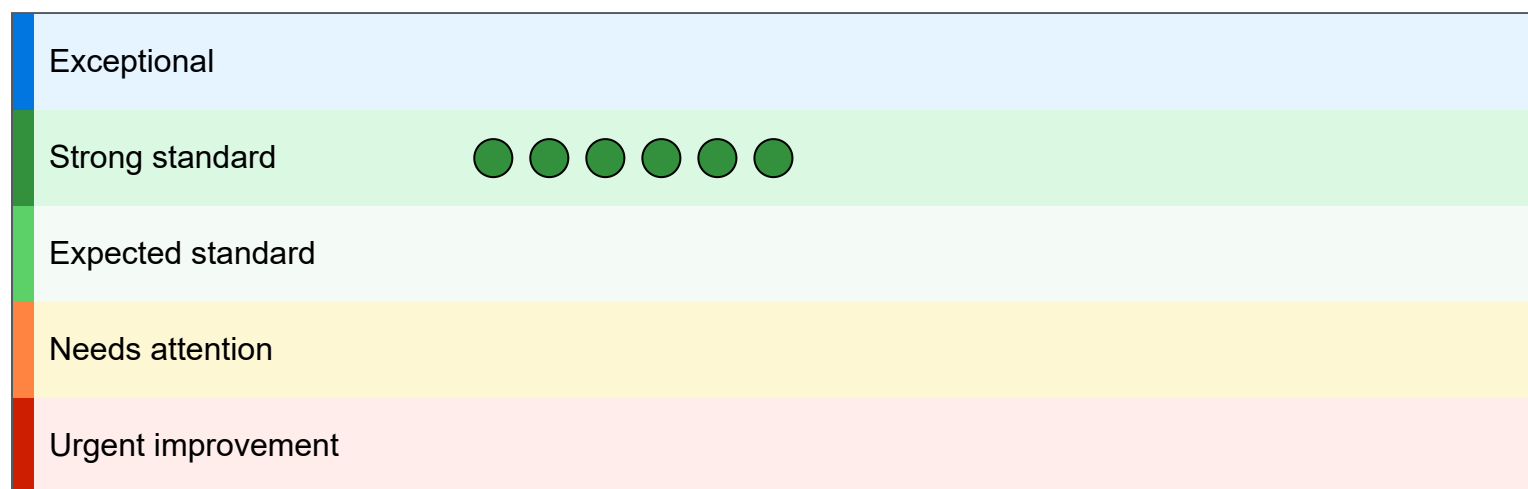


Waterside Academy

Address: 317-319 Kingsland Road, London, E8 4DL

Unique reference number (URN): 147653

Inspection report: 27 January 2026



Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils achieve extremely well at Waterside Academy. Over recent years, pupils' progress has been among the best nationally. Disadvantaged pupils achieve particularly well. Outcomes in public examinations are consistently above those for disadvantaged pupils nationally. Pupils talk with confidence about what they have learned and how their teachers help them to improve.

Pupils with additional needs, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well from their starting points. They receive well-targeted, bespoke support that helps them build knowledge securely. Pupils produce high-quality work across a wide range of subjects.

The school's approach to checking pupils' learning means that teachers identify gaps quickly. They put support in place straightaway and with urgency. Pupils receive the teaching and resources they need to develop strong foundations in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils leave the school consistently well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Pupils attend school well. Leaders act quickly when pupils' attendance starts to drop, working closely with families. When more complex issues arise, leaders work effectively with outside agencies to ensure that pupils get the help they need to be able to improve.

Leaders set high expectations for all pupils at this school. Routines are very well established. The school day runs calmly and smoothly. Staff greet pupils at the door, check uniform and equipment so that lessons start promptly. Around the school, pupils behave sensibly and respectfully. There is a firm but warm approach taken to managing behaviour. This helps to create a purposeful, productive learning environment.

Behaviour in lessons is excellent. Pupils listen carefully and complete their work without disruption. They show high levels of respect to staff and each other. The behaviour system is fair and applied consistently by all staff. Restorative conversations help pupils to understand the impact of their actions and to improve their choices. Suspensions are used appropriately and remain low.

Pupils say they feel safe at school. Bullying is rare. Staff deal with any concerns quickly. Leaders keep a close check on pupils, who need extra help with their behaviour. They provide effective, targeted support that helps pupils to improve.

Pupils who attend alternative provision remain closely monitored, with regular, rigorous checks on their safety, attendance and learning.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard 

Leaders provide a highly ambitious and well-planned curriculum for all pupils. Using their astute understanding of curriculum quality, they ensure that every subject is taught with a clear focus, building on pupils' learning steadily over time. Teachers explain new ideas skilfully. They model examples of what is expected, giving pupils time to practise, apply and articulate their learning. Teachers check pupils' understanding regularly. A carefully considered and consistent lesson structure helps pupils to be active participants in their learning.

Teachers know their subjects extremely well. They use high-quality resources to help pupils learn and remember important knowledge. Staff adapt lessons when needed, so that pupils who find learning more difficult can take part fully. This ensures that lessons support pupils with special educational needs and /or disabilities (SEND), as well as those with other barriers to learning. Leaders check the quality of teaching regularly. They provide highly effective coaching and training to help staff to further develop their expertise.

The school identifies any gaps in pupils' basic skills quickly and with urgency, especially reading. Pupils who need extra help receive targeted support. As a result, pupils across the school, including those who are disadvantaged or with SEND, achieve consistently well. They remain engaged and focused within lessons.

A strong focus on developing oracy helps pupils express their ideas with clarity and precision. Pupils take part in discussions and debates with confidence.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

This is a highly inclusive school, where all pupils are expected to achieve well, whatever their needs or starting points. Staff identify pupils' needs quickly, when they join the school. This is especially important as many pupils arrive mid-year, often with gaps in learning or education. Support for more vulnerable pupils, such as those who are known, or previously known, to children's social care is prioritised.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities follow the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Teachers receive accurate and detailed information about pupils' needs. They receive regular training so they can adapt the curriculum effectively. Additional support in lessons is highly effective. Leaders check the impact of this support and adjust it when needed. Pupils with education, health and care plans receive well-planned help that meets their individual needs.

Leaders work well with external agencies to ensure that pupils with more complex needs receive the right help. For example, close collaboration with the virtual school ensures that the needs of children who are looked after are very well catered for. Alternative provision, including for pupils with acute medical needs, is used appropriately and in liaison with the local authority. Leaders make sure that pupil premium funding is targeted effectively and monitored continuously. The school's strong inclusive culture helps pupils to feel valued and able to succeed.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

Leaders at Waterside Academy have a clear and ambitious vision for the school. They understand the community they serve and make decisions that place pupils' needs at the centre of their work. Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and the areas where further focus is needed. They check the quality of education regularly and take effective action to make continuous improvements.

Leaders use well-designed systems to monitor how well pupils learn. They check pupils' progress closely and identify any gaps quickly. This helps staff to plan effective additional support where needed. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those with barriers to their learning receive strong support. They expect all pupils to succeed. Staff across the school share this ambition.

The trust provides highly effective challenge and support. Senior trust leaders know the school's work in detail and help leaders to refine their approaches further. They have put in place clear structures for curriculum planning and staff development. This helps maintain consistency and high expectations across the school. Members of the local school board carry out their delegated roles diligently. They visit the school, speak with pupils and staff and use what they learn to challenge leaders appropriately. Regular checks are made to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective, all statutory duties are met and that leaders' decisions are always in pupils' best interests.

Leaders take staff workload and wellbeing seriously. Staff appreciate the support they receive and the professional culture that leaders have built at the school. The school's strong leadership at all levels contributes to the calm, purposeful environment and the positive experiences that pupils have each day.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, benefit from a well-considered, carefully designed programme that supports their personal development from the moment they join the school. The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum helps pupils to learn about important issues in an age-appropriate way. This includes keeping safe online and offline, healthy relationships and identifying the risks they may face in the local community. Staff revisit key content over time so that pupils deepen their understanding and develop detailed knowledge. Visiting speakers, from local and national organisations, strengthen pupils' awareness of safety, respect and social responsibility.

Pupils talk confidently about tolerance, fairness and respect for others. They understand the differences between people that are protected in law and learn about different cultures, identities and beliefs. Pupils say the school is welcoming and diverse. They value learning alongside their peers from many different backgrounds. Pupils demonstrate thoughtful attitudes, when discussing current issues or moral questions. They express their views clearly and respectfully. They are developing a secure, age-appropriate understanding of the fundamental British values.

The school provides an extensive range of clubs and activities that allow pupils to develop their interests. Pupils speak positively about their experiences, particularly school

productions, the careers fair and whole-school reward trips. Leaders actively ensure these activities are open to everyone. Staff encourage pupils to take part in new experiences so that they grow in confidence and broaden their horizons. The school's 'prestigious colleges programme', for example, has supported students to gain scholarships to highly selective post-16 providers.

Careers education is a strong feature of the school's work. Pupils hear from employers, take part in workshops, visit universities and complete work experience. They receive guidance that helps them understand the choices available to them. This helps pupils make informed decisions and prepares them very well for life after Year 11.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils at Waterside Academy value being part of a small community, where staff know them well. Staff understand pupils' individual needs. They help them settle quickly so that they feel they belong.

Pupils arrive each morning into a calm and well-organised school. Routines are clear and established. Staff greet pupils warmly as they line up for lessons. Pupils know what is expected of them and follow these expectations with little need for reminders. They move around the small school site sensibly and treat each other and staff with high levels of respect.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is extremely positive. Pupils listen carefully, work hard and show pride in their learning. They say that behaviour systems are fair and that teachers use these consistently across the school. Disruption to learning is rare. Pupils feel safe and know who to speak to if they have a concern. They trust staff to act quickly, when concerns are raised. Bullying is not common here. Staff deal with it promptly when it does occur.

Pupils enjoy their learning. Those who are disadvantaged, or who face additional challenges, make strong progress through the curriculum. Pupils who need extra help, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive timely support so that they can take part fully in lessons. Pupils consistently achieve well from their different starting points.

There are a range of clubs, trips and enrichment activities, including sport, drama, art and cooking on offer to pupils. These help pupils to develop wider skills and cater to their interests. They enjoy opportunities to take on responsibilities, such as through the school council. Older pupils benefit from highly effective work experience and careers guidance that helps them to prepare well for their next steps. Pupils feel safe, included and well supported. They enjoy school and are rightly proud of what they achieve here.

Next steps

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should maintain their highly effective approaches to providing all pupils, including those who face additional barriers, with a high-quality education, making adjustments and enhancements to the school's provision across all areas as needed.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Community Schools Trust multi-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, Simon Elliott, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Phoebe Clapham.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with school leaders, trust leaders, including members of the trust board, local school board members, staff and pupils during the inspection.

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 inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of 5 alternative provisions, including 2 that are unregistered.

Headteacher: Shuabur Rahman

Lead inspector:

Robert Grice, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Luisa Vittoria Bonelli, Ofsted Inspector

Charlotte Elizabeth Robinson, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.



This data is from 27 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

374

Well below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

500

Well below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

64.44%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

5.88%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

6.15%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	41.0%	45.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	60.2%	45.9%	Above
2022/23 (final)	44.4%	45.3%	Close to average

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	44.6	45.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	48.2	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	46.0	46.3	Close to average

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	1.04	-0.03	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.71	-0.03	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	37.0%	25.6%	Above
2023/24 (final)	47.5%	25.8%	Above
2022/23 (final)	47.3%	25.2%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (provisional)	44.2	34.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	44.8	34.6	Above
2022/23 (final)	46.3	35.0	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.85	-0.57	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.62	-0.57	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference

between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (provisional)	37.0%	52.8%	-15.9 pp
2023/24 (final)	47.5%	53.1%	-5.7 pp
2022/23 (final)	47.3%	52.4%	-5.2 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (provisional)	44.2	50.3	-6.1
2023/24 (final)	44.8	50.0	-5.2
2022/23 (final)	46.3	50.3	-4.0

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	0.85	0.16	0.68
2022/23 (final)	0.62	0.17	0.45

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	71%	91%	Below
2022 leavers (revised)	95%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	93%	94%	Not available

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	7.6%	8.1%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	7.2%	8.9%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	7.2%	9.0%	Below

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	23.9%	21.9%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	23.2%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	21.4%	26.5%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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