Inspection team**

Amanda Carter-Fraser, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jonathan Newby

Ofsted Inspector

David Radomsky

His Majesty's Inspector

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