

Inspection of a good school: King's Cross Academy

Plimsoll Building, 4 Wollstonecraft Street, London N1C 4BT

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 July 2023

Outcome

King's Cross Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a welcoming, warm and caring school. Pupils are safe and happy. There are positive working relationships based on mutual respect between staff and pupils. Pupils trust adults to deal with any issues seriously. Pupils and staff are proud of their school.

Pupils behave well and work hard in lessons. In the early years, children benefit from a clear and consistent set of routines. Throughout the school, pupils respond well to instructions. They learn to take responsibility for their behaviour and learning in lessons. As a result, pupils achieve well across the curriculum.

Leaders and staff are ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school's motto, 'love learning together', underpins school life. The school helps pupils to achieve a Level 1 in British Sign Language by the end of Year 6.

Pupils benefit from the wider opportunities for learning provided. These include educational visits to supermarkets, nature parks and art colleges. Pupils also take part in competitions against other schools, particularly in sport.

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

Leaders have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. Starting from the early years, leaders have thought carefully about the key knowledge, skills and vocabulary that they want pupils to learn and remember. The curriculum also supports the school's wider vision to develop pupils' 'next generation' learning. For example, in computing pupils develop their coding skills well throughout the school. In a few subjects, the school has not identified the key content that pupils should learn and when. This leads to gaps in pupils' subject-specific knowledge and skills in these subjects.

Typically, teachers have secure subject knowledge and present information to pupils clearly. They check pupils' knowledge and understanding effectively. For instance, in

mathematics, Year 3 pupils' misconceptions about time were clarified so that they could learn new content successfully. Sometimes, teaching does not implement the intended curriculum consistently. This limits pupils' deeper knowledge and understanding on occasions, so that they are not fully ready for future content.

Leaders prioritise reading. They make sure that staff teach phonics consistently well. Pupils learn to read as soon as they join the school. Pupils have books matched to their phonics knowledge. They segment and blend words confidently. Pupils who find reading difficult receive extra support to help them keep up. As a result, pupils read with increasing fluency as they progress through the school. Teachers bring books to life when reading stories aloud. Leaders promote a love for reading, for example through daily reading, buddy reading schemes and competitions.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders are skilful at identifying pupils' needs. They ensure that pupils with SEND get the extra help that they need. Adults who provide this support receive appropriate training so that they can provide effective support to pupils with SEND. Pupils, including pupils with SEND, achieve well.

The school supports pupils' wider development very well. Pupils benefit from a wide variety of outings and experiences. For example, Year 6 pupils take part in a residential trip to France. Pupils also benefit from a wide physical education (PE) offer, including after-school clubs. They enjoy and excel at sporting competitions. Teachers encourage pupils to develop their independence and confidence. For instance, pupils can perform at the Royal Albert Hall or display their work at the Central Saint Martins – University of the Arts London.

Staff are very positive about the work of leaders. They feel listened to and enjoy working at the school. They said that their workload is manageable and that leaders are considerate of their well-being. Governors are committed to the pupils and the school. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have a strong understanding of safeguarding concerns in their local community. They have created a culture of vigilance to keep pupils safe. Staff receive regular training and know the signs to look out for when a pupil may be at risk of harm. Leaders work closely with external agencies to get the right support for families.

Through the curriculum, pupils are taught how to keep safe, including online. Pupils are also taught how to keep physically and mentally healthy. They learn strategies to recognise and manage their emotions.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders have not embedded the key content that they want all pupils to learn. This leads to gaps in pupils' subject-specific understanding. The school needs to ensure that there is a clear, coherent intent for all foundation subjects which identifies the key knowledge and skills that pupils must learn.
- Sometimes, teaching does not implement the intended curriculum consistently. This limits pupils' deeper knowledge and understanding on occasions so that they are not fully ready for future content. The school must ensure that all staff have the expertise to deliver the intended curriculum effectively so that pupils are fully ready for new learning.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2018.

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	140686
Local authority	Camden
Inspection number	10293286
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	383
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Robert Evans
Headteacher	Kay Baxter
Website	kingscrossacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 and 10 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school currently has an acting headteacher. A substantive headteacher has been appointed from September 2023.
- At the time of the inspection, the school was making use of one alternative provider.
- The school is sponsored by King's Cross Academy Trust, which has been formed by the King's Cross Central Limited Partnership.
- The school is co-located with the Frank Barnes School for Deaf Children.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and PE. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Other subjects were also considered as part of this inspection.

- The inspector met with the headteacher, school leaders, governors and trustees.
- The inspector spoke with leaders, staff and pupils about safeguarding. The inspector also checked safeguarding records and documentation.
- The inspector considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey as well as responses to the staff survey.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in the playground and around the school site.

Inspection team

Christian Hicks, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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