

Holland Park School

Airlie Gardens, Campden Hill Road, London, W8 7AF

Inspection dates 12–13 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	Outstanding 1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1
Sixth form provision	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Students, staff and parents are immensely proud to be part of this exceptional academy.
- Students make outstanding progress in a wide range of subjects and in all year groups.
- Students' behaviour is exemplary. Their superb attitudes to learning permeate all lessons and play a key part in their outstanding progress. They feel utterly safe and nurtured. The academy shows excellent practice in the way it safeguards and promotes their well-being.
- Students' desire for education has no bounds. They soak up enrichment with relish and seek broader learning at every opportunity. They are confident, curious and always compassionate.
- Teaching is outstanding and often exceptional. Teachers are confident in their deep rooted subject knowledge and their appetite for further learning is voracious.
- Teachers' marking is among the very best. It is rooted in a forensic understanding of their subjects and ensures students make fast, secure progress.
- The headteacher is an inspiration to all. His relentless drive for improvement touches every single aspect of this wonderful learning community.
- Leaders and teachers embrace the academy's commitment to scholastic excellence with vigour. Their determination to challenge each other and all students pervades the entire community.
- Governors are proud to lead the academy. They are unwavering in their commitment to its continued improvement. They are focused, skilled and assertive in their support and challenge for the academy.
- A strong moral and spiritual purpose permeates the academy. Students are excited by the huge range of opportunities to extend their learning, inside and outside the classroom.
- The sixth form is outstanding. The deputy headteacher in charge of the sixth form is an exceptional leader who, with his superb teaching team, leads a sixth form where intellectual endeavour is 'cool' and embraced by all.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 36 lessons. They observed teaching and scrutinised students’ work. Ten lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, groups of students and a local authority representative. Inspectors met with three members of the governing body.
- Inspectors listened to students read.
- Inspectors considered the views of 211 parents through the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View. They evaluated the views of parents collected by the academy.
- Inspectors considered the views of 93 members of staff through the Ofsted staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation. This included academy improvement and development plans, minutes of governing body meetings, and internal and external reviews of the academy’s performance.
- Inspectors evaluated records of students’ progress, anonymised performance management records and records of professional development. They scrutinised the single central record, referrals to the local authority, case studies presented by the academy, behaviour tracking information and attendance records.

Inspection team

Debbie Clinton, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Mel Rose	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Richard Boswell	Additional Inspector
Evelyn Riley	Additional Inspector
James Coyle	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Holland Park School is a larger than the average-sized secondary academy, with a large sixth form.
- It converted to become an academy on 1 September 2013. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The academy recruits ten per cent of students each year according to their artistic aptitude.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is much higher than the national average. The largest ethnic group is of mixed ethnic heritage. The next largest group is White British.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of students at the academy eligible for the pupil premium funding, which is additional funding for disadvantaged students, is almost twice the national average.
- The academy uses EPIC Golborne Youth Community Centre, Walmer Road School, The Latimer Education Centre and The Portobello Centre as alternative providers. They are used to support a very small number of students.
- The headteacher provides leadership support to a number of other schools and academies.
- The academy has recently been awarded Investor in People Gold status.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the already excellent wider education programme by:
 - tracking individual student extra-curricular experiences more formally
 - ensuring students gain the broadest possible range of experiences beyond the classroom.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher leads this unique academy with a drive and skill which is admired by all in the community. He refuses to accept anything less than excellent in all that the academy does. As a result, the education the academy provides to its students is exceptional.
- The commitment of all who work in the academy to achieve the very best possible outcomes for students is tangible. Leaders and managers are ambitious and reflective, and their drive inspires all who work with them. They know the academy's strengths and weaknesses very well and apply a tenacious attention to detail when planning further improvements.
- All staff are quick to spot any decline or potential for decline. For example, even though the performance of disadvantaged students was significantly above national averages in 2012 and 2013, leaders were not satisfied. As a result, they took swift and decisive action and now disadvantaged students perform at least as well as their Holland Park peers in a large number of subjects. The zeal at the heart of the academy for sustained and deep rooted intellectual performance never dilutes the compassion for young people which permeates every pore.
- Leaders at all levels focus relentlessly on improving teaching and they have had huge success in doing so. There is a forensic attention to detail which results in each and every aspect of all lessons being scrutinised closely. This has resulted in an academy which is excited by developments in learning. Teachers are inspired to experiment and challenge themselves and they are passionate about their lessons. They are unstinting in their praise and support for the academy's leaders. As one member of staff stated, 'I can think of nowhere I would rather work.' Consequently, the overwhelming majority of teaching is outstanding.
- The academy's work in literacy is exceptional. In all lessons, in all subjects, students are challenged to write and speak accurately, without slang or colloquial language, and at length. The academy's progress in almost eradicating the use of 'like' as a sentence connective by students is one example of this hugely successful focus.
- The academy has the overwhelming support of parents. As one parent commented, 'the leadership of the school cannot be praised sufficiently. The quality of engagement with me as a parent exceeds my elevated expectations.' The Parent Leadership Group plays a vital role in the ongoing improvement of the academy, and they produced the superb, very popular Parent Planner with staff.
- Students benefit from a rich, bespoke curriculum which is responsive to them and the desires of their parents. They make outstanding progress inside and outside the classroom. The huge range of extra-curricular opportunities ensures that students are truly enriched and thoroughly prepared for life in modern Britain. For example, the plethora of sporting activities, competitive and social, embody the academy's commitment to excellence in the health and well-being of students. Furthermore, much of this wider learning is shared where staff and students acquire new skills and knowledge as co-students learning together. Leaders agree that the next step in this diverse menu is to map all students' experiences at an individual level to ensure that their programmes are broad ranging enough for future, more advanced study and employment.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because of a relentless drive to educate and care for the whole child. Leaders are determined to produce rounded, highly educated young people who will become superb employees and employers. In their commitment to a wide range of intellectual endeavours, extra-curricular opportunities, student leadership challenges and a culture of restless ambition, leaders prepare these young people superbly for life after school.
- Leaders are never complacent and have developed astute external partnerships. They regularly commission external reviews which enable them to diagnose and then deliver further improvements. For example, a comprehensive review of teaching quality across the academy has resulted in a weekly analysis of every single lesson precisely focused on improvements.
- Similarly, leaders monitor the progress, attendance and behaviour at all alternative provisions used by the academy rigorously. Along with all students in the Holland Park family, these young people too are expected to perform to the absolute best of their ability.
- The headteacher is astute in his scrutiny of staff performance and staff welcome this. Performance is coherently linked to training, development and pay. Staff know they will be rewarded well when outcomes for students are as outstanding as they should be, and less so if they are not. However, when they are not, the superb training programme at the heart of the academy helps them to quickly address any shortcomings.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance of the academy is outstanding. Governors know the academy's strengths extremely well and offer the headteacher and his senior team insightful, perceptive challenge. The decision to operate a headteacher and an associate headteacher model of leadership has been decisive. While the associate headteacher focuses upon the wider management of all other aspects of this very large academy, the headteacher gives undivided attention to the core work of the academy, the result of which is exceptional standards of learning and teaching.
- Governors take their own training and development very seriously. They offer robust challenge and support to the academy because they ensure their knowledge is up to date and that their own skills are complementary to those of the academy's leaders. Their recent training on high quality marking is one example, of many, in which governors are determined to understand and challenge the work of the academy with increasing expertise.
- Governors' took the decision to convert to academy status very carefully and at an appropriate pace. Their work, in comprehensively researching the potential risks and benefits of academisation for the school is first rate. They were ably supported by the headteacher, associate headteacher and external experts in this very thorough process.
- The progress of disadvantaged students is very closely monitored by governors. The impact of both the pupil premium and Year 7 catch up funding is scrutinised regularly. Governors are well aware of the academy's success in closing the gap between the achievement of disadvantaged students and their more advantaged peers.
- Governors regularly review their statutory obligations. They are diligent, for example, in their scrutiny of financial management and safeguarding arrangements in the academy. They also ensure rigorous challenge, along with the headteacher, when considering teachers' pay, which they insist is directly linked to students' performance and the quality of teaching.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is outstanding.
- Leaders judge that behaviour in the academy has moved 'beyond outstanding' and 'beyond compliance.' Inspectors agree. One student captured this by stating that the academy generates a 'moral mind-set so that behaviour is not based on obedience but on making the right choices.' Students take ultimate responsibility for their own behaviour and understand fully how good or better behaviour impacts on their learning. This results in the outstanding progress made by all students.
- Students' pride and self-esteem are demonstrated in their excellent conduct. They wear their uniform very smartly, rarely drop litter, speak with each other and with adults with consummate respect, and display good, often perfect, manners at all times.
- The academy uses exclusion very rarely and repeat exclusions are unusual. Increasingly skilled use is made of internal seclusion, but this is also used infrequently. Quite simply, students want to learn and want to be in lessons.
- Leaders insist on excellent punctuality. Students routinely arrive for learning on time throughout the day as a result of such high expectations. Consequently, very little learning time is ever lost. As one Year 11 student put it, 'it's only yourself who is missing out [if late to lessons].'
- Attendance rates are well above average. Leaders pursue any absence with vigour and students respond positively. As a result, all groups of students, including the disadvantaged, have very high rates of attendance.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding.
- Students have a comprehensive understanding of how to keep safe, in all ways. For example, Year 7 students talked animatedly about the importance of not 'friending people you don't know on social media.'
- Students have a sophisticated understanding of bullying in all forms. They appreciate that adults will work with them to resolve any such matters quickly. Academy records show that such incidents are rare and swiftly dealt with.
- The management of safeguarding and child protection is outstanding. Leaders are tenacious in its pursuit. For example, records of the range and quality of staff training and case studies in both areas demonstrate exemplary practice.
- Inspectors agree with parents, staff and students who state that the academy ensures excellent standards

of behaviour and safety.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Outstanding teaching is at the heart of this academy's success. Leaders and teachers pursue excellence in all lessons with a dogged determination. Students relish the challenges teachers give them and routinely work hard to achieve their very best. This is the case with students of all abilities across the academy because teachers are highly skilled in planning demanding lessons which extend all students' learning.
- Teachers have exceptional subject knowledge and expertise and, as a consequence, they teach with verve and confidence. Students wholly trust their teachers and their levels of engagement and commitment reflect a mutual passion for learning and intellectual stretch.
- Teachers work hard to ensure that there is consistently high-quality marking in books. Students respond energetically to teachers' very precise feedback in the vast majority of circumstances. However this is not always insisted upon by teachers. Academy leaders are already taking steps to ensure greater consistency in this important skill. They are using a finely-honed and effective training programme to improve this work further and its impact can already be seen on students' learning in a wide range of subjects.
- The development of literacy is exceptionally strong. All teachers and departments routinely reinforce and insist upon the very highest standards of written and spoken English. Teachers and support staff consistently model exemplary speaking and writing and students are immersed in an atmosphere of linguistic prowess. The impact of this is clear, from beautifully crafted written work, superb oracy and top drawer drama productions. Students read widely and often and the excellent libraries are in constant use. The decision to require all Year 7 students to read a Dickens' novel upon entry to the academy ensures that students quickly appreciate the academy's high expectations in literacy.
- Students' skills in numeracy are less well developed and leaders are already developing interventions here to ensure that students' progress in numeracy begins to mirror the very best practice in literacy.
- Questioning and the development of oracy are huge strengths in the academy. Teachers are very skilled in asking probing questions which make students think carefully. In a Year 9 science lesson, students' learning about the neurological impact of drugs was stretched through the highly skilled questioning of the teacher. Scientific, social and philosophical aspects of the subject were interrogated deeply. Consequently, all students made exceptional progress.
- The excellent work of teachers is supported with equal skill by teaching assistants. The additional support provided to a wide variety of students is targeted appropriately and with clear impact in the outstanding progress made by all.
- Parents and students are overwhelming in their praise and support of the teaching in the academy. They hold the teaching staff in very high esteem and trust them to plan stimulating lessons which result in outstanding progress.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students' achievement is exceptional. The overwhelming majority of Year 11 students this year and last year achieved five A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics. Achieving this standard is routine for the vast majority of students due to outstanding teaching and leadership. Increasingly large numbers are also achieving the very highest A* and A GCSE grades. From their varied starting points, students make impressive progress in a wide range of subjects, usually exceeding national expectations by significant margins.
- Students' attainment in the vast majority of subjects is outstanding. Wherever attainment is less than outstanding, leaders plan speedy, skilled interventions in the relevant subjects. For example, having identified under-performance in the A*-A grade measure for GCSE mathematics in 2013, careful intervention has led to improved performance in 2014. Similar actions have been taken in physical education and, again, GCSE results improved in 2014.
- Results in GCSE Art are among the highest in the country with all students gaining a gold standard grade A or A* in 2014.
- Students' progress in English and mathematics is impressive, particularly in English. The academy has made shrewd use of early entry and alternative qualification routes in GCSE mathematics resulting in consistently outstanding outcomes for the overwhelming majority of students. In English, equally considered examination entry combined with outstanding teaching results in routinely exceptional outcomes for all students.

- Learning and progress of all groups of students, including those who are disabled, disadvantaged or have special educational needs, routinely matches, and often exceeds, the progress of their peers in the academy and nationally. This is because their performance is very carefully tracked and they are given prompt support and intervention if they are at risk of falling behind. The academy has tightly focused plans for the spending of its pupil premium monies and the impact of those plans is clear in excellent outcomes for disadvantaged students. In English, disadvantaged students now make identically outstanding progress to their advantaged peers. In mathematics, disadvantaged students make almost as much progress as their advantaged peers and the gap has narrowed rapidly in the last year. In both of these subjects, disadvantaged students perform significantly better than their peers nationally.
- Similarly, more able students make exceptional progress in the vast majority of subjects. For example, in ten GCSE subjects in 2014, the performance of students at A* and A grades was exceptional and significantly above the national average in all cases.
- Such success is mirrored with students from minority ethnic backgrounds including those for whom English is an additional language. In line with its commitment to equality and diversity, the academy's excellent tracking and intervention systems result in outstanding outcomes for these students too.
- Year 7 catch-up funding is spent wisely. Year 7 students are routinely tested in literacy and numeracy upon entry to the academy and from then they are taught in flexible banded sets. This is a very effective strategy leading to students' outstanding outcomes in Key Stages 3 and 4.
- The very small number of students who attend alternative provision also make excellent progress. Alternative placements are planned very carefully, negotiated with students and parents and matched carefully to need. Academy leaders hold the alternative placements tightly to account and the outstanding outcomes are as routinely expected and secured, as they are for all other students.

The sixth form provision

is outstanding

- The deputy headteacher in charge of the sixth form is an inspirational leader. He is absolutely clear in his insistence that only the very best will do in all that the sixth form offers. When faced with a recent shortage in A-level physics teaching, the deputy headteacher in charge of sixth form, who is a theology graduate, took it upon himself to study A-level physics and to teach the students himself. The outstanding outcomes subsequently gained by those students are testament to this superb leader.
- A culture of scholastic excellence pervades all aspects of sixth form life. Entry requirements are rigorous and no students enter the sixth form without having secured pass grades in English and mathematics and seven A*-B grades at GCSE. This highly effective policy results in students making outstanding progress in their chosen A levels.
- The progress made by students in Year 12 has been less strong in some subjects, particularly in music and physics and for lower and middle ability students. However, leaders have taken swift, incisive action in these subjects and the progress of current Year 12 students is much stronger.
- Outstanding teaching is the norm in this excellent sixth form. Well-planned, imaginative and tightly focused teaching results in students achieving A-level results which are well above national averages in most subjects. Many students achieve exceptional results, notably in religious education and English Literature where, in 2014, three quarters of students attained A* or A grades at A level. More able students are routinely achieving the highest possible standards in a wide variety of subjects.
- Sixth form study programmes are very well matched to all learners. The range of qualifications available is tailored precisely to each individual student. As a result, all students have enjoyed consistently outstanding progress for a number of years at A level. Disadvantaged students of all abilities in particular make exceptional progress when compared to their advantaged peers.
- Students enjoy their learning immensely. In a Year 13 A-level mathematics lesson, the challenging number concept being skilfully taught by the teacher was tackled with energy by all in the group. Along with many other subjects, the quality and depth of written and verbal work was exceptional. The outstanding outcomes achieved by all students are the result of such focused learning attitudes.
- In common with all students in the academy, sixth form students enjoy excellent careers information, advice and guidance. Retention rates from Year 12 into Year 13 are well above average and these are matched by exceptional rates of progress into higher education. In 2014, eighty-five per cent of students successfully began university degree programmes and fifty per cent of that total entered Russell Group universities. These figures are significantly above the national averages.
- Sixth form students model exceptional attitudes and behaviour. They exemplify tolerance, decency and mutual respect. They know how to stay safe and understand their responsibilities to younger students.

- They celebrate the academy's great diversity through well-planned assemblies and personal, social and health education sessions. Such attitudes are promoted in the many opportunities provided for sixth formers to lead and work with younger students. This is the result of the outstanding work of sixth form leaders in developing highly effective care, support and guidance.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	140134
Local authority	Kensington and Chelsea
Inspection number	453850

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy Converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1343
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	163
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	AnneMarie Carrie
Headteacher	Colin Hall
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
Telephone number	020 7908 1000
Fax number	n/a
Email address	info@hollandparkschool.co.uk

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