

Eleanor Smith School

North Street, Plaistow, London, E13 9HN

Inspection dates 23–24 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher and governors have worked hard to ensure that this school continues to be good. They have created a harmonious community where staff, pupils and parents and carers thrive.
- School leaders regularly check the quality of teaching to make sure it is leading to good progress for all pupils.
- In the last three years, all pupils, whether they are boys or girls, educated part time or full time, including those who have complex medical and physical needs, made good progress in all subjects.
- Pupils supported by additional funding also made good progress, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together in effective teams to ensure that pupils get one-to-one and small-group teaching when they need it. As a result, the challenging behaviour of pupils improves rapidly when they join the school, and a high proportion return to their mainstream school after two years.
- The school gathers and keeps robust records of pupils' academic progress, attendance and behaviour. School leaders use this information to ensure that future planning is based on sound evidence.
- Children in the early years make good progress because they are taught by experienced and well-trained adults.
- Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the continued improvements of the school.
- Pupils' social and communication skills are improving rapidly because of the school's focus on their social, moral, cultural and spiritual development in all lessons. Pupils respect each other and adults, and develop positive attitudes to their learning. As a result, behaviour is good and pupils feel safe.
- Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They use effective strategies to ensure that they are well informed about how well the school is doing and the performance of its pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Teaching is not yet outstanding because a small number of pupils in the early years and Key Stage 4 are not doing as well as they could.
- Teachers are not always moving learning on as soon as pupils are ready. This slows the progress of some children, particularly in the early years.
- A few pupils in Key Stage 4 are not making enough progress because teachers' expectations of them are sometimes too low.
- The number of pupils who are temporarily excluded or who are absent from school is not reducing rapidly enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 parts of lessons jointly with the headteacher and/or two deputy headteachers. They also held a number of meetings with members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspectors visited all classrooms, toured the school's buildings on both sites and discussed the school's curriculum.
- The lead inspector had meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body and vice chair, two representatives from the local authority, and the headteacher and deputy headteacher of a mainstream feeder primary school.
- Further meetings were held with senior and middle leaders as well as a team of teaching assistants and support staff.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. The lead inspector interviewed 11 parents and carers and considered one written communication and 22 responses to the school's hardcopy questionnaire provided to parents and carers during this visit. The lead inspector also took account of the opinions of the 49 staff who completed the Ofsted staff questionnaire.
- The inspection team observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and in the playground, had discussions with them and listened to them read.
- Inspectors analysed the school's information on attainment and progress. They looked closely at documentation relating to safeguarding, the school's evaluation of its performance, its future plans, attendance and behaviour. They also looked at the school's website.

Inspection team

Justina Ilochi, Lead inspector
Clementina Aina

Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Eleanor Smith School caters part time or full time for pupils with a range of complex behaviour, emotional and social difficulties. Most pupils have underlying complex medical needs including speech, language and communication difficulties and a few also have physical disabilities. Almost all pupils have a statement of special education needs.
- The Eleanor Smith School is on a split site. Primary-aged pupils and pupils in Year 7 attend the Plaistow site on a part-time placement for two or three days each week. These pupils also have a mainstream school place. However, a few of these pupils attend on a full-time basis because of their complex needs.
- Secondary-aged pupils in Years 8 to 11 attend the Beckton site. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 attend part time while pupils in Years 10 and 11 attend full time.
- The school has very few girls.
- About 50% of pupils are from a range of ethnic minority backgrounds and a few speak English as an additional language.
- Almost all pupils are supported by the pupil premium; this is much higher than average. This is additional government funding for children who are looked after or who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are offered an alternative vocational curriculum with outside providers such as Newham Alternative Provision (NAP) and Laings in Newham.
- All children in the early years attend part time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the attainment of the few pupils in Key Stage 4 by making sure that:
 - demanding and challenging targets are set for all pupils as soon as they join the school
 - teaching always takes account of these pupils' previous achievement when planning activities to match their abilities.
- Improve the progress of children in the early years by ensuring that:
 - the school is taking full advantage of its collaboration with children's mainstream schools to plan the learning that matches the ability range of its children
 - teachers move the learning on as soon as children are ready.
- Further improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the new systems for managing the behaviour and improving the attendance of pupils are embedding faster and having an impact on attendance and temporary exclusions figures.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher ensures that the school is a harmonious community where staff, parents, carers and pupils work together well. They all confirm this view. He is well supported by experienced governors, senior and subject leaders, as well as support staff. All pupils, both part time and full time, make good progress both academically and in their personal development. As a result, in the last three years, the number of pupils who returned to their mainstream schools increased rapidly.
- The school's view on how well it is doing is accurate and shared by all staff. Robust systems link staff performance to salary and the achievement of pupils. Future plans are focused on ensuring that staff are continually well trained to carry out their role. Many staff are enrolled on a range of professional and academic qualifications. Consequently, staff are motivated to work as hard as they can and the quality of teaching is improving rapidly.
- The headteacher has empowered staff to lead on various aspects of the school's work. All teachers are leaders of subjects, and some teaching assistants have also been given leadership roles, such as running new projects that support the preparation of pupils for apprenticeships. This has led to the development of strong teams responsible for significant improvements to the way information is gathered and analysed. A good example is the single record the school keeps on pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour, which enables staff to see at a glance how well individual pupils are doing. The school supports pupils in Key Stage 4 to make good career choices for the future.
- The school keeps accurate data on pupils' progress in all subjects in Key Stages 1, 2, and 3, especially reading, writing and mathematics. This has helped leaders to plan one-to-one and small-group teaching to fill the gaps in education for the vast majority of pupils who have complex behavioural, emotional and social needs. As a consequence, pupils with additional complex medical and physical difficulties are making good progress.
- The school relentlessly strives to improve pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills through well-planned, all-year-round activities and a focus on developing pupils' resilience. This has taught pupils to enjoy relating with their peers and to treat adults with respect, thus preparing them well for life in modern Britain. Snapshots showing examples of school activities based on developing these qualities are proudly displayed in classrooms and communal areas on the two school sites.
- The school works closely with several external agencies, including the police, to ensure that it promotes equal opportunities for all its pupils to feel safe and do as well as they can. The school's curriculum is enriched through inviting prominent speakers to talk in assemblies, taking pupils on trips to important places and encouraging them to join after-school clubs and societies. Discrimination is not tolerated.
- School leaders ensure that the additional funding provided for most of its pupils is managed well and the impact checked often. For example, leaders have used pupil premium funding over the last two years to employ more staff to focus on literacy and emotional development. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils have made similar progress to other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The limited funding the school receives for primary physical education and sports was used to buy in sports coaching and equipment. This has also helped to improve the skills of staff, who are more confident in their support of pupils to get good qualifications in physical education.
- All staff have high expectations of the behaviour of pupils in the school. They make sure that all pupils are set challenging behaviour targets which are visible in pupils' books and displayed on walls in the classrooms.
- Pupils progress well at alternative provision because their behaviour and attendance are good and carefully monitored by the school leaders.
- Most pupils are not set challenging and demanding academic, end-of-key-stage targets in any subjects. As a result, few pupils in Key Stage 4 are not given enough opportunities to obtain better grades in GCSE subjects, including in English and mathematics. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 who spoke to the lead inspector said they would have liked opportunities to do more GCSE subjects like their contemporaries in mainstream schools.
- The local authority has worked closely with the school through commissioning a review of its performance this year. The report from the review was used by governors to raise important questions and helped them to support the school's new direction.
- Governors and school leaders check safeguarding arrangements frequently to ensure that they are effective.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body is one of the school's strengths. Members of the governing body are experienced, well trained and effective. They understand the school's strengths and weaknesses, and contribute strongly to the school's improvement and future plans. For example, they studied the school's current position after the local authority review and presented a full report to the school on their findings. They have high expectations of school leaders and staff, using good systems to check the performance of staff. Governors ensure that the school tackles underperformance and rewards good teaching. Their agenda for meetings include regular reports on the quality of teaching and the performance of pupils. Governors are aware of how the school is struggling to improve attendance and behaviour. They have supported the systematic gathering of data into a single record which enables them to hold school leaders to account more accurately. They oversee how the school prepares pupils' learning for life in modern Britain by regularly checking the school's calendar of events. Governors manage well any additional funding the school receives because they understand the position of the school's finances. For example, they know how the pupil premium is being used to benefit disadvantaged pupils who also have underlying speech, language and communication difficulties.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Parents and carers, staff and pupils confirm that behaviour has improved since the last inspection. This is because they work collaboratively to foster the aims of the school's new 'resilience' project. All pupils are set individual targets based on accurate assessments of their behaviour and they are rewarded when they achieve their goals.
- Leaders know that pupils display good behaviour when they attend the Newham Alternative Provision (NAP). This is because pupils are well supervised even when they are learning outside school.
- Recently introduced procedures to manage behaviour are robust and followed consistently by all staff. Pupils are taught to take responsibility for their behaviour, showing respect both to each other and to adults. Their attitudes to learning are rapidly improving from the very low starting points they display when joining the school. As a consequence, all pupils, particularly those with complex physical and mental needs, are making good progress.
- All pupils develop good listening, thinking and communication skills. Teaching assistants who work with pupils on a one-to-one basis, or in small groups, encourage them to pause and think before expressing their views both in and around the school. As a result, pupils are developing good social and personal skills. Pupils with underlying speech, language and communication difficulties are well prepared for returning to their mainstream schools and the next stages in their education.
- The behaviour of pupils is not yet outstanding. Even though serious incidents reduced this year, the total number of incidents did not. This is because strategies for managing behaviour are new and have not embedded enough to have a significant impact on behaviour over time. Nonetheless, temporary exclusions are still too high.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Parents and carers, and pupils as well as staff unanimously agree that this is true.
- Pupils know who to talk to if they feel unsafe, and they say adults always listen to them and act promptly if issues arise. Pupils are taught to work effectively together. For example, older pupils in the 'Secondary' often take responsibility for the safety of younger ones in the 'Primary'.
- Pupils start each day in a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Teachers and teaching assistants sit together to eat breakfast and talk about the school day, using this time to identify pupils' needs and address them as soon as pupils arrive. Pupils who have complex medical and physical needs in addition to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties settle quickly for the day ahead.
- Adults supervise pupils' activities well. They play alongside pupils in team sports, such as table tennis and football, during breaks and lunchtime. As a result, pupils feel safe, and on occasions when bullying happens it is dealt with successfully.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly average and has not improved much in the last three years. The school has introduced new systems and processes to increase the proportion of pupils who attend school each day. These have succeeded in improving the attendance of some pupils from very low starting points when they joined the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching over time is good in all key stages, including in the early years. The school has invested in the training of teachers and teaching assistants so that pupils with extremely challenging behaviour and complex needs who attend part time or full time are taught well.
- Teachers use every opportunity to teach pupils about good social and communication skills. As a result, the attitude of pupils to their learning is improving rapidly and they make good progress overall in all subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers work collaboratively in effective teams with pupils, parents and carers, and other adults such as the family support worker to ensure that transitions are seamless. The weekly movement between mainstream and the school for part-time pupils as well as between key stages is well managed and pupils' learning is unaffected by the process.
- Teaching of mathematics has improved rapidly this year because it is the focus for development. Pupils' problem-solving skills are developing well as the right kind of resources are used to make mathematics more concrete and enjoyable for them.
- Teachers pay good attention to the learning of reading and writing from the early years. They focus on activities that build on the interest of pupils to make lessons fun and inspiring. Parents and carers confirmed that they were impressed with the way the school filled the gaps in pupils' learning caused by their difficulties. As one parent confessed, 'My son could not read when he came here and I was afraid he never would, but now I can't stop him from reading.'
- Marking seen in pupils' books, particularly in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, is helping them to know exactly what to do to move on to the next step, so pupils are making good progress towards their targets, including the few girls. However, in Key Stage 4, pupils' books confirm that teaching over time, particularly in English and mathematics, does not always match the abilities of pupils. Consequently, a few pupils are not making as much progress as they can.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make overall good progress in all key stages, including the early years. This is because teachers work hard to narrow the gaps in pupils' learning as soon as they join the school. Pupils currently in Year 6 make outstanding progress in writing and mathematics, and are closing the gaps with their peers in mainstream education. Work in their books confirms the outstanding progress these pupils have made this year.
- Pupils in Key Stage 4 are also making good progress in most subjects. They have seized every opportunity to obtain functional skills and GCSEs in a range of subjects, such as information and communication technology, science, art, physical education, religious education, English and mathematics. In addition, pupils successfully complete a number of vocational qualifications from alternative providers, as well as getting some useful work experience. This prepares them well for their next steps in education, training or apprenticeship. However, a few pupils in Key Stage 4 are making slower progress than other pupils in the school because expectations of them, particularly in English and mathematics, are not consistently high enough.
- Pupils' progress in reading is improving rapidly. Phonics skills are taught to younger pupils in the early years and Key Stage 1. There are good systems in place to check pupils' starting points accurately when they join the school. As a result, most pupils in Year 2 can read fluently.
- Disadvantaged pupils make similar progress in reading, writing and mathematics compared to other pupils in the school. This is because teachers and teaching assistants use good strategies such as one-to-one and small-group teaching to ensure that they build effectively on small steps in their learning.
- Expectations of pupils are not consistently high in all year groups. The standard of work found in some books, particularly in Year 11, indicates that not all pupils are working towards sufficiently demanding targets.

The early years provision is good

- Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development when they join Reception part time from their mainstream schools. The provision is well managed and children are cared for well by adults who are trained in dealing with children with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. As a result, most of them are able to return to their mainstream school before the end of Key

Stage 1.

- Children’s language and communication skills are developed well through good-quality teaching. Teachers make good use of a wide range of resources, including signs, labels, captions, flash cards and picture books, to help children concentrate, enjoy and learn well in the classroom.
- The school engages well with the children’s parents and carers and with the teachers at the mainstream school to ensure a smooth transition to Year 1. Consequently, children settle quickly to routines and their behaviour and attitudes improve rapidly from low starting points.
- The school keeps accurate records of children’s good progress in literacy and numeracy as ‘learning journeys’. This information is not shared with their mainstream school or vice versa. This limits the capacity for the school to have a complete view of the abilities of individual children. Teachers therefore do not always plan activities that give children opportunities to do as well as they could. Sometimes teachers do not move children on quickly enough when they are ready to face new challenges.
- Most children in Reception receive one-to-one adult attention, which helps to provide them with the good security and safety that they need. Their attendance, like that of the rest of the school, is broadly average because of the complexity of the behavioural, emotional and social needs of some of them. However, attendance is improving rapidly and is currently above average. Behaviour of children in the early years is good.

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	102793
Local authority	Newham
Inspection number	449460
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	77
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Tritton
Headteacher	Graham Smith
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 November 2011
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