

Wren Academy

Hilton Avenue, North Finchley, London N12 9HB

Inspection dates

18–19 September 2018

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Stable, strong and ambitious leadership has ensured that high standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
- Pupils demonstrate mature attitudes to their studies from the earliest stages of their education. Pupils are diligent and enjoy their learning.
- Leaders ensure that their expectations for consistently high-quality teaching are met. Pupils make outstanding progress because of the excellent teaching they receive.
- Pupils are inspired and challenged by their teachers' skilled and well-planned delivery of the curriculum.
- Leaders plan a rich and varied curriculum that enables pupils to develop skills, and excel, in a broad selection of subjects.
- The early years provides a superb start to children's education. Children rapidly gain skills and knowledge that provide a firm foundation for their progression through the school.
- Pupils feel safe in school because of leaders' steadfast approach to safeguarding and a high level of pastoral care.
- The school's Christian values form a secure basis to the ambience of the whole school. Pupils and staff from a wide range of faiths and beliefs demonstrate mutual respect, kindness and understanding towards each other.
- Sixth-form students build on their experiences gained through the school, so that they are highly articulate and motivated learners. They benefit from specialist teaching, enrichment activities and impressive levels of individual support. Students are well placed to make successful applications to their chosen courses.
- Pupils receive excellent guidance on how their studies relate to their career aspirations. All pupils have access to an extensive range of extra-curricular activities which broaden their outlooks.
- Leaders ensure that teachers' assessments of pupils' work are accurate and enable pupils to progress very well. A revised system of teacher feedback is being introduced across the secondary phase.
- Teachers sometimes do not check quickly enough to see whether lower ability pupils are able to engage fully in more challenging tasks.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that lower ability pupils are able to access more challenging material and participate as fully in learning activities as their peers.
- Embed the new feedback policy, so that there is a consistent approach across all subjects and year groups.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders work with impressive dedication, determination and vision. They have ensured that the high standards of education and experiences for pupils seen at the previous inspection have been sustained and extended to the new primary and sixth-form phases.
- Leaders' relentless routine of reviewing and refining all aspects of the school demonstrates their accurate self-evaluation and their drive for continuous improvement. Any changes in leadership are smooth, with senior leaders ensuring high-quality leadership development.
- Pupils' and teachers' enthusiasm for learning and their good-humoured relationships with each other give rise to a very positive atmosphere throughout the school. Leaders set a fine example to staff in their high expectations of professional conduct and commitment. In turn, teachers are admirable role models for their pupils.
- The Christian ethos of the school provides a moral underpinning to the school's daily routines. Tutor times and assemblies provide the opportunity for pupils to reflect on their actions and to recognise the importance of being considerate towards each other. Inclusivity, mutual acceptance and regard for everyone's differences ensure that all pupils feel valued and respect each other's beliefs. Everyone, of all faiths or none, is respectful at times of prayer.
- Subject leaders are knowledgeable about the quality of teaching and learning in their departments and are proactive in whole-school initiatives. They are developed and supported very well by senior leaders. Leaders have clear and sensible strategies for further improving pupils' progress in their subjects. They collaborate purposefully so that less experienced subject leaders can benefit from the exemplary practice of others.
- Leaders have a well-organised and systematic approach to monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They address areas of whole-school focus and individual training needs in a comprehensive training programme. Leaders make the most productive use of the professional development opportunities for all staff that are integrated within the day-to-day routine of the school.
- Leaders plan and expect the most effective forms of assessment to forge pupils' learning while mindful of teachers' well-being and workload. Leaders have a comprehensive overview of pupils' achievements across the school. A wealth of additional support is available to pupils who need extra help with academic or pastoral matters. Leaders use additional funding wisely, such as the physical education (PE) and sport premium and pupil premium funding, to enable pupils to fulfil their potential.
- Leaders prioritise their planning of the curriculum, so that pupils' learning of different subjects builds over the years. Pupils can make links between different subjects to boost their knowledge further. All pupils are able to pursue an extensive range of timetabled enrichment sessions, including 'fit for life' activities such as sports and cookery to promote healthy lifestyles. Pupils in Year 11 and sixth-form students broaden their experiences and strengthen their university applications by attending, for

example, lectures at the Museum of London and concerts at the Barbican Centre. Children in Reception rapidly get to grips with the disciplines and benefits of yoga.

- The school's policy of teaching single-sex classes in mathematics, English and science leads to very strong outcomes in these subjects for boys and girls. This also encourages a higher than average proportion of girls to study science, technology and mathematics subjects at A level and to continue to study these subjects at university.
- Leaders have developed a comprehensive programme of careers education and guidance from early on in the school. Pupils are well prepared for the next steps in their education and know what is needed in order to fulfil their ambitions.
- Leaders work well with other schools, providing support and training, and sharing good practice and valuable professional development opportunities for staff. New staff settle in quickly because of the excellent support they receive from colleagues.
- Leaders and governors keep parents and carers well informed about their child's experiences at school and organise increasing numbers of opportunities for parents to be involved in the life of the school. The large majority of parents who responded to Parent View, the online survey, agree that they receive valuable information about their child's progress and that the school responds well to any of their concerns.

Governance of the school

- The governing body provides a wide range of knowledge and expertise so that governors are very well placed to ensure that standards in the school remain high. They draw upon their professional backgrounds and training to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively.
- Governors are not complacent when recognising the strengths of the school. They are ambitious and meticulous in identifying when changes and improvements are needed. Governors collaborate closely with school leaders and ask pertinent and probing questions, holding them to account on matters such as recruitment, pupil premium funding and school development planning.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The safeguarding team places utmost priority on ensuring that pupils' well-being is consistently supported across the whole age range of the school. Policies are comprehensive and amended as the need arises. Staff training is up to date and informs everyone's day-to-day practice.
- Leaders work collaboratively with external agencies to support pupils and their families in challenging circumstances. This leads to improvements in pupils' attendance and achievement. Members of staff are actively involved in specific areas of work, such as mental health training and awareness of the risks of child sexual exploitation, so that staff are well versed in contemporary and local risks to their pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers provide calm, purposeful and welcoming learning environments in their classes. Pupils from the earliest stages are keen to learn, share their achievements and take pride in their work.
- Teachers demonstrate specialist subject knowledge. They develop pupils' understanding confidently with interesting and thought-provoking lessons. They have high expectations for the quality of pupils' responses.
- Pupils and students across the school are well prepared for their lessons. They are rarely late and respond very well to teachers' expectations.
- Teachers develop pupils' technical vocabulary and understanding of complex concepts. Pupils thrive on challenge and are captivated by their teachers' enthusiasm for their subjects, from, for example, languages and science in primary phase, to religious studies and English in sixth-form classes.
- Teachers know their pupils well and adapt their teaching thoughtfully to consolidate and develop pupils' learning across the curriculum. Pupils have access to helpful, well-planned resources which guide and extend their learning.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are impressively focused, diligent and mature, and embedded from the Reception class onwards. Pupils are respectful to their teachers and appreciative of their education. Pupils readily support each other and are keen to discuss their work and 'have a go' at more difficult tasks.
- Teachers address sensitive subject matter skilfully and in an age-appropriate way for their pupils. The promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and British values is integrated through the curriculum.
- Teachers' assessments are accurate and teachers use their knowledge of pupils' achievements well to consolidate and further their learning. Leaders' revised expectations for teachers' feedback have been trialled successfully in several departments and are now in the early stages of being consistently applied across the school.
- Occasionally, teachers do not check soon enough that lower ability pupils have grasped more complex ideas and tasks. This means that these pupils are at risk of falling behind.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school across all phases is characterised by a respectful and harmonious rapport between pupils and their teachers. Well-established routines, leaders' high expectations and pupils' appreciation of their education mean that excellent conduct and attitudes to learning are the norm. Along with the value of academic success, staff promote the

values of being a 'good person' to the pupils. As a result, pupils are very well prepared for each stage in their education and wider aspects of their lives.

- Teachers model their expectations of their pupils, and nurture valuable social skills that will stand pupils in good stead for the future. This is epitomised in the school's restaurant, which is used by all staff and pupils.
- Pupils routinely make use of information and communication technology and online resources to support their learning. They do this responsibly and are well aware of the importance of e-safety because of the guidance their teachers provide.
- Leaders have an unequivocal caring focus on every pupil as an individual. Pupils are clear that there are staff, such as their tutors, school counsellors or learning mentors, they can go to if they have any worries. The 'equalities group' is one example of a valued forum in school where pupils know they can express their views in a safe place.
- Pupils thrive on responsibilities and contribute to decisions about the school. Leadership skills are nurtured through the school. Pupils from Years 7 to 11 take on the role of curriculum advisers, discussing with their teachers what they will study and how topics will be taught. Pupils are given appropriate guidance, so that they can be involved in the recruitment of new teachers. Year 10 pupils enjoy taking on the role of prefect, while sixth-form students build on these experiences to fulfil their responsibilities, such as those of head boy and head girl.
- The school works closely with staff at alternative provision when needed, so that pupils gain the right guidance and opportunities to enable their experience of education to improve.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Serious incidents of poor behaviour, such as bullying, are very rare. Pupils are confident that teachers deal with their concerns swiftly. Leaders' regular review of behavioural incidents ensures that pupils who have difficulties engaging successfully with school life are identified swiftly. They receive the right support so that their attitude to learning improves. Pupils feel safe in school. Attendance is high and rates of exclusion are very low.
- From Reception Year upwards, pupils of all ages are helpful and polite, demonstrating impeccable behaviour in lessons and around the school. Teachers use the behaviour policy consistently and fairly so that all pupils are clear on, and abide by, what is expected of them. This helps everyone to focus on their work and to learn.
- Pupils approach their studies with maturity, and take pride in their work and their school. Primary pupils now in Year 3, who were in the first Reception class, are especially proud of their important role in establishing the new primary phase.
- Leaders liaise productively with parents, so that pupils reflect on their actions and repetition of any poor behaviour is rare. A very large proportion of parents who completed Parent View agreed that the school ensures that pupils behave well.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Published information and the school's achievement records show that pupils generally and consistently make strong progress throughout the school and across all year groups. The progress of disadvantaged pupils exceeds that of other pupils nationally.
- Strong line-management structures and the use of planning and evaluation meetings create an environment in which all staff are focused on the progress of all pupils. Where there are variations between subjects and groups of pupils or individuals fall behind, leaders take appropriate action. This includes appropriate adaptation of teaching and intervention groups, so that improvements are made.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are very well supported to achieve their best. Leaders consider carefully the right courses for these pupils and tailor them to meet individual pupils' interests and abilities. This enables pupils to excel.
- Leaders' overview of assessments in different subjects ensures that the monitoring of pupils' progress is regular and accurate and demonstrates high aspirations for all pupils.
- Work in pupils' books demonstrates that pupils make excellent progress over time. This is especially the case when the quality of assessment follows leaders' expectations closely.
- Leaders promote pupils' skills and interest in reading across the school. Pupils have access to a wide range of challenging and interesting texts in books and online at school. Primary pupils enjoy using the library and classroom book areas, while older pupils recognise the value of wider reading to enhance their learning and experience of a subject.
- On a few occasions, in some subjects, the progress of lower ability pupils falls behind that of their peers. Leaders' methodical tracking identifies this swiftly so that pupils receive the help they need to catch up.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Leaders demonstrate an admirable and successful drive to attain high standards from the moment children enter the school. Since opening, the early years phase of the school has been shown to be very effective in giving children a rich curriculum. This has helped children to make excellent progress from a range of starting points.
- The leadership of early years has developed strongly as a result of the oversight, support and guidance provided by senior leaders. The combined work of leaders shows a deeply considered and accurate evaluation of the staff's work and the overall quality of education and care.
- Leaders review children's achievements meticulously and check that adults' assessments of children's progress are accurate. Staff are quick to provide the right support when children have particular skills and knowledge they need to develop more.
- The well-being of children is a top priority and safeguarding is effective through leaders' careful and considered actions. Staff know each child very well and what each

one needs in order to thrive. The indoor and outdoor areas are attractive, with wide-ranging opportunities to develop knowledge and skills. Children receive a carefully considered introduction to new routines and environments, so that they make the best use of the available resources.

- Adults' high expectations and high standards of teaching lead to children being motivated and interested in their work. Children's development in learning to read and write is especially strong.
- Leaders' communications with parents and nurseries are well organised and informative. The early years team is fully prepared to provide for each child's needs and abilities to enable them to make excellent progress. All children, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities, make sustained progress from their different starting points. They make an excellent start to their school life at Wren Academy and are very well prepared for Year 1.

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- Students build on study skills nurtured in earlier years in the school, so that they adapt rapidly to a more independent routine and organisation of their work. Teachers and learning mentors achieve just the right balance of regular checking, while enabling autonomy, so that students' transition to sixth form is smooth and productive.
- Sixth-form students are motivated learners and make the optimum use of private study time and organise their notes well. Retention and attendance rates are above the national average.
- Sixth-form students appreciate the regular individual support they receive from tutors, counsellors or learning mentors, with any areas of their academic studies or aspects of their health and well-being. Leaders are alert to times when students may need more emotional support and guidance with mental health issues.
- Teachers' specialist knowledge and specific training mean that there is high-quality teaching in the sixth form. Teachers' insistence on the accurate use of terminology and use of technical vocabulary ensures that students understand concepts well and make progress. Teachers broaden students' appreciation and application of the curriculum through wider reading and a variety of learning opportunities. Teachers also enable students to acquire the essential specialism in their subjects and apply their learning to new assessment requirements.
- Students are increasingly well prepared to make successful applications to high-quality, competitive university courses. Leaders and teachers have a clear understanding of application processes. They provide valuable enrichment opportunities, including relevant work experience and mock interviews, to enhance students' applications.
- Sixth-form leadership is skilled, ambitious and reflective. The school undertakes a thorough evaluation of the sixth-form provision and leaders respond promptly and effectively to areas needing to improve. Leaders have increased students' time in classes, prioritised sixth-form teaching as a focus for teachers' professional development, and organised targeted revision and booster sessions for students needing extra support. These initiatives have served to improve students' progress across all subjects.

School details

Unique reference number	135507
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10047355

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,437
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	280
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair	Kim Archer
Principal	Gavin Smith
Telephone number	0208 492 6000
Website	www.wrenacademy.org
Email address	gavin.smith@wrenacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	1–2 February 2011

Information about this school

- The school is larger than average. Since the previous inspection, new key stages have opened at the school: the sixth form in September 2013 and the primary phase in September 2015.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is slightly lower than the national average.
- Pupils represent a wide range of ethnic groups. More than half the pupils are from White British and any other White British background.

- The proportion of pupils who receive support because they have SEN and/or disabilities is lower than average, while there is an average proportion who have an education, health and care plan.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support from the pupil premium funding is lower than average.
- The school operates a policy of segregation by sex for classes in the core subjects in the secondary phase. Boys and girls are taught separately in mathematics, English and science. The school's rationale for the policy is that this strategy leads to very strong outcomes in these subjects for boys and girls. This does amount to positive action under section 158 of the Equality Act 2010.
- The school makes occasional use of alternative provision at The Pavilion School, Chandos Avenue, London N20 9DX.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with school leaders, members of the governing body, groups of pupils and members of staff. One inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority and another inspector attended an assembly.
- Inspectors, usually accompanied by school leaders, visited classrooms to observe the learning that was taking place in all phases of the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised the 254 responses to the online survey, Parent View. There were no responses to the pupil and staff surveys due to technical difficulties. Inspectors considered correspondence from seven parents.
- A wide range of documentation was evaluated, including the school's self-evaluation, achievement information, records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning and the school's professional development programme, minutes of meetings of the governing body, and records relating to the safeguarding of pupils, including the checks the school makes on staff.

Inspection team

Amanda Carter-Fraser, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jo Jones	Ofsted Inspector
Tim McLoughlin	Ofsted Inspector
Gill Bal	Ofsted Inspector
Amy Jackson	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2018