Inspection of East London Independent School

Welfare Road, Stratford, London E15 4HT

Inspection dates: 3 to 5 June 2025

Overall effectiveness	**Outstanding**
The quality of education	**Outstanding**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Outstanding**
Personal development	**Outstanding**
Leadership and management	**Outstanding**
Sixth-form provision	**Outstanding**
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
Does the school meet the independent school standards?	**Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils arrive at the school having experienced a turbulent time. All have been excluded from previous settings. Most pupils have missed out on significant periods of schooling. On arrival they receive a warm welcome from staff and peers. Pupils soon realise that the school will not give up on them. Teachers, support staff, social workers and therapists work together tirelessly. Together they ensure that every pupil settles and succeeds to the very best of their ability.

Pupils appreciate the positive professional relationships that they build with adults. Staff know them well and recognise when they are feeling down. When pupils struggle to manage their behaviour, staff help them to become calm. They teach pupils to value themselves first. This helps them to improve their behaviour towards others. Pupils reported that bullying sometimes happens, especially online. However, the school's response is swift and effective. As a result, both school sites are calm environments for learning.

Over time, pupils develop in confidence and resilience. All have genuine positions of leadership responsibility. Through the 'LIFE' curriculum, pupils learn important skills such as how to manage money. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education or employment.

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

The school offers a broad and ambitious curriculum. This identifies the important knowledge, vocabulary and skills that pupils need to learn. The curriculum is carefully adapted so that all pupils can work towards achieving their education, health and care plan targets. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Support staff and teachers work well together. They check pupils' understanding of taught content effectively. Staff address any misconceptions quickly. They provide opportunities for pupils to revisit what they have learned before.

Pupils enter the school at various times during the school year. Staff identify what pupils know, remember and can do. They identify where there are gaps and help pupils to catch-up. The school gives high priority to preparing pupils to engage with learning. Staff provide pupils with well-planned therapeutic and pastoral support. They review this with pupils, parents and carers and make changes where needed. Over time pupils develop increasingly positive attitudes to learning. They gain a range of appropriate qualifications. These include functional skills and GCSEs in English and mathematics.

In the school's post-16 department, students also complete programmes of study that suit their needs and careers aspirations. As well as studying English and mathematics, pupils access college courses. They select from options such as digital animation, construction and applied science. Students take part in enrichment and project-based learning leading to additional qualifications. Students benefit from a

well-sequenced personal, social, health education curriculum. They learn about important topics such as healthy relationships and consent. By the end of their time in the sixth form, students are confident about taking their next steps.

The school gives high priority to reading. In the primary phase, all pupils have a phonics lesson each day. This is adapted so that those pupils learning to decode get the help they need. Other pupils focus on developing their reading fluency and comprehension skills. This targeted approach is also used in the secondary phase. Staff use every opportunity to get pupils reading in class. They highlight the important vocabulary that they want pupils to know and remember. Pupils enjoy visiting the school and local libraries. They appreciate the special time they have for reading each day. Older pupils read a range of fiction and non-fiction texts with increasing confidence.

Teachers, support staff and therapists are intuitive and responsive in dealing with pupils' behaviour. They recognise that getting pupils ready to learn is key. Staff work together to identify pupils' 'triggers' for poor behaviour. They use a range of strategies to get pupils motivated to learn. Pupils respond positively to staff and to rewards such as 'CatchYa' cards. Pupils appreciate having a say in the running of the school. Pupils' attendance shows marked improvement, often from extremely low starting points. This is because the school is relentless yet sensitive in its approach.

Pupils enjoy an exceptional offer beyond the academic curriculum. Staff plan this around pupils' individual interests. The school prioritises pupils' physical and mental well-being. Pupils learn about the importance of good sleeping habits. They understand the negative impact of too much time spent on social media. During the school's annual 'culture week' pupils learn about culture, budgeting, food and clothing. Pupils frequently visit places of cultural interest such as museums in central London and the local mosque and gurdwara. There is a well-considered approach to careers within the school. All Year 10 and 13 pupils complete a work experience programme. Older pupils contribute to the local community through donations to the food bank. They take part in a gardening project where they grow food to sell to the local community. These experiences enable pupils to develop resilience and confidence.

Staff are highly committed to the school and its pupils. The school's focus on pupils' well-being extends to staff. Staff speak positively of the wide range of opportunities for professional development on offer to them.

The proprietor ensures that staff across the company share good practice. The experienced governing body have strong processes for checking the quality of education and therapeutic provision in the school. They apply the same level of rigour to the school's safeguarding arrangements. The proprietor ensures that the school meets the independent school standards consistently. This includes compliance with schedule 10 of the Equality Act. This sits at the heart of the school's inclusive ethos.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	136052
DfE registration number	316/6072
Local authority	Newham
Inspection number	10389225
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	90
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	12
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Thomas Keaney
Chair	Nick Pratt
Headteachers	Ishamar Blake (East London School) Ricardo Hylton (Nurture Primary)
Executive Headteacher	Gerard Strong
Annual fees (day pupils)	£72,916 to £92,400
Telephone number	020 8555 6737
Website	www.tces.org.uk/schools/east-london
Email address	admin.elis@tces.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 to 18 November 2022

Information about this school

- East London Independent Special School is a school within the TCES group.
- Since the previous inspection there have been changes to the senior leadership team and to staffing. The headteacher took up his post in November 2023. Ricardo Hylton is the headteacher of the primary site.
- The school now operates from two sites. These are:
  - East London Independent School, Welfare Road, London E15 4HT
  - Nurture Primary, Varley Road, London E16 3NR
- The main site at Welfare Road accommodates pupils aged 12 to 19. The Nurture Primary site has moved to Varley Road since the previous inspection. This caters for pupils aged seven to 12.
- All pupils have education, health and care plans. The school caters for neurodiverse pupils with autism spectrum disorder, social, emotional and mental health needs and other associated conditions.
- The school's previous full standard inspection took place in November 2022.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading and English, mathematics, humanities and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They also considered other subjects as part of this inspection.

- Inspectors met with the proprietor, chair of the governing body, headteachers, executive headteacher and other senior staff. They also had formal meetings with groups of staff and spoke with pupils. They had a telephone conversation with a local authority representative who places pupils at the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspection team: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extend to which the school has created an open and positive culture of safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- To check the school's compliance with the independent school standards, inspectors carried out a range of activities including meeting with leaders, a site walk to check the premises, a check of the content on the school's website and scrutinised the school's records and documentation.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted surveys for parents and carers and staff. They also had telephone conversations with some parents.

Inspection team

Lisa Strong, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jonathan Newby	Ofsted Inspector

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