

Bethnal Green Academy

Gosset Street, Bethnal Green, London, E2 6NW

Inspection dates 11–12 December 2012

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Not previously inspected | N/A |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| | This inspection: | Outstanding | 1 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Quality of teaching | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Leadership and management | | Outstanding | 1 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Students' achievement in Key Stages 3 and 4 is remarkable. The standards they reach overall at the end of Year 11 are higher than those of other students in the country even though the majority start at the academy with attainment that is below the national average.
- Students make extremely good progress in all subjects. Their progress in English and mathematics is exceptional and well above what might be expected.
- Teaching is of high quality. Teachers are ambitious for all students. They work tirelessly to make sure that students achieve extremely well.
- The academy has a wide range of very effective support in place to help students. This includes support for students who join the academy after Year 7, those for whom English is not their first language and those who need extra support with their reading and writing.
- The Principal is an inspirational leader who has vision, passion and dedication. He expects nothing but the best for the students and he has successfully made sure that all staff buy into this vision. The academy has improved rapidly under his leadership.
- The other leaders in the academy follow the Principal's example. They are extremely committed to making sure that everything they do makes things better for students. Their actions have a very positive impact on the lives and experiences of the students.
- Students are very proud of their academy and behaviour in and out of lessons is excellent. Students are very considerate of one another and say that they feel very safe in the academy.
- The new sixth form is good. Year 12 students are making good progress because of good teaching. The quality of teaching and the range of subjects on offer in the sixth form are not yet of the same high quality as in the rest of the academy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 40 lessons, taught by 40 teachers. Six of these observations were made jointly with a member of the academy’s senior leadership team. Inspectors also looked at students’ work and teachers' marking.
- Inspectors held meetings with governors, middle and senior leaders and talked to a number of students of all ages and backgrounds.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentary evidence provided by the academy, including records of observations of lessons, information about the progress of students, a range of policies, minutes of governing body meetings, the academy’s own checks on how well it is doing, the improvement plan, attendance records and logs of behavioural incidents. Safeguarding procedures were checked.
- There were no responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) but inspectors reviewed the surveys that parents and carers had completed for the academy.

Inspection team

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Matthew Haynes, Lead inspector | Her Majesty’s Inspector |
| Anne Duffy | Her Majesty’s Inspector |
| Sharon Wallin | Additional inspector |
| Trevor Woods | Additional inspector |
| Veronica Young | Additional inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- Bethnal Green Academy is a smaller than average secondary school with a sixth form. The sixth form opened in September 2012. The school converted to academy status in January 2012.
- There are approximately 20% more boys than girls attending the academy.
- The proportion of students eligible for additional government funding (the pupil premium) is well above that found nationally. This includes students who are eligible for free school meals and looked after students.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is well above that found nationally.
- The proportion of students supported through school action and school action plus is well above that found nationally.
- About three-quarters of students have a first language other than English. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is much higher than that found nationally.
- The proportion of students who join the school at times other than the beginning of Year 7 remains high, although this is reducing.
- Bethnal Green Academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in the sixth form so that it is outstanding by:
 - improving teaching so that it matches the high quality of teaching in the rest of the academy, especially in the way teachers use questioning to develop and deepen students' thinking and independence
 - extending the range of courses on offer in order to fully meet the needs, interests and aspirations of all students.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students make excellent progress during Key Stages 3 and 4. This is especially true in English, mathematics and science where the proportion of students making and exceeding national expectations is very high. Students are very well prepared, therefore, for the next stage in their education, employment or training.
- As a result of their excellent progress, students' standards at the end of Key Stage 4 are above the national average. In 2012, 90% of students achieved five or more grade A* to C GCSE qualifications, with 70% of students achieving five or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics. This is particularly impressive since most students start at the academy with levels of attainment below the national average.
- The achievement of students eligible for free school meals, those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those for whom English is not their first language is equally strong. They do much better than similar students in other schools across the country. The academy goes the extra mile to help these students through the wide range of support they are given.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs do extremely well. This is as a result of high-quality teaching, effective support in lessons from teaching assistants and extensive additional support provided outside of lessons.
- Students who join the academy at the start of Year 7 do exceptionally well given their starting points. In 2012, 86% achieved five or more higher grade GCSE passes including English and mathematics. Those who join at other times are given extensive extra support. This has a very positive and rapid impact on their progress.
- There are no major differences in the achievements of boys and girls.
- Attainment in some GCSE subjects, for example English literature, geography and some languages, has been lower in the past. Students are now making better progress in these subjects because of the swift action that teachers and leaders have taken. Attainment in these subjects is now much higher.
- Achievement in the sixth form is currently good overall. Students learn well in lessons and have made good progress so far.
- Additional funding from the government (the pupil premium) is used effectively to support the learning of those students at risk of doing less well. For example, it pays for extra staff to give one-to-one support for students and to work with small groups. This work greatly improves the achievement of these students. These students are doing much better than similar students in other schools across the country. They make excellent progress and attain highly at the end of Key Stage 4.
- There is a strong focus on developing students' skills in speaking, reading and writing across the academy. This happens in lessons and through other support given to students. As a result, students' skills improve rapidly and contribute positively to their achievement across the curriculum.
- A small number of the brightest students are entered early for GCSE examinations, principally in mathematics and languages. This does not affect their attainment and they achieve what they should. They typically move on to other courses or more challenging work.
- A small number of students attend alternative provision for part of their education. The academy has strong links with these providers and the benefit to the students is clear. They learn and achieve well because of these arrangements.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The outstanding progress made by all groups of students during Key Stages 3 and 4 demonstrates the impact of high-quality teaching over time.

- Teachers' planning is very good and it builds on students' prior learning. Teachers set challenging work which meets the individual needs of students extremely well. Teachers and students have high expectations about what they can achieve. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong and the relationships between students and teachers are excellent.
- Lessons frequently help to develop students' skills in reading, writing and mathematics. For example, teachers' regular use of key words and phrases and their feedback support aspects of literacy and numeracy.
- Questioning is used extremely well to develop students' thinking and learning, and to promote discussion. In the best lessons, which are common, there is an excellent balance between teacher-talk and students working together or leading a discussion.
- There are many opportunities for students to evaluate how well they are doing. Students know how well they are doing and are set challenging targets by their teachers. They understand what they have to do to improve.
- The way that teachers give feedback to students – both in lessons and through the marking of students' work – is highly effective. This makes a major contribution to students' learning.
- The many intervention programmes in place make sure that any student at risk of falling behind is given very well-targeted support both in class and outside of lessons. Teaching assistants' support is discrete and focuses on promoting learning through effective questioning and prompting.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good overall and improving. Students are currently making good progress because of this.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students' attitudes to learning are overwhelmingly positive. They work hard and they want to do well. Behaviour in lessons and around the academy is extremely good. Students have a strong sense of respect for each other and for the differences between individuals. They are very proud of their academy.
- Students, staff and parents and carers all agree that students are safe at the academy. Initiatives such as 'The Safe Project' and 'The Haven Club' provide a place for students if they are feeling worried about anything.
- Students have great confidence in staff at the academy and know who to go to if they have any problems. There is a significant staff presence around the academy at break and lunchtimes which students appreciate.
- Students are very aware of the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and homophobic bullying, and it is very rare. Cases of racial abuse are also rare. When bullying does happen it is dealt with swiftly and effectively by the academy.
- Attendance is high and exclusions are low. Students like coming to the academy and want to be there.
- There is a 'zero tolerance' approach to poor behaviour. Behaviour management processes are strong and effective. There is a range of support packages which help students who might be at risk of being excluded to get back on track.
- Partnerships with community groups, local businesses and with the police are very good. They work together to promote safety within the academy and the community, for example through projects like 'Operation Brooking' and 'School Watch'.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The Principal is an inspirational leader who puts the students at the heart of everything he does. He is always striving to improve the academy for the benefit of the students. His expectations of himself, the staff and the students are extremely high. The rapid improvement of the academy clearly shows the impact of his leadership.

- His mission is to help every single student achieve his or her very best. In achieving this, he makes sure that leaders and teachers understand their responsibilities and he holds them to account very effectively. Teachers know that nothing but the very best will do for the students.
- The senior leaders share this mission. They work very well as a team as well as on their specific areas of responsibility. They lead by example and are role models for the staff and students at the academy.
- The leaders of subjects and other middle leaders play a full part in moving the academy forward and improving the quality of what it does. They improve teaching in their particular areas. They make sure students are on track to achieve very well and provide support when there is a risk that they will not. This support has a significant impact on students' achievement.
- The leadership of teaching is outstanding. The academy has a wide range of ways that help teachers to improve constantly. The best practice in the academy is shared effectively. There is compelling evidence to show how this work has a positive impact on teaching.
- The way in which targets are set for teachers and how these are reviewed are detailed, regular and effective. Teachers receive useful feedback about their work and understand how to improve. These processes are directly linked to the achievement of the students they teach. Teachers are rewarded only when their performance is very good.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the academy's performance and strong, focused plans are in place to continue to improve the academy. All leaders in the academy contribute to this process, meaning that they all understand the main things the academy is doing well and know what the key areas of further improvement are. They make use of external experts to help them make sure their judgements are right.
- The curriculum in Key Stages 3 and 4 has been fully reviewed and it meets the needs of all learners. It stretches and challenges students of all abilities, including the brightest. The curriculum in the sixth form is currently a little narrow and does not yet fully meet the needs and interests of all students, including those in Year 11 who are hoping to join in the future.
- The development of students' speaking, reading and writing is central to the academy's work. There is a wide range of ways in which these skills are rapidly developed, both within lessons and through one-to-one support and work with small groups. This work contributes directly to their achievement.
- Students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is supported well through the curriculum, as well as through a wide range of extra-curricular activities and projects – many of which extend out into the community. This has a significant impact on students' attitudes, views and behaviour, as well as their involvement in everyday academy life.
- Links with parents and carers are strong. This is especially true where help for individual students and their families has led to regular contact with parents and carers and involved them in supporting the progress of their children.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is highly effective. Governors receive comprehensive reports from the Principal and they hold the Principal and his team to account very well. Governors share the same high ambitions for the students at the academy as the staff and leaders. They expect the best and challenge and support the academy to achieve this. They are fully involved in the leadership of the academy and they have a clear understanding of its effectiveness, including the quality of teaching. They manage the resources of the academy well and have a thorough knowledge of how the pupil premium is spent to help students at risk of doing less well. Their management of the Principal's performance is rigorous; governors challenge him to continue to improve the academy. Governors also know about the management of the performance of other staff and make sure that staff are only rewarded for consistently good performance.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| Grade | Judgement | Description |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 2 | Good | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

School details

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| Unique reference number | 137789 |
| Local authority | Tower Hamlets |
| Inspection number | 402772 |

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

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|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Type of school | Academy converter |
| 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 | 808 |
| Of which, number on roll in sixth form | 71 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Graham Taylor |
| Principal | Mr Mark Keary |
| Telephone number | 020 7920 7900 |
| Fax number | 020 7920 7999 |
| Email address | info@bethnalgreenacademy.co.uk |

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