

Ashmole Academy

Address: Cecil Road, Southgate, London, N14 5RJ

Unique reference number (URN): 136308

Inspection report: 11 March 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 develop deep knowledge and skills across the subjects that they study. This is because teachers quickly identify and correct misconceptions in class. They provide multiple opportunities for pupils to revisit and secure prior learning. Pupils routinely demonstrate excellent subject knowledge and the ability to synthesise information from different sources. GCSE results for all pupils are consistently above the national average, including in English, mathematics and science. Post-16 achievement is also above the national average in academic and vocational courses. As a result, post-16 students move on to highly ambitious education, employment or training destinations. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), disadvantaged pupils, those known or previously known to social care and those who face barriers to learning also achieve well. For example, disadvantaged pupils outperform their disadvantaged peers nationally. A combination of effective classroom teaching and additional support sessions help them to close any knowledge gaps. For example, staff provide tailored support for pupils who need help to develop reading fluency.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Attendance is consistently high across all year groups, including in the sixth form. Persistent absence is well below the national average. This is because pupils feel a keen sense of belonging to the school community. They enjoy coming to school and are reluctant to miss out on important learning. There are clear systems in place for following up on attendance concerns. Leaders analyse attendance information rigorously to identify patterns and trends. They liaise with families to understand individual circumstances which negatively impact attendance. Leaders also work effectively with external agencies. This approach enables leaders to design individualised additional support and make sure it has impact. This includes, for instance, putting in place increased pastoral guidance or running attendance modules for selected pupils.

Pupils' behaviour throughout the school is excellent. Pupils are consistently polite and respectful. There are multiple ways for pupils to report any rare concerns about bullying. Staff act on any issues raised promptly. In lessons, pupils engage remarkably well with learning. Low-level disruption is rare. This is because behaviour and reward systems are embedded and consistently applied by staff. Pupils appreciate the positive recognition that they receive when they demonstrate the school values. Staff ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported to manage their behaviour. Helpful adjustments to the school's behaviour policy mean that all pupils can meet the school's high expectations of behaviour and conduct.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

In recent years, leaders have revisited the sequencing of the curriculum across subjects. Starting in the younger years, the curriculum is broad and ambitious. It is carefully ordered so that pupils' new learning builds securely on what has gone before. Leaders' clear oversight and expectations, for example through the Ashmole 'teaching and learning pillars',

help to ensure consistently high-quality teaching within subjects and across the school, including in the sixth form.

Teachers are adept at checking pupils' understanding systematically. They do so in innovative ways that enhance pupils' engagement with learning. Teachers are skilled subject experts who encourage class discussion and prioritise the teaching of subject-specific language. Pupils are increasingly confident to share their knowledge aloud. This is a result of the school's successful focus on developing pupils' oracy.

The school places an unwavering emphasis on the progress of pupils with barriers to learning. Staff make consistently helpful adaptations to resources and teaching strategies. The precision and purposefulness of teachers' guidance help pupils to improve their work.

Staff are alert to pupils who may need extra help with writing, reading and/or mathematics. These pupils follow a programme which is carefully tailored to individual gaps in their foundational knowledge. Leaders' early intervention ensures that these pupils catch up quickly and go on to achieve very well.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

The school has high aspirations for the achievement of all pupils. With this in mind, leaders ensure that inclusion is front and centre of their work. Staff benefit from extensive training to enhance their understanding of inclusive practice. They identify and assess pupils' individual needs accurately and at pace. Staff use a range of methods for identification, including their inclusion and belonging framework, to continually assess and review what support would be of most benefit to each pupil. As a result, teachers and support staff consistently put in place effective strategies to enable pupils with barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing to thrive. For example, additional teaching sessions, where needed, support pupils' access to the curriculum.

Leaders are knowledgeable and reflective. They regularly review the impact of additional teaching and support strategies. This helps to ensure that support for pupils with barriers to learning is precise and well targeted to individual need.

Leaders engage effectively with parents and carers, professionals and external agencies. Pupils who are known, or previously known, to children's social care receive a range of effective emotional and academic support. This includes, for example, counselling, mentoring and coaching from the pastoral team. Pupil premium funding is used effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve well and have access to a rich variety of enrichment opportunities. When it is needed, alternative provision is used in the best interests of pupils. The school works closely with the virtual school to provide excellent support for looked-after pupils.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

Leaders at all levels make decisions in the best interests of pupils. They are determined to provide them with the best care and support, while facilitating pupils' academic achievement. One of the school's key foci is enabling pupils with barriers to learning to eventually

outperform their non-disadvantaged peers. This reflects leaders' consistently high aspirations for all pupils.

Leaders know the school extremely well and have identified the right improvement priorities. These are known and understood by all stakeholders, including governors and trustees. Those responsible for governance are supportive of the school's inclusive work and check that this is being enacted well. They perform their statutory duties effectively and provide appropriate support and challenge to leaders.

Staff enjoy working at the school. Like pupils, they show passionate commitment to the Ashmole community. Staff appreciate the school's open culture where senior leaders are approachable and visible. Leaders champion staff workload and wellbeing and put in place a range of supportive strategies. For example, staff value how leaders give them a flexible option for managing lesson preparation time and the positive impact this has on wellbeing. The provision for staff professional learning is broad and informed by relevant research. Staff appreciate the school's approach, including being able to select from a menu of training before- and after-school, as well as online. They enjoy sharing effective practice with their peers. Teachers in the early stages of their careers benefit from the excellent support that they receive.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

The school provides an extensive, well-considered and responsive personal development and wellbeing offer, which leaders keep under constant review. Pupils benefit from rich opportunities that they would not otherwise have access to. In daily personal development sessions, pupils debate pertinent topics. For example, they consider issues of gender equality through the lens of International Women's Week. This focus on debate and discussion is highly effective in promoting character traits such as confidence.

Pupils gain extensive and age-appropriate knowledge of physical and mental health topics. For example, younger pupils learn about the dangers of alcohol, drugs, smoking and vaping, while older pupils learn about contraception and pregnancy. Pupils learn how to stay safe on and offline. Through their learning about fundamental British Values, pupils show a mature understanding of important concepts, such as democracy and dictatorship.

Pupils are impressively knowledgeable about cultural diversity. They can articulate what it means to have a protected characteristic, listing race and gender as specific examples. All pupils are encouraged to have a voice in the school, for instance by joining the equalities or site committee. Pupils value the input of external speakers, the exciting offer of outings to places of interest as well as the diverse range of after-school clubs and societies.

Through the Ashmolean junior and senior scholar programmes, pupils are challenged to discuss complex subject-specific questions. Within their chosen fields, post-16 students take on leadership roles, running clubs and societies that inspire younger pupils. Alongside this, they design and develop projects in topics of interest, creating a portfolio that reflects their enthusiasm and growing expertise. Leaders track attendance closely and put adaptations in place to ensure that disadvantaged pupils access the school's abundant extra-curricular offer.

The school's careers curriculum is planned with care to ensure that it meets the needs of pupils and the community. Pupils benefit from bespoke guidance and access to a range of employers and external agencies. Post-16 students receive extensive support with university applications, including through the school's Oxbridge programme. As a result, all pupils are extremely well prepared to take their next steps in education, employment, training or apprenticeships.

Post 16 provision

Strong standard 

The school offers a broad and ambitious range of A-level courses. Leaders' current focus is on broadening the sixth form's vocational offer with the introduction of a new physical education course in September. Sixth-form teachers use their subject expertise to skilfully deliver the curriculum. They know the curriculum in their subject in depth and make consistently purposeful teaching choices in order to promote students' learning and progress in their studies. For example, teachers systematically question students to probe their understanding of complex topics and support them to provide extended answers.

Students achieve increasingly well and above national averages in A-level and vocational courses. In class, students produce impressive work and make thoughtful verbal contributions. They are committed to their learning and attend regularly. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) also produce high-quality work and progress to aspirational destinations.

Post-16 students play an active role in the life of the school. For example, students are trained to buddy younger pupils who need help to catch up in English and mathematics. Younger pupils view post-16 students as positive role models who they aspire to become. Post-16 students are well supported to take their next steps. All Year 12 students participate in a high-quality work experience placements. The school provides excellent bespoke support to students who are applying for university and degree apprenticeships.

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

Pupils are proud to be a part of the Ashmole community. They enjoy learning because they say their teachers are 'really special'. Pupils know that staff want them to achieve well. Leaders and staff seamlessly balance this culture of high expectations with effective pastoral care and support. Pupils consider themselves fortunate to attend the school. They are especially grateful for the highly positive professional relationships that they build with staff and with each other. Pupils show remarkably positive attitudes to learning and behave consistently well. They are keen to be in school every day.

Pupils feel a genuine sense of belonging at Ashmole because it is like a second home to them. Post-16 students new to the school are welcomed warmly and settle quickly. The school is a calm environment. Bullying does not routinely happen because staff are quick to nip any issues in the bud. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure. They can focus on their learning and the excellent academic progress that they make.

Pupils enjoy lessons because teachers are subject experts who explain curriculum content well. Staff provide multiple opportunities for pupils to secure their knowledge by revisiting curriculum content. This is equally the case for pupils who experience barriers to learning. The school identifies any gaps in pupils' learning effectively and then provides highly effective support for pupils to catch up. Teachers and support staff make precise adaptations in lessons so that all pupils can achieve and thrive.

The school provides an extensive offer beyond the academic curriculum, which is open to all. Pupils say that 'there is something for everyone'. They enjoy the multitude of academic, sporting, musical and cultural opportunities. Pupils also benefit from a range of aspirational educational outings, such as a recent trip to Oxford university. Post-16 students lead a plethora of popular societies for younger pupils. This curriculum offer prepares pupils very well for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that there are exceptionally high standards across the school and should further embed their work to increase pupil participation in the school's extensive clubs and societies offer.
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About this inspection

This school is part of the Ashmole 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), Timothy Sullivan, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Rudi Ramdarshan.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspectors are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with senior leaders, the CEO, governors, trustees, staff and pupils 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 1 alternative provision.

Headteacher: Balbinder Dhinsa

Lead inspector:

Lisa Strong, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Ray Lau, Ofsted Inspector

Emily Leonard, His Majesty's Inspector

Piers Saunders, His Majesty's Inspector

Duncan Kanya, His Majesty's Inspector

David Booth, 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 11 March 2026

School and pupil context**Total pupils**

1,823

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

1,551

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)

13.58%

Well below 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

2.41%

Close to 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

5.21%

Well 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

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 (revised)	68.8%	45.4%	Above
2023/24 (final)	78.6%	45.9%	Above
2022/23 (final)	76.9%	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 (revised)	59.9	46.0	Above
2023/24 (final)	62.2	45.9	Above
2022/23 (final)	61.3	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)	0.85	-0.03	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.89	-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 (revised)	34.5%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	36.0%	25.8%	Above
2022/23 (final)	50.0%	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 (revised)	45.6	34.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	46.2	34.6	Above
2022/23 (final)	46.8	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)	0.34	-0.57	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.26	-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 (revised)	34.5%	53.1%	-18.7 pp
2023/24 (final)	36.0%	53.1%	-17.1 pp
2022/23 (final)	50.0%	52.4%	-2.4 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 (revised)	45.6	50.4	-4.8
2023/24 (final)	46.2	50.0	-3.9
2022/23 (final)	46.8	50.3	-3.5

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)	0.34	0.16	0.17
2022/23 (final)	0.26	0.17	0.10

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)	97%	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)	38.64	34.99	Above
2023/24 (final)	38.25	34.38	Above
2022/23 (final)	33.71	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	Above
2023/24 (revised)	0.2	0.0	Close to average

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)	5.1%	8.1%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	6.0%	8.9%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	6.0%	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)	11.4%	21.9%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	15.7%	25.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	16.4%	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 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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