

East London Science School

The Clock Mill, Three Mill Lane, Bromley-By-Bow, London, E3 3DU

Inspection dates 9–10 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders and governors have a strong vision founded on high expectations, a science-focused curriculum and dynamic teaching. They all understand this vision and the school has made a strong start in fulfilling its aim.
- The quality of teaching has improved steadily since the school opened and is typically good. Work with a wide range of other organisations and regular training support teaching well.
- Data provided by the school indicate that the progress of students is at least good, and in some cases better. Achievement in English is particularly strong.
- The behaviour of students in and around school is good. A strong sense of community means students treat each other, staff and visitors to the school with respect.
- Students feel safe and the school has effective systems to support their care. Incidents of bullying are exceptionally low.
- An outstanding programme of educational visits and trips supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students extremely well. Other activities, such as the school's focus on debating, help develop tolerance and resilience.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of feedback to help students to extend their learning and deepen their understanding is inconsistent across the school.
- In Year 7, the achievement of different groups of students in mathematics is variable. Boys, disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs all achieve less well than their peers.
- Governors' records of their work with the school lack precision and detail as public documents.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the principal, members of the leadership team, middle leaders, newly qualified teachers and members of the governing body. An inspector interviewed a group of students and inspectors spoke informally with students at other times during the inspection.
- Inspectors visited 15 lessons and carried out a number of shorter visits to lessons to help inform particular aspects relating to the quality of teaching. Members of the leadership team were present for nearly all visits to lessons.
- Inspectors took account of responses to the staff questionnaire and considered 31 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View. They also considered the school's own survey of parents.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised. This included information about attendance, achievement, behaviour and safety. The inspection team looked at the school's evaluation of its own performance, information relating to performance management and the school development plan. Inspectors also studied minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to the quality of teaching.

Inspection team

Sai Patel, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Angela Podmore

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- East London Science School opened in September 2013 and is designated as an 11 to 19 mixed comprehensive school. There are currently 206 students at the school and all are in Year 7 or Year 8. The school has capacity for 1,000 and is oversubscribed for the forthcoming academic year.
- The school is part of the East London Science School Trust.
- Around seven in 10 students are from a minority ethnic background. This is significantly higher than the national average, with small proportions of students from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Around one in every three of the students speaks English as an additional language. This is significantly higher than the national average.
- Approximately one in every three students is disabled or has special educational needs; this is double the national average.
- A significantly higher than average proportion of students are eligible for pupil premium funding, with around half being classified as being from a disadvantaged background.
- The school supports one student who is being educated off site.
- No information is available to indicate if the school is meeting current government floor targets.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching of all students by ensuring they receive high-quality feedback in all subjects so they know what they need to do to improve their learning and deepen their understanding.
- Raise achievement in mathematics by addressing the underperformance of some student groups, notably boys, disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs. Ensure that the gap between students' achievement in English and mathematics diminishes.
- Ensure those responsible for governance develop and implement a systematic approach to how they record their work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The principal and governors provide a clear, simple and strong vision which permeates through the school. There is a strong sense of community within the school and this creates a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Leaders are committed to continuous improvement and have successfully refined many of their systems and procedures over the last year to make them more effective.
- Leaders monitor teaching frequently and their assessments about its quality are accurate. A new system recently implemented by the school provides more detailed analyses of the quality of teaching. Quality assurance measures are in place, but these do not always identify issues such as inconsistencies in the quality of marking. Leaders acknowledge the need for further refinement in this area. The school is proactive in helping staff and trainees gain qualified teacher status. The school also provides well-structured subject-specific support and training for primary schools, for example, through 'the physics factory'. Leaders have plans to broaden and emulate the success of this programme in other subject areas.
- This term the school implemented a new and more effective system for monitoring the performance of teachers. The school has its own pay scale and measures performance against five core competencies. Staff are rewarded only after a process of careful consideration by leaders and governors. The level of remuneration varies and links to the degree to which they have met the core competencies. Leaders readily tackle poor performance, and bespoke programmes of individual support have been successful in improving teaching. Staff, including newly qualified teachers, speak highly about the school and of the quality of support that they receive.
- Middle leaders are developing their practice as the school grows. Currently, all have additional whole-school responsibilities, such as for oversight of teaching or for the organisation of the enrichment curriculum. Regular training for staff has been effective in supporting the development of the curriculum and teaching. However, little training relates to developing their leadership roles. Leaders have realistic plans to develop this aspect in line with the growth of the school.
- The school works closely with students, parents and their primary schools to gain a comprehensive and accurate view of those joining the school. The school assesses students prior to starting in Year 7 and specific students attend an intensive week-long summer academic support programme. This, together with clear and well-communicated expectations, has a positive impact on the start students make at the school. Further testing in Year 7 is used to good effect to refine groupings.
- All students have the same aspirational target of achieving A* or A grades at GCSE in all subjects. Leaders then focus on providing appropriate tailored provision to individuals throughout their time at the school so that they can achieve this goal. This approach aligns with the school's vision of high expectations and all students having access to the best education possible. The school has made sensible decisions about developing its own approach to assessment, based on academic progression towards these targets. The school formally reviews student performance at three points in the year, and comprehensive tracking systems provide detailed analyses. The school quickly identifies underperformance and middle leaders with responsibility for year groups work diligently with students and families to support learning.
- The curriculum is organised in an effective way such that students can access additional support each afternoon. The effectiveness of these strategies for students has had marked success in English, but less so in mathematics. Leaders and governors recognise this as being a priority and have taken appropriate steps to address this subject gap through teacher recruitment.
- The curriculum continues to evolve as the school grows and while science has a suitable prominence, it is not to the detriment of other subjects. The longer school day allows for the delivery of a diverse range of subjects and other activities. Thus, students have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. The school's focus on developing confidence and students' ability to relate to the world around them is successful. Modern languages have high prominence, with students in Key Stage 3 studying two languages, including Latin. The two hours per week of sport helps students to lead healthy lifestyles. Effective guidance provided by tutors in Year 8 has enabled students to make their choices for GCSE study. Leaders intend to develop advice and guidance about careers in line with the growth of the school.
- An outstanding range of enrichment activities supports the formal curriculum. Two groups of students go on an external visit nearly every day of the school year, and each student gains at least 30 different experiences through the course of the year. Visits include excursions to the Science Museum, the London Buddhist Centre, HMS Belfast and the offices of the Telegraph newspaper. Students consolidate their learning well on these trips through the completion of organised learning journals. The enrichment

curriculum, supported by weekly lessons on ethics and other activities, means the students' understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues is outstanding. The wide range of opportunities combined with their academic study prepares students well for life in modern Britain. They show respect for one another, a tolerance of lifestyles and views different to their own. Discrimination is not tolerated.

- Other groups of students use the two hours in the afternoon for 'prep', which provides them with an opportunity to complete homework or to attend additional English or mathematics classes. This is effective in supporting not only their learning but also in the development of self-discipline, organisation and independence.
- The school's vision and approach embody the equality of provision; all students receive the same opportunities and access to the curriculum. Examples of this include the strong levels of achievement of those students who speak English as an additional language, and of girls in the sciences.
- The school uses pupil premium funding effectively to provide a range of appropriate activities to promote the all-round development of disadvantaged students. This includes additional English and mathematics sessions, access to online learning packages, a breakfast club and support for enrichment activities. Year 7 catch-up funding supports some of these activities and provides the week-long summer programme focused on developing literacy and numeracy. Data provided by the school indicate that these measures are having a positive impact; gaps in the performance of disadvantaged students in comparison to their peers are closing; this is more pronounced in English than in mathematics.
- Leaders monitor attendance effectively. Data provided by the school indicate that attendance levels are close to the national average. Persistent absence in the previous academic year, however, was higher than the national average. Leaders have been working successfully on improving the attendance of those who do not attend regularly enough through engagement with students and parents. There are signs of some improvement in the current academic year, but greater impetus is required if persistent absence is to reduce further.
- The school provides effective support for a student who is educated off site. The school monitors attendance and progress closely through regular liaison with a tutor.
- The school's evaluation of its own performance is accurate. Leaders recognise the strengths of the school and are accurate in their identification of priorities for development.
- Leaders have established appropriate safeguarding policies and processes and both staff and students are aware of how to report any safeguarding concerns that they may have.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - A new Chair of the Governing Body and Vice-Chair took up post early in January 2015. A restructuring of the governing body occurred shortly after. Governors are clear about the aims of the school and have been proactive in ensuring the governing body as a whole contains an appropriate range of skills and experience.
 - Regular and informal contact helps governors provide suitable support and challenge for leaders. They have access to detailed information relating to the current achievement of students and on-going training aids them in their interpretation of this data. However, formal minutes of meetings do not record the level of their interaction in sufficient depth or detail.
 - A newly appointed governor oversees pupil premium funding. Governors monitor the expenditure of pupil premium funding well, but evaluation of the impact of the spending is less comprehensive. This is especially true in relation to expenditure linked to non-academic interventions. Governors are aware that gaps in students' progress in Year 7 are greater than those in Year 8 and that students' achievement in mathematics lags behind other subject areas. They have challenged the school effectively on this point and are monitoring the situation closely.
 - Governors are knowledgeable of the new arrangements for the performance management of staff and understand their function in the process. They have changed the way in which the performance management of the Principal is completed and this is now more robust. They are aware of the quality of teaching and can identify areas of strong and weaker practice. The governing body is strategic in managing the growth of the school and supports the leadership team effectively in staff recruitment and in increasing leadership capacity.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good.
- Students, for the most part, conduct themselves well in lessons, around school, and in public. They wear their uniform with pride and are respectful of their environment. They demonstrate positive attitudes to

their learning and settle in lessons quickly. Scrutiny of records of behaviour indicates that, on a small number of occasions, students' behaviour is not always as it should be. The school is swift to take effective action in such cases. Leaders have reviewed policies and updated procedures linked to behaviour through the course of the year and, while it is too early to assess the full impact of these actions, evidence suggests incidents of errant behaviour are reducing.

- The site has been adapted to meet the needs of the school and is well maintained. There are very few signs of litter.
- Instances of bullying are very rare, with only a single incident recorded in the current academic year.
- The very large majority of responses to Parent View and staff questionnaires confirm inspectors' judgement that behaviour is managed well.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students value the information that they receive on staying safe both in and out of school, for example, information from the police on the dangers of becoming involved in gangs. They recognise the strong systems of support in the school and know who to talk to about any concerns they may have and are confident staff will deal with matters swiftly.
- Students are aware of many different forms of bullying and know how to keep themselves safe online through their learning in ethics lessons. However, they were less aware of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. Leaders have already initiated engagement with the 'Prevent' strategy.
- Leaders are diligent in ensuring that all external activities have suitable risk assessments carried out and that the levels of supervision of students, including when they are in public places, are appropriate. Students learn about identifying dangers and gauging risk in practical subjects such as science and physical education. All staff have received appropriate training relating to safeguarding and fire safety, and a significant number has been trained in first aid.
- The school works well with the local authority, primary schools and external agencies to ensure the care and welfare of its students. When referrals are made to relevant authorities, the school is appropriate in its approach and subsequent actions.
- The very large majority of parents who contributed to Parent View, and staff, confirm the inspector's judgement that the school takes all reasonable steps to ensure that students are kept safe at this school.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good. It is not outstanding because there is variation in some subjects.
- Where teaching is typically most effective, high expectations and strong subject knowledge are evident. Students are challenged well to grapple with complex ideas and advanced concepts. An example was a science lesson involving Year 8 students working on alkenes and understanding the notion of unsaturated carbon bonds. Skilful questioning also encourages students to think for themselves and reflect on their existing knowledge and learning. However, this practice is less evident or effective in other curriculum areas, including mathematics, and this serves to limit the progress students make in those subjects.
- The quality of written feedback to enable students to develop their learning is inconsistent. In some areas, such as religious education, feedback is exemplary and in line with the expectations of the school. Frequent assessment provides purposeful comments for students to consider. Students act on these comments and this results in rapid gains in their learning. However, there is significant variation in the quality of assessment across the school. Inconsistency also exists within individual subject areas, including mathematics.
- The school places a clear emphasis on literacy and the coordinator has led initiatives in this area with marked success. All students partake in reading at least once per week and an effective programme of debating develops students' verbal skills and confidence. Teachers' routine use of subject-specific terminology in lessons accelerates learning and understanding. Numeracy is less well developed; the school intends to create a lead for this role in the near future.
- Effective support is provided to those students who require additional support through small group work and, where required, individually.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is good. It is not outstanding because data provided by the school indicate that, although students make progress in mathematics at least in line with the national average, variation remains in the

performance of some groups of students.

- The combination of an aspirational curriculum, high expectations and specialist teaching meets the needs of the most able in nearly all areas of the school. The school's strategy of grouping the most-able students into separate classes allows teachers to plan for high levels of challenge and enquiry, and the subsequent high levels of achievement made by students reflects this.
- The school has developed its own method of assessment and does not use, or routinely reference, National Curriculum levels. The school tests students every half term to ascertain their current levels of attainment and their progress towards annual targets derived from their Year 11 target. Detailed analysis of this information is used well by leaders to ensure the future needs of individual students are met.
- The school provided inspectors with a detailed and methodical comparison of the progress of its students in English and mathematics with others nationally. Achievement data for Year 8 indicate high levels of progress in both English and mathematics, with a very large majority of students making better progress in comparison to their peers nationally. The high levels of achievement mean there is no significant variation between different groups of students.
- Year 7 does not show the same consistent and strong levels of achievement of Year 8. In mathematics, although progress is in line with national levels, it lags behind levels of achievement in English by some margin. Data provided by the school show significant variation in the progress of various subgroups. Disadvantaged students, boys, and those with special educational needs in Year 7 all make less progress than their peers in the school and other students nationally. This is in stark contrast to English where, in Year 7, disadvantaged students perform better than their peers and other students nationally; this represents a significant closing of the gap in achievement in comparison to the previous academic year. In mathematics, gaps in achievement remain the same as last year.
- The performance of those students who speak English as an additional language is in line with the average of their peers in the school in both English and mathematics.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	139834
Local authority	Newham
Inspection number	450299
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dennis Hayes
Principal	David Perks
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 8981 2680
Fax number	N/A
Email address	info@eastlondonscienceschool.co.uk

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