

Inspection of Ian Mikardo School

60 William Guy Gardens, Talwin Street, London E3 3LF

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 June 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy that staff in this school understand them. They trust staff and are confident that their complex needs can be met here. Pupils have usually experienced difficulties in their lives and often have not managed to cope in education before coming here. For most pupils, Ian Mikardo changes all that.

Pupils are skilfully helped to increasingly manage their own behaviour, assured that staff sensitively and subtly offer a safety net of support if needed. Pupils understand how leaders tackle bullying and are confident that it is not tolerated here. Leaders help pupils to see the long-term consequences of any discriminatory behaviour so that they do not repeat their mistakes.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils. Some staff have expertise in other professions, such as social care. This enables leaders to consider what is best for each pupil from a very well-informed position. Leaders place a priority on developing pupils' self-belief. Staff and pupils describe the school as being like a family.

Pupils enjoy and value the wider opportunities on offer. For example, students in the sixth form attend a lunchtime recital at the Royal Opera House. Pupils also enjoy helping out in the coffee bar and preparing refreshments for visitors.

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

The curriculum is organised in an effective way, which enables pupils to learn more over time. Leaders make sure that pupils' needs are considered when deciding what to teach and in which order. Pupils who have often missed a lot of education previously achieve well, particularly in acquiring skills that they need as they move towards adulthood and employment or further education. This includes development of knowledge in English and mathematics.

Staff use resources, time and information well to meet the complex needs of pupils. This means that pupils understand what they are learning and stay motivated. However, leaders have decided in some subjects to introduce new curriculum content. Teachers do not have enough experience and training in the use of these new materials to identify gaps in learning and adapt materials to meet the needs of some pupils.

Leaders have improved the curriculum to help pupils who are still developing their reading skills. Staff know how to teach phonics accurately by using materials which match pupils' ability. Leaders choose books carefully to encourage an enjoyment of reading.

Pupils enjoy mathematics because teachers make sure they can see how relevant and useful it is to them. Teachers ensure that pupils make good use of practical equipment to help them understand mathematical ideas.

The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme enables pupils to better understand issues that may affect their well-being and their relationships. Pupils gain a greater understanding of concepts such as consent. Staff are good at picking up and correcting misunderstandings pupils may have.

Pupils gain knowledge and information about options for their future careers. They are given a wide range of opportunities to experience work and develop skills related to employment, both in school and on placements. For example, some pupils opt to study hairdressing and beauty in a working salon. Staff go the extra mile to make sure that experiences take account of the wishes of the pupil.

Students in the sixth form benefit from effective support in making choices about courses and placements. If a placement breaks down, staff offer alternatives or extra support.

Pupils learn to understand their own needs and manage their emotions successfully over time. Staff know what to do to support pupils' needs so their behaviour improves. Teachers are experts at supporting pupils' emotional and social needs so that learning time is not lost.

Most staff think leaders do what they can to reduce workload and unnecessary administration. Leaders make sure that staff have someone to talk to after they have needed to deal with difficult or traumatic occurrences.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained in safeguarding matters and report any concerns promptly. They have secured the trust of pupils. This means that pupils talk about their concerns and worries, and leaders can offer any support needed promptly. Leaders make sure that professionals work together to act in the best interests of pupils. They manage concerns well.

Leaders make considered decisions about managing the risks which pupils may face. They adapt the curriculum to devote time to helping pupils better understand specific risks when it becomes evident that this is necessary.

Leaders and governors keep clear and detailed records of their safeguarding work.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders' recent decisions to improve the content and sequence of what they want pupils to learn have not had time to make a difference to pupils' achievement. Some aspects of the curriculum are inconsistently implemented because teachers are unfamiliar with the revised curriculum content. Leaders should make sure that teachers are trained in the use of the new materials so that they can identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and adapt their teaching accordingly.

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	143630
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	10268050
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	51
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	11
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trustees	Chris Weavers
Headteacher	Aaron Mulhern
Website	http://www.ianmikardo.com
Date of previous inspection	15 and 16 March 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is for boys with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with senior leaders, subject leaders, designated safeguarding leads, teachers and other school staff.
- The lead inspector also met with representatives of the local governing body and board of trustees.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils and staff as they met at the beginning of the school day. They met with pupils to hear about their school experiences and their work.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English (including the teaching of reading), mathematics, art and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors scrutinised safeguarding records and documents related to school improvement.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires for staff and parents.

Inspection team

Andrew Wright, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sara Morgan

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2023