

The Totteridge Academy

Address: Barnet Lane, N20 8AZ

Unique reference number (URN): 144502

Inspection report: 25 November 2025

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.

Exceptional ●

Achievement

Exceptional ●

Pupils in this school achieve extremely well. The well-constructed curriculum and highly effective teaching ensure that pupils gain the deep knowledge and understanding that they need to succeed. Pupils routinely produce work of a very high standard across the curriculum. They apply their knowledge confidently and consistently articulate their deep learning accurately, using subject-specific vocabulary. Pupils are taught to celebrate and learn from their mistakes to ensure that they are not repeated. As a result, pupils are committed and successful in their learning.

Pupils progress exceedingly well through the curriculum. Their attainment, at the end of Year 11, is sustained and above the national average. This is also true for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In many subjects, the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils outstrips non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. These extremely positive academic outcomes support pupils to move on to high-quality destinations, when they leave the school.

Curriculum and teaching

Exceptional ●

The school has embedded a highly ambitious curriculum. Leaders frequently review the quality of what is being taught. This informs the insightful decisions they make when deciding what pupils will learn and when this will happen. Teachers are continually looking at ways to improve their practice. They are experts in their subjects and highly skilled at adapting their approaches to overcome pupils' barriers to learning. As a result, different groups of pupils are engaged and inspired.

Teachers present curriculum content clearly and with great enthusiasm. They ask probing questions that require pupils to think deeply about what they are learning. For example, in mathematics, pupils are confident when using different methods to solve complex equations.

Teaching ensures that pupils are secure in their reading, writing and mathematical knowledge before they move on to more challenging content. Misconceptions are addressed immediately. This means that any gaps in learning are quickly closed. There is no fear of failure and mistakes are celebrated as learning opportunities. Pupils who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language are supported so well to catch up. Teaching consistently expands pupils' specialist vocabulary. This means that pupils explain what they have learned with considerable insight. They quite simply 'love learning' and are determined to do their very best.

Inclusion

Exceptional ●

The school places inclusion at the heart of its work, ensuring that pupils who may face barriers to learning flourish. Pupils thrive in this inclusive atmosphere. Leaders put the best interests of these pupils at the forefront of their decision-making. Their ambition for pupils is exemplified in their aim to 'put every student on the moon'. The consistent belief in all pupils,

from staff at all levels, transforms their self-belief. The school raises aspirations for pupils and their families.

Leaders' focus on excellence is reflected in the highly effective training that staff receive. Leaders work closely with a range of external agencies and parents and carers. This partnership provides expert and coherent support for pupils' aspirations. Skilled staff ensure that pupils' needs are identified swiftly and accurately. They provide high-quality support and keenly monitor the impact of their actions on pupils' progress.

The school's pupil premium strategy is crafted carefully to enhance the experiences of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders ensure that resources are used wisely and for maximum impact. This includes the provision of effective support for pupils' learning, attendance and enrichment activities. Staff consider how different groups of pupils might need specific support to learn and succeed. For example, pupils benefit from the 'inclusion lunch club', which provides a quiet space at social times.

Leadership and governance

Exceptional 

Leaders are unrelenting in their ambition for all pupils. All staff embrace the aim of the school to improve the life chances of every pupil.

Leaders at all levels, including trustees and members of the local governing body, fulfil their statutory duties extremely effectively. They have an astute understanding of the strengths and priorities in the school. They are insightful about the school's context and ensure that highly effective strategies are in place to rapidly improve any identified areas of focus. Leaders use detailed analysis of school performance to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's work, readily making changes and adjustments to drive further improvement. As a result, the strengths of the school's provision have been sustained over time.

Professional learning is at the heart of the school's work. There is a comprehensive programme in place for all staff. It is tailored to the school's development objectives and staff's needs. This includes a unique and highly effective approach to curriculum review. Leaders have established many collaborative initiatives with other schools and providers. This enables them to share their own expert practice and to learn from the work of others. There is a remarkable dedication to the development of teachers. The culture of the whole school enables pupils and staff to thrive.

Leaders are highly conscious of staff's workload and wellbeing in their decision-making. They have created a collegiate culture that permeates the school. As a result, staff are extremely positive and enthusiastic about working in this school.

Personal development and well-being

Exceptional 

The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum is designed and ordered with precision. Leaders have carefully considered the context of the pupils in the school when developing this curriculum. Pupils learn about important topics, such as healthy relationships, online safety and the dangers of drugs and alcohol. Pupils study an age-appropriate programme of relationships and sex education, which includes a chance to

discuss and debate important topics. There are plentiful opportunities to learn about the wider world. Pupils enjoy learning about fundamental British values. They regularly demonstrate how to be positive and active citizens of the world, including taking direct action in their local and school community.

Pupils relish the school's well-structured and remarkable personal development offer. A wide range of well-attended clubs, from cross-stitch to drama and many sports, broadens pupils' interests. All pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, consistently benefit from the high-quality wider opportunities available to them. The on-site 'GROW' farm is embedded in a number of aspects of the curriculum. The experiences that pupils have in growing their own food, equine therapy and learning the curriculum through a different lens are truly unique.

There is a comprehensive careers programme. All pupils have access to independent careers advice. Pupils in Year 10 and Year 12 undertake meaningful work experience activities. Leaders ensure that all pupils are given a range of purposeful and exciting opportunities to engage with employers. As a result, their eyes are opened to aspirational careers. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are among those who receive more tailored support to make successful transitions at key points in their education journey. Pupils are highly reflective and they are ambitious for their futures.

The school pays great attention to developing pupils' character, such as increasing their confidence and articulation. Pupils demonstrate quiet confidence which prepares them exceptionally well for wider life and their next steps in education and life.

Strong standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attendance. Leaders work closely with pupils and their families to promote good attendance habits. This includes a sharp focus on understanding the barriers that prevent individual pupils from attending school regularly. Staff take a personalised approach to support pupils, which is having a significant impact. Recent attendance rates have been broadly in line with the national average. However, this is improving rapidly, including for disadvantaged pupils.

Pupils across the school are entirely self-disciplined and respectful. They care about the school and one another. As a result, incidents of bullying or poor behaviour are rare and never tolerated. The behaviour policy is applied consistently and fairly. Pupils' focus in lessons is exemplary. This ensures that no learning time is wasted. Leaders intervene swiftly and effectively on the rare instances when pupils need support to manage their behaviour. When necessary, appropriate adjustments ensure that all pupils are supported to thrive.

Leaders have a clear vision for the post-16 provision. They have put in place a suite of academic courses, personal development opportunities and enrichment activities that help all their students to make informed, ambitious choices for their futures. Leaders understand the strengths of their provision and through their cycle of review and adaptation, they are continually improving students' experiences and their academic outcomes.

Students, including those who are disadvantaged, progress remarkably well through the post-16 curriculum. Their attainment at the end of Year 13 has improved over time. It is above the national average. The support that students receive, coupled with the strong academic curriculums that they study, have led to these high outcomes. Students remark on how much they appreciate the care that they receive from their teachers.

Through a well designed and sequenced careers programme, students are extremely well informed about the opportunities for the next stages of their education, employment or training. The wider opportunities and activities that pupils take part in, such as visits to lectures and conferences, running student societies and completing charitable works that support the local community, are highly effective in developing their character and positive personal traits.

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

This school has very high ambitions for what all pupils can achieve. Pupils recognise the high-quality education that they receive and the benefits that this affords them. The broad and very well-designed curriculum is delivered by dedicated subject specialists. Pupils' attainment in national examinations has been above the national average for several years. Pupils who are disadvantaged and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also achieve highly. This ensures that pupils move on to highly aspirational and well-matched destinations once they leave the school.

There is a true sense of community at The Totteridge Academy. Pupils respond extremely well to the trust placed in them and to the school's aspirational culture. Staff forge strong relationships with pupils and provide high-quality pastoral care. The school has an expert team of trained professionals, therapists and mentors who work effectively with pupils to break down barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing. Dedicated spaces, such as the inclusion hub, further help to foster a sense of inclusion. Pupils take great pride in calmly walking the two school dogs Bonnie and Rosie.

Pupils are highly courteous and respectful. Their positive conduct sets a happy tone. They feel safe in school and free from bullying. Pupils have a mature approach to their studies. They are keen to learn as well as they can.

Pupils' personal development matters here. They enjoy a breadth of opportunities that enrich the curriculum, including participating in Mathemagicians, the Physics Olympiad, Young Philosophers clubs and theatre trips. As part of this offer, pupils are taught to work together and to learn new skills. This contributes to pupils' welcoming approach to others. The school ensures that all pupils access the full range of opportunities on offer. Purposeful careers advice and guidance run through the school's work. Work experience opportunities and visits to colleges and universities contribute well to the careers programme and ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should sustain the effectiveness of their work in all areas. They should seek continued improvement, overcoming barriers and challenges, in order to drive a transformational impact for all pupils. This includes disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing.

About this inspection

This school is part of 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 (CEO), Sir Jon Coles, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Christian Brodie.

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

Inspectors spoke with the principal and other senior leaders during the inspection. The lead inspector also met with members of the local governing board and trustees.

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 school makes use of three alternative provisions, including one that is unregistered.

Principal : Chris Fairbairn

Lead inspector:

Sam Johnson, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Luke Stubbles, His Majesty's Inspector

Susan Maguire, His Majesty's Inspector

Russell Bennett, His Majesty's Inspector

Hannah Glossop, His Majesty's 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 25 November 2025

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,003

Close to 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

900

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: 1,152

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

32.25%

Close to 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

4.39%

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

20.24%

Well above 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 below 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	71.2%	45.2%	Above
2023/24	76.3%	45.9%	Above
2022/23	71.6%	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	57.7	45.9	Above
2023/24	60.4	45.9	Above
2022/23	55.8	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	1.32	-0.03	Above
2022/23	0.88	-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	57.1%	25.6%	Above
2023/24	64.1%	25.8%	Above
2022/23	70.2%	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	48.9	34.9	Above
2023/24	51.2	34.6	Above
2022/23	52.1	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	0.88	-0.57	Above
2022/23	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	57.1%	52.8%	4.3 pp
2023/24	64.1%	53.1%	11.0 pp
2022/23	70.2%	52.4%	17.7 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	48.9	50.3	-1.4
2023/24	51.2	50.0	1.1
2022/23	52.1	50.3	1.8

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	0.88	0.16	0.72
2022/23	0.62	0.17	0.46

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	86%	91%	Below
2022 leavers	87%	93%	Below
2021 leavers	85%	94%	Not available

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
2023/24	43.47	34.38	Above
2022/23	33.38	34.16	Close to average
2021/22	37.83	37.86	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
2023/24	0.40	0.00	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 (1 term)	8.2%	7.7%	Close to average
2023/24	8.8%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23	7.7%	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 (1 term)	22.1%	21.1%	Close to average
2023/24	25.8%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23	17.0%	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 standards expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standards 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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