

# Inspection of Mulberry School for Girls

Richard Street, Commercial Road, London E1 2JP

---

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 April 2024

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Outstanding**

---

The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Sixth-form provision

**Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The headteacher of this school is Alice Ward. This school is part of Mulberry Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Vanessa Ogden, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jane Farrell.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Mulberry School for Girls under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Mulberry School for Girls to be outstanding, before it opened as an academy.

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

At Mulberry, girls receive an outstanding education. Leaders have successfully established a positive and aspirational culture. Pupils show great dedication to their learning and take pride in their accomplishments. They consistently produce work of a high quality. These achievements are reflected in the excellent academic outcomes.

The school has high expectations for pupils' learning and conduct. Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils know the routines in lessons and no time is wasted. There are warm and respectful relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils are supportive of their peers and many volunteer as academic mentors. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do very well. This is because teachers are equally ambitious for these pupils.

The school provides extensive opportunities for pupils to develop their interests, talents and leadership skills. Pupils are excellent ambassadors for their school, including through the STEM Academy and Global Girl Leading programmes. Sixth-form students help to organise and host the annual youth conference. The arts and creativity are at the heart of the school. Pupils take up the many opportunities to participate in performances, events and competitions with enthusiasm.

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

There is a well-embedded and exceptionally ambitious curriculum for both the school and sixth form. Leaders have set out a clear vision and intent for each subject. This means teachers know the crucial knowledge that pupils need to learn. Leaders work closely with local primary schools to ensure that the curriculum builds successfully on what pupils already know. This helps pupils to get off to a flying start when they join. In some subjects, pupils are deliberately introduced to challenging content and concepts early on to help prepare them for later study, including at university.

In Year 7, the curriculum establishes clear foundations for future learning. In languages, for instance, pupils develop secure knowledge of the essential verbs needed to form basic sentences. In religious education, pupils learn the key conventions for asking ethical questions respectfully. This prepares them to explore the concept of morality in Year 8 and to engage with key philosophical questions in Year 9.

Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. In lessons, they use questioning skilfully to check pupils' understanding and extend their learning. They ensure that pupils have sufficient time and opportunities to practise so that their knowledge is secure. New information is presented clearly. Where needed, teachers make subtle and highly effective adaptations for pupils with SEND, ensuring that they learn the intended curriculum very well.

Pupils know the learning routines and follow them. Behaviour rarely disrupts learning. This is the result of leaders' deliberate work over time to establish a strong aspirational culture.

Reading is celebrated across the school. The library is very well attended and younger pupils look forward to their weekly library sessions. Book lists are carefully curated, allowing pupils to pursue their interests through reading. There is an appropriate phonics programme for pupils who are in the earlier stages of learning to read. This is delivered by staff who are well trained. This helps pupils to catch up quickly.

The school's determination to remove barriers to girls' achievement is uncompromising. Pupils understand that there should be no limits to their aspirations. This vision is underpinned by an exceptional personal development programme. It is highly ambitious in its scope and reach. Pupils are exposed to a wide range of experiences, ideas and opportunities. Many alumni contribute to this programme and serve as excellent role models. The programme of personal, social, health and economic education ensures that pupils learn the knowledge that they need to take care of their health and make informed choices. The curriculum is highly effective because it reflects the real-life challenges that pupils face.

The arts have high priority across the school. Pupils understand how creativity can enrich their lives. They pursue creative activities and engage with different and unfamiliar ideas with enthusiasm. Students in the sixth form benefit from an ambitious 'super curriculum', which provides regular opportunities to hear from leading thinkers and engage with topical issues. There is strong take-up of the offer in the sixth form, including from disadvantaged pupils. Students achieve exceptionally well. A high proportion of students transition successfully on to higher education and university.

Staff are proud to work here and there is strong support for their professional development. They work diligently to engage families and the wider community. There is strong uptake of the extensive training and support offered to them.

The school is supported very well by the trust and an experienced and committed local governing body. They ensure that leaders have the support that they need to realise their vision for pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	143629
<b>Local authority</b>	Tower Hamlets
<b>Inspection number</b>	10323431
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Girls
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,650
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	425
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Vanessa Ogden
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Jane Farrell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alice Ward
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.mulberryschoolforgirls.org">www.mulberryschoolforgirls.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Mulberry School for Girls is part of the Mulberry Schools Trust.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school’s education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Inspectors met with leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND, personal, social and health education, careers, behaviour and attendance, early reading, pupils’ wider development and the sixth form.
- Inspectors met with representatives from the board of trustees and the chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: modern foreign languages, mathematics, English, music and religious studies.
- 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 considered pupils’ learning in other subjects, including science, art, physical education, citizenship, geography, drama and sociology.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of staff about safeguarding, behaviour and their workload.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from the school and the sixth form. Pupils’ behaviour in lessons and at playtimes was observed.
- Inspectors considered the respective responses to Ofsted’s online surveys for parents and carers, staff and pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Polly Haste, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
Yvonne Chisholm	Ofsted Inspector
Michelle Bernard	Ofsted Inspector
Gareth Cross	Ofsted Inspector
Nigel Clemens	Ofsted Inspector
Ray Lau	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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2024