

Evolve Academy

Address: 20 Kennington Park Gardens, London, SE11 4AX

Unique reference number (URN): 149450

Inspection report: 24 March 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

When pupils join the school, leaders identify what pupils know and can do, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make appropriate progress from their individual starting points in learning the curriculum. Younger pupils develop and secure their knowledge of phonics while many older pupils become fluent readers. Across year groups, the school prioritises making sure that pupils secure and develop their numeracy, reading comprehension and writing skills, with some pupils gaining the knowledge they need to complete national assessments successfully and confidently at the end of key stage 2.

Older pupils who stay into Year 11 complete the qualifications they need for their next steps in education, employment or training. This includes qualifications in English and mathematics, where they achieve well overall. Most pupils who leave at the end of Year 11 go on to continue and sustain their education with post-16 providers.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

The school provides a network of staff and external agencies that supports and cares for pupils. This network includes mentors, counsellors, the school nursing service and therapists. The school also has an established working relationship with the local police force. Leaders know and understand pupils' needs, including the needs of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders work together with professionals to ensure provision of timely and appropriate additional support that meets pupils' individual needs.

The school makes sure that it identifies the needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders take a deliberate approach to understanding pupils' barriers to learning. The school also ensures that it uses pupil premium funding to provide suitable support for disadvantaged pupils. Staff are given training on appropriate strategies to support pupils. Staff implement these strategies well to support pupils' wellbeing, behaviour and motivation. However, the adjustments and adaptations to the curriculum and teaching that pupils need to develop and extend their understanding are more variable in quality. Nonetheless, many pupils benefit from some thoughtful and skilful additional support for their learning, including, for example, one-to-one support. Such support is particularly successful in helping pupils with their reading and communication skills.

Leaders ensure that all pupils access and experience a range of enrichment opportunities. These include visits, reward trips and events that build pupils' confidence and deepen their understanding of the world around them.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils benefit from the school's clear and structured approach to personal development. This approach meets pupils' individual needs and helps pupils to develop their confidence, character and sense of belonging. For example, the recent introduction of a house system

promotes teamwork and provides a community identity for pupils. The house system also provides opportunities for competition through sport, mathematics and spelling bees. Younger pupils go on regular visits to the local library. The school has established partnerships with local organisations to provide further drama, music and sporting opportunities. The school makes sure that these visits and events are open to all pupils.

The school provides a suitable curriculum for relationships, sex and health education. Leaders and staff ensure that pupils are taught about online and offline risks to their wellbeing. Pupils also benefit from lessons that cover a range of appropriate themes in personal, social and health education (PSHE). Pupils' PSHE education is further promoted and supported with a tutor programme. Older pupils follow a newly established King's Trust qualification, which develops their understanding of digital literacy, finances and physical wellbeing. Leaders are proactive in addressing issues that may affect pupils' safety and wellbeing. For example, they organise further workshops and talks from relevant professionals on topics, such as substance abuse, knife violence and sexual health. The school celebrates and promotes diversity, for example, through events, such as Black History Month and International Women's Day. There are also increasing opportunities for pupils to have a voice in the development of the school's provision. These events, together with the topics studied in PSHE, build pupils' understanding of fundamental British values.

Staff work hard to raise pupils' aspirations and to engage older pupils in work experience. Pupils receive careers advice and visits from a range of professionals. Pupils also take part in 'insight days' to build readiness for their next steps. These events help pupils experience different employment sectors, such as hospitality, carpentry and marketing.

Needs attention

Attendance and behaviour

Needs attention 

Some pupils have infrequent attendance or are persistently absent. This is particularly the case for secondary-age pupils. High levels of absence have a negative impact on the achievement and experiences of these pupils. Also, some pupils arrive late to school and miss out on important morning routines. This can have a negative effect on these pupils' behaviour and readiness to learn. The school works with families and other professionals to help overcome the barriers to individual pupils' regular attendance. However, leaders do not routinely identify patterns and trends in attendance to inform the school's actions. As a result, although some pupils' attendance improves over time, the attendance of many pupils does not.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils know and understand the school's rules. Staff have the knowledge and skills they need to support pupils' behaviour. Staff manage pupils' behaviour well and typically address any poor behaviour effectively. Pupils trust staff to deal with serious incidents quickly and pupils develop positive relationships with staff. The school does not tolerate bullying. Leaders respond quickly to inappropriate and derogatory language, as well as to incidents of physical aggression. Leaders are alert to any behaviour trends. They work effectively to address such trends, for example, through educating pupils on issues linked to misogynistic attitudes.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Teaching is variable in quality across subjects. At times, thoughtful activities bring learning to life meaningfully for pupils, with a clear focus on ensuring that they remember knowledge. At other times, teaching choices are not as effective in helping pupils to engage deeply with their learning, and in turn know and remember in depth what has been taught. Additionally, sometimes, teachers do not adapt the curriculum and teaching to pupils' needs. Staff do not consistently implement the strategies that the school has identified as beneficial to pupils' learning.

Teachers have the subject expertise that they need. The curriculum is clearly sequenced to build pupils' subject knowledge in a logical way. Pupils access learning at their individual starting points. Teachers check pupils' learning to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and any misconceptions. Pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, generally get effective support to develop their language and communication skills. Pupils who need additional help with phonics and reading receive support from well-trained staff. Younger pupils enjoy stories and develop a love of reading.

Leaders consider pupils' academic learning within a context in which pupils have significant social and emotional development needs. They design the curriculum to enable pupils to access their next steps and secure several qualifications, including in mathematics and English. Leaders keep the curriculum offer under review. For example, they are currently working on introducing new qualification pathways in the arts.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Leaders, including governors and trustees, understand the school's challenges and context. Leaders prioritise pupils' safety and ensure that pupils' wellbeing is put at the centre of what they do. Leaders have plans in place to drive improvements, for example, in teaching and attendance. However, some of these plans are still in the early stages of implementation. It is too soon to determine the impact of leaders' recent actions in these areas of school provision.

Trustees, supported by local governors, meet their statutory duties. Trustees and governors are committed to serving the school. However, the school's systems of oversight and accountability are not clear enough, nor are the roles of school leaders, governors and trustees in exercising oversight and accountability. For example, there is insufficient clarity in how information is shared with relevant leaders and then subsequently scrutinised and quality assured. This affects how well leaders can secure or sustain improvements.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They are given a range of professional development and they are confident in their roles. Staff understand the importance of their work in making a positive difference to pupils' next steps. This consistently guides the care and guidance that staff provide to pupils. Leaders consider staff wellbeing and ensure that staff workload is manageable.

Leaders work effectively with professionals and external agencies in the best interests of pupils. Leaders work particularly well with some parents and carers, who are facing difficult

circumstances. Leaders put pupils' interests first and ensure that pupils are well prepared for their futures.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

The school provides a stable and safe environment for the pupils it serves. Pupils either attend this school for a short period of time or join the school permanently at different points in their education. Staff know the importance of quickly building positive relationships with the pupils who attend. They carefully model the behaviours they want pupils to emulate. Pupils feel they are respected and heard. However, there is more for the school to do in ensuring that pupils attend well.

Pupils at the school have often experienced challenging personal circumstances in the past. The school supports pupils to understand their emotions. Staff teach pupils strategies to keep calm and not act impulsively. The school does not tolerate bullying. Staff check regularly on the appropriateness of peer relationships. Consequently, pupils mostly behave in an orderly manner around the school site. When behaviour issues do arise, staff respond appropriately and swiftly.

Many pupils successfully reintegrate back into their mainstream schools or into new settings. The school enters pupils who stay at the school longer for suitable qualifications. These qualifications include end of key stage 2 national tests and a variety of awards and certificates in Year 11. The school ensures that reading is a priority. Pupils of all ages are given the support they need to become confident and fluent readers. Most pupils at the school are disadvantaged and have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school understands pupils' barriers to learning well. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND generally make appropriate progress through the curriculum. However, there is some variability in the quality of the school's work to adapt and adjust the curriculum and teaching in order to support pupils in their academic work.

Pupils enjoy a range of experiences and opportunities that prepare them for their next steps and adulthood. These include, for instance, theatre trips and performances. Pupils also benefit from important talks on how to stay safe in the community.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that they identify trends and patterns in pupils' attendance with greater rigour. Leaders should use their analysis of pupils' attendance to inform timely and effective work that removes barriers to pupils' regular attendance and punctuality.
- Leaders should ensure that teachers adapt the curriculum and teaching to meet pupils' needs and engage pupils deeply in their learning. This includes making sure that staff consistently use identified strategies to support pupils' learning.

- Leaders, including trustees and local governors, should ensure that they establish clear and rigorous systems of oversight and quality assurance of school provision so that leaders' improvement actions have the intended impact.
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About this inspection

This school is part of the Parallel Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the interim chief executive officer, Angela Barry, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jonathan Alvis.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, senior leaders and staff during the inspection. They also held meetings with the members of the governing body, members of the trust and representatives from the local authority.

Access legislation:

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 school:

The school is an alternative provision and operates across 2 sites. The site in West Norwood is for pupils of secondary school age, and the site in Kennington provides places for both primary-age pupils and a small number of secondary-age pupils.

The school includes provision for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs at both sites, alongside pupils who have been permanently excluded or are missing education.

The school offers both full-time places to pupils and 12-week, tier 2 intervention placements through the local authority of Lambeth as well as other local authorities.

This is the first full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 for this school.

Headteacher: Melissa Elve-Williams

Lead inspector:

Sarah Saunders, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Martyn Patterson Patterson, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 24 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

81

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

School capacity

160

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

65.4%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

62.96%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

8.64%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

Location deprivation

Well above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school
2024/25 (1 term)	27.8%
2023/24 (3 term)	31.5%
2022/23 (3 term)	S

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school
2024/25 (1 term)	75.6%
2023/24 (3 term)	81.6%
2022/23 (3 term)	S

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

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