

# Beacon High

Hilldrop Road, London N7 0JG

## Inspection dates

14–15 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Teaching is not strong enough, especially at key stage 3. Sometimes, the work pupils are given is not challenging and inspiring, and pupils do not finish their work.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning require improvement. Although pupils' behaviour has improved, too often, pupils' punctuality to lessons is poor. In lessons where teaching is ineffective in the management of pupils' behaviour, pupils disrupt learning.
- Pupils do not routinely make strong progress across the key stages and subjects. As a result, they do not reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Leaders have reduced the number of fixed-term and permanent exclusions. Nevertheless, the proportions of excluded pupils are still above average.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher and governing body, well supported by senior and middle leaders, are taking decisive action to improve the school. The impact of their leadership is evident in better teaching and pupils' progress, mainly at key stage 4, and in pupils' behaviour. The morale of staff and pupils is mostly high.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is good. Leaders and teachers benefit from effective professional development which is helping the school to improve.
- Pupils' attendance has improved and is in line with the national average.
- The school provides pupils with good pastoral care to support their welfare and safety.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those pupils who speak English as an additional language benefit from effective support. This helps them to access the full curriculum and develops their social skills well.
- The curriculum offers pupils a range of enrichment activities and opportunities to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and pupils' outcomes by:
  - teachers raising their expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - teachers planning activities that meet pupils' needs and interests and that challenge them to reach the standards of which they are capable
  - teachers making sure that pupils complete their work
  - leaders ensuring that teachers consistently comply with the school's agreed strategies for teaching and learning
  - leaders training teachers to skilfully manage behaviour effectively in their classes.
- Improve pupils' attitudes and behaviour by leaders:
  - communicating a clear vision and high expectations for positive behaviour and attitudes to learning
  - making sure that staff routinely apply the school's rewards and sanctions policy
  - building on their work to reduce exclusions and training staff to resolve conflicts.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Following the previous inspection, pupils' outcomes dropped to significantly below average, absence increased to above average and exclusions were high. The new headteacher, new governing body and other leaders took decisive action to reverse this decline. The effectiveness of their good leadership is evident in all aspects of the school's work. Many members of staff and pupils fully support the changes, conveying their sense of optimism and aspirations for a better future.
- Leaders have robust systems for evaluating the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use the information to devise credible plans for improvement, many of which have already met with success. There is no sense of complacency. Leaders know that there is much to do to ensure that all pupils thrive and reach their full academic and personal potential.
- Last term, senior leaders convened a conference for all staff, governors and a representative group of pupils; they formed a range of working groups to discuss their vision for the school's future and to commit to actions to bring about the agreed changes. Ongoing conferences and consultations are forming the basis of the school's intended rebranding when it becomes Beacon High School next month.
- Leaders researched and devised an agreed methodology for planning good-quality teaching and learning. Leaders regularly visit lessons to check on teaching and learning. Where teaching is not good, leaders devise support plans to help teachers improve. They take decisive action when teachers do not respond positively to the support they are given to meet their targets for improvement.
- Leaders and teachers have access to an extensive range of professional development opportunities. They have training and coaching in school and work with the federation's partner schools. Furthermore, staff attend courses at the local teaching school alliance. As a result, teaching has improved, and much more is now effective.
- At the same time, leaders have had to contend with difficulties in recruitment and with some long-term absence. This has resulted in some dependence on supply and cover teachers during the year. Leaders have prioritised specialist teaching in key stage 4. In key stage 3, therefore, teaching is much more variable, and pupils' progress is weaker than in Years 10 and 11. Leaders have recruited a full complement of staff for September.
- Leadership of SEND is effective. Leaders have high aspirations and arrange well-tailored support for all pupils with SEND. As a result, they make good progress in their personal development and have access to the same curriculum as other pupils.
- Equally, a specialist leader gives effective support to pupils who speak English as an additional language. Pupils who arrive from overseas with little knowledge of English benefit from a bespoke induction programme and intensive ongoing support. Consequently, they quickly learn to speak English and integrate well into school life.
- Leaders have reviewed the curriculum offer and design. Whereas in the past Year 9 pupils dropped some subjects, from September they will continue to study the full key stage 3 curriculum. For next year, leaders have introduced more vocational options at

GCSE to better meet the range of pupils' needs and interests. The proportion of pupils who study the subjects required to qualify for the English Baccalaureate accreditation is low. Leaders plan to increase the uptake as they aspire to enable more pupils to pursue a rigorous academic career.

- The many enrichment activities make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. At key stage 3, for example, all pupils learn to play either the violin or the viola; school orchestras perform at the London Palladium. Pupils visit a range of places of cultural interest, as well as engaging in university and business-based activities. Visitors, such as a Holocaust survivor and a journalist injured in a terrorist bombing, inspire pupils to overcome adversity and to be resilient.

### **Governance of the school**

- In September 2018, a new federation governing body replaced the school's previous governing body. This has overall responsibility for the school's governance. Governors work closely with the school's committee, made up of some federation governors plus local associate staff and parent governors.
- Governors communicate a clear vision to provide support for all pupils, no matter what their background, abilities and starting points, to have a highly successful future.
- Governors regularly visit the school to check on all aspects of the school's work. They visit classes, talk with staff and pupils, and check on the impact of actions against the school's improvement priorities.
- Governors check carefully the progress of all groups of pupils across the school and subjects. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching. They support and challenge leaders with vigour.
- Governors make a strong contribution to improving the school and provide effective strategic leadership.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has three designated safeguarding leaders. These include the 'pupil well-being officer' who is available throughout the day to support pupils and staff with any safeguarding and welfare concerns as soon as they arise.
- Staff are aware of the main safeguarding issues in the locality to which pupils may be vulnerable. Staff attend training on the latest government safeguarding guidance as well as more detailed training, such as on child sexual exploitation, knife crime and the local context. As a result, they are vigilant and report any concerns.
- Leaders work closely with a range of external agencies to help pupils stay safe and to support their welfare. They commission specialist agencies to do preventative work with vulnerable pupils. These include, for example, mentors to help pupils at risk of being enticed into joining a gang or engaging in inappropriate relationships.
- The school has a full-time safer school's police officer on site. He supports leaders and pupils and runs workshops for pupils on potential risks and how to avoid danger.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Requires improvement**

- Teaching is improving because of leaders' effective action and teachers' positive engagement with quality training. It is not strong enough overall, however, as inconsistencies remain, especially across subjects at key stage 3.
- Sometimes, teaching does not follow the school's policy on how to plan and structure a good lesson, so planned activities do not meet the differing needs of pupils. Occasionally, the teaching does not give pupils opportunities to reflect on their learning and think deeply. Some weaker teaching is associated with difficulty in managing pupils' behaviour; the resulting disruption hinders learning. For some classes, teaching has been intermittent because of the need to use cover and supply teachers. This has affected the sequence of learning and limited the opportunities for pupils to consolidate their knowledge and understanding. In these instances, which occur mainly in key stage 3, pupils do not make good progress.
- Where teaching is strong, it is because teachers have positively embraced training and apply the school's agreed policies for effective teaching. Classes benefit from having the same teacher over a long period. Typically, this good teaching is characterised by well planned activities that meet pupils' needs. Teachers structure learning that is sequential and builds on pupils' prior knowledge. They have high expectations for behaviour and manage the class well so that learning proceeds in a calm and productive manner. Teachers question pupils and probe their responses so that they think deeply. In line with the school's policy, teachers give pupils feedback on their progress and pupils edit and improve their work. In these classes, mainly in key stage 4, pupils make good progress.
- Teachers, particularly of GCSE examination classes, use the new assessment systems well to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. They tailor support to help those pupils catch up. Leaders and teachers have made a good start in improving assessment and moderation procedures at key stage 3, but this is still a work in progress.
- Small-group, one-to-one teaching and in-class support for pupils with SEND and those for who speak English as an additional language are effective. This helps them to make strong progress, catch up and, over time, sometimes overtake their peers.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders pay much attention to pupils' welfare. Before, during and after school, pupils needing help or just wanting some quiet space can visit the 'well-being room'. Staff, mentors and the safer school's police officer are on hand to support pupils.
- Staff broker support from professional therapists, such as educational psychologists, counsellors, art therapists and behaviour management mentors. The school, in conjunction with University College London, is taking part in a well-being study. In these ways, and through the formal curriculum and assemblies, leaders effectively promote pupils' mental health, emotional well-being and safety.

- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy. They learn about healthy eating and the dangers of substance misuse. They have plentiful opportunities for playing sport, some even arriving at school an hour before lessons to play games.
- Pupils gain self-confidence and a sense of community responsibility from a range of leadership opportunities. The 'Head's ambassadors' meet regularly with members of the leadership team to discuss how, together, they achieve their vision for school. School councillors have a mentoring and support role for younger pupils and read with them. Charity leaders organise fundraising events for a variety of local and national charities.
- Pupils benefit from an effective careers guidance programme. This includes attending careers fairs and visiting post-16 colleges and businesses. The impartial advice and guidance prepare pupils well to move on to the next stages of their lives. The new leader of the careers programme plans for all Year 10 students to get access to work experience in future.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- New leaders have taken effective steps to improve behaviour, but there is still some way to go to ensure that it is routinely good.
- Rates of truancy during lessons have significantly reduced this year. Fixed-term and permanent exclusions, which historically have been exceptionally high, have reduced but are still above national averages.
- Leaders have reduced the rate of absence, which last year rose to above average. Absence and persistent absence rates are now broadly in line with the national averages.
- Too many pupils arrive late to lessons. This takes away valuable learning time, and the late arrivals disturb the majority who have settled down to learning.
- Some pupils disrupt learning. Their poor attitudes to learning limit their progress and that of their peers in those classes.
- Leaders check closely on the attendance, behaviour, welfare and progress of those few pupils who attend alternative provision.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- In 2018, the decline in GCSE outcomes for Year 11 pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, continued. This represented significantly below average progress across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Progress in languages was broadly average. Overall attainment was in the lowest 10% for all schools. The proportions of pupils who entered and attained the English Baccalaureate qualification were well below averages.
- Pupils currently in key stage 4 make good progress from their low starting points in the key stage. As a result, Year 11 pupils working towards GCSEs are on track for better outcomes than the previous cohort. This is because leaders make sure that teaching

and support in key stage 4 are good. However, because of the legacy of weak teaching in previous years, pupils are not on track to reach average standards.

- Pupils' progress in key stage 3 requires improvement. Teaching is not strong enough to ensure that pupils routinely make strong progress across the subjects.
- Pupils with SEND and those who speak English as an additional language generally make similar progress to their peers. Within the small-group bespoke classes in Year 7 and other specifically targeted interventions, they make good progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils make broadly similar progress to that of their peers in both key stages.
- Pupils leave the school with standards that are below those expected for their age. Therefore, they are not well prepared academically for the next stages of their education.

## School details

Unique reference number	100453
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	10088868

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	624
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jill McLaughlin
Executive Headteacher	Jo Dibb
Headteacher	Alan Streeter
Telephone number	0207 607 5885
Website	<a href="http://www.holloway.islington.sch.uk">www.holloway.islington.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:postbox@holloway.islington.sch.uk">postbox@holloway.islington.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	10, 12 and 13 January 2017

## Information about this school

- The school became part of the Islington Futures Federation 1 September 2018. The federation is made up of two secondary and two primary schools and the executive headteacher has oversight of all four schools.
- At the time of the inspection, the school was named Holloway School. As of June 1 2019, the school was renamed Beacon High.
- The federation has one governing body, with individual school committees and two federation-wide committees.
- A small number of pupils attend off-site alternative provision. Providers include New River College, the local pupil referral unit to help pupils modify their behaviours; North East London College; Westminster Arts Council for vocational courses; and Academy 21, an online home-tutoring provision.

- There have been several changes to senior leadership this year. The headteacher took up his substantive post in September 2018. At the same time, the new federation governing body replaced the former governing body and the executive headteacher, working closely with the headteacher, took responsibility for the federation oversight of the school. Two acting deputy headteachers assumed their substantive roles at the start of this term.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils learning in a range of classes. Senior leaders joined inspectors during most of these visits.
- Inspectors looked closely at pupils' work to inform judgements about pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Inspectors met with four groups of pupils and spoke informally to other pupils in lessons and during social times. Inspectors met with school leaders and other members of staff.
- Meetings were held with the chair of the governing body, the chair of the school committee and chair of the achievement committee. The lead inspector spoke with two local authority representatives.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation related to pupils' attainment and progress. They also looked at records and documentation about pupils' behaviour, attendance and exclusions, and the ways that staff help to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors considered the 10 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents and carers, which included some free-text responses. They also considered the school's own surveys of parents' views. Inspectors took account of the views of 32 members of staff and four pupils who responded to the inspection surveys.

## Inspection team

David Radomsky, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
David Bromfield	Ofsted Inspector
Yvonne Chisholm	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Maher	Ofsted Inspector

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