

# Bower Park Academy

Havering Road, Romford, Essex RM1 4YY

## Inspection dates

7–8 December 2016

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Inadequate</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Inadequate</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Inadequate</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	<b>Requires improvement</b>

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and governors have been far too slow to improve outcomes for pupils since the previous inspection. In many subjects, including mathematics and science, progress is inadequate.
- Previous governors have not held leaders to account or challenged them to improve the quality of education for pupils.
- Performance management is weak. Targets do not link effectively with school improvement priorities. Targets are not rigorous enough to hold teachers and leaders to account.
- Leaders are not rigorous in their use of self-evaluation, including evaluating the impact of teaching on learning. The school improvement plan is not focused on the key activities, groups of pupils or subjects needed to raise standards.
- Teachers are not consistently using the school's feedback policy. As a result, too many pupils are unable to move forward with their learning.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, make inadequate progress. The proportion of these pupils with an A\* to C grade in English and mathematics is low. Pupil premium funding is not used effectively to meet their needs.
- Teaching lacks challenge, particularly for the most able. Teachers do not sufficiently use the information they have to stretch pupils in their learning and to make them think more deeply. Teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving are not high enough.
- Assessment processes, particularly at key stage 3, are not giving leaders the information needed to accurately evaluate the quality of teaching and the impact it is having on particular groups of pupils.
- There is a wide variability in the quality of leadership at all levels. There is too much inconsistency across the school. Consequently, over time, the quality of teaching has not led to improved life chances for pupils.

### The school has the following strengths

- Staff know pupils well, particularly those who are vulnerable. As a result, pupils benefit from early help when needed.
- The curriculum is improving. Pupils now benefit from studying appropriate courses relative to their different abilities. Strategies to improve pupils' reading skills are showing impact.
- There are pockets of effective teaching in some subjects, including art and design, drama, physical education and religious education.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and friendly. They report that bullying is rare and that they feel safe at the school.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

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

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that the school improvement plan focuses on specific activities and includes measurable outcomes that will allow governors to hold leaders at all levels to account for their impact on the achievement of pupils
  - improving how pupil progress is monitored, particularly at key stage 3, leaders are focused on progress from starting points as a basis for judging the quality of teaching over time
  - ensuring that senior and middle leaders are consistently effective in their roles
  - ensuring that leaders and governors routinely evaluate pupil premium expenditure so that it is focused on activities that improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, including the most able
  - ensuring that systems for managing attendance and behaviour provide information so that leaders can identify any emerging trends and patterns for different groups of pupils
  - refining how teachers' performance is evaluated by focusing on the progress that pupils make when judging the quality of teaching over time.
- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching so that outcomes for pupils significantly increase, particularly in mathematics and science, by:
  - ensuring that all teachers use the information they have about pupils' starting points to plan learning activities that challenge pupils, including the most able, to achieve the grades of which they are capable
  - all teachers using the school's assessment policy to give high-quality feedback to pupils so that they are clear about what they have to do to improve their learning
  - all teachers demonstrating the highest expectations of what pupils should be learning appropriate to the age and stage of their education
  - developing effective opportunities for pupils to practise and deepen their mathematical skills across the curriculum.
- An external review of the school's use of pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.
- The school should only appoint newly qualified teachers after discussion with HMI in the London region.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- Leaders and governors have been woefully slow to implement the improvements needed since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching has declined over time and as a result, too many groups of pupils, including boys, disadvantaged and the most able, have made inadequate progress.
- The new interim headteacher and the executive headteacher are aware of the considerable issues facing the school. However, leaders have taken too long to finalise their self-evaluation and to use their findings to develop a coherent and structured school improvement plan. As a result, it is unclear what key actions are needed to be taken to make a greater difference to pupil outcomes. The improvement plan does not allow governors to hold leaders to account for their impact on the achievement of different key stages, groups of pupils or subjects.
- Leaders at all levels are working hard to improve the school. However, there is too much new activity that lacks coordination. Leaders are not focused enough on the key actions that secure improvement. Leaders cannot sufficiently reference and articulate the impact of their work, particularly for the most able and disadvantaged pupils.
- The targets set as part of managing the performance of leaders and teachers are not sufficiently linked to school improvement priorities. Evaluations of teaching by leaders do not sufficiently address how well teachers are enabling their pupils to make gains in their subject knowledge, skills and understanding. Assessment information is not typically used to evaluate teaching over time.
- The leadership of the use of pupil premium funding has been unacceptable. There is no evaluation of last year's expenditure. Only recently has the plan for this year been completed. The plan does not target funding for the most able disadvantaged pupils. This is a key group of pupils who are significantly underachieving. Therefore, an external review of pupil premium funding is recommended and should include a focus on how the needs of the most able disadvantaged pupils are met.
- Leaders are now offering a range of professional opportunities for staff. These focus on the school's strategy of a 'teacher effectiveness enhancement programme'. Staff welcome this strategy. It is too early to measure the impact of these initiatives on improving final outcomes for pupils. Teachers new to the profession feel particularly well supported.
- Leaders monitor the progress being made by pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, leadership of the funding for deployment and training of learning support assistants is not ensuring that the support provided to students is having an impact on helping pupils to make enough progress, particularly in subjects such as mathematics and science.
- Leaders have recognised the weaknesses in the previous curriculum. Previously too many pupils at key stage 4 studied a narrow range of subjects. The new curriculum model is ensuring that by the end of key stage 4, pupils will now be studying more-challenging qualifications reflective of their abilities. Pupils value the range of extra-

curricular opportunities available to them, including physical education and in the arts.

- Leaders use alternative provision to effectively meet the needs of pupils needing additional support outside of school. Pupils' attendance and progress is monitored closely throughout the time they spend in external provision.
- Pupils have a range of opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The 'form time rituals' give an effective start to the school day. Inspectors saw pupils reflecting on the highlights of their week and recording these in their journals. Pupils have a secure understanding of British values, including democracy and individual liberty. They also learn about human rights, the significance of Remembrance Day and take part in fundraising activities for charities. Pupils say that they would like more trips for out-of-school learning, including visiting other countries.

### **Governance of the school**

- A new interim transition board (ITB) has taken responsibility for the accountability of the school since it joined the Empower Learning Academy Trust on 1 September 2016. Although it is just a few months since the ITB was formed, it has rapidly come to an understanding of the challenges facing the school. Members are beginning to put in place the strategies necessary to improve the school. They are now providing more challenge to school leaders, particularly about the low standards of education. As a result, there is no recommendation made for an external review of governance.
- The previous governance was inadequate. Governors did not challenge school leaders and they did not hold them to account. As a result, standards at the school have declined significantly since the previous inspection.
- The ITB have not, as noted in their scheme of delegation, ensured that the self-evaluation and school improvement plan is of the quality needed to secure the rapid transformation of the school.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders take swift action to deal with any risk to the welfare and well-being of any of the pupils. Vulnerable pupils are particularly well cared for. Leaders are tenacious in their monitoring of any pupil at risk of being missing from education. They rigorously follow the local authority protocols, including for parents who elect to home educate their child. The training provided to staff is regular. Leaders monitor the impact of training carefully, for example through the referrals they receive. All pre-employment recruitment checks are compliant with statutory requirements.
- There are some areas where leaders have not sharpened their procedures, for example by ensuring that all policies around safeguarding such as anti-bullying are updated and that the school's public sector equality duty is up to date. This will give confidence to parents and carers who, for example, use the school website to access policies.
- Pupils report that they feel safe at school and that bullying is rare. Pupils learn about a range of strategies to keep themselves safe, both inside and outside of school. Pupils

can talk about what they have learned about e-safety, street safety and anti-bullying. Parental replies to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, typically agree that their child is happy and safe at the school.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Inadequate

- Leaders' actions since the previous inspection have not improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. It is inadequate.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are not challenging enough. Expectations about what pupils are capable of achieving are too low.
- Teachers are not consistently using the information they have about pupils in their classes to ensure that they plan stimulating activities that make pupils think. When this is the case, pupils become distracted and they lose interest.
- Feedback to pupils from their teachers is not consistent with the school's assessment policy. Pupils do not typically receive feedback that improves their subject knowledge and understanding. This means pupils are not able to respond to high-quality feedback where they can move forward with their learning.
- Pupils' confidence in using and applying their mathematical skills is well below age-related expectations. Older pupils often struggle with concepts and skills that they should have learned at a much younger age.
- Boys have weaker literacy skills than girls. They do not have the same confidence in the accuracy of their spelling, grammar and punctuation when writing.
- Assessment procedures at key stage 3 are at an early stage of development. Leaders have not ensured that this system is useful in monitoring the quality of teaching over time.
- The quality of teaching for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities varies. Leaders have not fully secured an accurate deployment of support where the skills of the learning support assistants match the subjects where they are helping pupils to learn.
- There is effective teaching at the school. Where teaching is exciting and engaging, such as in drama, art and design or physical education, pupils respond to challenges, show resilience and take risks in their learning. As a result, outcomes for pupils in these subjects are an academic strength in the school.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Requires improvement

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils receive appropriate careers advice and guidance. They have personalised interviews with either senior staff or the careers advisor. Leaders ensure that any pupils at risk of not being in education, employment and training are identified and supported.

- Leaders acknowledge that the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils would benefit from more bespoke work in relation to careers and guidance to raise their aspirations. Likewise, leaders are improving the curriculum offer to ensure that pupils' future economic well-being is improved by access to the courses that are academically appropriate.
- Pupils are not consistently resilient in their own learning, and this limits their personal development. They are very reliant on the teacher to support them. When learning activities chosen by the teacher needs pupils to work independently or when they find the work difficult, pupils tend to call out to each other or the teacher for immediate support.
- Pupils are well cared for. Leaders, including the newly established 'care team', are ensuring that the school is inclusive and that staff are approachable. This is a strength of the school. Vulnerable pupils, including young carers, are identified, monitored and fully supported.
- Staff know pupils and their needs individually. Referrals to the local authority or to external agencies are quickly followed up. Inspectors looked at several case studies and case files which showed that staff do not leave any stone unturned in securing the welfare and emotional well-being of pupils.
- Pupils at the school feel safe. Pupils are confident in talking about how to keep themselves safe, including when online and using new technologies.
- Pupils attending alternative provision are monitored closely. Only providers recommended by the local authority are used. The school's attendance officer routinely checks attendance. Leaders have a chronological file in place for each pupil attending alternative provision, listing the actions and contact made to check on pupils' well-being. This is effectively ensuring that targeted pupils benefit from educational provision that best meets their needs.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The interim headteacher and the ITB prioritised improving behaviour at the beginning of the academic year. A new behaviour policy has been implemented and this has seen rates of exclusion increase, particularly for boys. Leaders have made it clear to pupils that certain behaviour such as fighting or rudeness to staff will not be tolerated. Not all teachers consistently follow the school behaviour for learning policy.
- Staff and pupils report that behaviour is improving. Only 61% of parents who responded to Parent View strongly agreed or agreed that pupils were well behaved. This was one of the questions that elicited the lowest proportion of 'strongly agree' or 'agree' responses.
- Pupils do not routinely have a positive attitude to the presentation of their work. The quality of work can vary. It was more common to see this with boys. Boys also tended to leave some of their work incomplete. Inspectors did hear the use of bad language from older pupils during the inspection, particularly at the end of the school day.
- Overall attendance has improved over the last two years and is now just below the national average. The increase in exclusions has had a negative impact on the current overall attendance. Leaders monitor the attendance of individual pupils but have not

created a system where they are able to effectively monitor the attendance and behaviour of different groups of pupils. This is preventing them from being able to identify and intervene when patterns or trends emerge.

- Pupils are compliant, polite and friendly. Pupils hold doors open for visitors, they say 'good morning' or 'good afternoon'. Pupils are respectful to each other and they integrate well. Uniform standards are high. Areas outside of school are appropriately supervised.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Inadequate

- Outcomes are inadequate because pupils make weak progress over time from their starting points, particularly by the end of key stage 4. Progress compared to the national average is too low in too many subjects, including mathematics and science. For example, in 2016 provisional information indicates that boys' achievement in science will be three quarters of a grade below the national average. In mathematics, disadvantaged pupils' achievement is almost one full grade below.
- Provisional outcomes from 2016 show a sharp decline from the previous year. This was for almost all groups of pupils, including boys, the most able, disadvantaged pupils and the most able disadvantaged pupils. Standards are therefore unacceptably low.
- The progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, over time shows considerable underachievement. Pupils have not attained the level of literacy and numeracy required to secure access to the education, employment or training that reflects their starting points and aspirations. At the heart of this has been weak leadership of pupil premium funding and a lack of challenge for pupils to do better.
- Pupils across the school, particularly at key stage 4, have not made sufficient gains in their mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding. As a result of weak teaching over time, pupils are routinely unable to access mathematical problems and questions that they should already have mastered. Inspectors found evidence that Year 11 most-able pupils had completed work in their books that involved mental mathematics questions that pupils in key stage 3 had completed. Leaders acknowledge that this is not acceptable, and this is no longer happening.
- Due to poor teaching in the past, predictions provided by school leaders show that it will take time for outcomes to improve across the school. As a result, pupils in Year 11 are still predicted to make well below average progress in the 2017 end of key stage public examinations. Leaders are adding capacity to address this, including working with teachers from another school in the trust to add support to mathematics and science in particular. While leaders are hopeful that predictions will be exceeded, it is too early to see the impact of this.
- Key stage 3 outcomes are not secure because the system used by leaders is not showing progress from starting points. The information that is provided by leaders supports inadequate progress in some subjects, including mathematics. Leaders agree that assessment in mathematics requires further work to be more accurate.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are small in number. By the end of key stage 4 in 2016, they tended to make better progress in English and

humanities. Leaders with responsibility for special educational needs are aware that pupils are not making the same rates of progress in science and mathematics as they are in other subjects such as English.

- Reading is improving. Leaders have decided to have a 'five minute' reading session at the beginning of each lesson. Pupils, particularly at key stage 3, report that they enjoy the way that this promotes reading. The most able pupils read fluently. The lower-ability pupils that inspectors listened to reading struggled with breaking down words that they were finding trickier to pronounce. Pupils in the 'nurture' literacy group have made rapid gains in their reading. They were pleased to tell inspectors how their reading confidence had improved.
- There are good outcomes in subjects such as art and design and drama, where results were high in 2016. Similarly, subjects such as physical education and religious education had strong results. This is because teachers are skilled in engaging and challenging pupils in their learning.



## School details

Unique reference number	139307
Local authority	Havering
Inspection number	10019678

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	760
Appropriate authority	Interim transition board
Chair	Dave Harries
Interim headteacher	Ashley Dixon
Telephone number	01708 730244
Website	<a href="http://www.bowerpark.co.uk">www.bowerpark.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@bowerpark.havering.sch.uk">office@bowerpark.havering.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	24–25 September 2014

## Information about this school

- The school is a smaller-than-average sized secondary school.
- The school joined the Empower Learning Academy Trust on 1 September 2016, which consists of Bower Park Academy and two other secondary schools. There is an executive headteacher overseeing the three schools.
- The school received a warning notice from the regional schools commissioner for the east of England and north east London in May 2016 for low standards.
- The headteacher is currently absent from school. The interim headteacher has been in post since 1 September 2016.
- Pupils who attend the school have significantly below average prior attainment from their primary school education.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is above the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The school has a small number of pupils who attend alternative provision, including Future Gateways, Havering College, Redbridge College, The Bridge Tuition Centre, BEP Group, Falltricks, Motorvations and the National Teaching and Advisory Service.
- The school currently meets the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on their website about the school's most recent key stage 4 results, curriculum information for each subject for each academic year, pupil premium statement, a complete Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up report, information in relation to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the required governance information.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish on their website information about exclusion arrangements, and how the school is complying with its public sector equality duty.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a variety of subjects and year groups. Several of these were joint observations undertaken with school leaders. The inspection team also looked at the work in books in a variety of subjects.
- Meetings were held with both senior and middle leaders to evaluate the impact of their work. Meetings were also held with members of the ITB, trainee teachers, the executive headteacher and different groups of pupils.
- Inspectors took into account the views of the 13 parents who had responded to Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire. There were no replies to the staff or pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors scrutinised a variety of documentation provided by the school, including: assessment information for 2016 provisional outcomes and pupils currently at the school in key stages 3 and 4; self-evaluation; the school improvement plan; the scheme of delegation; minutes of meetings; attendance and behaviour information; case studies; case files; the single central record of recruitment checks and other information relating to the safeguarding of pupils.

## Inspection team

Sam Hainey, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Jude Wilson	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Johanna Davey	Ofsted Inspector
Gerard Strong	Ofsted Inspector

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