

Inspection of Mulberry Wood Wharf Primary School

20 Brannan Street, Tower Hamlets, London E14 9ZR

Inspection dates:	13 and 14 May 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Sarah Jane Bellerby. This school is part of The Mulberry Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Dr Vanessa Ogden, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jane Farrell.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at Mulberry Wood Wharf Primary School. They are caring citizens who know how to keep themselves safe and understand they have a role to play in looking after others. The school's mantra of, 'When someone is without a smile, you give them one of yours,' sums up the approach to fostering kindness and empathy. This creates a supportive community where pupils feel seen, valued and cared for. Discrimination and bullying have no place here. Parents and carers are supportive and positive, typically describing the school as 'caring', 'trustworthy' and 'happy'.

Pupils are explicitly taught the positive learning habits of creativity, resilience and respect. New pupils who join part way through their school life are made equally welcome because the school fosters inclusivity exceptionally well. Pupils learn an ambitious and well-thought-through curriculum. They are well-prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They focus on their learning, listening to the teacher and their peers. Pupils vigorously discuss and debate issues, showing respect for each other's ideas even when they differ from their own. Pupils are very proud of the positions of responsibility they hold, such as members of the 'kindness crew' or as 'rights respecting ambassadors'.

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

Children get off to an excellent start in early years. The nurturing and stimulating environment supports children to settle quickly and learn well. The curriculum is designed to teach children the strong foundation knowledge they need in a variety of ways. For example, children eagerly join in with songs about counting to 10. They listen carefully and practise sounding out letters and building words before going on to practise their writing when learning independently. Staff provide expert teaching that ensures children are thoroughly prepared for learning as they begin Year 1.

The school's curriculum is ambitious and well sequenced. The important knowledge, skills and language that pupils need to learn and remember have been identified and sequenced logically. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and present information clearly. However, the checks that teachers make on pupils' learning do not consistently identify where misconceptions have occurred. This means that some pupils have gaps in their knowledge that go unaddressed or do not get the chance to correct mistakes. This hinders these pupils' progress through the curriculum.

Reading is a priority from the time children start school. For example, the youngest children enjoy acting out stories they are learning to perform at the Mulberry Arts Festival. They use newly acquired language from the story with precision when performing to an audience. Early reading is taught well. Staff use their subject expertise to ensure phonics teaching is precise. Staff quickly identify any pupils who need additional help and put in place a range of immediate and effective support. This results in pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), becoming fluent, confident and enthusiastic readers.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with SEND swiftly and accurately. This allows staff to put effective support in place so pupils with SEND learn well across the curriculum.

Pupils have highly positive attitudes to their learning. This begins with the 'establishment curriculum', which sets out clear routines and expectations. For example, children in Reception learn to cooperate, share well and show respect for each other. As a result, children understand what is expected of them and settle into school life with confidence. Across the school, consistent routines foster a calm, purposeful environment that is conducive to learning. The school has high expectations of attendance. It ensures that parents understand the impact that absence has on learning. A range of support to help parents has resulted in improved attendance rates.

The school's personal development provision is exceptional. Pupils benefit from rich opportunities, supported by a well-designed and expertly delivered personal, social and health education programme. For example, pupils develop strong knowledge of other cultures, religions, democracy and healthy relationships. Pupils are encouraged to use their voices to create change. For example, a pupil-led healthy eating competition was inspired by giving up unhealthy food for Lent. Pupils gain a deep understanding of diversity and equality and actively celebrate each other's differences.

Those responsible for governance share the school's ambition and vision. They support and challenge the work of leaders and maintain the highest aspirations for pupils. They have worked closely together, especially during the recent site relocation, supporting the school to manage this significant change. Staff feel very well supported by leaders. They appreciate the opportunities they have to develop professionally and the efforts made to manage workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, checks on learning do not identify pupils' errors and misconceptions. This means that some pupils develop gaps in their understanding and find it more difficult to learn the intended curriculum. The school should ensure that staff have the knowledge and expertise to identify and address misconceptions consistently.

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	149084
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	10379179
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	132
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Yasmeen Majid
CEO of the trust	Dr Vanessa Ogden
Headteacher	Sarah Jane Bellerby
Website	www.mulberrywoodwharf.org
Date of previous inspection	16 June 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school opened in September 2022 with one Reception class.
- The school now has two Reception classes, two Year one classes and one Year two class.
- The school operated on a temporary site until September 2024.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and senior leaders.
- Discussions were held with the CEO and members of The Mulberry Schools Trust as well as with governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, geography and science. 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 the curriculum in other subjects.
- 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 gathered the views of pupils, parents and staff through discussions and their responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Lisa Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

David Hatchett

Ofsted Inspector

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