

Inspection of Featherstone High School

11 Montague Way, Southall, Middlesex UB2 5HF

Inspection dates:	11 and 12 March 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The executive headteacher of this school is Nathan Walters. This school is part of the Grand Union Multi Academy 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), Nathan Walters, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Prabhawati Tailor.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school lives by its motto 'Together We Achieve' and works in partnership with the community it serves. There are high expectations of pupils. They are provided with extensive opportunities and strong pastoral care, both of which enable them to flourish.

The school has made the building of pupils' cultural experience a priority. Pupils take part in an array of events, trips, workshops and clubs. They lead charity initiatives and community-based projects to instil a keen sense of responsibility and empathy for others. Pupils make meaningful contributions to the life of the school. For example, pupils are in the process of clearing and planting a new school garden. Sixth-form students take an active role in supporting their younger peers.

Pupils receive an excellent education. They produce very positive outcomes in public examinations, particularly at GCSE. Pupils develop a strong body of knowledge and are prepared well for their next steps. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), who achieve highly, alongside their peers.

Respect and resilience are core values at the school. Pupils are polite to each other and adults. Where pupils struggle, the school takes prompt and highly effective action to support them. Pupils value their learning and attend the school very well. They are safe and happy at school.

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

The school has designed a highly ambitious curriculum for pupils. Concepts are taught in a logical order, so that that pupils build their understanding effectively. The curriculum is enriched to deepen pupils' understanding. For example, pupils visit the Tower of London when studying the Normans, and Kew Gardens as inspiration for their artwork on natural forms. Workshops for themed weeks, including street dance for the arts and the construction of rockets for science, are well received and help pupils' learning become memorable.

There is a clear, consistent approach to the delivery of lessons, which is key to the school's success. Staff have strong subject knowledge, and their explanations are clear and explicit. They routinely revisit prior knowledge and check pupils' understanding. Teachers provide thoughtful guidance on how to improve, which is readily reflected on by pupils to move their learning forward. 'Talk tactics' is often used to both develop pupils' oracy skills and formulate their ideas before they commit them to writing. While sixth-form teaching benefits from teachers' expertise and regular student practice, approaches to teaching are more variable. At times, checking of deeper understanding is not as systematic as in the rest of the school, and students are not routinely guided to make more critical links or articulate more complex ideas in discussion.

The school identifies pupils' needs with precision and shares this information with staff. A range of strategies are available to support pupils with SEND. The school ensures pupils

are well known through 'all about me' sessions and careful consideration of their experience of school to make sure expectations remain high.

Reading is put at the centre of the curriculum. Leaders recognise that most pupils speak English as an additional language. As a result, there is a strong focus on ensuring pupils can read fluently and have the comprehension skills they need. Pupils read high-quality texts and benefit from two well-resourced libraries with a team of librarians. Teaching routinely explores new vocabulary and there is a range of competitions and programmes to promote reading for pleasure. Sixth-form students take on the role of reading buddies and workshops are provided for families on how to support reading at home.

Pupils are motivated to learn in class, and sixth-form students are highly positive about their learning experiences. Students work hard, but at times the expectations for how they should maximise their independent study time is unclear. The school site is calm and orderly. Pupils benefit from excellent relationships with each other and with staff. The school celebrates difference and has built a respectful school community that supports one another.

Pupils appreciate the excellent quality of careers advice and guidance that they receive. The school has built links with a range of employers for pupils to learn about different careers. Different speakers give talks to the pupils, and sixth-form students benefit from work experience. Through the personal, social, health and economic education programme, form time and school assemblies, pupils are well prepared for life beyond school. The programme covers important topics, such as relationships, masculinity, different faiths and global events. This allows pupils to develop a detailed understanding of life in modern Britain.

Staff are rightly proud of their school. They feel very well supported and are given effective professional development. The school is not complacent. Leaders, backed by the trustees and governors, are dedicated to their shared vision of inclusivity and aspiration.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A consistently strong pedagogical approach is not fully embedded in the sixth form. There is a lack of clarity about what strong independent study looks like and how effectively teaching checks for deeper understanding. This means that some students do not routinely develop their critical thinking skills or are not prepared for the higher demands of academic study. The school should ensure that there are consistently high expectations of students and that teaching in the sixth form systematically checks, challenges and prepares students for high academic success.

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	137729
Local authority	Ealing
Inspection number	10345934
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
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	1,762
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	400
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Prabhawati Tailor
CEO of the trust	Nathan Walters (executive headteacher)
Headteacher	Nathan Walters
Website	www.featherstonehigh.ealing.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	28 and 29 January 2015, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Grand Union Multi Academy Trust.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision to support a small number of pupils.
- 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 provides a breakfast club and after-school clubs.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (sixth-form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 took that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The impact of RAAC and the work taken by school leaders and governors to maintain the day-to-day running of the school was discussed with inspectors.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, representatives from the board of trustees and governing body, a representative from the local authority, teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, French, art and business studies. 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. Other subjects were also considered as part of this inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school and priorities for school improvement.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also spoke to pupils, parents and staff and took into consideration Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors checked the school's policies and records, including those related to behaviour and pupils' wider development.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour across the school, including as they arrived and left the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.

Inspection team

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