

Inspection of The Complete Works

1st Floor, Universal House, 88-94 Wentworth St, London E1 7SA

Inspection dates: 15 to 17 July 2025

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

The Complete Works transforms pupils' lives for the better and prepares them for the future exceptionally well. Many pupils have been out of school for a long time and have gaps in their learning. Most have experienced emotional, mental health or complex medical needs. Whatever their starting points, the school builds pupils' confidence, self-esteem and achievement extremely successfully.

Pupils recognise the school's positive impact on their learning. They said that staff 'talk with you and not at you'. Evidence of this positivity is all around, from the very strong relationships and the creative approach to the curriculum to the calm and highly respectful culture.

Once pupils start at the school, their behaviour and attendance improve immeasurably. Pupils' personal and academic skills are developed as a whole and woven together seamlessly. Each supports the other, helping pupils to access learning and engage in activities very effectively. Pupils are attentive in lessons and behave responsibly around the school.

The curriculum is aligned very skilfully to meet pupils' specific needs and interests. There is an absolute focus on getting education right for each pupil. This helps ensure that pupils are very well prepared for adulthood.

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

The school's unique education model meets pupils' needs very effectively. There is a steely focus on ensuring that the curriculum provides high-quality experiences for pupils. These are organised flexibly to ensure that each pupil develops their personal and academic skills fully.

Pupils' well-being, safety and personal development are key priorities. Staff carry out a careful and thorough analysis of pupils' social, emotional and academic needs when they begin school. This enables staff to tailor their teaching to pupils' needs accurately. Pupils receive a combination of small-group and one-to-one teaching. This varies according to pupils' needs. Frequent checks of pupils' learning enable staff to adjust programmes of study quickly. They provide additional support such as counselling in a timely manner.

The ambitious curriculum is designed skilfully to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It meets the requirements of the independent school standards. All pupils, including students in the sixth form, study English, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education (PSHE). This tailor-made curriculum is carefully adapted to meet each pupil's distinct needs and interests. It takes into account pupils' previous experiences and tackles any gaps in their learning. For example, the school's approach to teaching reading, such as the use of phonics and promoting reading for pleasure, has a positive impact. Pupils read with increasing confidence and fluency as they move up the school.

Pupils are very well supported to develop their social, emotional and academic skills. Over time, pupils become increasingly engaged in learning and keen to do well. By the time they leave school at the end of Year 11, or the sixth form, nearly all pupils move into further education or training.

Across year groups, the school provides an excellent range of enrichment and creative activities for pupils that complement and extend the formal curriculum considerably. These celebrate pupils' achievements and expose them to the wider world. For example, the productions at the end of each term allow pupils to show off their talents and interests. The published anthologies written by pupils are especially impressive. Various visits to local art galleries, the Houses of Parliament and other places of interest reward pupils for their hard work and help them to understand life in modern Britain. The PSHE curriculum ensures that pupils learn about fundamental British values as well as matters relating to relationships and sex education and health education.

The school is led and managed purposefully and with clear intent. A great deal of thought has gone into developing an approach that is focused on enabling pupils to overcome barriers to learning. Everything the school does promotes this aim consistently and coherently. For example, the strategic focus of those staff who deal with and manage the school's day-to-day operation is complemented effectively by those who focus on learning. Roles and responsibilities are clear. Communication and staff relationships are very strong. This ensures that staff have a comprehensive knowledge of each pupil's needs and challenges.

Support for staff well-being and workload is excellent. The arrangements for supporting staff and developing their expertise are very well coordinated. This ensures that teachers have the knowledge, skills and expertise to implement the curriculum consistently well. Access to pastoral support, for example a counsellor, also helps promote staff well-being most effectively.

The proprietor ensures that the school complies fully with the independent school standards as well as the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The proprietor provides strong leadership, using its considerable expertise to ensure it has a thorough understanding of the school's work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	139601
DfE registration number	211/6006
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	10391766
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	5 to 25
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	119
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	34
Proprietor	The Complete Works Ltd
Chair	Reji Vettasseri
Headteacher	Adam Dalton (Executive Headteacher) Dean Phillips-Smith (Headteacher) Andy Davies (Headteacher)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£14,145 to £55,866
Telephone number	020 7377 0280
Website	www.tcw.org.uk
Email address	headteacher@tcw.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 to 24 November 2022

Information about this school

- The Complete Works is an independent school that provides alternative provision for pupils and students aged between five and 25 years. Pupils are placed at the school by a variety of local authorities and schools. Most pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities related to a wide range of needs. They are supported with an education, health and care plan.
- The school operates from five hubs, organised between an East or South London 'campus'. The East London campus comprises three hubs at 88–94 Wentworth Street, London, E1 7SA; 38 Commercial Street, London, E1 6LP and 5 Thrawl Street, London, E1 6RT. The South London campus comprises two hubs at 43 Old Jamaica Road, London, SE16 4TE and 66 Lancaster Street, London, SE1 0RZ.
- Each campus is led by a headteacher. Both are overseen by an executive headteacher and a board of trustees. A central team oversees functions such as human resources and health, safety and well-being.
- Pupils attend school at either the East London campus or South London campus and follow an individual curriculum plan and timetable.
- The previous standard inspection took place in November 2022 when the independent school standards were met and Ofsted judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness.
- An additional inspection in February 2025 judged that the school was likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if an increase to the age of students admitted to the school to 25 was implemented. Prior to this, an additional inspection in October 2024 judged that the school was unlikely to meet the relevant independent school standards if an increase to the age of students admitted to the school to 25 was implemented.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science

and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors discuss the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and, where possible, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.

- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about other subjects and activities.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the two headteachers, other senior leaders, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors visited all the school sites.
- The lead inspector also met with representatives of the proprietor and the board of trustees.
- 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 checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- Inspectors considered responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, including written comments.

Inspection team

Brian Oppenheim, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sahreen Siddiqui	Ofsted Inspector
Lascelles Haughton	His Majesty's Inspector

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