

Inspection of Flixton Girls School

Flixton Road, Trafford, Urmston, Manchester M41 5DR

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 November 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade **Good**

The principal of this school is Dorothy Trussell. This school is part of the Vantage CE Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Jill Albertina, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Phillip Mason.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils know that they are expected to follow 'the Flixton way' by doing the right thing, being consistent and showing perseverance. Pupils rise to this challenge. New pupils settle into school quickly. Parents and carers appreciate how smoothly their children are welcomed into the school in Year 7.

The school has high expectations of what all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), can achieve. Most pupils achieve well.

Pupils are happy at school. They are aware of the many ways that they can report any worries or anxieties that they may have. Pupils engage well in lessons. The atmosphere on the corridors and at social times is calm and friendly.

The school offers a varied range of trips and visits to expand pupils' experience of the wider world. Pupils volunteer through the Duke of Edinburgh award. They eagerly adopt positions of responsibility including acting as eco ambassadors and as prefects. They proudly wear the badges that indicate their area of leadership in school. These opportunities help pupils to become active citizens.

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

The school has placed the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects at the forefront of its aspirational curriculum. There has been a marked increase in the number of pupils studying a modern foreign language at key stage 4. This, coupled with a considerable increase in pupils studying the three science subjects, demonstrates the increasing ambition that the school has for its pupils and their achievement.

The trust has ensured that suitable training is in place to support leaders at all levels and to develop teaching expertise. Consequently, teachers have strong subject knowledge. In most subjects, the essential knowledge that pupils need to know and the order in which it should be taught is mapped out clearly for teachers. The school and the trust work together well to design effective learning activities. However, in a small number of subjects, the school continues to refine its curriculum thinking. In these few subjects the order in which the key knowledge should be taught is less clear. As a result, pupils achieve less well in these subjects.

Teachers check and identify gaps and misconceptions in pupils' learning effectively. Pupils revisit their learning and improve their work. Nonetheless, where the curriculum is less well developed, pupils' recall of prior learning is not as secure.

The school is now working more effectively with parents to ensure that pupils with SEND are identified swiftly and get the timely help that they need to be successful. Most pupils with SEND learn alongside their peers. The school has recently improved the quality of the information that staff are given about pupils with SEND. This gives teachers clear guidance on how to support pupils' learning. How teachers use this information in the classroom is not consistent. As a result, some pupils with SEND

are not as fully engaged with their learning as they could be and do not learn as well as they could.

Teachers assess pupils' reading ability regularly and interweave opportunities for reading throughout the curriculum. The school has clear actions in place to support pupils to increase their reading fluency and comprehension. However, the school's approach to supporting the weakest readers is not coherent. As a consequence, some pupils who struggle with reading are not consistently supported well to enable them to catch up with their peers. This hinders their access to the curriculum.

The school's approach to pupils' personal development is well considered. Pupils participate eagerly in the myriad of opportunities on offer to develop their talents and interests. They learn how to recognise potential risks when they are in the community. For example, how to keep safe from gangs and knife crime. They are taught to recognise the dangers of substance misuse and to understand consent. Pupils are well prepared to grow up in a modern and diverse Britain. They learn about being tolerant and how to respect the differences between themselves and others.

The school prepares pupils well for their next steps. Pupils spoke to inspectors about their ambitious career plans. They can visit universities, take part in work placements and attend careers fairs. They are well informed about the different routes that are available to them when they leave Year 11.

Governors and trustees have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They are aware of the strengths of the school and the work needed to further improve the quality of education that pupils receive. The school listens to staff feedback. In response, it has ensured that deadlines are carefully distributed to help staff manage their workload. Staff are proud to work at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the school's development of the curriculum is at an earlier stage. This means that teachers are unclear about the order in which the most important information should be taught. As a result, pupils do not build a deep body of learning over time. The school should ensure that, as it refines its curriculum thinking, the essential knowledge that pupils should learn and when this should happen is clearly identified in all subjects.
- School systems to support those pupils who have gaps in their reading knowledge are underdeveloped. This means that some pupils do not receive the targeted support that they need to catch up quickly in reading. This hinders their access to

the curriculum. The school should ensure that it fully implements and embeds improvements to the reading curriculum so that pupils are supported to catch up quickly.

- The school does not ensure that some pupils with SEND receive well-tailored and consistent support. This means that some pupils with SEND do not learn as well as they should. The school should ensure that identified actions for pupils with SEND are implemented fully and reviewed regularly.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

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

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	136965
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10294904
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	939
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Phillip Mason
CEO of trust	Jill Albertina
Principal	Dorothy Trussell
Website	www.flixtongirls.com
Date of previous inspection	18 July 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of Vantage CE Academies Trust.
- The school uses two registered and three unregistered alternative education providers.
- 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.
- The principal is currently absent from school. There is an acting principal, Danielle Tedford, assuming this role during the absence of the principal.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the acting principal, other senior leaders, subject leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector met with the CEO and with members of the trust board. She also met with members of the local advisory board and held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, art and design, history, mathematics, science and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at the curriculum in other subject areas.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation document, school improvement plans, minutes of local advisory board meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils, and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture of safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils from Years 7 to 11 about their experience of school and their perceptions of behaviour and bullying. They also observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, on the corridors and at lunchtimes.

Inspection team

Niamh Howlett, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Joe Barker	Ofsted Inspector
Nick Lowry	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Mitchell	Ofsted Inspector

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