

Mulberry Academy Becomes A Centre of Excellence

October 7, 2020 by [Eilish McCann](#)



Mulberry Academy Shoreditch has achieved Centre of Excellence status.

Background

Mulberry Academy Shoreditch is a successful 11-19 mixed Academy located in East London. The Academy joined the Mulberry Schools Trust family on 1st September 2018 and the new Executive Principal was appointed at the same time. There are 1140 students on roll at the Academy including a growing Sixth Form. The school was judged as Outstanding in its last inspection in 2012.



School Context

Mulberry Academy Shoreditch has developed as a truly inclusive Academy which serves the local community. The school has a very comprehensive intake including 30+ children with EHC plans. The Sixth Form has an open admissions' policy and does its best to fit the young person rather than the other way around. The school sits within a community which has a deprivation indicator of 0.4, almost double the national average and the first language of 71% of students is not English. The population of the school is diverse with the majority of students coming from ethnic minority backgrounds and speaking over 40 languages between them. Nearly 70% of the school population is in receipt of Student Premium funding. There are slightly more boys than girls on roll and the Academy is oversubscribed. The mobility of the school population has been an issue for many years but is improving over time.

Enthusiastic and Proud Staff

I had a working lunch with a number of teachers, trainee teachers and middle leaders and we were able to discuss their experience working in the Mulberry Shoreditch Academy. We discussed wellbeing and professional learning opportunities as well as every aspect of their work. To say they were enthusiastic and proud to be working in the school is putting it mildly, they all said they were well supported and valued. They agreed that whilst the structures which are in place were for planning and delivering the curriculum, they were allowed a degree of autonomy that enabled creativity and recognised their professionalism. I met with three trainee teachers who talked me through their experience before and during lockdown, they were very positive about the challenges they faced and the support they received. With both groups we were able to talk about the way they had adapted and changed their teaching to ensure that home learning was possible. This work continues and nobody is sitting on their laurels assuming everything is back to normal – they are prepared for what comes in the future.

The Challenges of COVID-19

During my conversations with individuals and groups we revisited many of the topics we discussed during day 1 of the assessment and I was able to explore some of them discussed in greater detail. It was also very interesting to hear how the school had faced the further challenges of COVID-19 and had opened to all children this term. The timetable had been rewritten to ensure that the 'bubbles' did not mix. This was a huge task, which included special arrangements for the Inclusion Team to support

pupils who needed additional interventions. This timetable appeared to be working really well and both pupils and staff adapted to the new arrangements very quickly and were getting on with learning.

A Very Positive Atmosphere

The atmosphere in the school was very positive and it was clear that everybody was delighted to be back at school. The learning environment is well planned and is very pleasant and welcoming. The central street provides a light and airy space that is used in various ways and is a good place to watch pupils and staff moving around and getting on with their work. The building is a mixture of old and new but works very well. No space is wasted and every part of the premises is extremely well maintained.

Extensive Data

The extensive data provided as part of the self-evaluation shows that the Academy is making good progress in terms of academic achievement and attainment. The gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged students is narrowing and is now almost existent.

Excellent Positive Leadership

Finally, my discussions confirmed in my mind the total commitment the school has to ensure your school is a fully inclusive school. This is never done, never finished but is an ongoing developing issue. All the staff, as well as your Governors, are on the same page in terms of the vision for the future. The school is to be congratulated for the excellent positive leadership that enables others to get on with their jobs. All the staff have created a happy, successful school that pupils and staff want to attend. I can confirm all my findings in my initial Report.

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