

Stormont House School

Downs Park Road, London E5 8NP

Inspection dates

17–18 July 2018

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher's outstanding leadership has ensured that pupils enjoy school and develop well, both socially and academically. Pupils thrive in the school's nurturing environment.
- Governors have very high aspirations for the school. They provide challenge and support to realise leaders' vision.
- The inclusion leaders are a highly effective team. They ensure that pupils' special educational needs are fully met and develop strong partnerships with parents and external agencies.
- Leaders are fully committed to improving teaching and learning using research evidence about what is proven to work in schools. This training has a very positive impact on the quality of teaching across the school, which is excellent.
- Leaders' partnership and quality-assurance work with other sixth-form providers is exceptional.
- Leaders at all levels in the school, including subject leaders, understand their role in providing the best education for pupils. They value the support they get from leaders.
- Parents are very supportive of the school.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They participate in a wide range of activities, are listened to and cared for.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Highly effective teaching and clear expectations ensure that pupils behave well in class and around the school.
- There are many strengths in teaching. Teachers plan activities to meet pupils' needs successfully and support them with clear classroom routines.
- Pupils' outcomes are excellent. They make strong progress from their starting points across a wide range of subjects because of highly effective teaching. Pupils' writing is not always as strong as other aspects of learning.
- Pupils enjoy sport and their many achievements are showcased and celebrated. This has a very positive impact on their self-confidence and personal development.
- The 16 to 19 provision is outstanding. All students gain qualifications and continue in education, training or employment.
- Leaders have developed a strong culture of safeguarding. Safeguarding is effective.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop pupils' writing across the curriculum so that they can extend their written responses and so deepen their learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher leads the school with purpose and drive. He is never complacent, always focused on what is best for pupils and looking for constant improvement. The headteacher and his senior team strive for a very high level of consistency in all that they do. As a result, these exceptionally high standards have been maintained over time.
- Leaders have a strong focus on developing teaching and learning practice which is based on research evidence and has a track record of success in helping pupils to learn. The school's training programme for staff has been successful in ensuring high levels of consistency in the quality of teaching across all subjects. Staff are very positive about the school's approach to planning learning activities. They say how it helps them to do their best for their pupils and extends their own teaching skills.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and other members of the inclusion team are effective in addressing pupils' individual needs so that they can fully participate in learning activities in the classroom. This is through internal intervention and also support from external agencies, for example speech and language therapists.
- The school's curriculum is well balanced and meets the needs of the pupils. Pupils study a wide range of subjects. There is a strong focus on English and mathematics, but pupils' artistic, sporting and other talents are also well catered for. All subjects offer an accreditation. The taught curriculum is complemented by a wide variety of competitions, community activities and personal challenges, which pupils enjoy.
- There is strength in depth in leadership across the school. Subject leaders are positive about their training and the support that they get from senior leaders. They feel trusted to make decisions about their subject and are confident that they will be listened to.
- Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils celebrate other faiths and cultures in their curriculum subjects and in assemblies. Pupils have visited parliament, had a visit from the local mayor and ran a mock election. They learn to listen, and respect others' views in classes and in social times during the school day.
- The pupil premium, the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium, and special educational needs funding are used effectively.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and greatly appreciate its ethos and the impact all adults in the school have on their child's development. One parent wrote that the school is 'a happy, celebratory and empowering place'.

Governance of the school

- Governors are a highly effective team who support the school to provide the very best education for pupils. Governors know the school well. They visit regularly and receive comprehensive information from school leaders so that they can provide challenge and support in meetings.

- Governors are highly ambitious for the school. They are outward-looking and support the school's partnership work, which provide external validation and new challenges, in the local area and nationally.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have developed a strong culture of safeguarding in school. Staff are trained and understand their responsibilities. Leaders act swiftly when required and work effectively in partnership with external agencies and other providers to ensure that pupils are safe. All the required pre-employment checks on staff are carried out and staff appointments follow the safer recruitment guidance.
- The school site is secure and safe working practices are evident in classes. Pupils are well supervised. The assembly programme, tutor time and subjects all contribute to help pupils understand how to keep themselves safe while travelling or out in the community.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding. The school's training programme for staff is highly effective and has ensured that teaching is of consistently high quality across year groups and subjects. Consequently, pupils make excellent progress.
- There are strong relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. During the inspection, on the last teaching day of the academic year, pupils were still extending themselves in their learning with enthusiasm. For example, a Year 8 class greatly enjoyed re-enacting and reflecting on the battle of Bosworth.
- Teachers have clear classroom routines and high expectations of pupils. Pupils greatly benefit from this common approach. Pupils know how to behave and participate. As a result, activities run smoothly, and everything is focused on maximising pupils' learning.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan activities which are well matched to the needs of individual pupils. Pupils have a say in the assessment criteria that they are working towards. Teachers talk to pupils about how well they are learning, using a common language based on the school's approach to learning and the assessment system. Pupils understand this, it helps them to know that they are making progress and so they develop confidence in their own ability.
- Additional adults provide strong support for pupils. Their teamwork with teaching staff is effective. For example, modelling reading for pupils in one class and in teaching at the whiteboard in another. Pupils confirm that they get a lot of support from adults and that this helps them to stay focused and make progress.
- Teachers have excellent questioning skills. They use a wide range of questions to the whole class and individuals in one-to-one activities. Teachers' questioning is supportive

to pupils and builds their confidence, yet it is also challenging. Teachers' questions promote pupils' thinking and deep learning very successfully.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are hugely respectful of each other in classes and around the school. Teachers give all pupils opportunities to speak up in class and support them to do so. This builds pupils' sense of well-being. Creative and expressive arts, sport and a wide range of events and activities enable pupils to develop into confident, resilient young people.
- Pupils feel safe from bullying. Pupils trust the adults who work with them and are confident that they will be supported if any bullying occurs. Pupils say that there is no racist or homophobic bullying. The school's bullying records show that there is no recent bullying and that systems exist to deal with this should it occur.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when using computers and on the internet. Pupils demonstrate safe practices. For example, in a food technology class, pupils kept themselves safe while cooking breakfast while working at the stove with their partner.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour in classes is excellent. Teachers' high expectations and clear classroom routines enable all pupils to participate in activities and fully focus on their learning. Pupils understand what to do if they begin to struggle to manage their behaviour. Once again, these systems are clear and well understood by pupils and staff. So staff can respond effectively, and learning is not interrupted.
- Pupils' conduct is exemplary. They are polite and well-mannered and welcoming to visitors. This is because of leaders' high expectations and the strong relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils have a strong sense of ownership of the learning environment.
- Pupils like coming to school. They enjoy learning and feel safe. Consequently, pupils' attendance is well above the national figure for special schools and above the national average for mainstream secondary schools.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Outcomes for pupils are outstanding. Overall, they make strong progress from their starting points, including disadvantaged pupils. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of the education. All pupils benefit from work experience in Years 10, 11 and 12. Almost all pupils stay on in the school's sixth form to continue their learning and start suitable courses from entry level to level 2 in further education, with providers linked to

the school. A few students transfer directly into further education at the end of Year 11 if they are ready.

- Pupils make strong progress in English. Teachers ensure that all pupils have opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. For example, in a Year 10 English class, pupils read out their own work summarising different points of view about a character. In another example, pupils in Year 7 applied their phonics knowledge blending and segmenting words. Pupils speak confidently and listen respectfully to each other's views.
- Work in pupils' books shows that pupils make strong progress over time in mathematics. Pupils have high standards of presentation in mathematics and set their work out well on the page so that they do not get confused with place value. Pupils' tally charts and graph work are of a similarly high standard. Teachers revisit topics to help pupils consolidate their learning and balance this with the introduction of new work when pupils are ready.
- Pupils also make strong progress in science. They enjoy doing experiments and develop a range of practical skills. Pupils apply their mathematical skills in science confidently.
- The broad curriculum ensures that pupils develop skills and understanding in a range of subjects in addition to English, mathematics and science. Pupils particularly enjoy the opportunities to develop their artistic talents in expressive and creative arts. By the end of Year 11, pupils attain consistently well in their level 1 art and design qualification.
- Sport is a key component of the school's ethos and has a huge impact on pupils' confidence, health and personal development. All pupils are supported effectively to participate and respect each other's abilities and contribution in team games and individual events. Success in sport is celebrated and pupils have won innumerable local, London and national competitions.
- There is some variation in pupils' writing because some pupils find it challenging. Teachers support pupils well using a range of resources. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities for extended writing across the curriculum.

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- Leaders have a clear purpose and vision for the sixth form. They have developed highly effective links with partner providers. As a result, students benefit from a high-quality Year 12 provision, which enables them to make the transition from school to college very successfully.
- Leaders plan the sixth-form provision exceptionally well so that it meets the needs of individual students. Students identify their interests and aspirations early in key stage 3 through the careers education, advice and guidance programme. Leaders build on this knowledge and start reaching out to inclusion leaders in local colleges and providers to explore possible courses and accredited qualifications. Provider courses include media, information and communication technology, health and social care and animal welfare.
- The sixth-form induction is highly effective. Providers visit the school and meet with students and their parents. Students and parents also visit the providers. Leaders work

with students to smooth the transition to a college environment and provide support, developing travel plans and seeking funding advice.

- Students' behaviour and personal development is outstanding. The consistently high expectations of pupils in the main school continue into the sixth form. Students feel safe and happy. All students take part in an enrichment programme. This includes a sports leader's course and the Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award. These opportunities enable students to develop self-esteem, confidence and independence.
- Teaching in the sixth form is of a high standard. The strong features of teaching in the main school continue into the sixth-form classes. Students feel well supported and enjoy learning.
- Outcomes for students are excellent. Pupils make strong progress from their starting points and gain a range of level 1 and level 2 qualifications, including in English and mathematics. Leaders' outstanding partnership work with other providers, strong avenues of communication and rigorous quality-assurance process ensure that students achieve well.
- Students are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. All students leaving at the end of Year 12 are in education employment and training. A high proportion of students stay on in their college or other further education provider, in Year 13 and 14, to study level 3 courses.

School details

Unique reference number	100307
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	10047285

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	129
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	22
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bernard Hawes
Headteacher	Kevin McDonnell
Telephone number	020 8985 4245
Website	www.stormonthouse.hackney.sch.uk
Email address	info@stormonthouse.hackney.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–7 March 2014

Information about this school

- Stormont House School is a community special school for secondary-age pupils in the London Borough of Hackney.
- The school currently links with seven providers to deliver its sixth-form provision. These are: New City College, East London Advanced Technology Training (ELATT), WAC Arts College, Oaklands College, Brooke House Sixth Form College (B6), Capel Manor College and Inspired Directions School. Students spend three days in school and two days studying at the partner provider. Students study English, mathematics, physical education, a work preparation course and information and computer technology in school.

- About three quarters of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium funding, which is well above the national average.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The school is a member of the Hackney Teaching Schools Alliance (HTSA).
- The headteacher is a national leader of education.
- In July 2018 the school was awarded the World Class School Quality Mark (WCSQM).
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classes across year groups and in a range of subjects to observe pupils' learning and look at their books. All these visits were made jointly with senior leaders. The lead inspector also visited the school's sports day.
- Three groups of pupils and some ex-sixth-form students talked to inspectors about their views of the school. Inspectors also talked with pupils in classes and at breaktime. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- The lead inspector visited one of the school's sixth-form partner providers to talk to students, look at their work and speak to the programme leader. The lead inspector held telephone conversations with leaders at three other sixth-form partner providers.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and held a telephone conversation with the headteacher of a school with which Stormont House School has a professional partnership.
- Inspectors met with school leaders and staff to discuss the impact of their work. This included the headteacher, senior leaders, the SENCo, curriculum leaders, support staff and the pastoral support team leader.
- Inspectors scrutinised school documents including the school's own self-evaluation, records of pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance and safeguarding records.
- Inspectors took account of the 16 responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors considered the 10 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View and the school's own parent survey.

Inspection team

Janet Hallett, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kanwaljit Singh

Ofsted Inspector

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