

The Brooksbank School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	137521
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	386806
Inspection dates	14–15 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Robert Jones

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,702
Of which number on roll in the sixth form	289
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marion Bain
Headteacher	Kevin McCallion
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by six additional inspectors. Inspectors spent the majority of their time visiting 48 lessons taught by 48 teachers. They held meetings with staff, groups of students and a member of the governing body. They looked at a range of documentation, including policies, records of self-evaluation, records of students' progress and child protection records. The inspection team received and analysed 172 questionnaires from parents and carers, as well as a number of questionnaires completed by students and from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the academy's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The progress students make in mathematics across the academy.
- The challenge afforded to high-attaining students.
- The extent to which students are encouraged to work independently in lessons.
- The effectiveness with which the school monitors students' progress in the sixth form.

Information about the school

Brooksbank School became a converter academy in October 2011. It is a larger than average-size academy. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The majority of students are of White British heritage and a very small minority are from Pakistani backgrounds. Fewer students than average speak English as an additional language and fewer than average have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The academy holds specialist status in sport. It has its own headteacher who took up post in September 2011. The academy has close links with Park Lane Learning Trust and an executive headteacher divides her time between both schools.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is a good academy that is improving rapidly. These improvements are underpinned by outstanding leadership which has embedded ambition and driven improvements exceptionally well. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the academy's work, making comments such as: 'My children have blossomed since moving to this school.'

Outstanding care, guidance and support have led to students feeling exceptionally safe and secure from any threats of harassment or bullying. Furthermore, excellent pastoral care ensures students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable receive the best possible support. Attendance is high due to rigorous monitoring of absenteeism, which, combined with students' well-developed basic skills ensures their preparation for economic well-being in the future is outstanding. The academy's work with outside partners to promote learning and well-being is exceptional, particularly through the close working relationship with the nearby Park Lane Learning Trust and in connection with sports organisations through the academy's specialism. Moreover, the academy's outside links and strong specialism have given students the opportunities to make outstanding contributions to the academy and wider community. Students in the sixth form make good progress and provide good role models for their younger counterparts in the school, for example by working as lunchtime supervisors.

The quality of teaching and learning is good and improving strongly due to outstanding leadership and management of teaching and learning. Inspectors found that students make good progress overall from their starting points in Year 7, but in some subjects they make outstanding progress. There are, however, remaining inconsistencies which are preventing the overall quality of learning and progress from rising to outstanding.

Self-evaluation is incisive, rigorous and undertaken by leaders at all levels. The 'leadership framework' provides a uniformly outstanding approach to monitoring and evaluation which ensures there is consistency of practice and a constant re-evaluation of what is needed to secure improving outcomes for students. As a result of this attention to detail, achievement is rising year on year. These factors illustrate well the academy's outstanding capacity to sustain its improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the quality of learning and progress in lessons is consistently outstanding by:
 - maximising the opportunities for students to apply and practise their skills in addition to acquiring new knowledge
 - giving students increased opportunities for independent learning through activities such as group work, problem solving and structured discussions
 - disseminating more widely the outstanding practice that exists within the academy
 - allowing students time to reflect and respond to the advice teachers give on their marked work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In the very best lessons, students learn new skills but also practise and consolidate the skills they have acquired in previous lessons. Under these conditions, students develop independent learning skills through structured discussions and teamwork. When these characteristics are evident in lessons, students make good and often outstanding gains in their learning. In one English lesson, students engaged in high-quality discussions on how modern digital technology has shaped the English language. These discussions developed their reasoning as well as their speaking and listening skills at a fast pace. Where learning is not so effective, teachers tend to work harder than the students. In these lessons, students complete a series of tasks rather than becoming independent in their learning through activities such as group work, problem solving and structured discussions. Furthermore, in these less effective lessons, students acquire new knowledge, but sometimes time is not built into lessons to ensure there are maximum opportunities for them to apply and practise their skills. Behaviour in lessons matches the quality of learning and progress. Where learning fully involves students and engages them, behaviour is good and sometimes outstanding. Where teaching tends to be led largely by the teacher giving a series of instructions or does not fully involve students, it is satisfactory.

Students' achievement is good. They enter the academy with attainment that is broadly average. Attainment at the end of Year 11 is rising and is now above average, which represents good progress overall. However, in some subjects, such as English, students make outstanding progress. Inspectors looked carefully at the progress that students make in mathematics which is good due to improved teaching and improvements in monitoring and evaluating provision in mathematics. The academy has worked hard to ensure there is sufficient challenge for higher-attaining students. This has resulted in an increased proportion of students reaching the top grades at GCSE. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress due to the high quality support available to them. Students enjoy life at the academy a great deal, which is reflected in their high attendance and comments such as, 'The school goes out of its way to make things fun'. The academy's specialism ensures many students are involved in a good range of sports

and therefore well aware of the importance of regular physical activity. However, they do not always choose to eat healthily during the day, which means that their awareness of how to lead healthy lifestyles is good rather than outstanding. Students from different backgrounds make plentiful outstanding contributions to the academy and the local community, such as supporting a local special school and contributing to the 'On Side' academy magazine.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. There are examples of outstanding teaching across the academy which is securing outstanding progress for some students. In these lessons, excellent assessment is at the heart of the lesson, through first-rate questioning which challenges students and probes for the best possible answers. In one highly successful art lesson, the teacher allowed students to lead part of the lesson asking each other searching questions about their coursework which deepened their understanding. While assessment is a strong feature in the academy, it is less successful when there is insufficient time for students to reflect on and respond to the advice teachers give students on their marked work. The academy, through its excellent monitoring and evaluation systems, is aware of some remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching with sound plans in place to more widely disseminate the outstanding practice that exists across the academy.

The good curriculum provides students with a comprehensive range of memorable experiences and plentiful opportunities to extend their learning through visits and visitors to the academy. A particular strength of the curriculum is how it is customised to meet the individual needs of students. Literacy and numeracy are well supported across the curriculum and the academy's specialism supports this well, for example through opportunities to engage in sports journalism activities and orienteering. The academy has sound plans in place to ensure information and communication technology (ICT) is developed further within the curriculum. Improved provision for modern foreign languages is ensuring the number of students

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

leaving in Year 11 with at least a C grade at GCSE is now close to the national average.

Exceptional care, guidance and support are in place for all students, regardless of ability. Students’ progress is tracked meticulously and interventions are put into place quickly and efficiently should any student fall behind. Links with outside agencies are excellent which support those students who have additional needs. Excellent support for students at the early stages of speaking English means they settle well into the academy and make good progress. Year 7 students and their parents and carers comment on the high-quality transition arrangements in place between primary school and the academy. Plans and targets to support students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are of high quality. Dedicated pastoral leaders give exceptionally high-quality care to students, which is a prime reason why students feel so safe in the academy and why attendance is high. High-quality support for students’ diverse needs is embedded at all levels of the academy’s work.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and executive headteacher provide inspirational and visionary leadership. This has embedded ambition and driven improvements right through the academy and across all tiers of leadership to an outstanding level. Throughout the academy, there is a palpable sense of shared responsibility with leaders and staff being justifiably proud of what they have achieved so far. There is no hint of complacency, with the rigour of development plans illustrating well the academy’s constant strive to improve provision and outcomes further. Outstanding partnership working with Park Lane Learning Trust has benefited both schools in developing provision and outcomes for students. The academy’s sports specialism provides excellent opportunities for members of the community to engage in a range of specialist sports on the premises. Specialist targets have been exceeded year-on-year.

The governing body provides a good level of support and challenge to the academy’s leadership. It is well informed of developments and is firmly focused on raising achievement further. Equal opportunities are promoted well, particularly so through the academy’s keen tracking of students’ progress which has ensured gaps in achievement are closed whenever they occur. Discrimination is tackled decisively whenever and wherever it occurs. The academy adopts recommended good practice for safeguarding with training being of a high quality and particularly good information relating to students’ medical needs. The academy promotes community cohesion well in the local community through providing sports facilities in connection with the academy’s specialism and further afield through a very active link with a

school in Ghana.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

Students make good progress throughout their time in the sixth form. A wide range of subjects is available at A and AS level including a range of vocational options and a comprehensive Level 2 programme. Retention from Year 11 to the sixth form is good as is the number of students who choose to continue their studies into Year 13. The quality of teaching is good overall with some examples of outstanding teaching. In lessons, there are good opportunities for debate and discussion which deepen students' knowledge and understanding. Students have a high regard for the quality of their sixth form experience, describing it as 'outward looking' and that it 'offers us choice to further ourselves'. There is an extensive range of opportunities for students to be involved in recreational and enrichment activities with large numbers of students grasping these opportunities with enthusiasm. Sixth-form leaders have focused on improving the monitoring of students' progress which is showing some impact in improved rates of progress and rising attainment.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth Form	2
Taking into account: Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are supportive of the academy's work. Many of their comments focused on the excellent pastoral support, transition arrangements from primary school and how much their children enjoy attending. The inspection findings endorse the very positive responses from parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Brooksbank School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 172 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,702 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	90	52	76	44	3	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	77	45	95	55	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	108	63	62	36	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	90	52	79	46	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	76	44	92	53	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	67	39	91	53	10	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	61	35	105	61	4	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	83	48	79	46	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	80	47	87	51	2	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	79	46	81	47	6	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	58	34	92	53	6	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	83	48	84	49	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	96	56	74	43	2	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 November 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of The Brooksbank School, Elland HX5 0QG

Thank you for the welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your academy recently. You will be pleased to hear that your academy provides you with a good standard of education. Many things are outstanding, particularly the care and support you receive, how the academy helps you to feel safe, how it prepares you for the future and how you contribute to the academy and wider community. Your attainment is above average. These things, alongside your high attendance, ensure you leave as well-rounded, responsible young adults, ready for the next stage in your education. Attainment is rising each year, and this is because the academy is led outstandingly well with excellent links with outside partners and is very well placed to continue its improvement.

While you make good progress, it is better in some lessons than others, so I have asked your headteacher and academy leaders to improve the quality of learning so it becomes outstanding. This will require you to have opportunities in lessons to practise skills as well as learn new ones so that your learning is of a higher quality. We all learn best by collaborating, so I have asked that you have increased opportunities to work in groups through problem solving and structured discussions. There is outstanding teaching in the academy, so I have asked that teachers share their expertise and learn from each other. Finally, I have asked that teachers build in time to lessons so you are able to reflect on the comments they make on your work to ensure you fully understand their advice and know how to act on it to improve your work.

You can all help by reading carefully through the feedback your teachers give you and asking if you need it clarifying. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Robert Jones
Lead inspector

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