

Inspection of Brick Lane School

Bacon Street, Tower Hamlets, London E2 6DY

Inspection dates: 4 to 6 July 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

With the excellent help from the whole staff team, pupils settle into school really well. This is because staff work closely with parents and carers and other professionals to find out what each pupil likes to do and what they are good at. This helps pupils to feel safe, comfortable and valued. Over time, pupils build strong and positive relationships with staff. Their confidence grows, and they achieve well.

All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff, including therapists, use their expertise to understand what each pupil needs. Pupils are well supported to meet their individual targets. Everyone celebrates pupils' successes, especially when pupils achieve things for the first time. Staff notice the small steps that pupils take to reach their goals. These moments are captured and shared with parents.

When they are ready, pupils start to build friendships with others. At breaktimes, older pupils enjoy being role models for the younger ones. They play together well and have good fun. Staff help pupils to sort out any problems swiftly.

Pupils get to practise what they learn in school when they are out and about. For example, pupils enjoyed planning questions they wanted to ask on their recent visits to the mosque and the church.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum that focuses on developing pupils' knowledge in different subjects as well as their wider skills. Leaders make sure that therapies are built into everything that happens. Staff are well trained to meet pupils' speech, language and communication needs.

Staff ensure that pupils are clear about what is happening and when. This predictability in the day helps pupils to manage transitions increasingly well. For example, some pupils respond very well to visual prompts or by using countdowns. This helps pupils to get ready for learning, stay on track and feel secure.

Staff skilfully incorporate pupils' targets into different lessons and times of the day. For example, at breaktimes, some pupils needed symbols to remind them about what to do and when. Staff used well-planned strategies to help these pupils learn how to chew food safely while they are eating.

Teachers use what they know about pupils' needs to help them join in with different activities. For example, one group of pupils were comparing the properties of different materials. Some pupils were learning how to sort out a range of objects into different groups. Others were matching an object to a picture card. Staff knew exactly how to help each pupil to succeed. However, occasionally, pupils are given tasks that are not adapted to match their learning needs as well as they could be. This sometimes makes it harder for pupils to show what they know and understand.

Staff have high expectations for pupils' learning. They work effectively to find ways to motivate and engage pupils. This works well. For example, in science, pupils in Year 7 were highly motivated as they explored sources of light by placing different objects at different distances from the torch. Others looked at what happens when baking powder is added to different substances. Pupils in the primary phase used their prior knowledge of different vocabulary to create their own 'silly sentences' using compound words. While these activities were happening, staff consistently and effectively reinforced pupils' use of language and vocabulary. However, some staff lack knowledge and expertise in some of the subjects taught. Sometimes, this affects how well they can support pupils and address misconceptions.

Staff meet regularly to discuss how well each pupil is doing. Staff talk about the things they can do to help pupils achieve their next steps in learning. Pupils use their phonic knowledge well to read and spell different words. Staff make sure that the books pupils use allow them to read successfully and fluently. Pupils in Year 7 were keen to talk about their favourite authors and genres. Some pupils have started reading for the first time ever. Other pupils have recently found the confidence to speak and read aloud. Staff and parents are rightly proud of such achievements.

Pupils behave well. Staff use their skills and expertise well to help pupils' confidence and self-esteem grow. For example, they help pupils to tackle new things in carefully planned steps, giving them all the help they need to be successful. Pupils' hard work and positive attitudes are often rewarded with special points and time to do the things they like most. 'My Time', on Friday afternoons, is a particular favourite. Pupils get to do different clubs and activities during this time, which enriches their learning. Pupils contribute to the life of the school. For example, pupils designed the games and stalls that they felt would raise the most funds at the upcoming sports and enterprise day.

Staff are always looking for ways to support pupils' independence. For example, pupils take responsibility for watering the plants or collecting the fruit. Visits into the community become increasingly challenging. For example, pupils go from using one bus to get to their destination to using routes with multiple changes. Eventually, pupils are empowered to plan and organise their own journeys, without much help from staff. The school's careers programme is planned thoughtfully around pupils' needs. Leaders use it well to prepare pupils for their next steps, including life beyond school.

Leaders, including governors, have worked effectively together as the school has grown in its first year since opening. Well-established procedures are in place to check all aspects of the school's work. Leaders, including governors, have ensured that the independent school standards are met. The proprietor ensures that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Leaders ensure that the statutory guidance on relationships and sex education is followed.

Staff are proud to work at Brick Lane. They know that their hard work pays off. They can see the impact it has on pupils' all-round development. Leaders take staff well-being seriously. Staff feel very well supported by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a culture where everyone is responsible for keeping pupils safe. Staff know how to identify concerns and understand the additional vulnerabilities of pupils with SEND. Leaders take all concerns seriously. They adopt a multi-disciplinary approach through which different professionals work together to keep pupils safe from harm.

Leaders understand and fulfil their statutory responsibilities. They ensure that all the required pre-employment checks are undertaken. An up-to-date safeguarding policy is available on the school website that reflects the current government requirements.

The curriculum is designed to help pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. This is well planned so that it suits pupils' ages and stages of development. For example, pupils learn about bullying, online safety and the importance of personal space.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Occasionally, pupils complete tasks in lessons that are not adapted well to match their learning needs. When this happens, pupils can struggle. Sometimes, tasks are not the most appropriate ones to find out what pupils know and can do. Where this is the case, leaders should ensure that teachers' activity choices are suitably adapted to meet pupils' different learning needs.
- The school is growing rapidly and many staff are new to the school. Some staff lack the subject-specific knowledge they need to deliver the different curriculum subjects. Where this is the case, it sometimes affects how well staff support pupils' learning and address any misconceptions that pupils might have. Leaders should ensure that staff are given the support and training they need to develop further their subject knowledge across the curriculum.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	149018
DfE registration number	211/6011
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	10267713
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	25
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	P Bloom Ltd
Chair	Richard Power
Headteacher	Adam De Vecchi
Annual fees (day pupils)	£67,890 to £92,980
Telephone number	020 7186 0156
Website	www.bricklaneschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@bricklaneschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Brick Lane School is an independent day school that caters for pupils with SEND. All pupils have education, health and care plans. The school caters for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. Some pupils have other associated learning difficulties.
- The school was registered by the Department for Education and opened in May 2022. This is the school's first standard inspection.
- It is registered to admit pupils from age five to 18. At the time of this inspection, pupils on roll were aged between six and 13.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2022.

- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, pastoral leader and other members of staff. The lead inspector met with the chair of governors and a representative of the proprietor.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, humanities, and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and pupils' work in some other subjects, including science. The lead inspector heard pupils read.
- Inspectors looked at the school's single central record of staff suitability checks. They spoke with leaders about the school's safeguarding arrangements. They scrutinised documentation related to safeguarding, attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors held meetings with pupils and spoke with them informally in lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors looked at all parts of the school and scrutinised a range of documentation to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and to the online staff survey.

Inspection team

Gary Rawlings, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lascelles Haughton

His Majesty's Inspector

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