

Inspection of an outstanding school: Kensington Aldridge Academy

1 Silchester Road, London W10 6EX

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 March 2024

Outcome

Kensington Aldridge Academy continues to be an outstanding school.

The principal of this school is Anna Jordan. This school is a single academy trust. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Fletcher.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils receive an exceptional education at this school. Pupils flourish because the school has high academic ambitions for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school creates a thirst for learning and is driven by its motto 'intrepidus': boldly encouraging pupils to take risks without fear. This ethos builds both resilience and creativity.

Staff and pupils are proud of their school. The school has fostered a strong community that is welcoming and warm. The school is led with both sensitivity and determination, building a vibrant school in which pupils excel.

Staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave very well and are committed to their learning. They are courteous and respectful to each other and adults. Where pupils struggle, the school takes prompt and effective action to support them. Sixth form students take an active role in mentoring younger pupils and endeavour to be role models for their peers.

The school provides an array of opportunities to develop pupils' character. Pupils engage in fundraising activities, support the local food bank and take part in a wide range of trips and clubs. Many pupils take on leadership responsibilities by becoming prefects, joining the school council or becoming 'student technicians'. Pupils are safe at the school and attend well.

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

The school provides a curriculum that is ambitious and sharply focused on making learning memorable. Teachers set purposeful activities that deepen and consolidate learning. Knowledge is logically sequenced, so pupils return to, practise and embed key concepts. For example, in English younger pupils learn about social responsibility, political

satire and Victorian London through their study of the traditional text 'Animal Farm' and the more modern 'Ruby in the Smoke' to provide a strong foundation for their study of GCSE texts.

Teachers have a strong subject knowledge. They think carefully about what is learned and when. In dance, the curriculum is taught through choreography, performance and appreciation, and pupils' work is underpinned with enrichment opportunities that are provided by the Royal Academy of Dance. In all subjects, teachers routinely return to key vocabulary and check regularly that pupils remember essential knowledge and build on this learning at just the right time. A relentless drive for excellence and high aspiration for all continues into the sixth form.

Pupils with SEND are quickly identified and included in the ambitious learning of the classroom. Where additional help is required, pupils are given effective support. Some pupils move between the Grandin Centre and the main school, where the priority remains that all pupils both enjoy school and make great progress.

Leaders have made reading a priority of the school. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have dedicated reading time each morning with high-quality texts. Teachers are reading experts and deliver these lessons enthusiastically. Books are chosen to promote a love of reading and explore a range of issues and experiences. Pupils who need additional support to develop fluency receive help that is well suited to their needs.

Staff have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils develop independence and benefit from the support they receive to self-regulate and to build confidence. The house system and school values are at the core of the school and create a collegiate atmosphere on site. Pupils feel safe and are respectful in this diverse community. Pupils are consulted on school policy and take an active role in the school council. Successes and achievements are celebrated and the 'intrepidus badge awards' are held in high regard. The school takes prompt and effective action where any concerns about attendance are identified.

Leaders prepare pupils and students in the sixth form extremely well for the next stage of education, employment or training. Pupils take part in work experience in both Year 10 and Year 12. Pupils are provided with a careers advisor, careers fairs, workshops and talks about a wide range of pathways and careers, including routes into journalism, politics and engineering. Sixth form students also enjoy a wide range of societies, including in medicine and law. Many students speak highly of the individual guidance and opportunities that leaders have sought for them. Pupils in younger years take part in interhouse competitions, clubs and trips, including visits to museums and theatres, field trips and overseas excursions.

Staff are dedicated to the school and feel valued. Leaders at all levels are reflective and committed to further improvement. Trustees work together with leaders and have a keen understanding of the school and its wider context. Parents and carers speak highly of the school and the 'can-do' attitude that enables pupils to thrive and excel.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

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

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in December 2017.

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.

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	140212
Local authority	Kensington and Chelsea
Inspection number	10296731
Type of school	Secondary
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	1,238
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	234
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Fletcher
Principal	Anna Jordan
Website	http://www.kaa.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 December 2017 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The principal of this school took up their post in November 2023.
- The school is a single Academy Trust.
- The school uses five registered alternative providers to support a small number of pupils.
- The school has the ASSC, (Autism Spectrum Specialist Centre), known as the Grandin Centre, on site to support 28 pupils from Years 7 to 11.
- The school is funded by both the government and sponsors. These sponsors are Aldridge Education and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal and school senior leaders. Additionally, discussions were held with trustees including the chair of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, geography and dance. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum and visited lessons in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' school evaluation, information about pupils' personal development, records for behaviour and attendance, and reports to those responsible for oversight.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils to understand their experience of the school.
- Inspectors took account of survey responses from parents, pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Sarah Saunders, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

David Booth

Ofsted Inspector

Alan McDougall

Ofsted Inspector

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