

Inspection of a good school: Hammersmith Academy

25 Cathnor Road, London W12 9JD

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 January 2022

Outcome

Hammersmith Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff are determined that all their pupils will succeed. They have established a culture of aspiration for all, regardless of pupils' individual starting points.

Pupils talk proudly about their school and welcome visitors. They appreciate the support of their teachers and the opportunities provided to enrich their learning, in school and in the wider community. For example, pupils enjoy attending clubs, careers events and national and international events, such as the recent London Climate Summit.

Teachers have high levels of subject expertise. They are skilled in helping pupils to learn, remember and apply key knowledge. Leaders also prioritise reading. Pupils read frequently and, where needed, receive additional help to become fluent readers. Leaders and staff ensure that all pupils, including those students in the sixth form, are well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

Pupils benefit from learning a broad curriculum, including in the creative arts and languages. Many pupils choose to continue studying arts, as well as humanities and languages, at GCSE level.

Pupils learn to behave kindly and respectfully towards one another, making the school a harmonious place. Poor behaviour is rare. If bullying occurs, leaders respond quickly and effectively. Leaders and staff ensure that pupils are kept safe at school.

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

Leaders have considered the needs of pupils carefully, and planned a broad and ambitious curriculum. Pupils' learning is sequenced effectively from Years 7 to 13. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders are continuing to focus on making sure that all pupils learn the knowledge they need to be successful in their learning. Where needed, pupils are receiving additional, targeted help with their learning. For example, well-planned support is helping pupils to increase their ability to write accurately and fluently.

After Year 11, pupils are able to choose from a wide range of A-level options, as well as vocational subjects. Leaders make sure that pupils receive appropriate advice to find the right post-16 course for them.

Subject leaders' curriculum thinking is strong. They work together effectively to identify the essential ideas and concepts that the curriculum needs to emphasise. For example, teachers of history and English collaborate to plan a Year 9 unit in which pupils learn about the Russian Revolution. Pupils then draw on their history knowledge to analyse themes in the novel 'Animal farm'. This approach helps pupils to make links between subject content and to put their learning into context.

Leaders and staff give careful thought to making learning relevant and engaging. For example, in geography, pupils liked being able to build up their knowledge by attending a video seminar with a geologist from the British Antarctic Survey. Pupils also like being able to explore subjects further in the wide range of after-school clubs on offer.

Teaching focuses well on ensuring that pupils know more and are able to remember more. Teachers have the expertise to ensure that all pupils learn to remember and apply deep knowledge. Pupils routinely complete tasks designed to support them in recalling and revisiting what they have previously been taught. Effective use of assessment means that gaps in pupils' understanding are identified and addressed. Pupils talk confidently about past learning. They produce high-quality work and enjoy using what they have learned before to understand new ideas and concepts. However, in a few subjects, these strengths are not as firmly established in key stage 3 as they are in key stage 4. Occasionally, this means that pupils are not acquiring a deep understanding of the subject content taught.

Well-planned support and adaptations help to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities access the same ambitious curriculum as other pupils. Leaders have ensured that all teachers are well trained in recognising and meeting pupils' needs.

Leaders have put in place strong provision for pupils' broader development. Staff know pupils well and encourage them to take advantage of the wide range of opportunities on offer. For example, all tutor groups take a turn in looking after the school garden and animals. Through this, leaders aim for pupils to grow in confidence and become more aware of environmental issues. Many pupils also enjoy taking part in school performances. Alongside the demanding academic curriculum, leaders pay close attention to looking after pupils' happiness and well-being. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders have reviewed and further strengthened the range of pastoral support on offer. Particular emphasis is being given to building up pupils' confidence and resilience.

Pupils behave well around the school and in lessons. They appreciate that leaders and staff make sure that classrooms are places where they can focus on learning.

Leaders are supported and challenged by dedicated and knowledgeable governors, who share their vision of high standards in a supportive school. Staff said that they appreciate the support of senior leaders, and the way in which leaders consider staff workload in the decisions they make.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have set up effective systems to identify and support pupils who need help. They review and consider the arrangements for these pupils regularly and thoroughly. Where necessary, leaders work effectively with other agencies to make sure that pupils receive the support and protection that they need. Leaders and staff share information appropriately and keep accurate records.

Leaders and staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding. They are well informed about the risks pupils may face, including those in the local area. Staff are vigilant, and identify and report concerns without delay.

Pupils feel confident about reporting concerns. They are sure that they will be heard and helped.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In key stage 3, a few aspects of the curriculum do not enable pupils to deepen their understanding of all subject content taught. Leaders should build on their existing work to refine and strengthen the planning and delivery of the curriculum in these year groups. This includes checking that pupils have embedded and mastered the essential ideas that they have learned.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2013.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	136172
Local authority	Hammersmith & Fulham
Inspection number	10212356
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	960
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	250
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Tom Hartley
Headteacher	Gary Kynaston
Website	http://hammersmithacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders make use of one registered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the associate headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team. They also met with governors and the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans,

visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Other subjects were considered as part of this inspection, including languages, art, design and technology, and drama.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors examined the single central record and spoke to leaders. They also spoke to staff and groups of pupils from each year group.
- Inspectors considered 128 pupil responses, 39 staff responses and 171 responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Alice Clay, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David Radomsky

Her Majesty's Inspector

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