



City of London Academy (Southwark)

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134222
LEA Not Applicable
Inspection number 283100
Inspection dates 31 October 2005 to 1 November 2005
Reporting inspector Paul Brooker HMI

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

Type of school	Academy	School address	Lynton Road
School category	Non-maintained		London
Age range of pupils	11 to 19		SE1 5RB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02070537400
Number on roll	565	Fax number	02082995522
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr W Fraser
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mr Martyn Coles

Age group 11 to 19	Inspection dates 31 October 2005 - 1 November 2005	Inspection number 283100
------------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

The City of London Academy is a new and technologically advanced school in Bermondsey in the London Borough of Southwark. It has specialisms in business and enterprise, and in sports. Excellent information and communication technology classrooms and sporting amenities are amongst its outstanding facilities. The academy moved into its new buildings in September 2005, six weeks before the inspection, following two years in temporary accommodation on two different sites. It is in its third year of its phased growth: approximately 180 pupils and 18 additional teachers have been recruited each year. There are currently 531 pupils in Years 7 to 9, and 34 Year 12 students who started in September. With approximately six applicants for each place, the academy is hugely over-subscribed. Nonetheless it is careful to recruit pupils from its immediate locality. Admissions are co-ordinated by the local authority and pupils are admitted equally across five ability bands, in order to ensure a broadly comprehensive intake. The pupil population reflects the academy's immediate inner city catchment: just over half the pupils are of white British heritage with a wide variety of other ethnic groups represented, including significant proportions from African and Caribbean heritage. A third of pupils are entitled to free school meals; one fifth have special educational needs, including 29 who have a Statement of Special Educational Need; and 12 pupils are at an early stage of language acquisition. All these proportions are above or well above national average figures. The academy is fully staffed with 52 teachers, many of whom are new to teaching.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The phased expansion of the academy has been very well managed, particularly during the two years in cramped and temporary accommodation. Although it is only half full, the academy is already an effective school. It makes good use of its resources to successfully create an excellent teaching environment for its pupils in a very short period of time. There is a clear vision for the academy's future development, based on high expectations of achievement and attainment. The academy has good capacity to improve. The academy offers a suitable curriculum with some innovative features and a good range of wider enrichment opportunities. The staff are hard working and cohesive. The academy's self evaluation is broadly accurate. The rigorous systems for self evaluation give senior and middle managers a clear overview of the academy's strengths and areas for development. This information is well used to provide targeted support, to plan professional development and to guide development planning. Senior leaders correctly judge the quality of teaching and pupil achievement as satisfactory overall, with emerging strengths. The pupils are well cared for, guided and supported. They make satisfactory progress in lessons, and the academy is confident that they are on course to meet the challenging targets set for them. Despite the fact that a significant number of new staff are recruited each year, senior managers have quickly established and embedded agreed routines and practices across the academy. Senior managers recognise the need to further strengthen the quality of teaching and learning, particularly with regard to improving pupils' literacy and in the use of assessment. Suitable priorities are clearly set out in the academy development plan.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

At this early stage of its development the sixth form is satisfactory overall, with some developing strengths. The teaching is good and students make at least satisfactory and often good progress in lessons. The sixth form curriculum is appropriate, given the small number of students. The students themselves feel well cared for, supported and guided by tutors and subject staff, and have their views heard and acted upon. They enjoy full access to the academy's excellent sporting and information and communication technology (ICT) facilities, and have good opportunities to develop skills in business and enterprise.

What the school should do to improve further

* further improve the quality of teaching to increase the proportion that is good or better* make more effective use of assessment to meet the learning needs of pupils of all abilities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The ability profile of pupils on entry to the academy is below average. There is a high proportion of pupils who did not attain the expected levels at the end of their primary education, with a smaller proportion who attained higher levels than is found nationally. Standards of literacy are generally low. The academy has, as yet, no national test or examination results against which to compare standards and achievement. However, it has developed a thorough internal computerised tracking system which records pupil progress, based on regular teacher assessments. The academy's analysis shows that most pupils are making good progress. However, end of year tests last year did not entirely confirm this progress, particularly in science. There have been recent improvements in developing pupils' literacy skills, but weaknesses in this area still act as a barrier to learning for too many pupils. Progress in lessons seen during the inspection was satisfactory. The academy uses its assessment information to set challenging targets for pupils based on their previous attainment, well beyond expected levels of progress. The setting of targets involves pupils, teachers and parents in an on-going dialogue. This ensures that the pupils know what level they are working towards, encourages high aspirations and helps them to understand what they need to do to improve. However, target setting is underdeveloped in the sixth form. Furthermore, although assessment information is well used to track pupil progress, it is not effectively used to inform lesson planning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils are generally very clear about what is meant by a healthy lifestyle, including the importance of good nutrition. The academy takes suitable steps to promote this: food and drink which are high in fat and sugar content are not sold in the dining area. Lessons make pupils aware of potential threats to health, for example from alcohol and drug abuse. The pupils who spoke to inspectors reported that the staff are effective in dealing with incidents of bullying or harassment, which are few in number. The pupils like their academy and are proud of its excellent facilities. They appreciate the very wide range of activities available to them outside lessons. Levels of participation in extra-curricular activities are very high. The pupils have numerous opportunities to take responsibility and to contribute to the life of the academy and to the community more widely. They are given good opportunities to show initiative and to collaborate with each other, for example by organising sports practices and fund-raising for charitable causes. The student council is active and has real influence. Overall, the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the academy is satisfactory overall and often good. In general, relationships are good. Most pupils show respect for adults and consideration for others as they move around the site, although occasionally they are unduly loud or boisterous. In lessons, they are attentive and are keen to participate when the teaching is good, but occasionally lose focus when the pace is too slow or expectations of their conduct are too low. Attendance is above average and punctuality is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and good in the sixth form. All classrooms have interactive whiteboards and data projectors. In general, teachers have good presentational skills and make effective use of the excellent ICT facilities to prepare lessons and to structure the pupils' learning. In addition, most teachers planned a variety of learning styles and some lessons made good use of active learning techniques, such as paired discussion to solve problems. Teachers have good subject knowledge and the management of behaviour, which was occasionally challenging, was good. However, the work too frequently did not meet the needs of the pupils at either end of the ability range. Teachers do not make sufficient use of assessment information in lesson planning or when setting homework. The pupils use their time satisfactorily in lessons and make sound and sometimes good progress, but work sometimes lacks sufficient challenge. The assessment of the pupils' attainment and progress is very good in the main part of the school, but is underdeveloped in the sixth form. The quality of marking has improved recently and is now satisfactory; it is regular and targets are given to help the pupils raise the standard of their work. However, marking to improve literacy skills is inconsistent across the academy.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The curriculum in the main part of the academy is very good. It is broad and balanced and, in addition, it offers education in business and enterprise skills. At 30 hours of teaching each week, teaching time is significantly above the recommended minimum. Learning in different subjects is enhanced by a good range of visits, visitors, special events and residential opportunities. There is a wide range of well attended out-of-school activities. The pupils value these opportunities which enrich their experiences beyond what they receive in lessons, enable them to participate with others and develop wider interests.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The academy provides good care and guidance for its pupils. Heads of year do not have teaching responsibilities and are able to meet with parents, pupils and representatives of the various outside agencies who work in partnership with the academy to promote pupils' welfare. The pupils believe they have good advice about their future career options and they speak positively about learning about aspects of business and enterprise. Students in Year 12 particularly value the guidance available

to them from the business mentors. The broad range of opportunities beyond the classroom includes facilities for the pupils to eat breakfast in school and to complete homework. There are clear procedures for child protection and all the staff have had recent training in this area. Detailed records are kept of the support provided for vulnerable pupils and the expertise of appropriate outside agencies is enlisted to provide additional help for these young people. The academy has firm expectations of the pupils' behaviour, and the staff work hard to support pupils who are in danger of exclusion.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The principal provides very strong and effective leadership for the academy. He has skilfully managed the phased expansion of the academy during the first two challenging years by expertly balancing the day-to-day demands of management with its strategic development. He communicates a clear vision and high aspirations to the staff, parents and pupils. The principal works closely with the two vice principals and the finance director. Together they form a very good senior leadership team with complementary skills and a common strategic vision. The fact that the new building was delivered on time and on budget was a significant achievement. The high profile of senior managers around the academy effectively reinforces their high expectations. Recent appointments to the senior management team have necessarily sharpened the focus on improving teaching and learning. However, these strategies are at an early stage of development. The quality of the evolving middle management is sound and often good. The work of subject leaders is properly underpinned by assessment information that links with whole-academy planning. New and inexperienced teachers feel very well supported by senior and middle managers. Good opportunities for training and professional development have steadily strengthened the quality of teaching. Systems for self evaluation give senior and middle managers a clear overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the academy and the priorities for improvement. The academy makes effective use of staff and parental surveys to review and revise its policies and procedures. The governing body is supportive and is well informed about the academy's progress. The academy values the specialist advice that governors have been able to provide, particularly on financial matters. However, systems are not fully in place to ensure that governors are able to hold the academy to account. Links with the local community and with local primary schools have developed well, but the academy's wider community use and involvement have been frustrated by legal constraints.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	2
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for being welcoming and helpful when we came to inspect your academy recently. We very much enjoyed talking to you and seeing your work. Many of you were keen to tell us what you enjoy about the academy. Your opinions were important in confirming what staff, parents and governors told us.

Like you, we were very impressed by the excellent facilities, particularly the ICT equipment and the sports centre. This transformation is remarkable when compared with the temporary classrooms that many of you have had to put up with for the last two years. Many of you are rightly proud of your new school. Most of you show real appreciation for your new surroundings and are mature and sensible in lessons. In general you behave well and try to produce your best. We were particularly impressed that so many of you take advantage of extra curricular activities and other opportunities. However, some pupils were rather too loud or boisterous when moving around the site, and a few did not concentrate well enough in lessons.

We agree with you that many of your lessons are interesting and that some teaching is good. However, there is always room for improvement, especially with the excellent facilities that your new academy enjoys. We have asked your teachers and senior managers to work specifically on the following: * to further improve the quality of teaching;* and to make sure that your work is better matched to your individual needs, so that you are more often challenged by what you do in lessons and for homework. We wish you every success in the future.