

Inspection of a good school: Walthamstow Academy

Billet Road, Walthamstow, London E17 5DP

Inspection dates:

29 and 30 November 2022

Outcome

Walthamstow Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending Walthamstow Academy and are kept safe here. They know that they can talk to adults about any concerns. Pupils are confident that staff listen and take appropriate action. Pupils are also clear that bullying is not tolerated. Any issues are dealt with swiftly. Anti-bullying ambassadors are in place to spread this important message. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. The 'Junior Leadership Team' act as role models for other pupils. They share any feedback from their peers with school leaders.

The curriculum is ambitious and has been well designed to help pupils learn and remember key ideas. Pupils study a broad and balanced range of subjects. There are, however, a few subjects where the work pupils complete is less ambitious than the curriculum suggests.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), enjoy a range of enrichment opportunities. These activities include 'STEM' club, cooking and educational outings. Leaders listen to feedback from pupils and continue to expand the extra-curricular offer. Pupils appreciate being supported to organise work experience placements.

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

At Walthamstow Academy, pupils and students in the sixth form select from a wide range of academic and vocational subjects. Leaders have thought carefully about the knowledge that they want pupils to learn and remember across the curriculum. This has been carefully sequenced so that pupils build up their knowledge over time. For example, in geography, pupils use a range of different case studies to develop their understanding of geographical concepts, such as international development. Similarly, in art, pupils study a range of diverse artists. They learn to draw comparisons between the different artists and incorporate the ideas that they explore into their own work with increasing confidence.

Teachers have strong knowledge of the subjects that they teach. This ensures that they systematically check pupils' understanding and address any misconceptions as they arise. However, in some subjects, the activities given to pupils do not match the ambition of the planned curriculum. As a result, pupils do not fully secure the knowledge and understanding that they need in these subjects to tackle more challenging ideas.

Pupils with SEND are swiftly identified. Their needs are well communicated with staff. This ensures that these pupils follow the same curriculum as their peers. Reading is at the heart of the school. Pupils enjoy reading a range of fiction and non-fiction texts in different subjects. Leaders identify weaker readers and support them to develop greater confidence and fluency. This enables them to access the broad curriculum.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Leaders intervene quickly if these expectations are not met. Pupils are encouraged to have respect for others in the diverse school community.

Pupils' personal development is well considered. The curriculum, supported by a range of external speakers, is designed to help pupils to understand the importance of being healthy and staying safe. Pupils receive appropriate careers advice and guidance. This means that they are prepared to make choices about the next stage of their education, employment or training. For example, pupils in Years 7 to 9 visit a university and pupils in Year 10 are supported to write to employers to organise their work experience. Sixth-form students also complete a broad range of work placements. They appreciate being able to participate in the 'Access Aspiration' programme, which connects students with a range of local businesses.

Leaders ensure that staff are well trained. Effective use is made of colleagues from other schools to support teachers' professional development.

Staff are proud to work at this school. They feel that the school is well led and managed. Staff at all levels feel well-supported to develop in their profession. Most staff feel that their workload is taken into account by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding is a top priority for all staff. They understand the challenges faced by some pupils in the school. Staff receive a range of training. They understand what to do if they have a safeguarding concern, no matter how small. Records show that the safeguarding team respond swiftly to any concern. They liaise with a range of external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families receive the help that they need.

The curriculum has been designed to help pupils know about how to stay safe. For example, pupils are taught about the importance of healthy relationships and how to stay safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the planned curriculum is not implemented consistently well. As a result, pupils do not fully secure the knowledge and understanding that they need in these subjects to tackle more challenging ideas. Leaders need to check that the activities pupils are asked to complete match the ambition of the planned curriculum so that pupils are well supported to learn and remember more.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2014.

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.

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	132727
Local authority	London Borough of Waltham Forest
Inspection number	10250721
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,096
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	201
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Geoff Skewes
Headteacher	Emma Skae
Website	www.walthamstow-academy.org
Date of previous inspection	26 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders make use of one registered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

- 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.
- During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Inspectors also met with representatives from the local governing body, including the chair of governors. They also met with the regional director of the United Learning trust.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, art and geography. Inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils and looked at samples of their work.
- The curriculum in other subjects was considered as part of the inspection.
- To evaluate safeguarding, inspectors checked procedures for recruiting new members of staff. They met with leaders to discuss how they put safeguarding policies into practice.
- Inspectors gathered the views of pupils, parents and staff through both discussions and responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Hannah Glossop, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sam Hainey

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022