

BRIT School for the Performing Arts & Technology

60 The Crescent, Croydon, CR0 2HN

Inspection dates 20–21 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students attain very high standards and make outstanding progress in their vocational courses.
- Students' behaviour is mature and considerate. They respect each other and all staff. This contributes to the school's special and vibrant atmosphere.
- Students are fully committed to their performing arts or technology studies and enjoy learning. They work extremely hard towards their career aspirations.
- Learning is often exciting, particularly in the vocational sessions. It is delivered by skilful teachers who use their professional expertise to generate outstanding performances and technological work.
- Many students enter rewarding careers which reflect the unique qualities of the BRIT school and its high reputation in the performing arts and technical professions and industries.
- The sixth form is outstanding and well managed. Practically every Year 13 student proceeds into higher or further education, employment or training.
- The principal's and governors' leadership is outstanding; they have made significant positive changes while maintaining the school's dynamism.
- Senior leaders, middle leaders and managers work together very effectively to provide both academic and pastoral support. They are fully supportive of the new principal.
- The school's work in the local and wider community is exceptional. Numerous children and adult organisations benefit from the students' talents and their willingness to share them with others.
- Students relish the large number of trips, visits and overseas experiences they have in addition to the rich curriculum.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students, particularly the most able, do not do well enough in some academic subjects, particularly in GCSE but also at AS and A level.
- In some academic subjects, students' learning is held back because their notes are occasionally disorganised and teachers' feedback does not help them to know how to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 50 part-lessons (two with a member of the senior leadership team), an assembly and performances, rehearsals and community activities.
- Inspectors held meetings with several groups of students, members of the senior leadership team, leaders in charge of subjects and other aspects of the school’s work, and other staff with positions of responsibility. The lead inspector met four members of the governing body, the school improvement partner and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors discussed lessons they had seen with teaching staff and examined a range of documents, including the school’s own evaluation and improvement plans. Data about progress, standards, exclusions, attendance and behaviour was also considered.
- Inspectors looked at a range of students’ academic work and vocational coursework.
- Inspectors took into account 129 parents’ responses to Ofsted’s online Parent View questionnaire, an email received from a parent and questionnaires completed by 78 members of staff.

Inspection team

Clare Gillies, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Patricia Slonecki	Additional inspector
Joanne Stuart	Additional inspector
Pamela Rutherford	Additional inspector
Gill Walley	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The principal took up post in September 2012.
- The school is slightly larger than the average-sized secondary school but it only has students in Years 10 to 14. Over two thirds of the students are in the sixth form, which is much larger than most secondary school sixth forms.
- There are more girls than boys in all years except Year 14.
- A well-above-average proportion of students come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Students from a Black Caribbean or Black African heritage form the two main groups, with very small percentages from many other heritages.
- A well-below-average proportion of students speak English as an additional language, of whom very few are at an early stage of learning English.
- An average proportion of students is eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for specific groups, including looked-after children, students known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families. The school has a few looked-after children and no children of service families.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is just above average. The most common needs relate to specific and moderate learning difficulties, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, and the autistic spectrum.
- The school does not use any alternative, off-site education provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve progress in academic subjects where students underachieve by making sure that:
 - teachers give all students work that fully stretches them
 - students, particularly the most able, focus on attaining a greater number of high grades
 - teachers give students high quality feedback on their work so that they know how well they are doing and understand how to improve it
 - students keep neat and well-organised notes so that they can easily revise from them and keep track of their learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- In 2013 most Year 13 students achieved the equivalent of three A-level A*/A grades in visual art and design, dance, music, musical theatre and theatre. A-level dance and AS-level theatre studies results were also high.
- In the same year most of Year 11 students achieved the equivalent of four GCSE A*/A grades in visual arts and design, music, music theatre and theatre courses. All obtained A*/A in dance. GCSE results in art and design, media studies, textiles, drama and music were also well above average.
- Students who receive extra educational funding achieve as well as others on vocational courses. In GCSEs their results are similar or close to others'. In 2013, their results were around one third of a GCSE grade lower in English and mathematics. In these subjects they made more progress than similar students nationally and only slightly less progress than other students in the school.
- There is also little difference in the progress made by different ethnic groups, girls and boys, those with disabilities and special educational needs or looked-after children and others. Girls attain higher GCSE results than boys because their starting points are often slightly higher.
- Students read widely and enjoy doing research, some of which is suggested by teachers. Their writing is improving and this is combined with ensuring that students speak formal English correctly and clearly.
- No students are entered early for GCSE examinations.
- Achievement is not outstanding because the well-above-average progress made in practically all vocational qualifications is not seen in some academic subjects. Students who attained high standards at the end of primary school did not always achieve well enough in their GCSEs, especially in mathematics and science. A-level results, more than AS ones, reflect a little underachievement based on students' GCSE scores.
- Actions taken by senior leaders have dealt with several of the factors contributing to the weaknesses in academic performance.

The quality of teaching is good

- As a result of high quality teaching, the energy, determination and patience students display in vocational sessions is breath-taking: dancers exhaust themselves perfecting jazz routines and mastering new moves; interactive media students stay glued to their computer screens tackling complex 3D work or logo designs; musical theatre students sing enthusiastically as they master techniques or four-part harmony; and visual art and design students concentrate superbly.
- The exceptional learning in vocational lessons is underpinned by teachers inspiring students with their professional experience and deep knowledge of the performing arts and technology. Students' rapid improvement over time is particularly evident in rehearsals; for example, Year 13 students skilfully directed Year 12 actors, who were supported by theatre technician students displaying professional-level skills.
- Carefully steered by teachers, students learn by sharing and discussing their work with each other. Year 10 students contributed excellent creative ideas about how to use a zooming, multi-media tool in theatre work.
- Teaching and learning are not yet consistently outstanding because some students have underachieved in a few academic subjects, particularly in mathematics in all years, in science in Years 10 and 11, and in English in the sixth form to a lesser degree. This is because teachers do not always give students work that fully stretches them, particularly those who are most able.
- Those students with disabilities and special educational needs are well supported by teachers who ensure they are fully involved in lessons; for example, a teacher was observed scribing for a student who could not quickly get her ideas down.
- Students enjoy how teachers make learning fun; for example, they liked throwing a dice in

French and the number obtained determined how many sentences a student had to speak. Students also enjoyed experimenting with different equipment in a physical education lesson focused on fitness.

- The school's focus on extending students' literacy and speaking skills is evident in many lessons. Progress in English has gathered pace this year, accompanied by charts in all classrooms to promote accurate writing.
- In subjects where students do well, they receive quality feedback from marking which helps them understand how to improve their work. They also have well-organised and neat notes which help them to keep track of their learning and to revise. These elements are still not evident in all academic subjects, although things have improved this year.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students join the school appreciating that they are privileged to be there. They make the most of the numerous opportunities they have. Determined to succeed in their vocational courses, they work extremely hard, practising and studying for many hours on end and participating in numerous productions and events.
- The behaviour of students is outstanding. They get on together extremely well and also with their teachers. Respectful relationships underpin the school's success. Bullying is so rare that not one parent who responded to the inspection questionnaire had concerns about it, and students confidently say it does not happen.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Students feel very safe and appreciate the site staff being around at the end of evening events.
- The school energetically promotes understanding and tolerance of all differing skills and abilities, personal lifestyles and beliefs. Through assemblies and personal development lessons students consider such areas as the dangers of social networking and lesbian, gay and transgender issues. Students know that discrimination is not tolerated because all must have equal opportunities to succeed.
- Students' attendance is improving from the national average. Exclusions are extremely rare.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- As soon as he took up post 18 months ago, the principal instigated huge improvements, such as tackling the imbalance between the vocational and academic results. He also ensured that students' starting points were measured accurately. He initiated a review of the support given to students with disabilities and special educational needs and, as a result, support for these students has been extended. As a result of these and other many significant changes, staff morale is high and the principal's outstanding leadership is well respected.
- Both the principal and governors have a clear vision for the school and know where there is still work to be done. This confirms the school's outstanding capacity to improve in the future. The principal values external support and advice from the school's improvement partner and the local authority, which provides light-touch support.
- Evaluation of how additional funds were spent last year revealed that some students certainly benefited from study skills training or support from learning mentors. Progress in academic subjects is better this year because leaders have directed additional funds to pay for more English and mathematics teachers.
- Teachers are set challenging targets and a new pay policy is being introduced so that any increase in their salary depends on students making at least the expected progress from their starting points. Senior leaders assess the quality of teaching accurately and the principal quickly confronts teaching which is not good enough.
- The quality of training and guidance for all staff has improved because it is clearly linked to senior leaders' lesson observations. Learning support assistants, for example, have attended

autism and dyslexia training and middle leaders are attending courses to strengthen their leadership skills.

- The directors and leaders of vocational and academic subjects are very supportive of the changes being introduced. They work tirelessly for students, who observe that 'they always go the extra mile'.
- The subjects students learn, particularly in the sixth form, are weighted towards vocational courses, with a good choice of AS- and A-level subjects to choose from as well as options such as theatre make-up or workshops on animation. The small amount of time for academic courses, combined with some students studying too many of them or missing lessons for rehearsals, does not help them to achieve the highest grades possible. This has been recognised by leaders and changes are planned.
- The school's promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is outstanding, and underpins the school's outstanding community work. Events seen during the inspection encapsulate the school's enormous number of inspiring community activities. For example, students from the community arts practice course worked enthusiastically helping primary pupils to enjoy Shakespeare.
- The school supports many UK and overseas schools. All such links make BRIT students thoughtful and generous fundraisers.
- Numerous organisations contribute to the school financially and in other ways. Students have amazing opportunities to develop their working and social awareness, whether backstage at the BRIT awards or visiting a European school to learn computer programming expertise.
- All students stay on between Years 12 and 13. A dedicated team gives them outstanding guidance and advice about their future plans. Its success is seen in the breadth of higher education and jobs students move into.
- Parents are pleased that the principal has increased the amount of information they receive. Almost all of them who responded to the questionnaire gave extremely positive responses and would recommend the school to others.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors' outstanding support and critical analysis of the school's work are underpinned by their wealth of expertise in the relevant professions. They know where achievement or teaching is not good enough, understand progress data and discuss and carefully evaluate how extra funding is spent. They fully endorse sharper links between teachers' performance and their salary progression.
 - Governors fully support all the principal's past and planned improvements, such as those for a consultant to work with the special educational needs staff. The governing body ensures that all statutory safeguarding and child protection requirements are met.

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

Unique reference number	101849
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	440951

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Other secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	14–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,171
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	804
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Burger
Principal	Stuart Worden
Date of previous school inspection	27–28 February 2008
Telephone number	020 8665 5242
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