

Inspection of an outstanding school: Eden Girls' School, Waltham Forest

Silver Birch House, Blackhorse Lane, Walthamstow E17 5SD

Inspection dates:

27 and 28 September 2022

Outcome

Eden Girls' School, Waltham Forest continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Exceptionally high aspirations are the norm here. Leaders ensure that all pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, thrive academically and achieve highly.

Leaders have embedded an ambitious curriculum that provides opportunity for all, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers are knowledgeable and highly skilled at ensuring that all pupils make excellent progress through the curriculum. They plan learning with the goal of helping pupils to become experts in a subject. They also help pupils to enrich and apply their learning outside the classroom, for example through carefully chosen trips and events.

Pupils feel happy and safe at school. They appreciate and respect the high standards and expectations that leaders set. They also value the academic and pastoral support that teachers give them. Many described the school as being like a family.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Classrooms are calm and purposeful. On the very rare occasions on which bullying occurs, it is reported and dealt with effectively.

Pupils are keen to contribute to the school's ethos of tolerance. They are extremely well prepared for life in modern Britain. Leaders work hard to encourage pupils to become confident and well-educated members of society. This includes offering numerous chances for pupils to take part in extra-curricular events outside of school.

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

Leaders provide an exceptionally high-quality provision at this school. They realise their clear and ambitious vision for excellence for all, including for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Pupils succeed academically, and are well prepared for life beyond school.

The school environment is safe and nurturing. Teachers and pupils interact very positively. Pupils attend well and arrive punctually. They respond to the school's rewards system

which recognises both academic effort and success, as well as positive character traits such as helpfulness. If a pupil struggles to meet expectations, leaders spot this quickly and provide personalised additional help. Pupils are highly positive about their learning and wider school life. They also appreciate how leaders continually recognise and celebrate their achievements, for example through the school magazine.

All pupils, including those with SEND, follow a broad and balanced curriculum. Nearly all obtain the English Baccalaureate qualification by the end of Year 11. Pupils can select from a wide range of GCSE and vocational courses. Pupils who arrive needing support to read confidently are quickly identified. Leaders make sure they are supported to catch up, including through small-group phonics teaching where needed.

Pupils receive precisely targeted help to ensure they make the right choices for their future. The rich curriculum, combined with excellent pastoral care, means that pupils are well placed to be successful in their next school or college.

Subject leaders ensure that pupils are able to apply and connect what they learn in school to the wider world. Pupils frequently take part in national competitions and events, such as those for debating, mathematics and science. School and local events, including the Holocaust Memorial Day and cultural diversity days, further promote pupils' understanding of wider society. Pupils are taught how to lead, for example through the Student Shura. Being compassionate is a thread that runs through school life, and pupils regularly organise fundraising events for charity. All of this plays a part in leaders' aim to develop pupils into responsible citizens. Leaders keep a close eye on which pupils are participating in the wider curriculum offer, including clubs and activities. They take effective steps to ensure that all pupils take part.

School and trust leaders ensure that subject leaders and teachers are well-trained experts in their subjects. Teachers identify and understand the needs of their pupils well, including those with SEND. Across the subjects, teaching is adapted precisely to meet pupils' needs and teachers check pupils' understanding regularly.

Pupils benefit from a very demanding and well-sequenced curriculum. Teachers consistently help pupils to learn and remember knowledge in depth. Pupils apply their knowledge fluently when learning new and more complex subject content.

Leaders provide high-quality guidance and professional development to staff. They tailor this support and training, as needed, to ensure that all staff meet their high expectations. Equally, staff said that leaders are considerate of their well-being and workload. Members of the trust board and governing body are rigorous in overseeing the school's work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have embedded strong systems to ensure that pupils at risk or in need are identified quickly. They train teachers and staff to recognise and report concerns. Pupils

are taught how to stay safe and seek help. They are confident about how to report concerns about themselves or others, and trust staff to help them.

Leaders ensure that pupils receive timely help from pastoral staff within the school. They also work productively with local agencies to ensure that pupils get the support they need.

Leaders, including governors and the trust, ensure that appropriate safeguarding checks are carried out on staff. Systems are followed scrupulously.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in April 2017.

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	140957
Local authority	London Borough of Waltham Forest
Inspection number	10250719
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	610
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Kamruddin Kothia OBE DL
Principal	Aamena Mayet
Website	www.edengirlswalthamforest.com
Date of previous inspection	26 and 27 April 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a new principal has taken up post.
- The school is part of the Star Academies multi-academy trust.
- At the time of the previous inspection, the school had four year groups. It now has pupils in all year groups from Years 7 to 11, and has almost doubled in size. The planned sixth-form provision has not yet opened.
- The school uses no alternative providers.
- Eden Girls' School, Waltham Forest is an Islamic Free School. The last section 48 inspection by the Association of Muslim Schools took place in May 2017.
- Careers guidance meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- This is 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 the principal, members of the senior leadership team, the chair of the governing body, and leaders from the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: languages, art and design, and English. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects and visited a sample of lessons in other subjects.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors spoke to leaders, staff and pupils. They looked at safeguarding records, and considered the responses of staff, parents and carers, and pupils to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Alice Clay, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Bob Hamlyn

His Majesty's Inspector

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