

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Wren Academy Finchley

Hilton Avenue, North Finchley, London N12 9HB

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 February 2025

Outcome

Wren Academy Finchley has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteachers of this school are John Keohane and Louisa Taylor. This school is part of Wren Academies Trust which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the executive principal, Gavin Smith, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jeremy Turner.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils start their day happy to come to school and begin learning. They describe it as a place where teachers do their best to help them in class, and to keep them safe. Pupils move around the school calmly. They treat one another respectfully in this diverse school community.

The school has consistently high standards for pupils' behaviour and their learning. Pupils are able to meet these expectations through thoughtful actions towards adults and one another. When incidents of bullying are reported, the school takes effective and prompt action to resolve it. In the classroom, the atmosphere is productive and focused. Learning is rarely disrupted and pupils produce work of an exceptional quality, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For example, in art, pupils develop rich portfolios that recognise the influence that various artists have had on their design ideas.

The school provides pupils with opportunities to develop their talents and interests. Pupils become confident about trying new things. The school ensures that pupils broaden their horizons as they learn Mandarin, become young engineers, learn first aid or sing in the gospel choir. Pupils enjoy and take up the vast opportunities available which are an integral part of the school week.

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

The school's curriculum sets out the ambitious goals that pupils should achieve from the early years to the sixth form. It identifies clearly the important knowledge that pupils should learn and when. This means that pupils develop a deep understanding of the subjects they study. Pupils, including those with SEND, achieve exceptionally well. This is demonstrated in the outcomes that pupils achieve at every stage of external assessment and examination.

The curriculum is filled with opportunities for pupils to build on the ideas and learning they have previously been taught. For example, pupils in Reception are introduced to the French language and build their ability to make and pronounce sounds accurately. This then leads to more confident oracy as they reach Year 6. In science, pupils in Years 3 to 6 recall their knowledge of the digestive system and the role played by different parts of the body. This helps them when they reach Year 7 and beyond to further their knowledge and understanding of the role of enzymes in the body.

Pupils with SEND are well supported. The school identifies their needs and teachers are trained to understand these. In the classroom, effective strategies such as adapted resources are used to ensure that they can succeed at tasks and activities. As a result, pupils access the same curriculum as others and achieve well.

Teachers at the school have strong subject knowledge. They are passionate about the subjects they teach and share this enthusiasm with pupils. Teachers choose ambitious activities to help pupils master the important knowledge they need to learn. For example, in mathematics primary pupils confidently convert between decimals, percentages and fractions. They can explain why they choose a specific strategy and use this to perform calculations efficiently. When they make a mistake, teachers are swift to notice and address misconceptions.

The school's early reading programme is taught with precision. From the start of Reception, pupils are taught to read and begin writing to an impressive standard which leads them to be confident and ready for Year 1. Particular attention is given to the weakest readers who are helped to catch up. This ensures that pupils become accurate, fluent and confident readers able to access the curriculum.

The provision for pupils' personal development is a remarkable strength of the school. Pupils from Reception up to the sixth form access a wide range of visits and cultural experiences. They learn about different cultures and communities, linked to their learning. Pupils are given careers advice and meaningful work experience opportunities. This careers education programme provides them with the information they need to begin making important decisions for their futures. When needed, this focuses on the most disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND to ensure they are well informed. Overall, through the school, pupils are taught the important life skills they need to be ready for their next steps. This starts with learning about friendships and online safety in the primary phase. As pupils progress, these important issues are revisited to ensure that

they build on what they know. In the sixth form, academic rigour and support from the school enable students to access a wide variety of destinations including universities.

Pupils take on a variety of roles to contribute to the school community. These roles include acting as prefects, curriculum advisors and interviewers. When students reach the sixth form, they contribute to the running of clubs and enrichment activities. The interactions between staff and pupils ensure that clear routines are followed. Pupils recognise the importance of following these rules and trust that teachers will take action if a matter is raised.

Staff enjoy the atmosphere created by the school's leaders. They feel that there is consideration of their workload, and that efforts to support their well-being are successful. Those responsible for governance know their school and undertake these roles aware of the importance of their duties. They challenge leaders and ensure that they have the necessary information to fulfil their roles.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in September 2018.

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	135507
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10345907
Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1614
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	317
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jeremy Turner
Executive Principal	Gavin Smith
Headteacher	John Keohane (secondary principal) Louisa Taylor (primary executive headteacher)
Website	www.wrenacademyfinchley.org
Dates of previous inspection	18 and 19 September 2018, under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school is part of Wren Academies Trust.
- The school uses four alternative providers.
- The school is a Church of England school. Its academy sponsor is the The London Diocesan Board of Schools. The school was last inspected under Section 48 in February 2024.
- 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

- 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 have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive principal, primary principal, secondary principal and members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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.
- The school operates a policy of separation by sex for some classes in English, mathematics and science. The school's rationale for the policy is that this policy increases the number of girls studying STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects and the number of boys studying English and literature-based subjects at higher levels. Inspectors considered whether the separation by sex could constitute a breach under the Equality Act 2010. Inspectors concluded that there was no evidence to show a detriment to pupils. A positive action exemption applied under s.158 of the Equality Act was not considered by inspectors.

Inspection team

Karim Ismail, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Russell Bennett	His Majesty's Inspector
Katerina Christodoulou	Ofsted Inspector

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