

Inspection of The Boxing Academy AP Free School

1 Monteagle Way, Hackney, London E5 8PH

Inspection dates:	4 and 5 February 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The principal of this school is Anna Cain. This school is part of The Boxing Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Blu Reynolds.

What is it like to attend this school?

Care and support for every pupil run through all aspects of life in the school. Leaders and staff nurture a sense of belonging, mutual trust and respect that pupils describe as feeling like a family. Pupils thrive, knowing that staff help them to do as well as they can.

Pupils learn well together in small groups, or pods. Interactions between pupils are positive and friendly in lessons and at social times. Accompanying the pod through the day, pod leaders soon spot if a pupil is having a difficult time, for example with their learning or in managing their behaviour. Strong communications between staff and with pupils ensure that pupils receive the support they need to resolve any concerns swiftly. Pupils are kept safe in school.

All pupils learn to box. They recognise the distinctive qualities and skills they gain from working with professional coaches. As well as promoting pupils' physical fitness, the benefits to pupils' mental health and emotional well-being are substantial. Their growth in self-confidence and resilience boosts their focus on achieving their aspirations. Pupils are successful in fulfilling leaders' high expectations that they gain qualifications and take up places in their chosen next steps in education or employment.

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

Pupils attend the school following wide ranging and challenging barriers to their engagement with learning. The school rapidly identifies the support that pupils need to embark successfully on their learning. The school provides a carefully considered curriculum. Pupils develop knowledge and skills in a range of subjects that are readily applicable to their education and occupation pathways in the future. A comprehensive programme of professional development ensures that all staff are clear and uphold leaders' expectations for policy and practice in the school. Staff value the training, support and guidance they receive to enable them to fulfil their roles and develop their careers.

Teachers' strong subject knowledge ensures that they provide clear explanations, adapting and responding to pupils' queries and misconceptions, extending pupils' learning as they do so. Frequent recap of knowledge and skills from previous lessons helps to consolidate learning. Pupils become increasingly familiar with the meaning and use of technical vocabulary. References to links with other subjects and application of content to everyday scenarios motivate pupils. For example, when learning about plant growth in science, pupils discussed why some plants are damaging to buildings. Clear and consistent routines ensure that pupils know what is expected of them. The atmosphere in lessons is typically calm and purposeful.

Staff closely check how well pupils are achieving and identify gaps in pupils' learning. Strong and frequent communications between pod leaders and teachers inform where additional support is needed. Pupils receive bespoke programmes of support to enable them to catch up quickly. Staff know and use effective strategies to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities access the curriculum and achieve as well as others.

Pupils value highly the opportunities the school provides. Boxing makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils are inspired by the examples set by staff, promoting the strong culture in the school of commitment, ambition and consideration for each other's well-being. Staff and pupils value accessing counselling in school to support their mental health. The school places a high priority on helping pupils to be prepared for adulthood, to enable them to recognise risks to their health and know how to stay safe. Trained staff and external specialists support the school's personal, social and health education and relationships and sex education programmes, skilfully facilitating open and mature dialogue about sensitive themes and issues.

Pupils benefit from personalised careers education and guidance to help them make informed decisions about their next stages of study. Staff support pupils with all aspects of communications. For example, pupils are helped to explore and articulate their future aspirations with staff on college visits to maximise pupils' opportunities for success. Workplace visits provide pupils with valuable insight into the world of work and inspire them to pursue specific occupations.

Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to broaden their outlook beyond their home and school communities. The residential trip is especially popular, including activities such as kayaking, paddle boarding and hiking.

The school is relentless in its work to help pupils overcome barriers to their attendance. Staff carefully consider the optimum approaches to working effectively with pupils and their families and with outside agencies so that attendance improves.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	143103
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	10323423
School category	Academy free school
Type of school	Alternative provision
Age range of pupils	12 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	39
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair of the board of trustees	Blu Reynolds
Principal	Anna Cain
Website	www.theboxingacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 February 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a single-academy trust: The Boxing Academy Trust.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been several changes to the leadership of the school.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has started to admit pupils into key stage 3.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- 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 inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth-form

provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received 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 of the school.
- Inspectors met with school leaders, including the principal and two representatives of the governing body. An inspector held a telephone conversation with the vice-chair of the governing body and met with a representative of the governing body. All members of the governing body are also trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, physical education and science. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors held conversations with members of staff and pupils around the school at social times.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector/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 around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors considered the views of staff, parents and carers in responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

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