

Inspection of Kensington Queensmill School

Barlby Road, London W10 6BH

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 October 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Anita Bancercz. This school is part of the Queensmill Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Freddie Adu, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Greatorex.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are greeted warmly by their teachers and support staff when they arrive at school in the morning. This provides a positive start to the school day and helps to make pupils feel safe in school. Pupils are happy to see staff when they arrive. Staff work closely with pupils and families to understand what motivates them. Staff use this information to engage pupils purposefully in activities throughout the day.

Leaders expect all pupils to do well in their learning. Leaders have designed a curriculum that meets pupils' individual needs. Overall, pupils are well supported by teachers, support staff and therapists so that they can achieve their personal goals. Leaders aim to build pupils' self-esteem and to prepare them for their adult lives, and in turn make a positive contribution to their community. For example, sixth-form students are involved in running the KQ café in school and the KQ stall at Portobello Road market.

Staff support pupils to manage their behaviour well. All pupils have an emotional regulation support plan. Staff and therapists collaborate closely together. They identify triggers that may cause pupils' distress, and they work with pupils to understand and overcome these. These support plans are reviewed termly or more often, depending on pupils' individual needs. This means that pupils get the right type of support at the right time.

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

Pupils study a broad range of subjects and achieve well. Curriculum content is chosen carefully so that these subjects support pupils to successfully develop their communication and language, and numeracy and mathematical skills. In the creative arts, the curriculum also supports pupils' understanding very well, with pupils encouraged to express themselves. This curriculum is personalised to each pupil so that they can work towards achieving their individual education, health and care (EHC) plan targets. For example, in the early years, some children may be learning to identify environmental sounds, while others may be learning the sounds that letters make.

Leaders have thought about the key knowledge and skills that they want pupils to know and remember in many subjects. They have organised this knowledge into a logical sequence so that pupils can build on their prior learning step by step. This allows pupils to attempt more complex tasks in their future learning. Staff use visual aids and objects to support pupils' understanding of subject content, including in mathematics. For example, in the early years, staff use a variety of well-chosen sensory-based activities to increase children's understanding of number in gradual stages. However, not all subjects are thought about with the same clear sequential structure. In some subjects, the curriculum that pupils experience is less effective in developing their knowledge over time.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge and they know their pupils well. They use appropriate activities in the classroom to motivate pupils and help them to learn and experience new things. Staff use their knowledge of pupils and their interests to bring learning to life. For example, teachers make reading and story time engaging with props to represent the characters in a story. Teachers assess what pupils know and remember and check this against the agreed goals in pupils' personal learning plans. These plans are updated with new targets when pupils are ready. However, in some instances, the links between the EHC plan targets and those in pupils' personal learning plans lack clarity. As a result, at times, staff are unclear about whether pupils have met their targets securely and, in turn, if it is the right time to move pupils on to the next step in their learning. When this happens, this can lead to gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Communication, language and reading are priorities for all pupils in this school. From the start of early years until the end of sixth form, there is a well-sequenced programme to develop pupils' reading and communication skills. This programme is sharply focused on meeting pupils' needs and ensuring that they overcome any barriers to developing language and reading skills. Those pupils learning to read have books that match the sounds that they have been taught and know. This supports them to become more accurate and fluent in their reading.

The school is calm and orderly. Staff know pupils well and draw on a range of approaches to support them to manage their emotions. For some pupils, their complex additional needs can affect how regularly they attend school. However, leaders work closely with parents and carers to reduce absence. As a result, attendance is improving rapidly.

Pupils experience a wide range of activities outside of their planned curriculum subjects. Sixth-form students follow a well-structured programme of preparation for adulthood, which includes, for example, learning about how to look after themselves and keep healthy. All pupils learn about healthy relationships and the difference between private and public things. To increase pupils' independence and awareness of the wider world, leaders build numerous outings in the local community into the curriculum. For example, pupils regularly visit the local shops. Pupils have also enjoyed climbing and kayak trips as well as a visit to the Royal Albert Hall, and the school is planning for pupils to perform there later in the year. From Year 7 onwards, all pupils learn about the different careers available to them in the future. Guest speakers visit the school to speak about careers and sixth-form students attend the Queensmill Careers Fair.

Leaders at the school, supported by the trust, make sure that staff have the training and support they need to teach the planned curriculum. Leaders are mindful of staff workload. Staff work collaboratively and they said that leaders respond well to requests or suggestions.

Governors know the school well and fulfil their duties with regard to safeguarding and equalities. As a new school, leaders make effective use of the support and guidance from colleagues across the trust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, knowledge is not planned in a way that allows pupils to build on their prior knowledge step by step. Therefore, gaps can arise in pupils' knowledge and pupils do not reach the ambitious end points that leaders wish them to achieve. The school should ensure that all subjects are designed to build pupils' knowledge sequentially over time.
- There are occasions where targets in pupils' personal learning plans are not tightly matched to their EHC plan targets. As a result, it is unclear if pupils have mastered some key steps in their learning. This can lead to gaps developing in pupils' knowledge. The school should sharpen its assessment approaches so that, for each pupil, leaders and staff are able to obtain an accurate picture of the knowledge and skills that pupils have mastered.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	148562
Local authority	Kensington and Chelsea
Inspection number	10293316
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	88
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	11
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Greatorex
Headteacher	Freddie Adu (Executive Headteacher) Anita Bancercz (Head of School)
Website	www.kensingtonqueensmill.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Queensmill Trust.
- All pupils who attend the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). All pupils also have an education, health and care plan. The school caters for pupils with autism.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND based at Avondale Park Primary School. There are six pupils at this provision.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, head of school and other senior leaders. Inspectors met with the chair of trustees, the chair of the local governing body, other governors and trustees and representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: reading, language and communication, mathematics, creative arts, and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also considered pupils' learning in other subjects, including computing.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes was observed.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of staff about the school's work, including about safeguarding and behaviour. Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also looked at staff, parent and pupil responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Mark Smith, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Nell Nicholson	Ofsted Inspector
Kieran Bird	His Majesty's Inspector

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