

City of London Academy (Southwark)

Address: 240 Lynton Road, London, SE1 5LA

Unique reference number (URN): 134222

Inspection report: 3 February 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 ●

This is a school where pupils consistently achieve highly across the curriculum. Pupils' achievements are evident in several ways. One way includes how well pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities successfully access the curriculum. This includes pupils with education, health and care plans who achieve the ambitious outcomes that are set for them.

Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve very well in their end of Year 11 examinations. For example, over time, disadvantaged pupils' overall progress and attainment have been consistently above the national average for disadvantaged pupils.

Current pupils build up lots of detailed knowledge in their different academic subjects. They use subject-specific vocabulary with confidence, both in their oral responses to questions and in their written work. Pupils produce work that is of a consistently high quality. The school is highly successful in its work to enable pupils to be ready for what comes next, for example, as they move into the sixth form.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders keep a tight focus on pupils' attendance. This includes developing positive relationships with families. For example, this year, leaders swiftly identified pupils joining the school in Year 7 who were likely to need support with their attendance. Their work with this group has been highly successful. These pupils now regularly attend school. This example is typical of the school's highly effective work. Overall, pupils' attendance, including for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, has steadily improved over time.

Leaders and staff work well together to implement the behaviour policy consistently. Low-level disruption is rare. Non-teaching staff give glowing feedback about how students show high levels of respect, both to them and their environment.

Pupils enjoy learning. They consistently show positive attitudes to their learning and take pride in the quality of their work. Pupils know that rules are important. They understand, for example, leaders' decisions help to keep them safe. Pupils are right to be confident that staff will take quick action should any cases of bullying or discrimination be reported.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

The school offers an extremely ambitious curriculum. Leaders check carefully that teaching is of high quality across the school. They have an in-depth understanding of where the strengths and the few areas for improvement are. Teachers benefit from training that increases their expertise, for example to successfully adapt their teaching, where appropriate, to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Teachers make sure that pupils build up their knowledge and skills in a logical order. Staff identify where pupils have gaps in important knowledge such as in reading and mathematics. Support sessions and high-quality teaching help pupils to close these gaps and keep up with their peers. This is particularly notable for pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils.

Leaders promote a love of reading. This includes through tutor time and the work of the library, which is a well-resourced space. Leaders have rightly started to introduce phonics support, particularly for the few pupils joining the school in Year 7 who need this support to build up their reading fluency.

Teachers have deep subject knowledge and consistently check pupils' understanding. They are quick to spot when they need to adapt their teaching if pupils have not grasped a concept. They routinely make sure that pupils go back and revisit previous learning so that it sticks in their long-term memory.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

The school's mission to be 'inclusive by design' is firmly embedded. Staff work highly effectively, both together and with external agencies, to identify and meet pupils' individual needs and reduce barriers to their learning. The impact of the school's work can be seen in lots of ways. One way is its use of 'pupil information profiles' for pupils with an education, health and care plan. These profiles, alongside staff training, give staff the confidence to skilfully adapt their teaching to fully meet pupils' needs.

Staff know pupils incredibly well. This includes the group that the school identifies as most vulnerable, such as those who are known to social care. The school works successfully with the virtual school to meet pupils' needs. Leaders take decisions that are in the best interests of pupils and help pupils to achieve the outcomes in their personal education plans.

Leaders are quick to put in place the right support at the right time for pupils. This includes pastoral guidance that helps pupils improve their behaviour and includes academic catch-up sessions that help pupils to close gaps in their learning. Leaders check carefully that the support they provide has the desired impact, for example to improve pupils' academic progress. Leaders' impact of the use of pupil premium funding is evident across the school's work, for example in disadvantaged pupils' high attendance.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders have a firm grasp on what school life is like for pupils. They never rest on their laurels and continually look for ways to make the school better for pupils and staff. Leaders, including those in the trust central team, work well together to make improvements, including through the use of educational research to inform their decisions. Leaders make sure that staff receive the training that they need to carry out their different roles highly effectively. There is much consistency across the school's work. For example, teachers routinely follow the school's model for what a typical lesson should contain. Leaders have also made rapid gains in their work to improve pupils' personal development and wellbeing, particularly in responding to changes in pupils' pastoral needs.

Leaders are deeply committed to inclusion. This commitment is seen in many ways, such as through the range of support that is available for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and how carefully leaders check the impact of their work on disadvantaged pupils. The school's most vulnerable pupils benefit from highly positive experiences and outcomes.

Staff feel well supported by leaders. They speak very positively about how the school balances its high expectations and drive for consistency with the impact on staff's workload and wellbeing. Leaders survey views to consider how staff are feeling and respond accordingly.

The board of trustees and the local governing board know the school well. They step up to their different responsibilities. They use a range of methods to check on the quality of the school's work, for example, through annual safeguarding reviews.

Post 16 provision

Strong standard 

The sixth-form curriculum is ambitious and leaders keep it under regular review. A wide range of courses are on offer. This includes a pathway for work-related courses.

Teachers have high expectations. Students learn to become more independent, for example, in their wider subject reading. Teachers make sure that students move confidently through the curriculum. Teaching helps students to achieve well across the range of courses that they study. This includes their academic performance in national examinations and assessments. For example, students on courses such as health and sport achieve outcomes that are above the national average. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve very well from their starting points.

Students greatly appreciate the guidance they receive in relation to preparation for life after sixth-form, for example in applying for a university place or an apprenticeship. Students who join the sixth form at the beginning of Year 12 from other schools are tremendously complimentary of their experiences.

Students benefit from an enrichment offer as part of their study programme. This includes taught content about healthy relationships, finances and stress management. Students can also access the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme and different clubs, such as sports, bible study and chess.

Expected standard

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school makes sure that pupils learn about relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education through their 'society, ethics and beliefs' curriculum. This includes topics about how to manage online risks, such as catfishing and fraud. Sixth-form students learn how to look after their physical and emotional health in an age-appropriate way. That said, some pupils have not built up the detailed knowledge of RSE that the school intends.

Overall, the school helps pupils to learn about and prepare well for life in modern Britain. This includes their understanding and appreciation of the importance of respect and tolerance towards all the things that makes people different.

Leaders make sure that pupils build up their confidence, resilience and social skills, for example, through being able to take part in a wide range of clubs, activities and residential visits. The school supports disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to fully benefit from what is on offer. This includes residential trips abroad. The range of clubs on offer supports pupils to develop their talents and interests across the arts, music, sports, sciences and technology. Pupils with SEND can access additional clubs, such as games, craft and wellbeing, in the school's 'ambition centre'. The school is right to be exploring more ways to engage even more sixth-form students in the school's enrichment programme.

Pupils benefit from highly positive pastoral support, including from external agencies and access to alternative provision. This work is personalised, such as to help pupils to re-engage with learning and better manage their social, emotional and mental health needs.

Leaders have put in place a well-developed careers programme. This includes access to work experience, employer engagement and one-to-one advice. The school actively supports its most vulnerable pupils with the bespoke support to help them avoid being out of education, employment or training when the time comes to leave school.

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

Pupils rise to the school's high expectations. They behave very positively, attend regularly and achieve consistently highly across the curriculum. Pupils' academic achievements, including in their end of Year 11 and sixth-form examinations, is something to celebrate. Disadvantaged pupils achieve particularly well.

Pupils receive high-quality teaching. Teachers make sure that pupils receive the help and guidance that they need. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who benefit from the right support packages that help them to access their learning successfully and keep up with their peers.

One of the school's values, 'integritas', lies at the heart of its work. Everyone works to support pupils to develop the importance of acting with integrity as part of their character development. This is seen in pupils' awareness of right from wrong and how they treat each other and adults with respect.

The school's routines for the start of the day and pupils' silent movement around the building are embedded. Bullying is something that staff take seriously, including the current focus on staff spotting signs of what the school calls 'subtle bullying'. Staff work well together to make sure that the school is a calm and safe space for pupils.

The school is rightly proud of its 'Basketball Academy' for sixth-form students. The teams in the academy compete in national leagues, and some students are successful in gaining scholarship to universities in the United States.

Pupils learn about a range of topics that support their physical, emotional and mental wellbeing. They also benefit from a well-developed careers education programme. The annual careers fair is a particular highlight where over 75 employers, education and training providers come together at the school to interact with pupils. Sixth-form students are particularly keen to talk about how well supported they are in applying for university places or an apprenticeship.

Next steps

- Leaders should make sure that the implementation of the curriculum to cover relationships and sex education and health education has the intended impact so that pupils develop a more detailed understanding of the taught content.
 - Leaders should ensure that there are exceptionally high standards across all subjects and phases. This should include work to embed the revised approach for those few pupils new to the school who require phonics teaching to build up their reading fluency.
-

About this inspection

This school is part of City of London Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Mark Emmerson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Steve Goodman.

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.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with a variety of school and trust leaders, including the headteacher, CEO, chair of the board of trustees and representatives from the local governing board. Inspectors also spoke with staff from the alternative provision being used by the school and staff from the local authority, including the virtual school.

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 currently makes use of three registered alternative provisions.

Principal: Mike Baxter

Lead inspector:

Sam Hainey, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Ogugua Okolo-Angus, Ofsted Inspector

David Lloyd, Ofsted Inspector

Eliot Wong, Ofsted Inspector

Alan Blount, Ofsted Inspector

Terry Millar, 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 3 February 2026

School and pupil context**Total pupils**

1,576

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

1,200

Close to 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)

55.48%

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

2.03%

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

15.55%

Close to 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)	57.4%	45.2%	Above
2023/24 (final)	62.6%	45.9%	Above
2022/23 (final)	56.8%	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)	52.6	45.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	53.4	45.9	Above
2022/23 (final)	51.1	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)	0.48	-0.03	Above
2022/23 (final)	-0.01	-0.03	Close to average

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)	53.8%	25.6%	Above
2023/24 (final)	58.3%	25.8%	Above
2022/23 (final)	51.7%	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)	49.0	34.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	50.5	34.6	Above
2022/23 (final)	48.1	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)	0.31	-0.57	Above
2022/23 (final)	-0.15	-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)	53.8%	52.8%	1.0 pp
2023/24 (final)	58.3%	53.1%	5.1 pp
2022/23 (final)	51.7%	52.4%	-0.7 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)	49.0	50.3	-1.3

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	50.5	50.0	0.5
2022/23 (final)	48.1	50.3	-2.2

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)	0.31	0.16	0.14
2022/23 (final)	-0.15	0.17	-0.32

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)	91%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	92%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	94%	94%	Average

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)	37.63	34.99	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	36.83	34.38	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	32.68	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)	0.1	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	0.2	0.0	Above

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)	7.5%	8.1%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	7.3%	8.9%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	8.9%	9.0%	Close to average

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)	21.0%	21.9%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (3 term)	20.2%	25.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	26.6%	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.

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 <https://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 2026



© Crown copyright