

Inspection of City of London Academy, Highgate Hill

Holland Walk, Duncombe Road, Archway, London N19 3EU

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The Principal of this school is Prince Gennuh. This school is part of City of London Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Mark Emmerson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Catherine McGuinness CBE.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have set high expectations for all pupils. All pupils attend at two enrichment activities each week. Pupils choose from a rich variety of activities, including Latin, fencing, crochet and a variety of sports. As a result, pupils deepen their interests and widen their horizons. Visits to universities raise pupils' aspirations.

Leaders have reviewed and revised the curriculum since the last inspection. Pupils build cumulative knowledge more securely in the subjects they study over time than in the past. They study a broad range of subjects and are interested in what they are taught.

Pupils are safe and enjoy coming to school. Students in the sixth form benefit from a range of support and guidance that helps them make informed choices for their courses of study and next steps. They leave the school well prepared for their next stage in education, employment or training.

Typically, pupils behave well in lessons and conduct themselves sensibly around the school. They are taught to be kind to each other and to be respectful of the differences of others. They are encouraged to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy and to keep safe online.

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

Leaders have worked hard to make changes to the school and raise standards of behaviour. A new behaviour system, 'TOP', is in place to encourage pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. As a result, routines are clear and embedded. Pupils said they understand the school's expectations. They follow the school's rules and typically learning proceeds with little disruption. Parental surveys show that parents and carers are becoming more confident in the way behaviour is managed here. Leaders take incidences of bullying seriously and deal with any issues quickly and effectively, although sometimes some parents feel under informed about the action that has been taken to resolve issues. Pupils attend school regularly and on time.

Leaders have spent time reviewing and developing the curriculum so that it is more ambitious for all pupils. All pupils study the same curriculum. Pupils study a broad range of subjects to the end of Year 9. High numbers of pupils now study the English Baccalaureate subjects, including a modern foreign language, history and geography at GCSE. Actions taken by leaders are having an impact. Typically, for example, pupils write in depth about what they have been taught. Pupils spoke confidently about what they have learned. These improvements have not had time to show an impact on published examination results.

Pupils are encouraged by staff to read regularly in school. Leaders ensure that book choices reflect pupils' interests so that pupils are more motivated to read than in the

past. Pupils who may struggle with reading are identified early and appropriate support is put in place to help improve their reading fluency and confidence.

The school ensures that there are effective systems in place to identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Information is shared with staff. Although some training has taken place to develop ways to support pupils with SEND, sometimes teaching and resources are not routinely well adapted to meet the specific learning needs of individual pupils.

In lessons, teachers check routinely that pupils have learned the curriculum they have been taught. Pupils are helped to commit their learning to long-term memory through opportunities to recall prior knowledge. Pupils are encouraged to extend their knowledge through regular 'Tenacity 20' independent-learning time. However, sometimes learning and resources are not carefully adapted to enable all pupils to complete this independent work. As a result, some pupils are not helped to deepen their understanding as securely.

In the sixth form, students choose to study a highly demanding set of subjects. Courses are tailored to suit students' preferences and their extremely high aspirations for their future studies. Students here are ambitious for themselves and, as a result, work hard and are very focused in their learning. Teachers use their expert subject knowledge to enable students to deepen their understanding of the subject content they have been taught. Students are given detailed advice on the next steps which they follow in order produce high-quality work. As a result, students are well prepared for their A-level examinations.

Pupils are introduced to various professions and careers options through the school's personal, social, health and economic curriculum. In the sixth form, students benefit from an exceptional pastoral development programme that includes careers guidance, support and advice.

Pupils are taught, in an age-appropriate way, about healthy relationships and how to form positive friendships. Through the curriculum and in assemblies they learn about issues that may affect them in their local area and how to keep themselves safe. The school works in partnership with a wide range of external groups to support them with this work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, information available about the needs of pupils with SEND is not used routinely to adapt teaching and resources to their needs. This affects how well some pupils with SEND learn the curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that information available is used fully to adapt teaching to meet the needs of all pupils with SEND.
- Sometimes, some parents would like more communication from the school about action taken to address incidences of bullying. As a result, some parents do not feel sufficiently reassured that the school has dealt with issues quickly and effectively. The school should ensure that through their communications, parents are clear that the school has taken action to address any concerns.

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	143659
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	10323432
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
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	652
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	54
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Roy Blackwell
Principal/Teacher in charge	Prince Gennuh
Website	www.highgatehill.cola.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	18 and 19 January 2022 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses five registered alternative providers.
- The school is in the City of London Academies Trust.
- 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.

Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors met with the principal and a range of senior leaders. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative of the trust and members of the governing body, including the chair of the local advisory body and the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, science, geography, modern foreign languages, and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with some pupils and teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also visited lessons across a wide range of subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders including the designated safeguarding lead, 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 pupils' behaviour in a range of situations, including in corridors, at breaktimes, at lunchtimes and in lessons. They also spoke to pupils about behaviour and bullying. Inspectors spoke with leaders, teachers and pupils about the school's programme of personal development.
- Inspectors considered the responses from parents to Ofsted Parent View. This included the comments submitted via the free-text facility. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and the survey for staff.

Inspection team

John Blaney, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lisa Smith	His Majesty's Inspector
Juliette Claro	Ofsted Inspector
Yvonne Chisholm	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Maguire	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 2024