

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: The Totteridge Academy

Barnet Lane, Barnet, London N20 8AZ

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 November 2024

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The principal of this school is Chris Fairbairn. This school is part of the United Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Jon Coles, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Christian Brodie.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at The Totteridge Academy are exceptionally well supported to succeed. The shared ambition for everyone to continuously improve is fully realised.

The highest expectations are set by staff for pupils. Staff commit to the vision that 'everyone is there to put a student on the moon'. Pupils gain secure knowledge and skills through a broad and ambitious curriculum. As a result, they achieve very strong outcomes in a range of subjects at GCSE and A level.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They display great respect for each other and for adults. In lessons, pupils focus on learning and show very positive attitudes. Pupils are happy and value their friendships. They feel safe in school. Pupils are articulate and feel listened to by the school and staff. Pupils enjoy reviewing policies and presenting their feedback to the school community.

The school provides a wide range of opportunities to develop character. These include fundraising activities, completing the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and pupil leadership. Pupils take a keen interest in world affairs. They confidently debate complex subjects such as democracy. Pupils love their outdoor experiences on the school's farm and walking Peggy, the school dog. Pupils and their families value the strong nurturing school community.

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

The school has thought carefully about the content of the curriculum and the order in which it is taught. Teachers are clear about the knowledge that pupils need to secure. The curriculum is designed well to enable pupils to build their knowledge over time. Staff encourage pupils to recall their prior learning frequently during lessons. This prepares pupils to apply their knowledge to new concepts with great confidence.

Staff are experts in their subjects and consistently teach to the highest quality. This supports pupils to gain a deep understanding of subject topics. Pupils' learning and understanding of subject content are routinely checked in a range of highly effective ways. Teachers address any misconceptions in a trusting atmosphere. Pupils know they learn well through their mistakes. They use feedback well to improve their work. Teachers introduce new knowledge in an engaging way that prompts pupils' curiosity. Pupils regularly ask questions in their keenness to learn more. Their work across subjects is of consistently high quality.

The school promotes reading across the curriculum. There is an understanding of the importance of reading. Staff check pupils' reading ability frequently. Pupils who require further practice receive regular support. This helps them to become fluent readers. The library is a hive of activity for pupils and inspires a love of reading, for example, through its many quality books and daily reading groups.

The school thoroughly identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers appreciate the information they receive from leaders to support all pupils closely. They use this information to adapt their teaching strategies for pupils with SEND very skilfully. This means pupils with SEND can access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers.

Pupils are well informed about their next steps through high-quality careers education. Students in the sixth form receive extensive support with university and apprenticeship applications. Students in the growing sixth form present themselves as positive role models who show care and support for younger pupils.

The school sets exceptionally high standards for pupils' behaviour. Routines and consistently high expectations lead to a calm, orderly environment. Pupils learn about tolerance and valuing different opinions. Their interactions during breaktimes show genuine warmth and care for one another. Pupils know why it is important to attend school. The school uses a range of strategies to ensure attendance is high. There is an understanding that all staff are responsible for pupils attending school.

Pupils' wider personal development is a strength of the school. Through the pastoral offer, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Trips into London to places such as The Royal Courts of Justice and the Houses of Parliament support their learning. Pupils also learn about healthy relationships and on- and offline safety. Pupils benefit from a range of therapeutic interventions. These include the 'equine therapy' project and the 'GROW' club.

During the school's farm activities, pupils grow and harvest herbs, fruit and vegetables. This also provides valuable experiences about healthy living. Pupils enthuse about the chefs using their produce for school lunches.

Staff benefit from high-quality professional development, and early careers teachers receive excellent support. They understand their responsibility for safeguarding and know how to report concerns. Trustees, governors and leaders are skilful in their roles. They are clear in their strategic vision for the school. Staff value the support they receive for their well-being and workload. They consider that the school hears their voice and welcome the openness of leaders to listen.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in March 2019.

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	144502
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10346047
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
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	1,013
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	116
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Christian Brodie
CEO of the trust	Sir Jon Coles
Principal	Chris Fairbairn
Website	www.thetotteridgeacademy.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 March 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school makes use of four registered alternative provisions.
- 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

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have

taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school and priorities for improvement.
- 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 held meetings with staff and with pupils.
- Behaviour was observed both in lessons and around the school.
- The views of pupils, parents and carers and staff were considered through discussions and looking at information collected from Ofsted's surveys.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders about the provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors held discussions with members of the local governing body, as well as with representatives of the board of trustees.

Inspection team

Janice Howkins, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Joanne Hamill

Ofsted Inspector

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