

Central Foundation Girls' School

Address: Bow Road, London, E3 2AE

Unique reference number (URN): 100975

Inspection report: 6 January 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

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' progress through the curriculum is excellent. They learn the intended knowledge and skills extremely well. Pupils secure the knowledge they need to access increasingly difficult topics. For example, in modern foreign languages, pupils secure their understanding of vocabulary and grammar in one topic and tense before applying it to new topics and tenses.

Pupils, particularly those in key stage 4, achieve extremely well in national tests. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils at the end of Year 11 is impressive. This typically accounts for over half of pupils in Year 11. Over the last three years, these pupils' attainment and progress results are significantly above disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. This is a direct result of the work of the school to identify these pupils and ensure that strategies are in place for them to achieve their full potential. As a result, pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard 

Pupils' attendance to school is excellent. Over the past three years, pupils' attendance has been significantly above national averages for all groups of pupils. This is a result of a number of factors. Leaders have high expectations for attendance, and these are shared with pupils and parents and carers from the start of Year 7. Leaders know the importance of instilling good habits of attendance from the start. Leaders analyse the data forensically and intervene quickly should pupils' attendance start to fall. All staff understand that achieving good attendance is everyone's responsibility. Attendance support staff play a key role in getting pupils into school.

Pupils manage their own behaviour extremely well, resulting in a calm and orderly environment where pupils are focused on their learning. This is a result of a clear behaviour policy that is fairly and consistently implemented by staff. Within this policy, bullying, discriminatory language and harassment are not tolerated. Pupils are rewarded for their good behaviour and receive sanctions when it is poor. The effectiveness of the school's work in this area is seen in the very low number of suspensions and the fact that there have been no permanent exclusions since 2012.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

Leaders have developed robust systems and processes to identify the specific needs of pupils with special educational need and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND visit the school in the summer term before Year 7 on a number of occasions. Leaders also actively encourage these pupils to attend the summer school to make friends and be confident for the start of term. Leaders waste no time in assessing the needs of any pupil who joins the school after the start of Year 7. Leaders share key information about pupils with staff. This identifies the individual needs of pupils and the strategies to be used to support those pupils. Staff are highly knowledgeable on how to meet the range of needs that pupils may have. They adapt their teaching so that all pupils can access learning in class. Leaders monitor pupils' progress through the curriculum and update strategies when needed.

The pupil premium grant spending is planned strategically. Leaders carefully consider up-to-date research to develop the best ways to support pupils. This helps leaders have a clear understanding of what makes an individual pupil disadvantaged and the most effective strategies to raise achievement of these pupils. This includes ensuring that cost is not a barrier to any pupil participating in educational visits. Leaders ensure that the monitoring of how well disadvantaged pupils are learning is prioritised. As a result, disadvantaged pupils achieve extremely well.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders know their school extremely well and have been accurate in identifying the school's strengths and development areas. These are clearly outlined in the school's improvement priorities and shared with staff and governors. Leaders carefully use data to identify areas for development and then plan a strategy to address them. Department and faculty heads are included in identifying and monitoring these areas. As a result, leaders' actions are impactful.

Leaders have developed a high-quality programme of professional learning that is directly linked to the school improvement priorities. This programme, in addition to addressing the school improvement priorities, is tailored to meet the individual development needs of staff. Staff value the quality of their professional learning very highly. The work to support early career teachers is also of a very high quality, and these teachers feel well supported at the start of their teaching careers. Overall, staff feel very well supported by leaders with regard to their workload and wellbeing.

Leaders are committed to breaking down barriers to pupils' learning. They make decisions with the pupils' best interests at heart. They are acutely aware of the issues facing pupils in the school and put systems in place to support them. This might be via the key stage 3 or the key stage 4 study support hubs. Bespoke help is provided effectively for pupils who need support to manage their emotions in the 'flourish' provision. Governors work closely with the school, fulfil their statutory duties well and have a detailed knowledge of the school's work.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Leaders have planned a comprehensive personal development programme that meets the pupils' needs as they progress from Year 7 to post 16. This programme includes assemblies, social studies lessons, personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) and citizenship education in key stage 4. The PSHE and social studies programmes are designed in a way that are age-appropriate and build on pupils' prior learning. They include appropriate relationships education and how pupils can keep themselves safe online. They are also responsive to the needs of pupils and what is happening in the local community. They are adapted, when necessary, for example, to discuss the harm of vaping. Pupils learn about life in modern Britain and the values that underpin it. For example, they learn about concepts such as democracy and tolerance. This contributes to a harmonious school community that recognises and values difference, for example, via the 'D3' diversity club.

There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities in place for all pupils from Year 7 to Year 13. This offer, called 'Central+', allows pupils to further their interests in areas such as sport,

music, drama and debating. These activities are free of charge or, if not, they are funded by the school for disadvantaged pupils. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme is popular, and there are pupils on all 3 levels of the programme. Leaders carefully track which pupils are involved in these activities. They ensure that disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the most of these opportunities. Indeed, attendance of both these groups of pupils is in line with their peers. Departments also organise 'innovation days' in the summer term that involve educational visits for all pupils in the school.

The school has designed a careers curriculum that runs from Year 7 to Year 13. It prepares pupils for their lives beyond school and gets them ready for further study and the world of work. Pupils are given personalised advice and guidance when choosing GCSE subjects and their post 16 choices. Students in the sixth form all undertake work experience placements.

Expected standard

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The school's curriculum extends beyond the requirements of the national curriculum. Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to access this curriculum, in order to improve their life chances. Staff receive tailored professional development that supports them to adapt their teaching in their subject to meet the broad range of pupils' needs. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the curriculum and teaching in the school. They have created a curriculum across all subjects and key stages that is logically ordered and allows pupils to develop their knowledge step by step over time. For example, students in a Year 12 law class confidently apply previously learned, individual concepts to consider how to prove non-fatal crimes.

Teachers know their pupils well, and they have the information they need to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of all pupils. Teaching actively ensures that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are fully involved. However, the teaching of the curriculum is not as effective across all subjects and key stages. For example, there is some variability in how well teachers check pupils' understanding of a topic before moving on.

Leaders' sophisticated analysis of pupils' starting points allows them to quickly identify any pupils who have not developed the necessary reading, writing and mathematical skills to access their ambitious curriculum. As a result, leaders are able to implement a personal intervention strategy so that these pupils can catch up quickly.

Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

The school operates an inclusive sixth form that offers a broad range of A level subjects alongside level 3 applied courses. Pupils who do not achieve the entry requirements for these courses can apply for a level 2 applied course alongside resitting English and mathematics GCSEs. If successful, these pupils can progress to level 3 courses the

following year. This demonstrates leaders' commitment to supporting the majority of pupils to progress to the sixth form and beyond.

Leaders have a thorough understanding of how well students perform in post 16 courses. Historically, this performance did not meet leaders' high expectations. As a result, they implemented an improvement strategy, which is now part way through its second year. The impact of this work can be seen in students' achievement in lessons and is starting to make an impact on published results. This is particularly the case for the level 3 applied courses, where both attainment and progress are significantly above national averages. However, the impact has not been fully realised across all of the post 16 provision.

Students in the sixth form benefit from educational visits, such as those to Parliament, an augmented reality day at a social media company and open day visits to universities. Students receive dedicated support for university and apprenticeship applications. Work experience for all students in Year 12 prepares them well for making informed career choices.

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

Pupils enjoy coming to school, meeting their friends and making the most of their learning. Pupils study a broad range of subjects that develop both their academic and creative knowledge and skills. At post 16, students are able to choose between a wide range of academic and vocational courses. Teachers are specialists in their subjects, and pupils develop their knowledge and skills well as they progress through the school. As a result, pupils achieve very well, particularly by the end of Year 11. This prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education, training or employment. The school is a welcoming and inclusive environment to all pupils. Leaders and staff quickly identify any potential barriers to pupils' learning. The school puts support in place quickly so that pupils can make the most of the learning opportunities on offer in the school.

Pupils get along well with one another, and they have positive relationships with staff. Pupils learn how to be respectful to everyone and take responsibility for their own behaviour. They are keen to learn, and lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. In those rare moments when staff need to intervene, it is done calmly and respectfully, further enhancing the culture of mutual respect. Pupils feel safe in school and know who to speak to if they have any concerns. While bullying is not common, pupils know who to speak to if it occurs and they trust that it will be resolved.

Pupils attend school well. They know they need to be in school to take advantage of the wide range of activities on offer to them. For example, pupils participate in a range of sporting, creative and academic clubs and societies before, during and after school. Pupils are keen to volunteer at school events, including working with staff at the summer school. Each year group also selects a charitable cause and fundraises for this during the year.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that its strategy for checking pupils' understanding of new knowledge is embedded consistently across all subjects and key stages in the school.
 - Leaders should implement and monitor the remainder of their post 16 strategy so that achievement is consistent across all subjects.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Hilary Evenett.

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 (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers, the other senior leaders, the chair of governors and the other governors 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 one registered alternative provision.

The headteacher took up post after the last inspection.

Headteacher: Ms Carla Prince

Lead inspector:

Mark Smith, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Olivia Page, Ofsted Inspector

Tom Brook-Myers Brook-Myers, Ofsted Inspector

Paula Ledger, Ofsted Inspector

Lisa Smith, His Majesty's Inspector

Luisa Vittoria Bonelli, 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 6 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,541

Well above 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

1,550

Well above 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)

56.48%

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

2.08%

Below 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

10.38%

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

Well 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)	53.6%	45.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	59.2%	45.9%	Above
2022/23 (final)	63.2%	45.3%	Above

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)	54.0	45.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	55.0	45.9	Above
2022/23 (final)	54.6	46.3	Above

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)	0.50	-0.03	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.67	-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)	49.6%	25.6%	Above
2023/24 (final)	51.8%	25.8%	Above
2022/23 (final)	57.3%	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)	52.2	34.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	50.8	34.6	Above
2022/23 (final)	51.1	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)	0.23	-0.57	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.56	-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)	49.6%	52.8%	-3.2 pp
2023/24 (final)	51.8%	53.1%	-1.3 pp
2022/23 (final)	57.3%	52.4%	4.8 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)	52.2	50.3	1.9
2023/24 (final)	50.8	50.0	0.8
2022/23 (final)	51.1	50.3	0.8

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)	0.23	0.16	0.07
2022/23 (final)	0.56	0.17	0.40

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)	96%	91%	Above
2022 leavers (revised)	98%	93%	Above
2021 leavers (revised)	98%	94%	Above

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	32.56	34.99	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	32.60	34.38	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	34.77	34.16	Close to average

A-level value added

A score showing students' progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	-0.3	0.0	Below
2023/24 (revised)	-0.3	0.0	Below

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)	6.6%	8.1%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	6.7%	8.9%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	7.3%	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)	20.1%	21.9%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	20.9%	25.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	24.5%	26.5%	Close to average

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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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