

Inspection of New Level Academy

Third Floor, Ujima House, 388 Wembley High Road, London, Middlesex HA9 6AR

Inspection dates: 10 to 12 May 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to New Level Academy each day. It is different from mainstream education. Pupils get along well together. They said that there is no bullying. They enjoy the close-knit feel of the school. Staff build strong relationships with pupils based on trust. This helps pupils to feel safe because they can speak to members of staff about any issue. They know staff will resolve it.

Pupils behave well in and out of lessons. If they 'play up', teachers handle it well. They talk to the pupil about their behaviour. They encourage them to think about their conduct and its effect on others. This prepares pupils well for reintegration into mainstream education.

Pupils show motivation to learn, especially in mathematics and practical subjects. This is not always the case in English. Some pupils struggle to come up with ideas for writing and to put pen to paper. They enjoy being in small classes. Teachers can dedicate more time to them. They assess pupils often. Pupils appreciate this as they can see they are making progress. Staff prepare pupils well for their next steps. They develop pupils' belief that everyone has a unique gift or purpose in life.

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

Leaders have made the curriculum broader so that it better prepares pupils for their next steps. Priority is given to English and mathematics. Pupils also learn science, computer science, physical education, creative media and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Pupils leave and join the school at different times during the year. Teachers keep detailed records of what they have learned for when they do return to school. This is also the case for sixth-form students. Pupils who do not return to mainstream education complete level one and two qualifications. All study English and mathematics, as well as vocational courses such as sport and construction.

In mathematics and physical education, the curriculum is ambitious and well sequenced. For example, in mathematics, pupils learn about percentages before moving on to ratios and proportions. In physical education, pupils learn about the skeletal system before learning about joints and movement, muscles and then the heart. New learning builds upon what has come before. In English, the curriculum is less ambitious. Pupils complete many 'comprehension' activities, but they do not have enough opportunities for extended writing. This means that they do not develop an important skill for their future lives. Pupils do not access a wide enough range of texts to develop a love of reading.

Teachers check that pupils remember what they have learned. Typically, they begin each lesson with a recap of the previous one, including the use of quizzes to test recall. In mathematics, written work is checked in lessons to identify and correct misconceptions immediately.

Pupils take online assessments in English and mathematics on joining the provision. Teachers follow up on these by carrying out their own assessments. Pupils have gaps in their learning because of their previous experiences. Many speak English as an additional language (EAL). Many lack confidence in their abilities. Teachers help pupils to conquer this fear by assessing them in class each week. Pupils value this. They can see they are making progress. This builds up their confidence and spurs them on. Teachers adapt their lesson resources. They deploy teaching assistants to work with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Occasionally, staff identify pupils with undiagnosed SEND. They make referrals so that pupils receive the extra help they need.

Teachers have started to discuss how they might promote better learning of vocabulary across the curriculum. Currently, most pupils struggle to access subject terminology, including the language used in examination questions. This includes those with SEND and EAL.

Pupils enjoy coming to school each day. Their attendance and punctuality are good. This is because staff engage well with parents and carers. They make contact to chase lateness or poor attendance. Staff use reward points to motivate pupils for good attendance, punctuality, learning and behaviour.

The school is an inclusive community where all pupils feel valued. Teachers talk to them about same-sex relationships and families. Pupils learn how to stay healthy through the sports curriculum. Staff teach them about risky behaviours such as sending inappropriate text messages. Pupils enjoy competing in team sports. Leaders provide for pupils' spiritual development. They take them to local places of worship, including the mosque and the synagogue. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, pupils visited the Houses of Parliament and the High Court to learn about fundamental British values. They learn to be good citizens. Through the construction curriculum, pupils are renovating a house for homeless young people.

Leaders use one-to-one mentoring and the PSHE programme to develop pupils' understanding of careers. On joining the provision, many have no idea what they want to do. Staff take them to colleges to help them find out more about the courses on offer. They attend careers fairs locally. Pupils sign up to an apprenticeships website to gather more information. Teachers help them to write college applications.

The proprietor has worked hard to improve the school and ensure it meets the independent school standards. He understands the provision's strengths and areas for improvement. The proprietor reaches out to contacts in education when he needs advice. However, his workload is significant. There have been recent challenges with staffing, especially in English. Newly appointed teachers will provide much-needed expertise in this area. Staff are proud to work at the school. They enjoy the strong relationships they have with pupils and with their peers.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safeguarding team ensure that staff have relevant training. Staff know how to identify and act on the signs of potential harm. They are aware of the dangers of peer-on-peer abuse and any form of derogatory language. Currently, leaders are most concerned about the online risks that pupils face. They provide education to raise pupils' awareness of these risks. Staff use physical activity to break the cycle of addiction to social media.

The school works well with external agencies. These include social services, the youth offending team, the police and child and adolescent mental health services. Leaders ensure that they carry out appropriate checks on staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Typically, pupils join the school with low levels of literacy. Leaders ensure that pupils have an English lesson every day. However, the English curriculum does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to write at length. Pupils do not read a broad enough range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Leaders must ensure that newly appointed English teachers plan a curriculum which addresses these gaps.
- Teachers have started to discuss how they might promote better vocabulary learning across the curriculum. Currently, most pupils struggle to access subject terminology and the key terms used in examination questions. Staff must plan systematic opportunities for language learning in all subjects to improve pupils' understanding of key vocabulary.

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The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	142832
DfE registration number	304/6003
Local authority	Brent
Inspection number	10204264
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	13 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	11
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	4
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	2point4 FM Ltd
Chair	Terry Springer
Headteacher	Terry Springer
Annual fees (day pupils)	£13,500
Telephone number	020 8838 3529
Website	www.newlevel.brent.sch.uk/
Email address	info@newlevel.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 to 18 January 2018

Information about this school

- New Level Academy is a small independent school and provider of alternative provision for pupils in the London Borough of Brent.
- The school provides permanent school placements and temporary alternative provision for up to 20 pupils aged 13 to 20 with behavioural needs. The school works with pupils excluded from, or at risk of exclusion from, schools around London. Most pupils remain on their school roll. Very few pupils have education, health and care plans.
- The number of pupils on roll has slightly increased since the last full inspection.
- The school does not use alternative provision. However, pupils attend physical education sessions at a boxing gym which is in the same building as the school and football sessions at King Edward VII Park in Wembley, HA9 7QS and at Goals five-a-side soccer centre in Wembley, HA0 1JH.
- The school's last standard inspection took place in January 2018.
- A material change inspection took place in August 2019 where the school was found to not meet all the independent school standards.
- A monitoring inspection took place in January 2020. The school did not meet all the independent school standards.
- In October 2020, the school was found to meet all the independent school standards.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation.

- The inspector met with the head of centre, who is also the proprietor, the designated safeguarding lead, the deputy designated safeguarding lead and a range of staff.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in English, mathematics and physical education. She looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work, met with pupils to discuss their learning and met with teachers.

- The inspectors also looked at the curriculum plans of the other subjects taught at New Level Academy.
- Through discussions with leaders, staff and pupils, the inspector considered the effectiveness of safeguarding.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online survey which was completed by staff.
- The inspector toured the site. She scrutinised a range of documentary evidence to check on the statutory requirements of the independent school standards. This included checking the school's admissions register, risk assessments, attendance information and safeguarding training.

Inspection team

Lisa Strong, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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