

Inspection of City of London Academy, Highgate Hill

Holland Walk, Duncombe Road, Archway, London N19 3EU

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 January 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders are ambitious for pupils' academic achievement. They aim to provide a high-quality education through an ambitious curriculum. Most pupils want to succeed. Teachers work hard to ensure that pupils know and remember more. They go back over work pupils find difficult. Pupils find this very helpful.

Leaders state high expectations for pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Pupils are safe at school. However, pupils' behaviour is not consistently good. Pupils said that lessons are sometimes disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils are removed from lessons when they do not meet leaders' expectations.

Pupils learn about bullying and discrimination. Leaders say that bullying is taken seriously and that they encourage pupils to report it. When pupils report bullying, leaders respond, but some pupils feel that those actions are not effective. They said that bullying sometimes continues.

Pupils have many opportunities to try new activities and gain new experiences. All pupils start learning a musical instrument in Years 7 and 8. All pupils attend timetabled enrichment lessons. They choose from up to forty different activities. These include Russian for beginners, chess and many sports.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum for all pupils. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In Years 10 and 11, most pupils study modern foreign languages and geography or history. Leaders are clear about the knowledge and skills they want pupils to learn. They have designed a well-sequenced and coherent curriculum. In a few subject areas, more curriculum thinking would strengthen this intention further.

Teachers use their subject knowledge well to support pupils' learning. They give clear explanations and ask questions to check pupils' understanding. Pupils respond well to the work set for them. Teachers use assessment to help pupils to improve their work. Pupils said they found teachers' assessment helpful. Some teachers' choices of activity could be better suited to what they want pupils to learn. This would help pupils to secure a deeper knowledge and understanding.

Leaders prioritise reading in Years 7 to 9. Additional support is provided for pupils at an early stage of reading. All pupils read in tutor time and have reading lessons in the library. This widens pupils' experience of reading and develops their confidence. Leaders identify the needs of pupils with SEND with increasing expertise. Pupils with SEND are well supported in lessons. They complete the same work as other pupils and achieve well.

Although leaders say that bullying is not tolerated, some pupils said that leaders' and teachers' actions to address bullying do not always stop it. It is not endemic but,

when it happens, bullying too often continues. Pupils' behaviour in lessons sometimes disrupts learning. When this occurs, leaders remove pupils from lessons so that learning can continue without disruption. Levels of persistent absence were significantly high before the pandemic. They remain high now. Leaders' actions are only slowly having an impact in reducing persistent absence.

Leaders give high priority to broadening pupils' cultural experiences. In Year 7, pupils visit Kew Gardens and the City of London. Pupils learn about equality and diversity. Teachers encourage discussion and debate. Leaders are developing the range of careers advice and guidance for pupils. Pupils have the opportunity to meet a range of employers and education providers. Pupils in Year 11 value the information they receive. It helps them to prepare for their next steps in education and employment.

Leaders are mindful of staff's workload and well-being. Staff feel valued and welcome changes to assessment and email policies. Leaders engage with parents and the local community to support pupils' education. But some pupils think that leaders should listen to their views more. Governors and trustees hold school leaders to account. They help them to improve the quality of education for all pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) works with a large safeguarding team. This provides the school with a high level of knowledge and expertise. Leaders identify safeguarding concerns quickly and manage them appropriately. All staff receive frequent training. This ensures that they understand local safeguarding risks. Staff are alert to the potential signs of risk in pupils. They report any concerns immediately. Leaders work effectively with the local authority and other safeguarding partners. This secures the help pupils need. Leaders adopt a rigorous approach to safe recruitment. Pupils learn about safeguarding risks through the curriculum and assemblies.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Although leaders have ensured that pupils get a good quality of education, in some other areas they have had limited impact. Actions to prevent bullying, and to stop it once it is reported, are not always effective. This means that bullying sometimes continues. Leaders must ensure that their actions to prevent and stop bullying are more effective so that bullying is reduced.
- Leaders have made some headway with improving attendance but, over time (before March 2020 and since March 2021), levels of persistent absence have been high. As a result, a significant minority of pupils have missed too much of their learning. Leaders must ensure that pupils who are persistently absent are more effectively managed and that their attendance improves significantly.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	143659
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	10212085
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	633
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tijs Broeke
Principal	Prince Genuh
Website	www.highgatehill.cola.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school uses four registered alternative providers.
- The school opened on 1 September 2017. The school is in the City of London Academies Trust.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker clause, which requires schools to provide pupils with information about approved technical educational qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the principal, members of the leadership team, the chief executive officer, members of the governing body and members of the board of trustees. Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science,

modern foreign languages, geography and art. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also spoke with subject leaders for mathematics, history, music and design technology and looked at curriculum plans for these subject areas.
- Inspectors met with the school's DSL and a member of the school's safeguarding team. They looked at safeguarding documentation and record-keeping, including the single central record. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors spoke to additional groups of pupils in relation to behaviour and attitudes and personal development.
- Inspectors considered the 226 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, 44 responses to the staff survey and 32 responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Ian Rawstorne, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lisa Strong	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jasper Green	Her Majesty's Inspector
Bruce Goddard	Ofsted Inspector

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