

London Academy of Excellence Tottenham

Inspection dates: 16–18 November 2021

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Education programmes for young people	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

London Academy of Excellence Tottenham (LAET) is a mixed 16 to 19 academy, situated in Tottenham, in the London Borough of Haringey. It was established in 2017 as a selective free school. LAET works in partnership with nine independent schools, of which Highgate School is their main educational sponsor. Tottenham Hotspur Football Club is their business sponsor.

At the time of the inspection, LAET had 557 students studying A levels, including mathematics, biology, chemistry, psychology and English. There were 290 students in Year 12 and 267 students in Year 13. All students study four A-level subjects in Year 12 and can reduce this to three A levels in Year 13. Approximately a quarter of students continue to study four A levels in Year 13.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Students at LAET are inspired by their studies. Lessons are exciting and students are highly motivated by the atmosphere and culture of the school. They appreciate being in a studious environment where they are encouraged and challenged to achieve their best academically, and to contribute to the local community.

Students appreciate the excellent support that they receive from their teachers. Teachers help students to understand their work and what they need to do to improve. Students talk positively about the high-quality guidance that they receive in planning their future careers.

Students work hard and are ambitious to achieve high standards of work and to progress onto careers of their choice. They benefit from a broad range of additional activities that are available to them at school. For example, they take part in sports, community projects, arts and drama to complement their curriculum. Teachers encourage students to explore and discuss contemporary issues. As a result, they learn to conduct themselves with integrity and grow in their understanding of the diverse communities that they live in.

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

Governors, leaders and managers have established an excellent vision and ethos for the school. They communicate this vision enthusiastically to staff and partner organisations. Leaders focus on creating a culture of academic excellence and ensuring that students make valuable contributions to the local community. Leaders work closely with feeder schools to raise academic standards and aspirations across the local area.

Leaders have put in place an ambitious and challenging curriculum which provides students in the local area, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, with the opportunity and aspiration to excel. Staff are committed to providing students with outstanding education and are proud to work at the school.

Teachers design the curriculum carefully, so that Year 12 students can swiftly benefit from their studies. For example, in chemistry, teachers revise concepts such as electrons, bonding and structure studied at GCSE, to ensure that students understand basic concepts well, before they progress onto more complex topics at A level. Teachers frequently start complex topics early in students' courses. For example, in computer science teachers introduce the synoptic project early in the course. As a result, teachers challenge students to extend their thinking about topics being taught while ensuring that they learn the underpinning knowledge they require.

Students appreciate the challenge that teachers provide for them. They know that teachers will give them comprehensive support with their studies, and consequentially they gain in confidence to understand difficult topics.

Students consistently demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning. In lessons and extra-curricular activities, teachers encourage students to express their own ideas, including on controversial topics such as immigration. In pastoral lessons, students confidently voice varied opinions, for example on whether the media is racist. Teachers create a culture where students listen to, understand and are highly tolerant of each other's views, even when they are different to their own. Students' behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary.

Teachers are highly qualified and experienced in their specialist subjects. They use their subject knowledge expertly to ensure that students develop high levels of skill and mastery in those subjects. For example, in mathematics, teachers use their expertise in using mathematical modelling to teach students in Year 13 organic chemistry, to calculate brain tumour growth and analyse the data using spreadsheets.

Staff provide students with very good advice on their future careers. They give students thorough support to progress to university, for example with their application forms and interview techniques. They ensure that students receive advice on broader career options. For example, if students aspire to apply for medicine, tutors ensure that they know about other applied health sciences such as clinical nutrition and public health. Staff ensure that students know about degree apprenticeships that are available to them.

Teachers provide highly effective and targeted support for students who need it. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities benefit from helpful support from teachers and teaching assistants. Teachers know students' needs and understand the strategies that help them to learn more easily. Staff provide appropriate and relevant support in class and outside of teaching sessions. As a result, students with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well.

Teachers challenge students to extend their knowledge beyond the basic requirements of the curriculum. For example, in English students read independently about the historical context in which their books are set, so that they have a deeper understanding of the characters. Teachers encourage students to attend additional lessons focused on university study, and academic coaches provide additional learning outside of lessons. As a result, students make excellent progress and are well prepared for their examinations and for future study.

Teachers use assessment strategies skilfully to check students' understanding in lessons. They swiftly identify any misconceptions and ensure that students understand the concepts that teachers have taught. In chemistry, teachers use whiteboards to check students' calculations and in English teachers use games effectively to check students' understanding of important vocabulary, such as cultural bereavement and dual identity. As a result, teachers swiftly identify any gaps in students' learning and support them to understand the concepts being taught. Students gain knowledge and skills in their lessons which they successfully apply to new contexts in future lessons.

Teachers provide students with exceptionally detailed and thorough feedback on their work. Consequentially, students understand what they do well and what more they need to do to achieve the high grades that they aspire to. Students appreciate the feedback that they receive from teachers. They focus on repeating consistently what they have learned in their new work. As a result, students improve their performance in examinations where they are required to work to deadlines. They make very good progress, are well prepared for their assessments and achieve their qualifications with high grades.

Leaders, managers and sponsors work extremely well with local feeder schools to promote and improve educational standards in the local area. They have established a partnership programme which works successfully with organisations to enable students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds to overcome barriers to high attainment. For example, leaders have recently introduced a project alongside veterinary practitioners from ethnic minorities to inspire young people from different backgrounds to consider careers in veterinary science.

Governors are highly skilled and knowledgeable. They have the appropriate expertise to support and shape the strategic direction of the school, including development of the curriculum. Governors have an excellent knowledge of the school and understand the strengths and the areas for development. They support leaders well to secure improvements, for example they work collaboratively with partner schools who contribute to teaching at the school. Experienced staff are seconded from partner schools to provide additional teaching expertise and to provide guidance in developing new subject areas.

Leaders and managers monitor the quality of teaching rigorously. They have set high standards by establishing five principles of teaching which they use to guide teachers. Teaching and learning coaches help new teachers to improve their teaching skills. When teachers require additional support, teaching and learning coaches provide this swiftly. Staff benefit from shared staff development days with independent school partners so that they share good practice. Leaders have put in place opportunities for teachers to be seconded to different schools in the partnership. As a result, teachers share good practice, learn from experienced teachers and are inspired by industry experts.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Governors, leaders and teachers put safeguarding as a high priority. The designated safeguarding officer and the safeguarding team are highly trained. Leaders ensure that staff receive safeguarding training at induction and frequent update training at team meetings and on staff development days. Managers have very good links with external agencies and work closely with them to put in place policies and procedures to keep students safe.

Managers understand the main safeguarding risks for students in the local area. They take appropriate action to help students to stay safe. Managers focus strongly on supporting students with their mental health. For example, a mental health and well-being lead has been appointed to support students.

Leaders carry out rigorous checks on staff at recruitment to ensure that they are safe to work with students. Students feel safe at school and in the local area.

Provider details

Unique reference number	144753
Address	Lilywhite House 780 High Road Tottenham London N17 0BX
Contact number	02083 526020
Website	www.laetottenham.ac.uk
Principal/CEO	Jan Balon
Provider type	16–19 Academy
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the headteacher, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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