

Inspection of London Academy

Spur Road, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 8DE

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 July 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders, governors and staff realise the school's vision and ensure that all pupils succeed. Pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, achieve strongly across the school. Pupils benefit from a strong academic curriculum and high-quality teaching. This quality continues, as students in the sixth form receive an excellent education and are proud ambassadors of the school. They help younger pupils to feel welcome here.

Pupils enjoy attending, and are safe and thrive in the school's caring environment. They show exemplary behaviour and attitudes to learning. Pupils are kind and courteous to each other. Leaders encourage pupils to realise the values of the school. The personal development of pupils is exceptional. The 'LA7' ensures that all pupils receive a rich entitlement and weekly enrichment opportunities. For example, leaders make sure all pupils visit the theatre.

Children in the early years provision receive a good start to their education. They play and cooperate well. In the primary phase, pupils learn well across the majority of subjects. In the early years, children grow in confidence, so they are ready for Year 1. Leaders have taken steps to promote an ambitious curriculum. These actions lead to pupils achieving very well in national examinations and tests.

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

Leaders have created an ambitious curriculum that promotes a broad range of subjects. Across the school, the curriculum in subject areas is typically well sequenced, building on the key information and knowledge pupils need to know and remember. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The curriculum in mathematics is carefully planned and implemented very well. Leaders have taken steps to promote a highly ambitious curriculum. In the sixth form, teachers explain content to students skilfully.

Teachers utilise their knowledge of pupils and their subject knowledge and present material clearly. This helps pupils to build sequentially on their knowledge. For instance, in Year 2, pupils extend their key vocabulary and understanding of two- and three-dimensional shapes. In early years, children learn successfully across all areas of learning. On occasion, staff in early years do not extend or deepen children's knowledge and skills deeply.

In the secondary phase, teachers use frequent assessment opportunities. They check for gaps in pupils' understanding and address these issues quickly. In the primary phase, sometimes, the implementation of leaders' aspirational curricular thinking is not fully realised. This is because, on occasion, in a few subjects, teaching does not fully check pupils' knowledge securely. This results in gaps in pupils' knowledge as they struggle to recall key information.

Leaders prioritise reading across the school and develop pupils' love of reading. Children acquire knowledge of phonics securely. Pupils who are behind are prioritised with appropriate support. In the secondary phase, leaders provide targeted support to address any gaps in pupils' reading fluency.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exceptional. Leaders ensure that clear expectations are embedded in place. Disruption to lessons is very rare. From Reception, children learn to cooperate, play and work together. Pupils demonstrate strong levels of maturity. Transitions from and to lessons are orderly and seamless. Sixth-form students demonstrate exceptional levels of resilience and commitment to learning. Pupils feel safe and report any concerns to the school, which are dealt with promptly.

The provision for pupils' personal development is of a very high quality. Staff prepare pupils for future contributions to the wider community. Pupils have a vast number of enrichment opportunities on offer. For example, Year 7 pupils learn to play the violin. Pupils spoke highly of the enrichment programme, from learning about British Sign Language to participation in sports.

The school offers a wide range of clubs, outings and cultural experiences. Pupils were rehearsing for the upcoming performance of 'Matilda, Junior'. In the sixth form, students widely contribute to the life of the school. Leaders have ensured that sixth-form students are trained to support younger students in reading and with their academic work.

Careers education is very well considered. This includes through a wide range of visits to universities and visiting speakers. The school hosts an annual careers fair for all students, enhancing pupils' understanding of the world of work. Students in the sixth form are prepared well for university and employment.

Leaders and governors have created a welcoming place where staff and pupils work together very well. Staff appreciate leaders' and governors' commitment to reducing their workload and improving their well-being. Opportunities for professional development are embedded throughout the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that staff are trained and aware of their safeguarding requirements. Pupils and staff are comfortable to report any concerns. Leaders then ensure that actions are taken swiftly. The school works exceptionally well with external specialists, including for mental health support. Leaders work with families and external agencies to respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns.

Pupils are taught in a sequenced and well-planned manner to recognise the dangers of being online, to develop healthy relationships and to be safe. They are taught how to administer first aid.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, in the primary phase, teaching does not check carefully that pupils have secure knowledge of essential subject content in some foundation subjects. Some pupils struggle to remember previous learning and do not have secure knowledge and understanding. The school should ensure that the curriculum is consistently implemented as planned and that teachers use formative assessment effectively in all subjects to pick up and address gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- In the early years, sometimes, teaching does not consolidate or extend children's deeper understanding. This limits some children's knowledge and skills, including acquiring new vocabulary. The school should ensure that the intended curriculum is consistently implemented throughout the early years, developing children's core knowledge of vocabulary and skills precisely.

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	134798
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10287211
Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,739
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	355
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Philip O'Hear
Principal	Alex Warburton
Website	www.londonacademy.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	1 and 2 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up their post in September 2018.
- Leaders currently use one alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The academy is part of the AIM Academies Trust.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 executive principal, the principal, the director of education and other members of the school leadership team. The lead inspector met with members of the trust and the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, modern foreign languages and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited samples of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors talked to leaders about the curriculum in other subject areas and visited lessons in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' school evaluation, the school development plan, records for behaviour and attendance and information about pupils' personal development.
- In checking the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements, the lead inspector met with leaders responsible for safeguarding. This included reviewing various documentation, including the school's policy and records of support provided for pupils. The school's approach to pre-employment checks was scrutinised. Inspectors spoke with staff and pupils about the arrangements for safeguarding.
- Inspectors met formally with pupils across all year groups and informally around the school site. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- The inspection team considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Ray Lau, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
John Blaney	Ofsted Inspector
Rekha Bhakoo	Ofsted Inspector
Guy Forbat	His Majesty's Inspector
Jude Wilson	His Majesty's Inspector

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