

Inspection of Plumstead Manor School

Old Mill Road, London SE18 1QF

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 June 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is a welcoming place, where pupils are kept safe. Leaders' ambitions for pupils' behaviour are not fully realised across the school. In Years 7 to 9, pupils do not routinely work hard and pay attention during lessons. Many pupils shared that they do not enjoy their experience at school. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have positive attitudes to their learning.

Pupils have mixed experiences during social times. While leaders do not tolerate bullying, some pupils do not trust adults in school to help them if they need it. Typically, pupils in Years 7 to 9 do not develop their learning securely. Pupils do not secure the important knowledge and skills they need to progress to the next stage of education. In the sixth form, students achieve well through a coherent curriculum.

Leaders ensure that pupils learn about the importance of equality and diversity. They promote pupils' positive mental health. The school provides a wide range of opportunities outside of lessons, including extra-curricular clubs such as sports, chess and music. However, not enough pupils take part in them.

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

Leaders are beginning to make the curriculum more ambitious. However, these actions have not had time to be implemented securely in all year groups. In the sixth form, students can study a wide range of academic and vocational qualifications. Leaders identify the important content that students need to know and remember in the sixth form sequentially.

In some subjects, leaders' curricular thinking is well developed. For example, in history, pupils revisit key concepts about Africa and Britain. Generally, pupils in Years 10 and 11 study a coherent curriculum, which helps to develop their knowledge and skills well. However, the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is not as ambitious. Leaders have not thought carefully about the core knowledge pupils need to learn for each subject. This leads to gaps in pupils' subject-specific understanding. For example, pupils have limited opportunities to work scientifically. In mathematics, pupils do not gain secure strategies and methods.

Teachers' subject knowledge is variable. This means that the curriculum is delivered inconsistently between subjects. Teaching does not routinely check that pupils know and remember the taught content. This limits pupils' deeper knowledge and understanding. In the sixth form, teaching is more effective. This is because teachers' subject knowledge is secure, and they build on pupils' prior learning well.

Leaders ensure that pupils with the most complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs met effectively. However, this same level of support is not in place for some pupils with SEND. There is a clear system to identify

and support pupils who struggle with their reading. Pupils who find reading difficult receive extra support, which helps them to catch up.

Staff expectations of pupils' behaviour are too low in Years 7 to 9. Many pupils in these year groups do not concentrate in lessons and waste too much lesson time. Leaders have put in place effective support for pupils who need extra help to manage their behaviour. As a result, the number of suspensions is reducing. However, many pupils and staff worry about poor behaviour, which often gets in the way of learning. Clear routines are in place to monitor and support pupils with their attendance and punctuality. However, persistent absence among disadvantaged pupils is too high.

Staff teach pupils about the importance of healthy relationships at an age-appropriate level. There is a range of opportunities outside of lessons, but too few pupils take part in them. The school provides pupils with information about future careers. However, pupils do not gain enough experiences of the world of work.

Most staff, including those at the start of their careers, enjoy working at the school. Typically, teachers feel well supported and value the professional development they receive. Some staff shared that the school does not take their workload and well-being into account.

Leaders have focused on improving the school and have identified the right priorities. However, they do not check the impact of their actions accurately. The governing body has not been rigorous enough in overseeing improvements to the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have clear systems in place to identify and manage safeguarding concerns. They ensure that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Staff are well trained and know how to identify pupils at risk of harm. Leaders understand the risks faced by pupils in the local community and work well with a range of external agencies. This ensures that pupils and their families get the help they need in a timely way.

Pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe through the curriculum. For example, staff teach them about keeping themselves safe online and in the local area.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not identified the key knowledge they expect pupils to learn and remember in Years 7 to 9. This means that pupils do not have opportunities to develop their subject-specific knowledge and skills securely. Leaders should ensure that they identify and sequence the important knowledge pupils need to learn in each subject at key stage 3.
- Teaching does not routinely help pupils to remember the key content they have been taught securely in Years 7 to 9. This means that too many pupils have gaps in their knowledge, which limits their readiness for future content. Leaders must ensure that all teachers have the necessary expertise to deepen pupils' understanding.
- Leaders do not make sure that staff's expectations of pupils' behaviour are high in Years 7 to 9. Some staff are concerned about pupils' disruptive behaviour. They do not always feel that leaders support them well to manage behaviour. Leaders must ensure that all staff manage pupils' behaviour well so that poor behaviour does not interrupt learning.
- Too many pupils, particularly vulnerable pupils, do not attend school regularly. As a result, they miss important learning. Leaders should work with pupils, families and external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils attend school more often.
- Leaders have not ensured that their vision is realised securely through embedded policies and practice. The actions that leaders have taken to improve the school have not yet had the anticipated impact. This means that progress in several areas has been slow. Leaders must implement improvements effectively and check the impact regularly.

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	100183
Local authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	10271238
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,503
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	303
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sue Le Bas
Headteacher	Douglas Greig
Website	www.plumsteadmanor.com
Date of previous inspection	9 and 10 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school uses a small number of registered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been many changes to staffing.
- 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 qualifications and apprenticeships.

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 met with the headteacher and other leaders. They also met with leaders responsible for SEND, the sixth form, and pupils' wider development.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, history and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subjects and visited a range of lessons in the sixth form.
- Inspectors looked at the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding and supporting pupils' welfare and well-being. This included looking at case studies and reviewing the school's single central record of pre-employment checks.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair. The lead inspector also met with representatives of the local education authority.
- Inspectors considered the responses of pupils, staff and parents, including to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Christian Hicks, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Vikram Gukhool	Ofsted Inspector
Fiona Jatta	Ofsted Inspector
Charlotte Robinson	Ofsted Inspector
Brian Oppenheim	Ofsted Inspector

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