

Inspection of a good school: Stepney Green Mathematics and Computing College

Ben Jonson Road, Stepney, London E1 4SD

Inspection dates:

30 November and 1 December 2021

Outcome

Stepney Green Mathematics and Computing College continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has high ambitions for all pupils. It partners with prestigious businesses and university colleges to inspire them. Pupils are well-motivated and work hard to achieve success.

Pupils meet the school's high expectations of them. They treat each other and adults with respect. Pupils are happy and feel safe at school.

There are small numbers of girls in Years 7 and 8 and in the sixth form. The girls feel equally as valued as the boys. They say that they are free from any discrimination or harassment. Girls and boys work cooperatively in lessons.

Pupils behave well. They are polite and considerate. They are attentive in lessons and move around the school in an orderly manner. Bullying is rare. The staff address it swiftly when it occurs. At lunchtime, pupils play many sports including badminton, cricket and football. Leaders encourage pupils to take part in the wide range of activities and clubs on offer. Homework and subject clubs are popular.

Pupils have the opportunity to discover new experiences. Staff prepare them well for the next stage in their education or for employment. The school helps pupils to become whatever they want to be.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum to raise the aspirations of all pupils. The curriculum provides pupils with the knowledge and skills to enrich their lives. Pupils study a broad curriculum that reflects both their community and global diversity. A large majority of pupils study history or geography and a modern foreign language at key stage 4. The curriculum is ambitious for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities

(SEND). It is well-ordered. Pupils build their knowledge and understanding in greater depth through the years. The approach to teaching history and geography at key stage 3, however, requires review. Planning needs to ensure that pupils secure their learning in these subjects in Years 7 and 8.

Teachers use their subject expertise to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. They often start lessons with activities to help pupils recall knowledge learned before. Pupils can then understand the learning that comes next. Some teachers use homework for pupils to revisit learning from topics taught in the past. This helps pupils to remember more. Occasionally, teachers do not check some pupils' understanding before moving on. In the sixth form, teachers develop a real depth of knowledge and understanding in students. Sixth-form students can work independently. Teachers give them the confidence to complete complex tasks, for example in mathematics in the study of linear equations.

Pupils' work is of a high quality. Pupils respond well to teachers' questioning and ask when they need support. Teachers use assessment to help pupils understand what to do to improve their work. They identify any gaps in knowledge and adapt their teaching to address these. Teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils with SEND in lessons. This allows these pupils to access the same curriculum as all other pupils and overcome any barriers to their learning. Pupils at an early stage of reading learn phonics. This accelerates their ability to read independently. Pupils also read books at an appropriate level to develop fluency in reading.

Pupils are motivated to learn and their attitude to their work is positive. Low-level disruption is quite rare. Teachers use the school's behaviour management approach when needed. They do not allow any disruption to interfere with pupils' learning.

Leaders are wholly committed to pupils' wider development. Pupils have a wealth of opportunities to gain new experiences, for example the Tall Ships Youth Trust and cultural visits. Speakers on a range of themes come into school. The personal, social and health education programme is comprehensive. Leaders prioritise support for mental health. Pupils receive high-quality careers information and guidance. They experience a range of careers events, including work experience. Sixth-form students visit universities, such as the University of Sussex. They also have access to a variety of professions and city businesses.

The headteacher provides strong moral leadership. He has a mission to provide all pupils with a broad, rich academic education that will instil in pupils a belief that there are no limits to what they can achieve. Staff share this mission and are proud to work at the school. They appreciate leaders' mindfulness of their workload and well-being. They feel fully supported. The school has recently joined the Mulberry Schools Trust. The trust's values complement those of the school. Trust leaders and school governors provide effective strategic leadership and oversight.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding. They ensure staff knowledge and awareness are prioritised through regular training. Staff are alert to the identification of risk. The designated safeguarding lead works with a team of trained colleagues. They meet weekly to discuss concerns about pupils. Leaders work in partnership with the local authority to provide the support pupils need. The school also has an on-site social worker and school counsellor, and staff participate in a national mental health programme. Leaders manage safer recruitment practices appropriately. Pupils learn about the safeguarding risks to them. They feel safe at school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The key stage 3 humanities curriculum is implemented in Year 7 through an integrated, thematic approach. This means that pupils do not always develop subject-specific knowledge sequentially and in appropriate depth, for example in history. Leaders should review this approach to ensure that pupils are taught a history and geography curriculum at key stage 3 that supports them in building their subject-specific knowledge coherently.

Background

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

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Stepney Green Mathematics and Computing College, to be good in April 2014.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	144700
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	10206481
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1274
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	342
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jane Farrell
Headteacher	Paramjit Bhutta
Website	www.mulberrystepneygreen.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Stepney Green Mathematics and Computing College converted to become an academy school in March 2018. When its predecessor school, the Stepney Green Mathematics and Computing College, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school joined the Mulberry Schools Trust in October 2021. School leaders refer to the school as Mulberry Stepney Green Mathematics, Computing and Science College.
- The school changed from a boys' school to a co-educational school in September 2020.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the leadership team, other school leaders, members of the governing body and the chief executive and chair of trustees of the Mulberry Schools Trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, history and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke to the headteacher and a deputy headteacher about the school curriculum. They also spoke with heads of faculty for humanities, art and design, and design and technology and looked at curriculum plans for these subject areas.
- Inspectors met with the school's designated safeguarding lead and a member of the school's safeguarding team. They looked at safeguarding documentation and record-keeping, including the single central record. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding.
- The lead inspector spoke with a group of Year 7 and Year 8 girls.
- Inspectors considered the 51 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, the 42 responses to the staff survey and the 28 responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including their free-text comments.

Inspection team

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