

Inspection of Education-My Life Matters

108 Conisborough Crescent, Bellingham, Catford, London SE6 2SP

Inspection dates: 30 April to 2 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement
Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Education–My Life Matters (EMLM) is not your usual school. It is small and caters for pupils for whom mainstream schools are not currently suitable. Some pupils have been out of education for long stretches or have moved schools many times. What binds them together is their positive take on EMLM. They said that the school is 'alright' but quickly qualified this and explained that it helps them to move to a better place in their lives.

All are pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school's success lies in helping each pupil understand what they can do to overcome the challenges they face, whether academic, emotional or social. For some, this means returning to mainstream school after six weeks and completing their GCSEs. For others, coming to school regularly, learning how to manage their behaviour or getting an apprenticeship are significant achievements.

All pupils spoken to said that they felt safe at the school. Many said there was no bullying and although some felt it did happen occasionally, they were confident that it would be sorted out successfully. Pupils' upbeat views have much to do with the school's safe and secure environment. Pupils trust staff and feel that they can talk to them. They know that they are respected and that the school will work with them in a way that is sensitive and responsive.

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

Leadership at EMLM has made significant progress in the last year or so to improve pupils' education. The school now puts equal emphasis on pupils' academic achievements as on meeting their social and emotional needs.

All pupils are expected to follow a broad curriculum. This includes art, technology, religious education, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and relationships and sex education. The overriding aim is to give all pupils the essential learning that they need for the future. Where appropriate, pupils take functional skills assessments in English and mathematics.

A great deal of work has gone into ensuring that the curriculum is coherently designed and structured to build pupils' learning logically. With many pupils starting and leaving at different points in the year, the curriculum is adapted regularly to meet pupils' very specific needs. The school recognises that there is still some work needed to ensure that all pupils achieve their potential. In some cases, for example, the work given to pupils is not ambitious enough and does not build fully on what they already know. This limits their achievements.

The increased focus on the curriculum is, nevertheless, paying dividends. For example, lessons typically begin with a recap of previous work, and a check on what pupils remember, so that any gaps in learning can be tackled quickly. This helps to reinforce learning and is particularly effective in English and mathematics.

The school goes the extra mile to ensure pupils' safety and welfare. Pupils' social and emotional needs are identified swiftly and the school chases up support with a single-minded determination. Leaders' links with the local authority are especially strong, enabling the school to get targeted help as quickly as possible. The school's partnership with parents and carers is especially impressive and an integral part of the work to safeguard pupils. Parents value the support that they get from the school.

The new approach to behaviour is making a positive difference. For example, there is now greater consistency in the way behaviour strategies are applied. This is helping to improve pupils' motivation and attendance. Pupils appreciate the support that they get in learning how to regulate their behaviour.

As part of this increased focus on educational outcomes, the proprietor has made sure that there are staff with the expertise and experience to drive improvement. For example, the governing body holds the school to account and provides support in equal measure. Quality assurance is used effectively to identify areas for improvement. These important features ensure that all the independent school standards are met consistently. The school ensures that it fulfils the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

As well as improving the formal curriculum, the school is broadening pupils' experiences successfully. The PSHE curriculum covers important topics such as keeping healthy and safe, online safety and relationships, including consent, and careers. This year, trips to the National Gallery, the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey have enabled pupils to learn about British institutions and London's rich culture. There are plans to further develop a work experience programme next year.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In a few cases, the work given to pupils does not routinely take their learning forward as much as it should. For example, it unnecessarily repeats work already covered in primary school. Although it is important for some pupils to repeat important ideas and topics, the work set for them also needs to be consistently aspirational. The school needs to ensure that the work for all pupils is suitably ambitious regardless of their starting points.

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	143933
DfE registration number	209/6003
Local authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	10322595
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	16
Proprietor	Ervin Hall
Headteacher	Winsome Fletcher
Annual fees (day pupils)	£19,000 to £57,000
Telephone number	020 8698 9663
Website	www.emlm.org.uk/
Email address	info@emlm.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 to 8 July 2022

Information about this school

- EMLM is an independent school providing an alternative education to pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs and other special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most pupils have an education, health and care plan or are under assessment for one.
- The school is supported by a consultant executive headteacher.
- The school makes use of two alternative provisions: Y.O.U.R. Beauty School, London, SE6 2JH and Millwall Football Club, London, SE16 3LN.
- The school's most recent inspection was a progress monitoring inspection in January 2024. Prior to this, a progress monitoring inspection was carried out in March 2023, which also considered the school's change in premises. The school's last standard inspection was in July 2022.

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.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and PSHE. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector also looked at the wider curriculum.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and the head of care, who is the designated safeguarding lead.
- The inspector met with the proprietor and the chair of governing body.
- The inspector considered responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey.
- Meetings were held with pupils to discuss their views about different aspects of their school. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey or staff survey.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector 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.

Inspection team

Brian Oppenheim, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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