

London Academy

Spur Road, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 8DE

Inspection dates

1–2 May 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal and executive principal provide very effective leadership. They have established a culture of high expectations and leave no stone unturned to help pupils realise their full potential.
- Leaders have created a strong, inclusive school which supports and cares for all within its community. Leaders have robust systems in place for checking and improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Teaching is strong across the all-through school, and pupils make sustained good progress across a wide range of subjects. Where teaching is weaker, leaders take decisive action to provide teachers with carefully planned coaching programmes.
- The curriculum is imaginative and responsive to the needs and aspirations of all pupils.
- From below average starting points, pupils' attainment is average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11. Over time, disadvantaged pupils make strong progress across the curriculum.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fully integrated into all aspects of school life.
- Outstanding leadership in the early years ensures that children get off to an excellent start in their school career.
- The sixth form is good and prepares students well for the challenges they face in further and higher education.
- Governors articulate an ambitious vision for the school. They have high expectations of leaders and pupils and what they are able to achieve.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils feel safe and are kept safe.
- Pupils' behaviour, in and out of lessons, is good. Pupils are enthused, respond well to teaching and develop good relationships with staff. Pupils' personal development and welfare are outstanding.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in science is variable in key stages 3 and 4. Leaders have taken action, but the full impact of the work is yet to be seen.
- Students are not making strong enough progress in some subjects in the sixth form.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the improvements to teaching and learning in science in key stages 3 and 4 by ensuring that all teachers:
 - are fully aware of any gaps in skills and knowledge that pupils have, and use this information to plan activities which help pupils to catch up quickly
 - use questioning more effectively in lessons to probe pupils' understanding and deepen their learning, especially the most able.
- Ensure that students in the sixth form receive the support and challenge needed to achieve consistently well across the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The principal and executive principal have established a school in which pupils respond very well to their high expectations of behaviour and learning. Pupils are respectful of each other and are very proud of their school. The powerful culture of learning enables disadvantaged pupils, who comprise the majority, to make accelerated progress in English and mathematics.
- Leaders at all levels from early years to the sixth form are highly ambitious. They are determined to make the school the best that it can be. Senior and subject leaders are making an exceptional contribution to raising standards across the school. They are very well trained and supported to carry out their leadership roles.
- Leaders make regular and accurate checks on the quality of teaching. Pupils benefit from strong teaching across a wide range of subjects because leaders are uncompromising in their commitment to achieving excellence. Additional support and training are given to newly qualified teachers and any teachers who do not meet leaders' expectations.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils of all abilities and aptitudes very well. Much in-depth thinking goes into the design of the curriculum and how learning is to be sequenced. All staff are involved in this. Subject leaders have an excellent understanding of how the curriculum is mapped and assessed. Leaders offer pupils good advice about which subjects to choose from the wide range on offer in key stage 4. There is, for example, a successful focus on encouraging girls to take up subjects in science, technology and mathematics.
- Pupils benefit from an impressive range of extra-curricular activities to develop their skills and talents in sport and the performing arts, as well as other interests. Leaders monitor the attendance of pupils at the different events and encourage a high level of participation. As a result, pupils' personal development and welfare are outstanding.
- Leaders make excellent use of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are making very strong progress from their starting points, including in English and mathematics. Leaders check that disadvantaged pupils engage in extra-curricular activities. Leaders use the additional pupil premium funding astutely to support pupils to take part in, for example, visits to universities and residential activities.
- The programme for helping pupils in Year 7 to catch up in literacy and numeracy is very well established. For example, the high proportion of pupils who join the school with low levels of literacy make rapid gains in their reading skills.
- Leadership of special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, including the on-site resource base, is very effective. These pupils are very well supported by teaching assistants in lessons and through specialist teaching for speech and language. As a result, the progress being made by pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is good.
- The primary sports funding is used effectively to improve opportunities for key stage 1 pupils to participate in sport. As a result, there is stronger participation in clubs and

activities and more effective teaching of physical education (PE).

- Leaders are taking decisive action to improve the consistency of teaching in science, compounded partly by recent difficulties in recruitment. A science consultant has been appointed to work with subject leaders to improve teaching, learning and assessment in key stages 3 and 4. There are early indications of the good impact of this work.

Governance of the school

- Governors are very committed to the school. They share the principal's and executive principal's vision that all London Academy pupils will receive a good-quality education to prepare them to become 'leaders of tomorrow'.
- Governors are very knowledgeable and astute. Leaders provide them with detailed information about the school's progress, which enables them to challenge leaders very effectively on all aspects of the school's work. For example, leaders were challenged to provide explanations when the outcomes for GCSE science dipped in 2017.
- Governors know the school very well because they scrutinise information about pupils' progress. They also check the quality of teaching and provision by talking to pupils and visiting the school regularly.
- Governors carry out their statutory duties very effectively. They have a secure understanding of the way in which additional funding is used, such as pupil premium funding and funding for primary sport and PE. They check that the Year 7 catch-up funding is being used to improve the literacy and mathematical skills of the pupils who require additional support when they join the school.
- There is strong expertise in the governing body. For example, excellent knowledge about financial management enables the best decisions to be made on spending.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong school culture of keeping pupils safe. Staff know how to make a referral if they have any concerns. The school has several senior staff who have been trained to a high level in safeguarding, including leaders in the primary section. They use this expertise well to ensure that pupils who need extra support get the help they need. All staff are appropriately trained and understand their responsibilities. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and know that, if they have any concerns, they can talk to a member of staff they trust. The vast majority of parents and carers feel their children are safe at school.
- The child protection policy is up to date and implemented effectively. Appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that staff are safe to work with pupils. The recording of these checks meets statutory requirements.
- Leaders ensure that vulnerable pupils are well supported in school. Staff work very well with parents and the local authority to protect pupils in need of care and support.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers are reflective and use their good subject knowledge to engage pupils' interest. As a result, pupils are enthused and respond well to teachers' high expectations. This applies across the school, from early years to the sixth form.
- Planning is a strength, particularly in English and mathematics, where teachers build logical sequences of lessons over time and focus on consolidating pupils' understanding. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and use their strong subject knowledge to plan lessons that challenge pupils' learning.
- Leaders have identified literacy as a barrier to learning for many pupils. In the best teaching, this particular focus is evident and, as a result, pupils' written accuracy has improved. Many pupils are confident in writing for a variety of audiences and purposes.
- Teachers use a good range and depth of questioning to explore pupils' answers and extend their thinking. Teachers are confident and skilled in developing pupils' initial responses further through increasingly complex and probing questioning. This was seen in many subjects throughout the inspection, including mathematics, English, design and technology, modern foreign languages and PE. It was less evident in science, especially in the case of the most able pupils.
- The support and planning for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are effective. This includes pupils in the on-site resource base. Most pupils, from their various starting points, are given tailored guidance on how to improve. Teaching assistants help pupils to overcome any misunderstandings so that they can participate and understand the lesson fully.
- Teachers help pupils to understand what it is that they have learned and how to improve their work. When the school's policy on assessment is used carefully, which it is most of the time, the teaching leads to demonstrable improvements in pupils' learning.
- Teachers in key stage 1 explain concepts and model strategies very effectively. As a result, pupils in Year 2 were able to apply the column addition method confidently to add two-digit numbers.
- Teachers check carefully with each other and sometimes with other schools and consultants that they are assessing pupils' progress accurately. This means that leaders are confident that the assessment information they receive and provide to governors is accurate.
- Sometimes, teachers in science do not demonstrate strong enough knowledge and understanding about pupils' gaps in key skills and knowledge. As a result, some pupils' misunderstandings about key ideas in science get worse rather than becoming clearer.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of their life in modern Britain. For example, they are taught very well about the rule of law. They experience democracy by electing their pupil leaders and show considerable maturity when they are given this level of

responsibility.

- Many subjects, including religious studies, successfully promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by significantly enhancing pupils' understanding of a wide variety of cultures. Key stage 1 pupils have a good age-appropriate understanding of the importance of accepting and valuing differences in appearance and background.
- Pupils enjoy being part of this highly inclusive and caring school community. They recognise that discussions about equality and prejudice help them to understand others' individuality. Consequently, they know and value the diversity in British society and they respect differences.
- Pupils understand the range of potential risks locally and nationally, for example knife crime and radicalisation. The school provides very effective education on these risks and many others, for example the dangers of sexting and online grooming. Pupils could talk knowledgeably about a range of topics which they explore in the wider curriculum.
- The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to reflect on their skills and personal qualities. A series of visits to universities and local colleges provide pupils with an insight into further and higher education. Leaders are establishing links with local partners to plan further events to promote pupils' career aspirations.
- The on-site resource base is helping the few pupils who attend to use strategies to manage their own behaviour and improve their well-being. Those who attend off-site provision are checked on routinely by school leaders.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have adopted the school's values and culture, so that they typically display strong conduct. Most pupils show positive attitudes to learning.
- The school is an orderly environment. Calmness prevails during key transitions in the school day, for example at breaktimes and at the end of lessons.
- Pupils in key stage 1 are polite and kind to one another. For example, they share resources well in lessons and respect each other's views and opinions.
- Pupils told inspectors that bullying is dealt with effectively when reported. The school's records show a reduction in poor behaviour and bullying incidents as a result of leaders' focus on embedding a strong learning culture. The number of fixed-term exclusions has also gone down compared to the previous year.
- The vast majority of pupils arrive on time and are ready to learn in every lesson. Additional support staff are working with parents to coax pupils back to school. As a result, the attendance of pupils has improved and is now in line with the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils arrive in Year 7 with prior attainment that is consistently below the national

average. Pupils' reading ages are particularly low. From these starting points, pupils make rapid progress in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics. As a result, they reach standards that are in line with the national average by the end of Year 11.

- Pupils achieve well in a wide range of subjects, both academic and applied. Scrutiny of pupils' work across the curriculum demonstrates strong consolidation of knowledge and skills in most subjects over time.
- Pupils in key stage 1 build well on the early reading skills taught very effectively in the Reception Year. Pupils' phonics skills are good and they apply these effectively when reading texts in Year 1 and writing coherent paragraphs in Year 2. The strong emphasis on developing reading comprehension skills continues into key stage 3 when, first thing every morning, pupils 'drop everything and read'.
- The most able pupils benefit from teachers' strong subject knowledge and effective planning and, as a result, they are inquisitive and challenged. They make strong progress in English and mathematics and achieve well in many other subjects, for example languages, history, design and technology and art.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making similar progress to their peers, and sometimes better. Teachers regularly challenge disadvantaged pupils during lessons, for example through targeted questioning. This enables pupils to think through problems and apply their reasoning skills, which results in deeper learning.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, and those taught within the designated resource provision, make strong progress from their starting points. This is because they are taught well and they are rapidly gaining confidence in their ability to learn.
- Catch-up funding is used well to ensure that pupils with low literacy skills make accelerated progress. Most Year 7 pupils involved in the programme are now accessing the complete curriculum in Year 8. They can now read much more fluently and understand their literacy activities in lessons.
- A 'mastery' programme in mathematics is having a significant impact on enhancing pupils' numeracy skills. This was seen, for example, in key stage 1 mathematics, where pupils applied calculation strategies to work out if a subtraction sum was right or wrong.
- Too many pupils underachieved in key stage 4 science in 2017. The school's current assessment information is more positive, indicating stronger progress over time. However, the quality and depth of pupils' learning in science in key stages 3 and 4 are not consistently strong.
- Leaders closely monitor the progress of the very few pupils who attend off-site provision. They ensure that pupils' academic needs are met and that they are well looked after.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Leadership and management of the early years are outstanding. Leaders undertake incisive self-evaluation to identify priorities for improvement. All adults ensure that

teaching gives the highest priority to developing children's understanding and their use of language. The curriculum is highly effective in broadening and developing children's experiences in school.

- Leaders and teachers successfully meet the challenge of helping children to make rapid progress from low starting points in their learning. When children start in the Reception class, most demonstrate skills and knowledge below those typical for their age, particularly in communication and language. An above-average proportion of children reach a good level of development by the end of Reception.
- Children's work shows outstanding progress in learning and the acquisition of skills in Reception. Leaders ensure that transition arrangements into Year 1 are very strong. They carefully identify and address next steps. Teaching is adapted so that pupils build on their successes and make excellent progress across key stage 1.
- Teaching is consistently of high quality. For example, staff teach phonics remarkably well. Children use their phonics knowledge to develop their reading and writing skills. Staff embed the features of good writing skills from an early age.
- Children show that they understand safe play and the safe use of resources. For example, children work sensibly on activities involving the use of tools for cutting. They form strong bonds with adults and this helps them to feel safe. Parents are delighted that their children are safe and looked after in a very stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environment.
- Children who qualify for additional funding, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities and disadvantaged children, make the same strong progress as their peers. Many children speak English as an additional language. Teaching supports them in making rapid gains in their language development.
- Children thoroughly enjoy their time in the early years. A love of learning is fostered and children behave very well, forming excellent relationships with adults and their classmates.
- Safeguarding is effective in the early years. Staff training is up to date. All staff are vigilant in ensuring the safety and happiness of the children in their care.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Standards dipped in 2016 and many students underachieved in several academic and applied subjects. Leaders were forensic in their analysis of the reasons for this underachievement. Decisive action was taken to improve outcomes, resulting in most students making broadly average progress in 2017.
- Teaching provides suitable challenge for current students, including disadvantaged students and those targeting the highest grades. As a result, students make good progress in most subjects.
- Teachers prepare students well for the rigours of A-level study, encouraging them to read widely. As a result, students develop their academic study skills, interest in the subject and a sense of enquiry.
- The leadership of the sixth form is effective. Whole-school policies are applied consistently. Detailed tracking of student progress means that teachers identify and

support those who fall behind. Middle leaders work well with senior leaders to ensure that action plans are in place to address gaps in learning. Outcomes are improving as a result.

- As a result of more detailed monitoring and higher expectations, attendance in the sixth form has improved.
- The students value the curriculum offered in the sixth form. In addition to the subjects which they study, they get good opportunities to develop leadership skills and to contribute to the school community. For example, many volunteer to help the younger pupils improve their reading comprehension skills.
- The requirements of study programmes are met. Students balance their academic study with a consideration of issues relating to their personal, social, health and economic understanding. Students value the opportunity to discuss and debate live issues of real relevance to their everyday lives.
- Staff prepare students well for the next stage of their education or training. Careers education in the sixth form is strong. The very large majority of students now enter higher education and they value the preparation they receive for university applications.
- Although current students are making stronger progress in most subjects, students' achievement is not consistently strong across the curriculum.

School details

Unique reference number	134798
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10047367

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	All-through academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,463
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	350
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phillip O'Hear
Principal	Paddy McGrath
Executive principal	Angela Trigg
Telephone number	020 8238 1100
Website	www.londonacademy.org.uk/
Email address	office@londonacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 November 2011

Information about this school

- London Academy is an all-through school serving a culturally diverse community. The primary section of the school opened in September 2015. Currently, there are 29 children in the early years foundation stage and 77 pupils in key stage 1.
- The school formed a multi-academy trust (AIM Academies Trust) with Deansbrook Junior School in April 2013.
- The school is governed by a local governing body, with strategic oversight by a trust board. The chair of the trust board and the local governing body are one and the

same.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils have SEN and/or disabilities.
- The school has specially resourced provision for a few pupils who have speech and communication difficulties.
- Over two thirds of the pupils are of minority ethnic heritage. This proportion is much higher than average. The main groups are of Asian and Black African heritage. Almost half of the pupils speak English as an additional language. Pupils of White British heritage comprise a small but significant minority.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- One pupil is currently studying full-time at a local education provider, the Alternative Centre for Education.
- The current executive principal was the principal of the school at the time of the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons throughout the school in all year groups, some with leaders from the school. They carried out other visits to classrooms to look at particular aspects of the school’s work and scrutinised examples of the pupils’ work.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders and other staff at the school and with members of the governing body.
- They spoke with the pupils in groups, in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors checked the 58 responses on Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View. They also took account of the 62 responses to Ofsted’s staff online survey.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school’s development plan and self-evaluation, policies and records relating to safeguarding, the school’s information about pupils’ attendance, behaviour, attainment and progress, and other information about the work of the school and the governing body.

Inspection team

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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