

Inspection of Chelsea Academy

Lots Road, Chelsea, London SW10 0AB

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 September 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The principal of this school is Mariella Ardron. This school is part of Chelsea Academy, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Mariella Ardron, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gary Griffin.

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 11 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's vision of 'learning to flourish together' is at the heart of everything that happens. Leaders have high expectations for all pupils. Pupils rise to these expectations. They work hard and behave well. The school ensures high ambition in its work. Leaders make sure that pupils are central to all decision-making.

Throughout the school, including the sixth form, pupils enjoy their learning and attend school regularly. Pupils who are new to the school are made to feel very welcome. Pupils are proud to be part of Chelsea Academy.

Pupils feel safe in school and behave well. Bullying is rare and, where this exists, the school is proactive in dealing with it properly. Pupils are taught, in an age-appropriate way, about keeping themselves safe. Pupils enjoy a variety of enrichment opportunities. For example, pupils get to take on leadership roles through the school. Pupils in Year 8 particularly like the residential visit to Bournemouth.

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

The school's curriculum is broad and ambitious. Pupils study a wide range of subjects. Pupils particularly enjoy languages and an increasing proportion choose to study languages in Years 10 and 11. The curriculum is designed to ensure that pupils build up their knowledge over time in each subject. What pupils learn in lessons builds on what they have been taught previously. Leaders have considered carefully what pupils need to know and when. Leaders adjust the curriculum appropriately to respond to pupils' needs or gaps in their knowledge. For example, in physical education (PE), leaders have introduced extra swimming lessons for pupils in Years 8 and 9. This has allowed leaders to address gaps in pupils' knowledge of swimming strokes and water safety.

Typically, teachers have strong subject expertise. They build good relationships with pupils. In lessons, teachers check what pupils know and what they have remembered from previous learning. For example, pupils in Year 11 used their prior knowledge of calculation to help them solve more complex problems. They used mathematics terminology well to explain the reasons for their answers.

The school has introduced some new systems and approaches for supporting pupils in lessons, particularly to help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Although these pupils achieve well overall, some of these new approaches are not firmly embedded. Occasionally, activities are not adjusted well enough to meet pupils' needs. This means that, sometimes, these pupils do not keep up with their learning as well as they might.

The school prioritises reading within the curriculum and during 'coaching time'. Pupils are enthusiastic about reading. Those who need more help with learning to read are given the support they need.

Students in the sixth form are positive about school and enjoy taking responsibility for their learning. Students rise to the challenges set by teachers. For example, in Year 13, students demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of chemical calculations of several atoms.

The school is a calm and orderly place. In the main, pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to their learning. Leaders work effectively to ensure that pupils attend school regularly.

The school's ethos and values are key features in developing pupils' character. The school uses a variety of approaches to help pupils learn about themselves and others, including values such as democracy and perseverance. For example, pupils benefit from 'coaching time' and assemblies, which focus on a variety of concepts. The school's new 'flourish 8' initiative focuses on pupils' independence. Pupils get to take part in a range of enrichment programmes, including in the arts. They particularly enjoy the extensive sporting opportunities, including rowing on the River Thames. Students in the sixth form are strong role models to younger pupils. For example, students get to help younger pupils by giving them extra reading support. The school's careers programme provides pupils with advice and guidance about their future studies and options. Pupils take part in workshops led by different employers. Pupils in Year 10 and the sixth form take part in well-planned and suitable work experience opportunities.

Leaders, including governors, have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that need further development. Leaders have worked effectively to build strong partnerships with parents, carers and the wider community. Parents are supportive of the school's work and appreciate the regular communication they receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has introduced some new approaches for supporting pupils in lessons, particularly for pupils with SEND. Some of these approaches are not fully embedded. This sometimes leads to inconsistencies in how well these pupils are supported in lessons. The school should ensure that the new approaches are embedded. It should ensure that, in all subjects, lessons are adapted effectively to meet pupils' different needs.

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	135531
Local authority	Kensington and Chelsea
Inspection number	10290154
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	1,156
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	267
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gary Griffin
Principal	Mariella Ardron
Website	www.chelsea-academy.org/
Date of previous inspection	23 May 2012, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses three registered alternative providers.
- The school has a specially resourced provision which caters for up to 12 pupils with autism spectrum disorder.
- The school has a Christian religious character. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in July 2017. The school's next inspection is due to take place within the next two years.
- 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.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, senior vice principal, vice principal and other members of the school's leadership team.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, geography and PE. 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. An inspector also listened to some pupils reading.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' school evaluation, the school development plan, records for behaviour and attendance, and information about pupils' personal development.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements, inspectors reviewed the single central record and took into account the views of leaders, staff and pupils. The inspectors considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The lead inspector met with members of the trust and the governing body.
- Inspectors met formally with pupils in all year groups and informally around the school site. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- The inspection team considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, and the online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Ray Lau, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Alan McDougall	Ofsted Inspector
David Bromfield	Ofsted Inspector
Ogugua Okolo-Angus	Ofsted Inspector
Philippa Nunn	Ofsted Inspector
Karim Ismail	His Majesty's Inspector

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