

Inspection of an outstanding school: Mowlem Primary School

Mowlem Street, Bishops Way, Bethnal Green, London E2 9HE

Inspection dates:

30 and 31 January 2024

Outcome

Mowlem Primary School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school sits at the heart of the local community. There is an inclusive culture in which everyone is made to feel welcome, whatever their religion or nationality. The school works together with parents and carers to meet pupils' needs. Staff know the pupils and their families well. They show genuine care for them. Strong relationships permeate throughout the school. Pupils feel accepted, loved and respected. They thrive in this supportive environment.

Leaders have the highest expectations for pupils' achievement and behaviour, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils know these expectations well and live up to them fully. Pupils are extremely polite, well mannered, and exceptionally well behaved. Classrooms are calm and well-ordered places for learning. On the playground, pupils enjoy spending time playing with their friends. Incidents of poor behaviour or bullying are rare and are dealt with quickly. Pupils are happy. They feel cared for and safe.

As they get older, pupils value the opportunities to take on roles and responsibilities, such as well-being ambassadors, digital leaders and school councillors. Pupils are dedicated to making the school the best it can possibly be, and they act as excellent role models for younger pupils.

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

Pupils benefit from the highly ambitious curriculum. Across all subjects, the essential knowledge and skills pupils should learn, and the order in which they should learn them, are clearly and precisely set out. Each step in learning is planned carefully from the early years to Year 6. Staff check on pupils' learning with precision to ensure that there are no gaps in pupils' knowledge. As a result, pupils develop a detailed understanding of the topics they learn.

Subject leaders understand how to monitor the curriculum. This ensures that the focus is always on pupils knowing and remembering more. Teachers are experts in the subjects they teach. The school has ensured that all staff receive high-quality training, which enables them to teach the curriculum with considerable skill. Staff provide pupils with engaging learning tasks that deepen pupils' learning. New ideas and concepts are explained clearly so that pupils understand well. Staff ask precise questions and regularly give pupils time to think and talk about their learning. As a result, pupils are confident and articulate, with a highly secure understanding of what they have been taught.

The school places a high priority on pupils learning to read. Leaders have implemented a rigorous early reading programme, including phonics. This results in pupils becoming accurate and fluent readers. The books that pupils read are very well matched to the sounds that they have learned. This gets them off to a flying start. If pupils fall behind in the reading programme, additional support is put in place promptly for those who need it. This helps them to keep up with their peers. Teachers read to pupils regularly. They model how to make reading aloud exciting for the listener. Pupils of all ages read a wide range of ambitious texts. Older pupils are articulate in recommending books. They encourage each other to read more widely.

Children in early years settle quickly into school. The relationships between adults and children are nurturing and aspirational. Routines are very well established, and children show excellent independence and autonomy. Children move into Year 1 as curious learners with the skills and knowledge they need to tackle the new curriculum.

The school has highly effective systems to identify the needs of pupils with SEND quickly. Following assessment, pupils have activities carefully adapted to ensure that they learn an ambitious curriculum. Adults are highly skilled in designing and teaching activities that precisely match the needs of pupils with SEND. As a result, staff ensure that all pupils are fully included in the life of the school.

Pupils experience an extensive range of opportunities that enhance their personal development. They learn about demonstrating respect for all religions, beliefs and different types of families. Pupils develop a strong understanding of protected characteristics and fundamental British values. They are well prepared to take their place as active citizens in modern Britain. Pupils have opportunities to develop their talents and interests through a broad range of clubs, including drama, arts and crafts and sporting activities. This is a truly inclusive school, which develops inclusive pupils. The school has developed highly effective strategies to promote pupils' regular attendance.

Governors know the school well. They ensure that they support and challenge school leaders effectively. Staff feel extremely well supported by leaders. They are proud to work at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in November 2017.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	100914
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	10296695
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co-Chairs of governing body	Brian Brown Mark Owen-Lloyd
Headteacher	Julia Burns
Website	www.mowlem.towerhamlets.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	1 and 2 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The executive headteacher also leads another local school.
- The school provides a breakfast club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other school leaders, teaching staff, the co-chair of governors and a range of other members of the governing body. The inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and history. For each deep dive, the inspector 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. The inspector also considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents, including those relating to behaviour and SEND.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in the playground and at lunchtime.
- The inspector considered the views of pupils, parents and staff through discussions during the inspection and the Ofsted surveys.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Chris Birtles, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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