

Inspection of Leigh Academy Blackheath

Old Dover Road, Blackheath, London SE3 8SY

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 December 2022

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This extends to academic learning and life outside school. Staff provide pupils with detailed knowledge that prepares them well for their next steps. Pupils engage with the local community, including volunteering at a local food bank.

Pupils are happy and safe. Staff get to know pupils well through the school's college system. This enables pupils from all year groups to interact with each other. Older pupils actively support younger ones. There are always adults available to speak to pupils if they are worried about anything. Bullying is not common here. Where it does happen, leaders take it seriously. They take effective and timely action to stop it.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. Classrooms are calm places where pupils can focus on their learning. Staff create a safe environment where pupils can speak up if they do not understand. Pupils become articulate and confident. They are proud to be part of this school community.

Pupils know the school's values. These permeate everything they do. Pupils show high levels of respect for each other's differences. They embrace the extensive opportunities for personal development the school provides.

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

Leaders provide a curriculum which matches and far exceeds the ambition of the national curriculum. In English, for example, pupils study plays by Shakespeare. They also read works by his contemporaries Marlowe and Cervantes. This high ambition is the same for pupils with SEND. All pupils access the same curriculum. Staff are well informed about individual pupils' needs. They make highly effective adaptations to teaching strategies and resources. This helps pupils with SEND to achieve well.

Leaders have planned well-sequenced curriculums that build pupils' knowledge and skills. Teachers revisit pupils' previous learning each lesson. Pupils find this helpful because they can better retain knowledge.

Teachers are subject experts. They recognise the important knowledge that pupils need to get better in their subject. Across the curriculum, teachers check pupils' understanding. They adapt lessons to address any misconceptions. Teachers ensure pupils' knowledge is secure before moving on.

Across the curriculum, staff give high priority to the development of vocabulary. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' use of spoken language. They correct pupils' use of subject-specific vocabulary during lessons. Similarly, leaders recognise the importance of reading. Teachers provide phonics support for pupils who struggle

to decode. They work with pupils whose reading comprehension is weaker. The school encourages pupils to develop a love of reading. Staff check that all pupils read regularly. All pupils take part in the school's annual literary festival.

Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is superb. They are taught how to be active learners through the 'Leigh Academy Blackheath learner lesson'. Low-level disruption to lessons is rare. If it happens, teachers use school procedures to ensure pupils' learning is not interrupted.

The school offers a broad range of opportunities for personal development. Leaders ensure that all pupils can fully participate in these. Pupils go on visits to the theatre and museums in central London, as well as take part in the annual school production. Pupils enjoy trips abroad such as the ski trip. They participate in a variety of clubs and societies at lunchtime and after school. There is a bespoke offer for pupils with SEND, including a quiet space for them to go to at lunchtime. Pupils with SEND get one-to-one support to prepare them for the next steps. All pupils appreciated a well-planned careers programme. This includes up-to-date labour market information, impartial advice and encounters with employers.

Staff are proud to work at this school where everyone's contribution is valued. Leaders provide excellent development opportunities for all staff. They are conscious of staff's workload and well-being. Knowledgeable governors and trust members support and challenge leaders effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is a top priority. Leaders provide regular reminders about safeguarding. All staff share safeguarding concerns, no matter how small, with a knowledgeable safeguarding team. Leaders are aware of their local safeguarding risks. The safeguarding team take swift action to support pupils and their families. They liaise with external agencies and think carefully about the help that individuals need. Staff make regular checks on pupils who may be in need.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. They can speak confidently about a range of safeguarding themes. These include consent and online safety.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	145895
Local authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	10255282
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	900
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Frank Green
Principal	Emma Smith
Website	www.leighacademyblackheath.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Leigh Academy Blackheath opened as a new free school within Leigh Academies Trust in September 2018. The principal took up her post at the same time.
- The school occupied its new building in September 2020.
- There are 900 pupils from Years 7 to 11 on roll. In September 2023, the school will open its sixth-form provision.
- One registered alternative provision is used for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical qualifications and apprenticeships.
- Leigh Academy Blackheath is an International Baccalaureate World School. It offers the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with leaders with responsibility for curriculum, behaviour and attendance, personal development and safeguarding.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, history, mathematics and modern foreign languages. They met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the effectiveness of safeguarding, including through discussions with leaders, staff, pupils and governors.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents, staff and pupils, including responses to Ofsted's online surveys.
- Inspectors spoke to members of the governing body and senior staff from the trust, including the chief executive officer.

Inspection team

Lisa Strong, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Polly Haste	His Majesty's Inspector
Hannah Glossop	His Majesty's Inspector
Rebecca Iles-Smith	His Majesty's Inspector

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