

# The Business Academy Bexley

Yarnton Way, Erith, DA18 4DW

**Inspection dates** 7-8 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Students in all parts of the school, and children in Reception, make good progress because teaching is good.
- Students enjoy school because they find learning interesting and enjoyable.
- Students take great pride in their school and are keen that it should be held in high regard in the local community.
- Students behave well and feel safe.
- The executive principal and headteachers of the primary and secondary sections provide excellent leadership. They work closely with the governors, sponsor and other leaders to improve progress and raise standards.
- Leaders provide good training for those new to leadership roles and to help teaching become better.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, work is not demanding enough for some students.
- Sometimes, the pace of work is not fast enough.
- Teachers do not always insist that students produce well-presented, detailed writing in their work.
- Occasionally, classroom assistants are not effective in helping students to work independently or to pay attention in class.
- Teachers do not always mark students' work often enough, give students enough guidance on how to improve their work, and check that they follow any advice given.
- Children in the Reception classes do not have sufficient provision to learn outdoors.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 51 teachers in 53 lessons or parts of lessons. Eight of these were observed jointly with senior leaders to check how accurately they evaluate teaching. Inspectors also listened to students read.
- Meetings were held with staff, students, and with members of the governing body and the academy's sponsor. Inspectors spoke to parents bringing their children to school or attending assembly.
- Inspectors examined documents about the school's work, including information about the achievement of students, development planning and the school's self-evaluation.
- They took account of 16 responses to the Parent View online questionnaire, and the school's own survey of parents' and carers' views.

## Inspection team

Edward Wheatley, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Fatiha Maitland	Additional Inspector
Sa'ad Khaldi	Additional Inspector
Graham Marshall	Additional Inspector
Noureddin Khassal	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than most schools. It is an all-through academy, catering for students throughout their primary and secondary education.
- Just under half of the students come from White British backgrounds and just under a quarter are from Black African families. The great majority of students speak English, and some are at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school loses some of its students at the end of Year 6 and Year 11 to go to local grammar schools.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. This is additional government funding for children looked after by the local authority and students known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Some students receive part of their education off site. This is at 'Construct', set up by the academy to provide vocational training in skills associated with the building and construction industry. It is used by other schools in the area and is inspected separately.
- A privately managed nursery shares the school site and this is inspected separately.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' progress and attainment in English and mathematics, at the end of Years 6 and 11.
- The academy has an executive principal, a headteacher for the secondary school and a consultant headteacher in the primary school.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and students' achievement by making sure that:
  - work is demanding for all students
  - learning is fast paced
  - students produce detailed, neat written work
  - classroom assistants work consistently to ensure the students they work with develop independent learning skills, and listen to the teachers when they are talking
  - teachers mark students' work frequently, telling them how to improve their work, and checking that they follow the advice they are given.
- Improve the facilities for outdoor learning to ensure all Reception children have more opportunities to take part in outdoor learning activities.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students achieve well throughout the school. Standards are rising and progress is steadily improving.
- Children in Reception make good progress. They start with much lower than expected skills, especially in literacy, and personal, social and emotional skills. Most achieve the skills expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1, and their progress is improving.
- By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average. This is higher than in recent years and part of an upward trend. The proportion of students reaching the higher Levels 5 and 6 remains below average, but is better than it has been. Standards in all years are rising.
- Students' progress from below average attainment on entry to Year 1 is good. In all years, progress is good, sometimes excellent, and is improving.
- By Year 6, students' reading skills are broadly average. Students link sounds and letters together competently to read unfamiliar words. They enjoy reading, and read regularly. Standards of writing are broadly average, and students write carefully, using a wide vocabulary. They express themselves well.
- Students have broadly average numeracy skills by Year 6. They carry out basic mathematical procedures competently, and have secure mental mathematical skills.
- Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 11. The proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, in 2012 was close to average, and better than in recent years. In humanities subjects, where results were particularly low in 2012, standards are rising.
- Students make good progress from below average levels on entry to Year 7. The pace of progress is improving steadily in all years and all subjects.
- Students have good reading skills, which they practise in most subjects. They speak well and readily explain their ideas and understanding. However, while most students write well, some do not. These students write too briefly so that they do not explain their understanding and knowledge well enough. Their work is often untidy.
- Their mathematical skills are broadly average, and most students in Years 7 to 11 apply and practise the skills they are taught competently in several subjects.
- Throughout the school, students with special educational needs make good progress. This is because teachers and classroom assistants are sensitive to their particular needs, and support and guide them well. They encourage students to work independently, and to work with other students.
- Students at the early stages of learning English make good progress. Other students help them and make sure they are included in the work they do, and staff provide effective guidance and support for them.

- Students eligible for the pupil premium funding make good progress. Funding is used very effectively to provide staff for individual and small-group support. By Year 11, the standards they reach are broadly average, and better than similar students nationally in English and broadly the same as in mathematics. The gap between them and other students has further narrowed in the current year to being about one term behind in English and a little more than this in mathematics.
- Students in the sixth form make good progress from below average starting points, and the standards they reach are broadly average. Under new sixth form leadership, and improved selection and guidance for courses, students' progress is improving. Students have done best in vocational courses in the past, but performance in academic courses is improving.
- In the past, many students have moved to local grammar schools to follow 'A' and 'AS' level courses, but more now stay to complete their studies in the school. Some have started courses at other schools, and have then returned because they have preferred being at The Business Academy.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good. Some teaching is outstanding and is setting a challenging target for all teachers to reach.
- Teaching is usually challenging and based on accurate assessment of students' past progress, and what their learning needs are. Extension activities and challenging questions to encourage the most-able students to make good or excellent progress are used well. Support for slower learners is equally good, with carefully planned activities and individual support to help them make good progress.
- Occasionally, work is not as demanding as it should be, and students' progress slows for a short time. In these lessons, too, the pace of learning is often too slow.
- Activities in lessons are generally well planned to capture students' interest and imagination. The extensive use of small-group and whole-class discussion, and opportunities for students to make their own choices and decisions contribute well to their confidence to explain their understanding and their wish to succeed. Collaborating with other students effectively promotes the development of their moral, social and cultural skills.
- Teachers generally encourage students to write about their understanding and to use the ideas they develop through discussion and collaboration with other students. However, sometimes teachers do not ensure that students write in enough detail or neatly.
- In most lessons, the partnership between teachers and classroom assistants to ensure students receive the support they need to learn well, is good. However, occasionally, classroom assistants give too much direction to students, rather than encouraging them to be independent, and do not make sure that they pay attention when they should.
- Teachers' questioning is searching. Teachers do not accept simple or brief answers, but expect students to explain what they mean fully, and continue to question them to encourage very detailed responses.
- Teachers' marking at its best gives students a clear picture of the levels they are reaching, what

the next steps in learning are, how work can be improved, and they check that students follow any advice given. Some marking is infrequent, and lacks sufficient detail to guide students on how to improve their work or make further progress.

- There are good links between subjects. For example, a whole-school numeracy policy in the primary school ensures students develop secure numeracy skills. Links with numeracy work in the secondary school help continuity in mathematical development. The secondary school provides community numeracy activities for primary school students. These are well supported by students from the primary school, and also from twelve other local schools.
- The range of subjects taught is good. Students' academic and vocational aspirations are well met. Some students take GCSE mathematics at the end of Year 10 and students benefit from this. If they achieve high grades, they then study for a higher-level mathematics qualification, and if they do not do as well as expected, they take the examination again at the end of Year 11.
- Teaching in the Reception classes is good. Children are encouraged to work and play independently. Teachers focus on encouraging children to speak to each other and to adults, and this enriches their vocabulary and their confidence to speak at length. Relationships between adults and children are extremely good, encouraging children to confidently ask for help with work if they need it.
- The Reception classes make good use of the available outdoor learning area; however, it is too small for the number of classes using it, and limits the time children can take part in learning activities outside.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good, and often excellent. Expertise in teaching in the sixth form is improving, and the curriculum is widening to cater for the increasing number of students with academic aspirations. The individual support for students is particularly good, making sure students are well prepared for examinations.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour and attitudes of both primary and secondary students are good, and frequently excellent. There is a small amount of unacceptable behaviour, but the great majority of students do not accept this, and are not influenced by it in any way to misbehave themselves.
- Relationships are very good. Students treat each other with exceptional respect and consideration. They work together very well in lessons and are patient when someone is slow to learn. They help each other readily, but are quick to comment if someone they know has not learned something they should have learned.
- Students take on responsibilities readily, and carry them out conscientiously. Older students in the primary stage help younger ones. Students throughout the school help raise money for charities, and represent their classmates' and years' views on student councils. Secondary students help primary school students, for example, at the community mathematics evenings, and serve in the community.
- Membership of the student councils is eagerly sought, and there is a waiting list in case places become available. Students see it as important to serve their school, and others see it as valuable in terms of their own development, and to be able to refer to it when seeking employment or places at college or university.

- Students are keen to improve how well the school is regarded locally. They have been into shops to tell owners what level of behaviour they should expect from students, and who on the student council they should contact if that high standard is not met.
- Students of all ages recognise that there is a small amount of bullying and have a very good understanding of the different forms of bullying. However, they say it is dealt with extremely quickly and effectively. They feel happy to go to any member of the student council or member of staff if they need help.
- Students generally take pride in the work they do, and are pleased to 'show off' their successes. For example, they are enthusiastic that their artwork is admired, and are proud of their school.
- Attendance is above average. There is little persistent absence, and all absence is dealt with speedily. Secondary exclusions were high, briefly, as a result of a new behaviour management policy. However, exclusion has reduced significantly and is used appropriately to deal with unacceptable behaviour.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The executive principal, headteachers of the primary and secondary stages, and other senior leaders provide excellent direction for the school's work. Their enthusiasm and relentless efforts to push through improvement are having a positive effect on the support they receive from other staff, and how effectively improvements, especially in teaching, are implemented.
- Senior leaders, and most other leaders, have a clear grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Procedures to check on the effectiveness of teachers are good overall, and less experienced leaders are helped to rapidly gain the skills they need to drive improvement in their own areas of responsibility.
- The school has dealt with problems of inadequate teaching well, and is supporting teachers to become good or outstanding. Teachers have targets to help them improve their work. These are closely linked to students' progress, and to the priorities the school has for its overall improvement.
- The school conducts much of its own training internally, and it does this well. It also uses the expertise from other schools, consultants, business, universities and colleges extremely well to promote better teaching.
- The school organises the subjects it teaches very effectively. Under the leadership of the executive headteacher and other headteachers, the primary and secondary parts of the school are close to merging the times of lessons so that there can be closer ties between the subjects taught. Trips and visitors support students' learning well. For example, an artist-in-residence helped primary school students produce impressive African masks. Older students visit universities and businesses to help them understand higher education and commercial or industrial work.
- The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well and has a significant impact on the positive values that students develop. Lifelong learning skills are promoted through citizenship, respect for each other, regard for the community, and care for the environment. Wonder at aspects of religion and nature are built into much of what

is taught.

- The school works effectively to eliminate all forms of discrimination and intolerance. Students speak highly of the school's effectiveness in eliminating discrimination, and see it as part of their responsibility to reflect this approach to encouraging understanding and tolerance for people from different backgrounds.
- The school works extremely well to ensure all groups of students make equally good progress. There is little difference in the progress made by different groups of students. Standards are rising, teaching is improving and attendance and behaviour have improved. The school's capacity for further improvement is strong.
- Parents and carers are pleased with the school, and the school's survey of their views confirms this. There is a significant number of hard-to-reach parents and carers, and the school arranges activities to attract them into school. For example, several attend the community mathematics programme, and others come to primary school assemblies. Those spoken to during the inspection spoke highly of the recent improvements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body and sponsor support the school extremely well. Governors are well trained, and have a very good understanding of how their students' achievement compares with that of students nationally and in other local schools. They plan the use of funds carefully, focusing on groups of students who do not do as well as others, and check how effective the expenditure is in raising standards. For example, they checked the impact of funds to support students entitled to the pupil premium funding, and are delighted with their good progress. They check that the school's procedures to evaluate how well teachers teach, and that their progress on salary scales are related to students' progress, teachers' professional training and the school's priorities for improvement. They research the cost and effectiveness of new resources well before purchasing them. The governing body ensures safeguarding requirements are fully met, and that checks are made on the suitability of all staff employed in the school.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	133769
<b>Local authority</b>	Bexley
<b>Inspection number</b>	402584

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1527
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	157
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tim Garnham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christina Moon (Executive principal)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	02083 204800
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