

# Inspection of Wapping High School

153 Commercial Road, London E1 2DA

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Inspection dates: 21 and 22 November 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

The head of school is Tom Raw. This school is part of the Wapping and Shadwell Education 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 Kerstyn Comley. There is also an executive headteacher, Gary Nelson, who is responsible for this school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

This is a safe, happy and ambitious school. Wapping High School was founded with the intention that pupils would benefit from being in a small school. This vision has been realised and maintained. Staff know their pupils very well. This helps pupils to feel safe and cared for. Pupils appreciate the opportunities that the school gives them, including the coaching programme, which helps them grow in confidence. A wide range of trips and activities, some as far away as India and Costa Rica, broaden pupils' horizons. Leaders make sure that these opportunities are available to all pupils. Pupils behave well around the school. They listen to teachers and to each other. Kindness is one of the school's core values. Pupils and staff demonstrate this every day.

Pupils benefit from a carefully considered curriculum which is broad and balanced. Leaders make sure that this curriculum is accessed by all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils who are at the early stages of learning English receive additional support to help them access the same lessons as their peers. Pupils are prepared well for their next steps in education or training.

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

Pupils study a rich and interesting curriculum, which exceeds the scope of the national curriculum. For example, pupils study Mandarin as well as Spanish in Years 7 to 9. Leaders have thought carefully about subject content, so pupils learn more and remember more over time. In mathematics, for example, the teaching of geometry develops in complexity each year so that pupils are well prepared for the rigour of GCSE questions.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. In lessons they make sure that pupils are clear what to do and how to do it. Teachers routinely check how much pupils have understood, and they regularly revisit prior learning. There is a strong emphasis on teaching vocabulary across all subjects. Sometimes, however, in Years 7 to 9, teachers do not choose the most appropriate tasks to help pupils understand the intended content. This can lead to gaps in pupils' knowledge or misconceptions that are not addressed.

Teachers know their pupils well. The school has high expectations for pupils with SEND. Pupils who need help are quickly identified, and they are supported to access the curriculum alongside their classmates. This is also the case for pupils who are at the early stages of learning English. Pupils are supported to develop their reading skills, and there is additional assistance in place for those who need extra help.

Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They know that unkind and discriminatory language is not tolerated. Pupils are polite and they listen to their teachers and to each other. Pupils feel very safe in the school. They have been taught how to keep themselves safe, including online, and they know they can share

any concerns with adults in the school. The school works hard to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and arrive punctually.

Leaders and trustees are determined to make sure that pupils are developed well beyond the academic. To this end, they have developed a far-reaching and ambitious set of experiences for pupils. Pupils in the younger years enjoy 'Workshop Wednesdays', where they develop teamwork, resilience and problem-solving through a series of challenges. A wide range of enrichment activities every Friday, including bouldering, cooking and drama helps pupils discover new talents and interests. Horizons are broadened further with regular overseas visits, during which pupils complete community projects such as refurbishing a school in Costa Rica. Leaders make sure these opportunities are open to all pupils.

Trustees know the school very well. They share the same vision and ambition for pupils as school leaders. Staff feel valued by school leaders. Staff benefit from extensive training and professional development. This includes teachers who are new to the profession who are very well supported. Staff are proud of their school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Sometimes in key stage 3 subjects, teachers do not select the most appropriate task to help pupils to learn the intended subject content. This leads to some gaps in pupils' understanding and some misconceptions. Leaders should ensure that teachers choose tasks that are most appropriate for the needs of their pupils so that pupils learn more of the intended curriculum.

## **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 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138202
<b>Local authority</b>	Tower Hamlets
<b>Inspection number</b>	10271254
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy free school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	343
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Kerstyn Comley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gary Nelson (executive headteacher) Tom Raw (head of school)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.wappinghigh.org">www.wappinghigh.org</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	27 and 28 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Wapping High School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school and is in a single academy trust.
- The school experiences significant changes to the pupil cohort with a high proportion of pupils arriving mid-year. A significant proportion of these arrivals are new to English.
- The school does not use any alternative education providers.
- 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.

## 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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history, and design and technology. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked to teachers and pupils. The inspectors talked to leaders and looked at curriculum information for other subjects and visited a range of lessons.
- The inspectors held meetings with the head of school and the executive headteacher, members of the leadership team, and with members of staff, as well as a range of pupils.
- 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.
- The inspectors considered the survey responses from parents, pupils and staff.
- The lead inspector spoke with trustees, including the chair of trustees.

### **Inspection team**

Bob Hamlyn, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alan McDougall

Ofsted Inspector

Yvonne Chisholm

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
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