

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



22 February 2019

Mr David Perks
Principal
East London Science School
The Clock Mill, Three Mill Lane
Bromley-by-Bow
London
E3 3DU

Dear Mr Perks

Short inspection of East London Science School

Following my visit to the school on 22 January 2019 with Joanne Hamill, Ofsted Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in June 2015.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

You and your leadership team have established a school with high aspirations for all pupils. You want pupils to experience a wide range of subjects and enjoy cultural activities that will broaden their horizons. For example, you have introduced classics and Latin in key stage 3, and all pupils in key stage 4 study a modern foreign language at GCSE. You are determined not to limit what pupils can achieve. You want all pupils to aspire to the highest grades at GCSE and have taken bold decisions that reflect this. For example, all pupils are entered for higher tier GCSE examinations regardless of their prior attainment.

You manage the school across the three sites effectively. You have overcome a range of challenges, including how to feed pupils at lunchtime without a designated dining space or kitchen. You also make good use of the rooms you have available to teach lessons, most of which were not designed as classrooms.

Pupils behave well in school. They are courteous and respectful and enjoy positive relationships with each other. Pupils take pride in themselves and look smart in their uniform. Pupils enjoy school. Those who spoke to inspectors said that they appreciate the wide range of enrichment opportunities they receive. Pupils said that they enjoyed a recent trip to a local museum to learn about the slave trade.

You and your team are aware of the school's successes and areas for development. For example, you have identified that in 2018 disadvantaged pupils in Year 11 did not achieve as well as their peers. Pupils' progress in mathematics and modern foreign languages was weaker than in other subjects last year. Mathematics was identified as an area for improvement during the last inspection, and that it remains a priority.

You have attempted to address the other areas for improvement identified during the last inspection. Governance has been strengthened, and governors now record their work more systematically. However, your work to ensure that know what they need to do to improve their learning has not been as effective.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your team ensure that pupils are safe in school. Despite the challenges of managing a school split across three sites, you have created safeguarding systems that are effective and understood by all staff. When you appoint new staff, you ensure that they are suitable to work with children and you maintain up-to-date safeguarding records.

All staff receive appropriate safeguarding training. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding receive enhanced training, and this ensures that they are knowledgeable about current safeguarding issues. New staff joining the school receive appropriate training so that they know what to do if they are concerned about a child. Staff have a clear understanding of the school's safeguarding procedures. They are vigilant and know the warning signs that may suggest a pupil is at risk from harm. Staff know what to do if they are concerned, and they report their concerns swiftly. The designated safeguarding lead acts with the same speed, referring matters to the appropriate agency swiftly.

Governors take their responsibility for safeguarding seriously, and those with responsibility for overseeing this are appropriately trained. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school, and they are taught how to keep themselves safe outside and when they are online.

Inspection findings

- For the first key line of enquiry, we agreed to look at what leaders are doing to improve outcomes in mathematics. This is because in 2018, pupils' progress at the end of Year 11 was weaker in mathematics than in other subjects, including English. Moreover, improving outcomes in mathematics was one of the areas for improvement identified during the last inspection.
- In 2018, pupils in Year 11 did not make as strong progress from their starting points as they should have done in mathematics. Senior leaders have responded to last year's GCSE results by changing the way mathematics is taught. There is now more emphasis on pupils acquiring a range of mathematical skills than there was previously.
- In some lessons, teachers provide pupils with clear explanations, and this helps

them to develop their understanding. However, more typically, teaching does not challenge pupils sufficiently. Leaders expect all pupils to aspire to the highest GCSE grade possible, irrespective of their starting point. Teachers are unaware of pupils' prior attainment. This information is not provided by school leaders. Consequently, teachers do not consider pupils' abilities when they plan work for pupils. This results in a lack of challenge for the most able, and a lack of support for the lower-attaining pupils.

- Work in books typically shows that pupils currently in the school are still making weak progress over time. Pupils are not routinely given guidance that helps them to develop their understanding. Mathematics has been a priority for the school since the last inspection. Recent and current progress indicates that leaders have still not addressed this issue successfully.
- For the second key line of enquiry, we looked at what leaders are doing to improve outcomes in modern foreign languages. This is because in 2018, pupils in Year 11 achieved significantly below other pupils nationally in this subject.
- Leaders have taken the decision that all pupils should study a modern foreign language. Pupils can choose either French, Spanish or German. In 2018, pupils in Year 11 studying German made stronger progress than those studying French.
- Leaders have identified that pupils' progress in modern foreign languages is a priority for the school. They have already taken steps to secure improvement. Pupils were not as well prepared for their GCSE examination last year as they should have been. Leaders had not made sure that teaching staff understood the GCSE requirements fully.
- In 2018, all pupils were entered for the higher paper regardless of their prior attainment. Pupils with low and middle prior attainment made less progress and attained less well than their peers nationally with the same starting points.
- Pupils currently in the school continue to make weak progress over time, particularly in French. One reason for this is that teachers do not check that pupils have understood fully before they move on to a new concept.
- For the third key line of enquiry, we looked at what leaders are doing to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. This is because in 2018, disadvantaged pupils in Year 11 did not achieve as well as their peers overall and in most subjects.
- Leaders spend the additional funding they receive for this group of pupils on a range of activities. Pupils experience trips to local museums as well as residential trips to the countryside and overseas. Pupils enjoy these experiences. However, leaders do not measure the impact they have on pupils' progress.
- Not all teachers know who the disadvantaged pupils are. As a result, teachers do not consider the needs of disadvantaged pupils when they plan lessons. Disadvantaged pupils do not attend as well as their peers. They are more likely to be absent from school. The school's own records indicate that almost one third of disadvantaged pupils are persistently absent from school. Work in books indicates that disadvantaged pupils continue to make weak progress over time.
- For the final key line of enquiry, we looked at what leaders are doing to ensure middle prior-attaining pupils make stronger progress over time. This is because in

2018, middle prior-attaining pupils in Year 11 made much weaker progress than their peers in most subjects.

- Leaders have identified that, in some subjects, middle prior-attaining pupils may not have understood the examination specification last year. Leaders are seeking to address this with the pupils currently in Year 11 by providing greater clarity around what is expected.
- You have decided that all pupils should take the highest tier GCSE examination. Pupils are not being appropriately prepared for the demands of the higher tier examinations in mathematics.
- You have made very few adaptations to the provision for middle prior attainers this year. Work in books indicates that they are still not achieving as well as they should over time.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the additional pupil premium funding is used effectively so that disadvantaged pupils make stronger progress
- pupils are given guidance which supports them in their learning and helps them to know what they need to do to improve their work
- teachers consider pupils' starting points when they plan tasks so that all groups of pupils make stronger progress
- the quality of teaching in mathematics and modern foreign languages improves so that all pupils achieve as well as they should.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Newham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Niall Gallagher
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we met with you, senior and middle leaders and members of the governing body. We made visits to the three school sites. We made visits to classrooms, jointly with senior leaders. We spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at a range of pupils' work in their books and folders. We met with pupils from all key stages to talk about their views of the school and reviewed 57 responses to the Ofsted parents' questionnaire, Parent View. We evaluated a range of school documentation, including leaders' development plans, minutes of

governing body meetings and safeguarding information.