

Inspection of Roundwood School and Community Centre

Longstone Avenue, Harlesden, Brent, London NW10 3UN

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected

The headteacher of this school is Juan Fernandez. This school is part of Beckmead Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Jonty Clark, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Laurence Nesbitt.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy here. They feel safe. This is because there are always staff around to help them. As a result, pupils develop trusting relationships with adults. This helps them to re-engage positively with education in a typically calm working environment.

Pupils' personal development is a driving force at Roundwood. They benefit from an exceptionally well-planned offer that introduces them to new experiences and develops their existing interests. Pupils are encouraged to take on additional responsibilities, for example as school councillors. They are keen to do this and are proud of the roles they hold. Pupils know that they are listened to and supported with decisions about the school. For example, a consultation about school uniform has given pupils ownership and a sense of identity in their new school, for however long they might attend.

Pupils are well supported to re-engage with learning. Most do this well and show positive attitudes towards their education. However, the curriculum they learn lacks ambition and coherence. Consequently, pupils do not develop the knowledge and understanding they need in different subjects to be sufficiently well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

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

The school has undergone significant staffing changes at all levels. This has impacted on the pace of curriculum design and implementation. Given pupils' high levels of need, leaders have rightly focused on securing a positive culture for behaviour and an exceptional pastoral offer. This means that pupils who attend are, after a very short induction period, able to access learning again. Now this is secure, and staffing is more stable, leaders are accelerating their work to develop a stronger curriculum offer. Appropriate plans are in place to do this, but the work is in its infancy or planned for later this academic year. This means that the impact of leaders' work is yet to fully benefit the quality of education pupils receive.

The school uses the national curriculum as a basis for what pupils will learn. However, the small steps that pupils need to learn and remember have not been identified or sequenced. This means that staff are often unsure of the exact content to teach. As a result, the implementation of the curriculum can become disjointed and lack ambition. Assessment is used well when pupils start at the school to gauge what they understand and can do. However, the weaknesses in curriculum design mean that staff do not consistently check what pupils have learned. Misconceptions are not routinely identified or addressed. This limits the depth of knowledge and understanding that some pupils secure.

The school has prioritised developing pupils' vocabulary and reading for understanding. Several pupils are at an earlier stage of learning to read. The support provided for them is not as well considered. For example, there is no structured

phonics curriculum in place. This limits the fluency, accuracy and confidence with which these pupils read.

Behaviour is a high priority to maintain pupils' safety and ability to access learning again. Leaders and staff know the needs of each pupil well. Individualised behaviour plans and well-targeted therapeutic support ensure that pupils are typically able to access learning with minimal disruption. When incidents do occur, staff are well trained to react appropriately to restore calm and a return to positive learning. Leaders have appropriate systems in place to check on pupils' attendance. They work closely with families for whom this is a priority.

Provision for pupils' personal development is exceptional and underpins pupils' re-engagement in learning. A wide variety of enrichment activities provides new experiences for pupils to develop their talents and interests. For example, boxing classes led by local police officers help to build community relationships as well as physical fitness. There is a well-structured careers programme. This includes impartial information about different professions and courses and is often bespoke to pupils' aptitudes and pursuits. Experiences are provided to motivate pupils to make informed choices about their next stage of education, employment or training.

Trustees, leaders and those responsible for governance have a secure understanding of the school's strengths. They know that work is needed to strengthen the school's curriculum and have appropriate plans in place to do so. Staff feel well supported to manage their workload and say that well-being is a priority.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils at the early stages of learning to read are not supported effectively. This means that they do not learn to read with sufficient accuracy, fluency or confidence. The school should ensure that a systematic synthetic phonics curriculum is in place. They should also ensure that staff are well trained to teach phonics using texts that are appropriately matched to the sounds that pupils know.
- The curriculum is at an early stage of design. The important knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember has not been clearly identified or coherently sequenced. This means that the small steps pupils need to secure are not consistently taught or checked. As a result, pupils do not routinely develop a depth of knowledge in different subjects. The school must ensure that it develops a curriculum that identifies and sequences the important knowledge pupils need to learn. It must also ensure that this is implemented consistently and that

assessment is used to check that pupils have learned and understood 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.

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	148250
Local authority	Brent
Inspection number	10290377
Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	26
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Laurence Nesbitt
CEO of the trust	Jonty Clark
Headteacher	Juan Fernandez
Website	www.beckmeadtrust.org/roundwood
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Roundwood School opened as a free school in January 2021. The school is part of Beckmead Trust.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized alternative provision.
- The school is located in a community centre in Harlesden in the London Borough of Brent.
- The school offers alternative provision for secondary-aged pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils are placed at the school for varying periods of time.
- The school makes no use of any additional alternative provision for pupils.

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 had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and members of staff. They spoke with the chief executive officer of Beckmead Trust and met with trustees, including the chair of the trust board.
- Discussions were also held with representatives from the local authority regarding pupil placements.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in English (including early reading), mathematics, art and design, and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- The inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents, including leaders' priorities for improvement.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- The views of pupils, parents and carers, and staff were gathered through discussions, and responses Ofsted's surveys were considered.

Inspection team

Samantha Ingram, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Diane Rochford

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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