

Inspection of Skinners' Academy

Woodberry Grove, London N4 1SY

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 May 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff welcome pupils as they arrive to school every morning. Pupils are happy in school, safe and ready to learn. Leaders and staff have high expectations for what pupils will achieve. Pupils study a broad curriculum and do well. Across the school, pupils take pride in their work.

Students in the sixth form are particularly proud of their school. They are focused and work with maturity both in lessons and in independent study. Most students continue their education at university. Those who choose not to are well supported to apply for apprenticeships.

Generally, behaviour around the school and in class is calm. Leaders have introduced a clear behaviour system. Leaders and staff typically deal with any behaviour issues quickly and effectively. However, occasionally the behaviour system is applied inconsistently. This means that, in these instances, behaviour is not managed as fairly or effectively. Bullying is rare and is dealt with by staff.

The sixth-form student leadership team supports younger pupils in the school. In Years 7 to 11, some pupils take on a leadership role by becoming members of the student council. Following the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders have now restarted organising school outings, visits and extra-curricular activities. This includes pupils taking part in a whole-school production this term.

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

Leaders, at all levels, have worked hard to develop an ambitious curriculum rapidly. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 now study all the subjects of the national curriculum for three years. Students in Years 12 and 13 can choose to study a range of A-level and vocational qualifications.

Leaders think carefully about what they want pupils to learn and why. In each subject, leaders have identified the 'powerful knowledge' or most significant subject content that they want pupils to learn. They have identified how pupils will develop this knowledge over time. For example, the curriculum in history has been designed to develop pupils' knowledge of chronology alongside key historical content.

In each subject, the curriculum is planned so that individual lessons build on what pupils learned previously. For example, in design and technology, pupils in Year 8 learn how to sew using different types of stitch before they use this knowledge to sew a bag. This structured approach ensures that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are successful in learning the curriculum. Senior leaders rightly recognise that there is more work to do to refine the curriculum. They have a clear understanding of where additional support is needed and are working with subject leaders to develop their curriculum expertise.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. In the sixth form, students are especially well supported by subject specialists. Throughout the school, teachers explain concepts clearly. However, teachers rarely check what pupils have learned in lessons. This means that some teachers do not effectively identify which pupils need additional support to ensure that they remember and understand key subject content.

Staff identify and support weaker readers to improve their reading. For example, leaders have put in place a whole-school approach to developing pupils' vocabulary. Pupils who are at the very early stages of learning to read are supported to catch up using phonics.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attendance. Over the past year, leaders have focused on improving pupils' behaviour, for example by prioritising promptness to lessons. A new behaviour system has been introduced which most staff and pupils value. However, there are some inconsistencies in how well staff implement the new system. This means that, sometimes, pupils feel it is unfair and, on a few occasions, behaviour is not managed as well as it could be. Leaders are taking appropriate steps to address this. They are also developing their existing rewards scheme to further recognise those pupils who meet leaders' high expectations.

Pupils from Year 7 are well supported in their next steps in education through effective and frequent careers education. In the sixth form, students benefit from dedicated one-to-one advice about universities and apprenticeships. Leaders have planned an ambitious personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum that is focused on encouraging pupils to be responsible, respectful and active citizens.

Some pupils take part in a range of extra-curricular activities. These include football, steel band and the Duke of Edinburgh Award. However, leaders' monitoring shows that currently some pupils do not take up any of these opportunities.

Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Some of their work to embed new systems and develop culture has been hindered by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, leaders and governors remain focused on doing the right things to improve the school further. They have developed an ambitious and clear long-term plan that outlines how they will reach their vision. Most staff acknowledge the work done by leaders to address workload, for example by reducing the frequency of assessments. Early career teachers feel well supported.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a range of support available to pupils if they need it. For example, there are mentors and health professionals on site. When necessary, leaders work effectively with external agencies to secure the support that pupils need.

There are clear systems in place to identify any pupils who may need additional help.

Leaders know the safeguarding risks that are specific to the local area. They have ensured that pupils are made aware of these, and others, through the curriculum. This includes promoting pupils' understanding of healthy relationships and consent as well as how to stay safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not routinely check what pupils have learned in lessons. This means that some pupils do not get the specific feedback that they need to understand the new content. Leaders should ensure that all teachers check pupils' understanding in lessons so that, if necessary, they can provide clear and direct feedback to address any errors or misconceptions that pupils may have.
- Staff and leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour throughout the school. Leaders have recently introduced a new behaviour system which most staff use effectively to manage pupils' behaviour. However, sometimes, this system is not consistently applied. This means that, occasionally, behaviour in the school is not managed fairly or as effectively as it could be. Leaders should support teachers to implement the behaviour system consistently so that behaviour is responded to in the same way across the school.

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	136137
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	10228281
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1035
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	140
Appropriate authority	The Skinners' Academy
Chair of Trust	Jocelyn Claire Mitchell
Headteacher	Shereka James
Website	www.skinnersacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2020.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education, qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school uses three registered providers for alternative provision.

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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with senior leaders, members of the governing body, subject leaders and representatives from the local authority and Academy sponsor.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: art and design, English, science and history. Each deep dive involved discussing the curriculum with subject leaders, visiting a sample of lessons, reviewing samples of pupils' work and speaking with teachers and pupils from the lessons they visited.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects on day two, and visited lessons.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator to find out how the school supports pupils with SEND to learn the curriculum. This involved reviewing documentation to see how pupils with SEND were being supported.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during breaktimes and lesson changeovers to gather evidence about the behaviour and attitudes of pupils in the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders responsible for the school's safeguarding arrangements. They looked at safeguarding records, including pre-employment checks for staff.
- Inspectors spoke to staff about their well-being and workload. They considered responses to Ofsted's online staff survey. They also met with early career teachers.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of pupils from different year groups. They considered the pupils' responses to Ofsted's online pupils' survey.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey.

Inspection team

Jasper Green, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Debbie Lebrett	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Moore	Ofsted Inspector
Bob Hamlyn	Her Majesty's Inspector

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