

Inspection of AIM Academy North London

34 Turin Road, London N9 8DQ

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 December 2023

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	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The principal of this school is Clare Darley. This school is part of AIM Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Philip O'Hear. There is also an executive principal, Paddy McGrath, who is responsible for this school and two others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel happy and safe here, demonstrating a sense of pride towards their school. Clear and consistent routines ensure pupils behave well and focus on their learning within a calm and purposeful environment. At social times, pupils show respect to staff and to each other. Pupils are protected from bullying and know staff take any concerns seriously.

The curriculum demonstrates high ambition for all pupils. Teachers use their expert knowledge of the subjects they teach to design pupils' learning. They have high expectations of all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers encourage pupils to build their vocabulary and remember what they learn. Pupils benefit from daily reading sessions that encourage a love for reading.

The school is ambitious for pupils' futures. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, are encouraged to become 'leaders for tomorrow'. They enjoy opportunities to develop their character. Pupils take part in careers visits to a university campus and other cultural outings. The school offers a range of extra-curricular activities to pupils.

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

Leaders have identified the key knowledge they want pupils to know and remember. They have thought carefully about the order they teach subject content. For example, in languages, teachers introduce pupils in Year 7 to the present tense. This includes learning about regular and irregular verbs in the simple and continuous forms. This gives pupils a firm foundation for learning more complex grammatical structures later on.

Teachers help pupils retain important knowledge through revisiting topics and assessing their understanding. Key concepts built upon with increasing complexity year on year. In history, for example, pupils develop their understanding of analysing source material. This supports older pupils to evaluate the reliability of different sources with confidence.

Much thought has been given to how assessment is used to gauge pupils' knowledge and skills. Leaders identify pupils with SEND accurately. Teachers have the information they need to support the learning of these pupils. Typically, work is successfully adapted for pupils with SEND, so they can access the same curriculum as their peers.

Pupils have regular opportunities to engage with feedback from their teachers. This helps them to develop their understanding and improve their work. At times, however, teachers do not systematically check what pupils know before moving on. As a result, some gaps in pupils' knowledge are not swiftly identified and addressed by teachers.

Daily reading lessons encourage pupils to read widely and often. The school identifies pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read. These pupils receive support to help them to develop their reading fluency and comprehension.

The school encourages pupils to express their opinions fluently through class discussions. For example, Year 10 pupils take part in the Jack Petchey 'Speak Out Challenge' to develop their debating skills. There is a comprehensive careers programme that starts from Year 7. Pupils receive age-appropriate advice and guidance about different future pathways. Students in the sixth form are well supported in making decisions for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

The school behaviour policy is well understood by pupils, staff and parents. The school rewards pupils when they demonstrate positive behaviour and attendance. Pupils wear their 'value badges' with pride. Attendance has improved in recent years. Leaders have a range of systems to support pupils to improve their attendance over time. While most pupils behave well, there are a small minority that are passive and do not consistently access the intended learning during lessons.

Pupils' wider personal development is well considered. For example, pupils are taught to stay safe, including when online. They have been taught about groups at risk of discrimination and understand that this should be challenged. Students in the sixth form talk confidently about the importance of healthy and respectful relationships. They have an age-appropriate understanding of important issues, such as consent.

Staff understand their role in keeping pupils safe and know what actions to take if they have any concerns. Leaders consider the workload and well-being of staff when making decisions. Leaders have put in place a coaching model, so that teachers can learn from each other's practice. An experienced governing body provide effective challenge and support to school leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, pupils' understanding is not systematically checked, including for those at the earliest stages of reading and/or with SEND. This means that some pupils are not able to benefit from the content being taught. The school should ensure that assessment is used consistently well. This will help staff to make appropriate adaptations, so that all pupils are able to access the curriculum.

- A small number of pupils take a passive approach to their learning during lessons. As a result, learning time is lost for some pupils. The school should ensure that these pupils are consistently identified and supported to access the intended learning and wider life of 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.

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	147536
Local authority	Enfield
Inspection number	10293312
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
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	605
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	24
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Philip O'Hear
Executive principal	Paddy McGrath
Principal	Clare Darley
Website	www.aimnorthlondon.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- AIM Academy North London opened as part of AIM Academies Trust in September 2019. When the predecessor school, Nightingale Academy, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- 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 education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school makes use of three registered alternative provisions and one unregistered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with several senior staff, including the principal and other senior leaders. Inspectors met with representatives from the local governing body as well as the chair of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, modern foreign languages and history. For each deep dive, inspectors visited a sample of lessons, reviewed a sample of pupils' work, met with pupils to discuss their learning, and met with subject leaders and teachers to discuss the curriculum. Inspectors also considered the curriculum and pupils' learning in a range of other subjects, including reading.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed behaviour during lessons, at breaktimes and throughout the school day. Inspectors spoke to a range of staff about their views of pupils' behaviour, and their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted online parent survey, Parent View. Inspectors also considered the responses to the Ofsted online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Robert Grice, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Nick Turvey	His Majesty's Inspector
Katerina Christodoulou	Ofsted Inspector
Brian Oppenheim	His Majesty's Inspector

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