

Inspection of a good school: Ickburgh School

Kenworthy Road, Hackney, London E9 5RB

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 June 2023

Outcome

Ickburgh School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to Ickburgh School. They are happy and they feel safe.

Pupils are keen to get into school when they arrive in the morning. They are met by smiling, friendly staff from their own class. Pupils are encouraged to be as independent as possible. They are given opportunities to make decisions and meaningful choices throughout the day. Staff understand the complex needs of their pupils very well. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and positive.

Leaders and staff expect pupils to behave well and work hard in their lessons. Pupils respond well to these expectations and do their best. Teachers devise activities that are fun and imaginative, which helps pupils stay engaged in their learning. Occasionally, pupils need help to manage their emotions and behaviour, but this is rare. Staff manage these times consistently and expertly so that pupils return to their learning quickly.

Pupils feel safe at school, and they know who they can talk to if they are worried about anything. This includes those pupils who may need extra time and support to communicate their feelings and choices. Leaders follow up on any incidences of unkind behaviour straight away.

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

Leaders have ensured that there is an ambitious curriculum in place that meets the needs of pupils at the school. Through the curriculum, pupils build up knowledge and skills in a clear and logical sequence. Leaders are still in the process of making sure that the curriculum is consistently strong in all areas of learning so that pupils can achieve their best.

Teachers have a secure understanding of the subjects that they teach. They also know the pupils' individual needs very well, and they devise and deliver lessons that capture pupils' interests and make learning enjoyable. At each step on pupils' journeys through the curriculum, teachers check that pupils have understood what they have been taught

before moving on to new learning. Pupils have opportunities to revisit areas they have already covered to make sure that concepts are secure in their memory.

Leaders have ensured that pupils who are learning to read have the tailored support that they need. Staff are well trained in the approach that leaders have chosen, and they adapt their teaching to the particular needs of pupils. Pupils learn to read as soon as they are ready. When they read, pupils read books that are matched to their level of phonic understanding. This helps them gain confidence and fluency. For pupils with the most complex needs, leaders have established a clear structured approach which helps pupils to build the early skills that they need to be ready for text and phonics.

Pupils learn in a calm and orderly environment. Disruption to lessons does not happen very often. Staff are quick to notice if a pupil needs extra help to manage their emotions, and they respond expertly so that pupils can return to learning as quickly as possible.

School staff like working at the school. They do not feel that there are major issues with workload. Leaders are aware that they have introduced some new systems, and they are checking to see if some things can be streamlined to eliminate any duplication. Staff feel valued and that leaders consider their well-being.

Leaders provide pupils with a rich programme of social and cultural opportunities. This includes visiting musicians who do workshops with pupils and trips to places of interest such as the zoo. Pupils get involved in many sports activities both in and out of school. Physical development is prioritised throughout the school, and this helps pupils to be physically active and to maintain and improve vital physical skills. These regular activities also promote healthy lifestyles, including mental health and well-being. Pupils have opportunities to learn about the world of work and develop the independence and life skills that they need for the future.

Leaders have built strong and purposeful working relationships with the specialist therapists who work at the school. These professionals work in a coordinated way with leaders and school staff, which strengthens and informs the school curriculum. For example, the speech therapy team are fully involved in planning communication goals and activities. Teams work together to safeguard pupils for example by ensuring that pupils' moving, feeding and drinking needs are carefully considered.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders take a rigorous approach to safeguarding. They have ensured that staff are well trained and supported to keep pupils safe. Staff know how to spot the signs that a pupil might need extra help, and they are vigilant in checking the well-being of pupils. Leaders work well with safeguarding partners, making sure that pupils get the support they need.

The safeguarding systems that leaders have put in place follow statutory guidance, including the checks on staff who are appointed to work at the school. Governors keep a close check on systems and practice.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some areas of the curriculum are under development. This means that pupils' learning in these areas is not as deep as in others. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum, in all areas of learning, is set out clearly so that all pupils are able to achieve their potential and maximise their understanding of the world they live in.

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 July 2014.

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	100312
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	10287171
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	163
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	33
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Pat Corrigan
Headteacher	Joseph Sieber
Website	www.ickburgh.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses no alternative provision.
- All pupils who attend the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Pupils at the school have a wide range of needs including cognition and learning, communication and interaction and physical and sensory needs. Some pupils have additional social, emotional and mental health needs.

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 this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher

and both assistant headteachers.

- Inspectors also met with governors, a representative of the local authority and the therapists who work at the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics (including thinking skills) and physical education and development. For each deep dive, inspectors met with leaders to discuss the curriculum, 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 the curriculum and spoke to leaders about some other subjects including personal, social and health education and communication.
- When inspecting safeguarding, inspectors had discussions with leaders, scrutinised the school's safeguarding policy and checked safeguarding records and systems. Inspectors spoke to pupils and staff about safeguarding.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors considered responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Gary Pocock, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Mark Smith

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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