

The Archer Academy

Eagans Close, London N2 8GA

Inspection dates

21 to 22 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher's clear, unwavering vision focuses on supporting pupils' high achievement across the curriculum. Staff implement the vision very well. As a result, pupils receive an outstanding education.
- Leaders at all levels are very skilled. They know what they do well, and concentrate their energies on what they could still do better. Consequently, leaders' capacity to continue to improve the school is very strong.
- Pupils make significant progress as they move through the school. They reach high standards in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. There is a strong focus on the development of subject knowledge. Teachers question pupils carefully to ensure that their learning is extended.
- The curriculum is responsive to pupils' interests and needs. The way in which it is organised motivates pupils. Stretch and challenge through deeper thinking is a consistent theme through the curriculum.
- Teachers appreciate the high-quality training provided to make them even stronger practitioners.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are very well supported. Leaders use the additional funding for these pupils very effectively. This ensures they make strong progress.
- Behaviour is orderly and sensible. In lessons, behaviour is excellent. Pupils respond well to the systems in place, which ensure that they behave exceptionally well.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are very well looked after, and that they are kept safe. Pupils are very happy to attend the school.
- Governors have a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths. They provide leaders with effective support and challenge, which ensures that the school continues to improve.
- A small minority of pupils with low prior attainment do not achieve as well as their peers. Not all teachers routinely take account of these pupils' lower literacy skills when they teach difficult concepts.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise the achievement of a small minority of pupils with low prior attainment by ensuring that:
 - all staff take responsibility for the development of these pupils' literacy skills
 - teachers find ways to break down difficult concepts so that those who struggle to understand can access the learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leadership is exceptional. The headteacher's leadership has transformed the school. Pupils make outstanding progress and reach high standards. They also develop into well-rounded individuals by adopting the 'Archer Way'. Pupils have a thirst for learning and are committed to their education.
- At the heart of leadership is a dogged determination to ensure that every pupil receives the education they deserve. Nothing but the best will do. Checks on the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make are very robust. Leaders are thorough in the way they monitor and evaluate the quality of education across the school. As a result, the school continues to improve at a rapid pace.
- Middle leaders play a vital role in the school's success. They know what is expected of them, and they receive effective support and challenge that enables them to meet these expectations. As a result, pupils make outstanding progress and achieve well in a wide range of subjects.
- Leaders are accurate in their evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching, learning and assessment. They use this evaluation to ensure that staff receive training that develops their individual areas of need and supports the school's goals. Staff value the high-quality professional development they receive, and they are proud to work at the school. Leaders are very effective at training teachers, for example through the weekly 'flash Friday' events, and in more formal coaching programmes. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment continues to improve.
- The way in which the curriculum is designed and organised supports the strong rates of progress that pupils make. At key stage 4, most pupils continue to study the subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate. The choice for pupils has expanded considerably since the introduction last year of a range of vocational courses. For instance, business studies, engineering and health and social care are now offered. The key stage 3 curriculum provides sustained intellectual challenge for pupils through weekly lessons in thematic learning. For example, Year 7 pupils assessed the strength of Descartes' famous statement, 'I think, therefore I am', as an argument for existence. The taught curriculum is enhanced by wider opportunities, in particular through the highly regarded weekly enrichment programme.
- Additional finance that the school receives to support disadvantaged pupils is used very well. The progress that these pupils make from their starting points is very strong, partly because of the targeted approach for the use of these funds. Similarly, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make strong gains in their learning as a result of an intelligent use of finances and resources.
- Leaders successfully promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils take part in school drama, dance and music shows. They attend stimulating visits, and benefit from interesting and thought-provoking assemblies. As a result, pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders have acted swiftly and appropriately since the school's short inspection in October 2018. They have further refined the key stage 3 curriculum and implemented

plans to improve the literacy skills of pupils with low prior attainment. However, further work is needed in these areas to build on the gains already made.

Governance of the school

- Governance is highly effective. Governors make a very strong contribution to the school's work and provide clear direction to the school's leaders. Governors share leaders' passion and commitment to ensure that the school is the best it can be.
- Governors support and challenge leaders well. They visit the school regularly. Records are made of visits to link departments. They are comprehensive and show a deep understanding of the school. Governors reflect on their own effectiveness, and they regularly complete a skills audit to this end.
- Governors see no limit to the further success of the school. They challenge school leaders to continue the school's improvement journey. They believe that the school can develop even further, and their expectations continue to rise.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff at all levels receive regular safeguarding training, and they know how to identify pupils who are potentially at risk. Staff understand and follow leaders' protocols for reporting any safeguarding concerns.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding concerns are properly recorded. They are tenacious in making sure that child-protection referrals are dealt with appropriately. The maintenance of child-protection files is very effective, and leaders work well with representatives from other agencies.
- School policies reflect the latest requirements. Leaders and governors make sure that all the required checks are carried out when recruiting new staff to work with pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- The quality of teaching is routinely strong. This, combined with an effective curriculum and pupils' excellent attitudes to learning, helps pupils to succeed.
- Teaching is characterised by a strong focus on academic content. Teachers plan lessons that stretch pupils' understanding. Teachers ensure that planning meets the needs of their pupils. Consequently, pupils are keen to learn, listen intently and demonstrate a thirst for knowledge.
- Teachers are relentless in thinking how best to develop their craft. The school has introduced 'honours questions' to ensure that pupils think deeply in lessons. These have been effective in promoting academic resilience and independent learning. These are two of the 'Archer Outcomes'. Pupils told inspectors that they appreciate being challenged and that they enjoy thinking at a high level.
- Learning activities are closely matched to most pupils' starting points, and lessons are carefully set within a sequence of learning. It is clear to pupils where lessons fit into the bigger picture. This understanding deepens their learning and allows them to make

links between one lesson and the next.

- Teachers question pupils carefully to assess their learning. They listen attentively to pupils' answers, and then shape their next lines of enquiry accordingly. As a result, teachers know when to move pupils on, and when to consolidate their learning.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support to pupils with SEND. They plan closely with teachers and understand the needs of the pupils they support. Teaching assistants' effective questioning and explanation of tasks support pupils with SEND to make strong progress.
- Teachers provide pupils with specific and helpful guidance about what how to improve their work. This is based on assessing pupils' progress against the 'Big Ideas' identified in each subject. Pupils told inspectors that they find this very useful, and most make good use of the feedback provided.
- Homework is set regularly and makes a good contribution to developing pupils' independent learning skills. Homework tasks provide opportunities for students to practise key skills in each subject, as well as to deepen their thinking.
- Teachers consider carefully how they can consolidate pupils' literacy skills in their lessons. For example, they check pupils' understanding of subject vocabulary that is misspelled or misunderstood. This encourages pupils to focus on their literacy skills, in addition to the task in hand. However, teachers are not routinely effective at breaking down difficult concepts for the small number of pupils with low prior attainment. This affects their understanding and, over time, these pupils make less progress than their peers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Leaders, staff and pupils work together to make the school a harmonious community. Pupils are respectful, courteous and kind to each other. Pupils of different faiths, and those without a faith, get on well together. Through the curriculum and additional wider opportunities, the school actively promotes an understanding and celebration of different beliefs and worldviews.
- Supporting pupils' good mental health is a high priority in the school. Pupils told inspectors that they value the focus that staff have placed on exploring issues linked to mental health. This information and support are provided, for instance, through assemblies and the daily tutor programme.
- Pupils said they feel safe. They know about different forms of bullying, including those presented by technology and social media. Pupils are confident that staff will help them to deal with any potential issues. They said that any bullying is dealt with swiftly and robustly. Parents and staff overwhelmingly agree that pupils are safe.
- Teachers provide pupils with guidance on how to stay safe, including how to protect themselves from risks associated with radicalisation, exploitation and the use of the internet. The curriculum provides excellent opportunities for focused discussions about mitigating risks. In citizenship, for example, pupils considered the impact of sex and

relationships education on different types of sexually transmitted diseases.

- Careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG) is very effective. It reflects leaders' commitment to ensuring pupils have high aspirations and are well prepared for the next stages of their lives. Pupils are provided with a range of independent advice, including from post-16 providers, in lessons and during specially organised events. Almost all pupils who left the school in 2018, moved on to further education or training.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are friendly, articulate and self-confident. They talked to inspectors about their school with great pride. They show respect for the school environment, and help to keep it tidy.
- Pupils' behaviour as they move around the building and in lessons is exemplary. No low-level disruption or misbehaviour of any kind was observed during the inspection. The school's behaviour logs indicate that disruption to learning happens occasionally, but this has decreased over time.
- The school has effective internal systems to reduce the level of fixed-term exclusion. Pupils understand the systems to manage behaviour, and said that they work well. Staff provide excellent care and support for the small number of pupils who need extra help to regulate their behaviour in lessons.
- Pupils are keen to learn, and they come to school regularly and punctually. Attendance is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is below average.
- The few pupils who attend off-site provision are well looked after. Leaders have close relationships with the provider, and they check that pupils are safe and that their behaviour meets expectations.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils typically start Year 7 with levels of prior attainment that are above average. They make sustained and substantial progress over time. This is because of high-quality teaching, combined with their determination and excellent attitudes to learning.
- In 2018, pupils' progress scores in their GCSE examinations placed the school in the top 10% of all schools nationally. Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics was above average. They made excellent progress in a wide variety of subjects, including English, mathematics, science, history, geography and modern foreign languages. The progress of disadvantaged pupils was significantly higher than other pupils nationally. This was the school's first Year 11 cohort since the start of the school, in September 2013.
- Pupils make very strong progress throughout the school. For example, pupils in Year 11 are performing to the similar high standards as the previous cohort, at the same point last year. Pupils in Year 7 have made particularly strong progress since the start of this academic year. This was evident from a detailed scrutiny of pupils' work in a wide

range of subjects, including in English and mathematics.

- Pupils are encouraged to read widely. They enjoy reading for pleasure. All pupils in Year 7, for example, had read the same classic text by the time they joined the school. Pupils who struggle with reading are given effective additional support, including by sixth-form students from a local college.
- Pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged make strong progress. Staff quickly identify their different needs, and they are supported very effectively in their learning.
- The needs of most-able pupils are well met. Teachers plan lessons so that subject content is interesting and challenging for these pupils. As a result, they develop a keen sense of independence and ownership of their learning.
- The few pupils who attend off-site alternative provision are monitored very effectively. They attend regularly, are kept safe, and progress well.
- The very small number of pupils with low prior attainment have made progress this academic year. However, their progress is not as strong their peers. They do not experience the benefits of the wider curriculum due to the limits imposed by their low standards in literacy.

Unique reference number	139594
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10088896

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	774
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Avis Johns
Headteacher	Lucy Harrison
Telephone number	020 8365 4110
Website	thearcheracademy.org.uk
Email address	info@thearcheracademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 October 2018

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average. This is also the case for pupils who have an education, health and care plan.
- The school educates pupils from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The Archer Academy became a full school for the first time in September 2017. It is a campus school, with pupils in Years 7 to 9 based at the lower school, and pupils in Years 10 and 11 at the upper school.
- A few pupils are educated off-site in a local pupil referral unit, The Pavilion.
- The headteacher has been in post since September 2015.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders, some staff, and members of the governing body. Inspectors held a telephone conversation with the school's improvement adviser.
- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Inspectors observed learning in many lessons, some jointly with leaders.
- A wide range of pupils' workbooks were reviewed by inspectors to assess the quality of teaching and pupils' progress over time.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils informally in lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes to seek their views about the school.
- Inspectors met with three groups of pupils more formally to discuss many aspects of school life.
- Inspectors observed an assembly and made visits to afternoon tutor sessions.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website and a range of school documents, including assessment information and the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness. Inspectors scrutinised leaders' improvement plans and their records about behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the 161 responses made by parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also considered the 48 responses by staff to the Ofsted staff questionnaire.

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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