

# Hornbeam Academy Special Academy

Folly Lane, Walthamstow, London E17 5NT

## Inspection dates

20–21 June 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The academy is good and improving. Leaders show a clear and strong sense of purpose.
- The Hospital and Home Teaching Service is outstanding. It meets pupils' needs exceptionally well, whether they have a short or long stay in hospital or require home tuition.
- The academy caters for pupils who have a very wide range of needs and many have profound and multiple disabilities. They make good progress because of the strong focus on meeting their individual needs.
- The staff help pupils to develop into confident young people, who are as independent as possible and able to make sensible decisions about their future.
- Teaching is good and teachers plan lessons well to meet the wide range of individual needs. At times, though, the level of challenge is not high enough for the most able pupils.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils also learn about British values and what it means to be a good citizen.
- The youngest children get a good start in a warm and supportive environment. The outdoor space is well used but does not always support learning as successfully as it could.
- The sixth form courses meet students' needs well. The experience and qualifications they gain enable them to go on to suitable courses.
- The transitions to the next stage of the pupils' education or training are very well managed to make sure that pupils can move on confidently and successfully.
- Pupils enjoy school and have good attitudes to learning. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and promote good behaviour. Pupils are polite and friendly towards visitors.
- Pupils are kept safe in the academy and are taught how to keep themselves safe outside, particularly if they are able to use the internet.
- Most parents are supportive of the academy and appreciate the high quality of care and support it gives their children.
- Most pupils attend regularly but there are a few who are absent too often.
- The curriculum has been developed to provide a wider range of courses and qualifications but these have not been in place long enough to show that pupils will make better progress.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by making sure that:
  - the work is sufficiently challenging to enable all pupils, but particularly the most able, to make good or better progress.
- Develop the work on improving attendance, particularly in relation to persistent absentees.
- Develop the use of the outdoor area in the early years foundation stage so that it better complements what the children achieve in the classroom.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The executive headteacher and the principals have a clear vision for the further development of the two main campuses, William Morris and Brookfield House. Leaders are determined to see that the academy continues to improve and have identified suitable priorities and a clear action plan. They are strongly committed to raising expectations for what their pupils can achieve.
- Their priorities are shared by leaders of the different phases and by the staff as a whole. They show a strong commitment to the welfare of individual pupils and their families. They take on different responsibilities effectively and their roles complement each other well.
- The academy is responsible for managing the Hospital and Home Teaching Service based at Whipps Cross Hospital. The leadership and management of this provision is outstanding. Excellent liaison with families and the schools the pupils usually attend ensures that pupils receive high-quality teaching. This helps them to keep up with their peer group. Leaders keep the provision constantly under review to make sure that it continues to meet pupils' needs.
- Leaders regularly review teaching and make secure judgements on the quality of teaching and learning. They use the information from this to plan an effective programme of staff development. This helps equip staff with the skills they need to enable their pupils and students to make good progress.
- Since the school became an academy, leaders and managers have put into place a curriculum which is more responsive to pupils' needs. The pathways provide pupils of different abilities and aptitudes with a range of experiences which can be further adapted and refined to meet specific individual needs.
- The most able pupils follow the Challenger pathway. This leads to both recognised academic and vocational qualifications, such as GCSE, functional skills and BTEC, as well as ones which show their progress in their personal development and social skills.
- The planning for further development recognises that expectations are not consistently high enough for all the most able pupils and students. Plans include introducing functional skills examinations in Key Stage 4 and enabling pupils who join the academy in Key Stage 4 to continue with GCSE courses they may already have started.
- Leaders make sure that additional funding is used effectively to help pupils make good progress.
- Personal, social and health education and the wide range of opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development greatly expand pupils' understanding of the wider world. They help pupils to develop personal and social skills which complement their academic development.
- The additional sports funding is used very effectively and pupils have had considerable success in disabled sports competitions. They also have many opportunities to go on visits, for example to the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich and the Science Museum as well as taking part in residential visits and fundraising for charities.

- Careers guidance is well planned. Staff provide parents and pupils with good guidance so that they can make sensible decisions about moving on to college or other placements.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors provide very effective support. The local governing body works closely with the Hornbeam Academy Trust and the academy leaders to scrutinise all aspects of the academy. They are constructive in the way in which they hold leaders to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, so that they work in a real partnership with academy leaders. Governors challenge leaders to reflect on the work of all sections of the academy and to produce plans to move the academy forward. They use their expertise well and have been fully involved in the decisions about the priorities for the academy. Governors ensure that pupils' welfare and safety are always a high priority for everyone and that they themselves complete appropriate training in relation to safeguarding.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff on both campuses and in the hospital school understand that ensuring the welfare and safety of pupils and creating a culture of safety is everyone's responsibility. Pupils, particularly those in the older age groups, are also encouraged to take responsibility for their own safety and welfare.
- The academy's website provides detailed information for staff and parents. This includes information about how to report concerns. The safeguarding policy reflects the government's latest guidance.
- All staff receive training and are regularly updated on safeguarding and child protection procedures. Staff know the signs that should raise concerns and what to do if they are concerned about any pupil's safety and well-being.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the required checks on adults working at the academy are carried out. Safeguarding records are fit for purpose and any sensitive information is kept secure. The family support team works closely and effectively with the senior staff in the academy and with other professionals and agencies, including the local authority, to help keep pupils safe.
- Health and safety checks and risk assessments ensure that pupils are kept safe in the academy and when on visits out of the academy.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teaching is typically good. Teachers know their pupils very well and use a range of different approaches to help everyone make good progress. Signing using Makaton is used very consistently and effectively across the academy. This not only helps pupils to communicate effectively, it helps to build their confidence.
- In the Hospital and Home Teaching Service the teaching is outstanding. Regular

contact with families and other schools, to exchange information about progress and the curriculum needs, ensures that pupils can keep up with their schoolwork when in hospital or being taught at home.

- Staff manage pupils' behaviour very well, so that classrooms are calm and orderly places for both staff and students to work and learn. Teachers and assistants give pupils both time and support, which encourages them to express what they want or what they mean.
- Staff, whether teachers, therapists or teaching assistants, work as a team to help pupils to practise what they can already do and learn new skills. Activities are planned to help pupils become more independent, such as where pupils are expected to organise themselves when getting ready for lunch.
- The team approach typically works well but occasionally teaching assistants are not given enough direction. At times, most-able pupils are not always challenged to do as much as they possibly can for themselves.
- Teachers check on and record pupils' progress in detail. They analyse the information carefully to identify the next steps or areas where further work or practice are needed. They are quick to praise small steps, which nonetheless represent real progress. The best feedback motivates pupils to want to achieve more, but this more detailed feedback is not consistently as helpful as it could be.
- In English lessons and in other subjects, teachers make sure that pupils develop their literacy skills as much as possible. From a young age they enjoy songs, rhymes and stories. As they move through the academy, they are given more opportunities to use their reading skills in different contexts. Numeracy activities are focused on enabling students to learn through practical activities, which will introduce them to using money and everyday mathematics, such as weights and measures.
- Teachers take every opportunity to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider world. This includes introducing them to fundamental British values and helping them to understand what it means to be a good citizen. Older pupils learn about democracy through electing an academy council and a head boy and head girl to represent them.
- Visits, visitors to the academy and the choice of topics all help to widen pupils' understanding further. One class had just returned from a visit to a local supermarket. This is a regular activity and helps pupils to learn how to use money as well as building confidence and skills when out of school. In another class where pupils were learning about India, they discussed the choice of fillings for samosas, using a range of picture and verbal clues to help them make suitable choices.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- On both campuses and in the hospital school, relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Staff take care to let pupils know what will happen next and make sure that they are comfortable. As a result, pupils are generally very attentive and

able to contribute in class whatever their level of need or disability.

- The transitions between different stages of the academy are very carefully managed so that pupils can move happily and confidently into the next class. Access to very good personal and careers guidance helps older pupils to have high aspirations for their future and understand what is involved in different courses they might want to take.
- Pupils' welfare is taken very seriously. The family support team works very effectively with pupils and families. If they need help with specific issues or are going through a difficult time, there will be people to guide and support them.
- Parents of pupils attending the hospital school could not speak highly enough of the support they and their children receive.
- Great emphasis is placed on helping pupils to learn to take responsibility for themselves, for example by looking after their own belongings. Older pupils have good opportunities to take responsibility, for example as part of the school council, and take their responsibilities seriously.
- Pupils say they feel safe in the academy and know how to stay safe outside the academy. The staff work hard to make sure that pupils understand the issues which might affect them, for example in the current work on healthy eating. They also work with pupils, particularly as they get older and more independent, on issues around the use of social media, radicalisation and extremism.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The vast majority of pupils enjoy school and show real enthusiasm for activities. They are polite and friendly, and make visitors feel welcome. Behaviour in lessons is good and if there is any poor behaviour it is not allowed to disrupt the education of others. Pupils respond well to the systems for rewarding good work and behaviour.
- Attendance is improving and most pupils are absent only for medical reasons. However, a small group of pupils are still absent too often and are not making as much progress as they could.
- Pupils generally come into the academy very happily in the morning. If any pupils are upset when they arrive, staff are quick to help them to settle so that they can join in with activities from the start.
- There are a few reported incidents of bullying, but pupils are confident that these are dealt with. Pupils say that they think behaviour has improved and that there are now fewer incidents of really poor behaviour. Academy records support this view. Senior staff say it is because changes to some routines and some of the timings of the academy day have made the academy calmer. Pupils believe that they are safe in the academy and helped to stay safe. Pupils able to use computers independently say they know how to stay safe when using the internet and social media.

## Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' starting points are usually well below those typical for their age. Those who join the academy late also tend to have gaps in their education, which makes it more difficult for them to catch up with their peer group.
- Pupils who attend regularly make good progress overall and outstanding progress in developing their personal and social skills. The range of activities and experiences provided encourage them to make their own choices and become as independent as possible, from their very varied starting points.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language and/or those who are entitled to support through additional funding make similar progress to other pupils.
- Pupils attending the hospital school or receiving home teaching make excellent progress, both academically and in their personal development.
- Overall, pupils make good progress in learning to communicate well. From a very early age they are encouraged to express their ideas and needs, whether through use of sign language or through acquiring spoken language. Speaking and listening skills are consistently promoted across all classes and pupils are encouraged where possible to learn to read. Older pupils and students use their reading skills well in a range of circumstances.
- Pupils learn numeracy skills through practical mathematics, for example where they have to go shopping or work out the budget for food for an event.
- Increasing numbers of older pupils are gaining recognised qualifications, including BTEC vocational courses and functional skills in English, mathematics and ICT at levels which enable them to go on to take GCSE and more advanced vocational qualifications at college.
- Independent careers education starts in key stage 3 and by the time pupils leave they have had considerable help, advice and counselling so that they really understand what is involved in different courses. All pupils in key stage 4 move on into the sixth form or to a suitable other placement.
- The level of challenge and the outcomes for the most able pupils and students are inconsistent. In some classes, expectations and outcomes are high and supported by a good range of challenging work, but this is not the case in all lessons. Sometimes too little is expected of these pupils and they are given too much help.

## Early years provision

Good

- The children who are in the early years foundation stage work alongside the small number of pupils who are of year 1 age. Almost all have physical disabilities and/or complex medical needs and many also have other needs, such as speech and language or an autistic spectrum disorder.
- The leadership and management of the early years foundation stage are good. Leaders make sure that relevant training and planning sessions help staff to gain very good knowledge of the children's needs. They also get to know their families

well.

- Staff encourage children to learn to make choices and show preferences through, for example, learning to use Makaton sign language. Children were showing great enjoyment when taking part in music and singing sessions, even if at this stage they could not join in vocally. This helped them to become even more motivated and keen to communicate.
- Good planning ensures that teaching is closely matched to each child's individual needs. The use of a wide range of sensory stimuli helps children to learn well. They make good progress across all the areas of the early years foundation stage curriculum.
- The children enjoy being in the outdoor area, but its potential for supporting children's learning and development is not exploited as fully as the indoor facilities.
- Parents were very positive about the provision for their children and think they are well cared for, kept safe and able to make good progress.

### 16 to 19 study programmes

**Good**

- The sixth form is well led. Leaders and other staff provide highly effective support when students are making choices about the future. Students appreciate the quality of information and support they receive to help them make their applications. They are well prepared for the move to the next phase of their lives and learning, whether this is a college course, a supported internship or an apprenticeship.
- Students in the sixth form follow similar pathways to those in the rest of the academy. These are well matched to their individual needs and interests and, for those on the Challenger pathway, lead to recognised qualifications, such as Level 1 and 2 functional skills in English and mathematics as well as BTEC vocational courses. These provide a good basis for future work at GCSE or more advanced vocational qualifications. Where students are capable of taking GCSE courses in English, mathematics, science or ICT they are supported in this, often in collaboration with a mainstream secondary school.
- Students on the other pathways may take a range of qualifications through entry level functional skills courses and short courses run by the Oxford, Cambridge and RSA examination board and by ASDAN. These help them to improve their basic skills in literacy and numeracy and promote their independence and social skills.
- Teaching is typically purposeful and mostly well matched to students' needs, though occasionally the most able students are not challenged enough. Where teaching is most effective, it encourages students to think for themselves. For example, when planning an event, students were highly motivated and clearly used to responding to a challenging task. They had to make decisions which took into account preferences, quality, ease of preparation and costs. They all joined in a lively debate showing respect for other views and responding well to challenging questions. In another class, students were accurately able to identify fruit and vegetables that contribute to a healthy diet.



- Sixth form students are encouraged to show a sense of responsibility. The academy council is regularly consulted and its opinions are respected. Students agreed that they felt safe in the academy and received good information about how to stay safe out of the academy. They felt that the academy has improved and that behaviour is better.

## School details

Unique reference number	138454
Local authority	London Borough of Waltham Forest
Inspection number	10048289

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	254
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	86
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Haydn Walsh
Principals	Tania Dorman Maria Pla
Head of Hospital and Home Teaching Service	Melanie Hall
Telephone number	02085 032 225
Website	<a href="http://www.hornbeamacademy.org">www.hornbeamacademy.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:enquiries@hornbeamacademy.org">enquiries@hornbeamacademy.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The academy was formed when William Morris School and Brookfield House School joined together as the Hornbeam Academy Special Academy in 2015. The academy admits children from the age of two upwards. At the time of the inspection, there were no children aged two on roll. A high proportion of pupils stay on into the Academy sixth form where they may stay until they are 19. Each campus has its own principal and management team which is responsible to the chief executive officer (CEO) of the Hornbeam Academy Trust.

- The academy is responsible for managing the Hospital and Home Teaching Service attached to Whipps Cross Hospital. The head of the service is also responsible to the CEO of the trust.
- The academy caters for pupils who have a wide range of needs, including physical, behavioural, social, emotional and mental health needs, autistic spectrum disorders and profound, multiple and complex medical and learning needs. All pupils who attend the two main campuses at Hornbeam have an education, health and care plan.
- The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is well above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed a range of lessons or parts of lessons in almost all classes on the two campuses. One inspector also visited the hospital school. All observations were undertaken jointly with the principals or other senior staff.
- Meetings were held with governors, academy leaders and staff. A telephone conversation was held with an officer of the local authority which places pupils at the academy.
- The inspectors spoke to five parents who asked to meet an inspector. Inspectors reviewed the responses from 13 parents who had completed Parent View, Ofsted's online survey.
- The inspectors met and talked to pupils, both formally and informally. They looked at their work and the academy's records of their progress.
- The inspectors took into account almost 100 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the online pupil questionnaire.
- The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents provided by the academy, including those available on its website.

## Inspection team

Grace Marriott, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Derek Kitchin	Ofsted Inspector
John Paddick	Ofsted Inspector

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