



The Academy at Peckham

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134225
LEA Not Applicable
Inspection number 283977
Inspection dates 25 January 2006 to 26 January 2006
Reporting inspector Susan Kara HMI

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

Type of school	Academy	School address	112 Peckham Road
School category	Non-maintained		London
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		SE15 5DZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 7703 4417
Number on roll	1130	Fax number	020 7703 4305
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Bruce Noble
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mr Peter Crook

Age group 11 to 18	Inspection dates 25 January 2006 - 26 January 2006	Inspection number 283977
------------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© 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 Academy at Peckham is a new technologically advanced school in the London Borough of Southwark. The academy opened in September 2003 on the site of the predecessor school and is now in phase three of an extensive renovation and building programme. The academy has specialist status in business and enterprise and the performing arts. The sixth form, known as The Academy College, was opened to Year 12 in September 2004 and has 130 students on roll. It offers a suitable range of vocational and academic courses at different levels of accreditation. Some excellent specialist facilities support a wide range of courses including those of industry standard in hospitality and catering, motor vehicle engineering and hairdressing. The academy is much larger than most secondary schools. It is a very popular choice with pupils and parents and is now admitting 240 pupils each year and will grow to a maximum of 1450 pupils including a sixth form of 250. The academy serves one of the most socially deprived boroughs in the country. Two thirds of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, a much higher number than is usual. Just over half of the pupils are from black African or Caribbean heritage with around one in five pupils of white British heritage. There are almost twice as many boys as girls. Nearly one third of the pupils are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities and forty nine pupils have a statement of special educational need, a proportion that is more than double the national average. Just under half of the pupils do not have English as a mother tongue. The academy has a specialist unit for pupils with dyslexia. The average skill levels of pupils entering Year 7 is very low. Almost one in ten pupils is identified as vulnerable by the academy because they are refugees, are in care, or are on the child protection register. The academy has largely met the challenge of teacher recruitment by investing in staff development. Over twenty teachers have gaining Qualified Teacher Status from further education or overseas backgrounds since joining the academy.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The academy is providing a satisfactory standard of education; it has a number of good features and is rapidly improving. The academy vision of everyone working in partnership to raise ambition, expectations and achievement is well on the way to becoming a reality. The pupils greatly appreciate the new facilities and value the unstinting support of the staff in helping them to learn. The care, guidance and support for pupils is a strength of the academy and this ensures the pupils' good personal development and well-being. The principal has demonstrated his outstanding leadership by successfully creating a positive climate for achievement and by securing rapid improvement. Together with the strong team of vice-principals they are leading and managing the academy well. The academy has good capacity to improve, demonstrated through its robust self review programme and the good progress made so far. The academy's sponsor and the governing body provide helpful and generous support for the academy. The senior leadership team's evaluation of the academy is good and their overall judgement was confirmed by inspectors. However, although the senior team recognises that there are some weaknesses in the sixth form, it has not acted swiftly enough to address these. Achievement is satisfactory and is rising. Results in Year 11 and Year 9 were much better in 2005 than in 2004. The 2005 published results for the sixth form were poor. However, this is only part of the story as a number of courses have yet to be completed. Teaching is satisfactory with much of it good. The curriculum is broad and balanced and reflects the academy's specialist areas with the vocational pathways from 14-19 developing well. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some notable strengths. However, weaker teaching does not make best use of the long lesson time and the quality of learning varies widely within and between lessons.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 4

The academy's inclusive philosophy for the sixth form has significantly increased the proportion of students who choose to stay in post-16 education. The courses are tailored well to meet the range of needs and aspirations of students, with good flexibility to allow different combinations of subjects at accreditation levels 1, 2 and 3. In 2004/5 the poor match of students to appropriate courses led to low levels of attainment. In addition a significant proportion of students left during the course of the year. Well matched recruitment and retention remain a significant challenge for the academy. Notwithstanding their low starting points, in 2004/5 too many students failed to make satisfactory progress during the first year. Achievement was inadequate overall and inspectors judge that the sixth form was ineffective in its first year. Since September suitable steps have been taken to ensure that the provision better meets the students' needs. Entry criteria have been suitably tightened. Procedures for tracking the students and monitoring the quality of teaching have also been strengthened and are broadly satisfactory. However, there has not been time for actions to impact fully, and significant weaknesses remain in some areas of sixth form provision.

What the school should do to improve further

* continue to improve the effectiveness of the sixth form through the urgent implementation of the review recommendations* continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning through more effective planning for the different needs and abilities of the pupils in each class.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 4

Inspectors agree with the academy that achievement and standards are satisfactory for pupils aged 11 to 16 years. Standards in the national tests and examinations in 2005 showed a marked improvement over the academy's first set of public examination results in 2004. In comparison with schools in similar contexts, pupils achieved satisfactorily, including those who had learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In 2005, nearly half of the Year 9 pupils achieved Level 5, the standard expected of 14-year-olds in the national Key Stage 3 tests in English and mathematics, which met the academy's targets. However, only one third were awarded Level 5 in science. Not enough pupils achieved higher levels in English and science. Nearly all of the pupils passed at least one GCSE and about 90% gained five or more: these figures demonstrate good progress and compare well with schools in similar contexts and reflect the academy's inclusive approach and success in motivating the pupils. The many pupils who have home languages other than English were particularly successful. Although the proportion of pupils awarded five A* to C grades nearly doubled compared to the previous year, the academy did not meet its target and is aware that it has more to do to ensure the most able pupils fulfil their potential. Also, in some subjects, a significant minority of pupils failed to achieve a pass grade. The academy has set challenging targets for 2006 and the early signs are that it is continuing to build on last summer's improvements. In the sixth form, the attainment of many students in the 2005 examinations was poor. Only one third of the AS level entries achieved a pass grade, with no passes in chemistry, information and communication technology (ICT) and the performing arts. GNVQ ICT also had no passes. However over half of the students passed at least one AS and all of the students passed in drama. A number of courses have yet to present any results as they take two years and will report for the first time in 2006. In lessons, including in the sixth form, most pupils made at least satisfactory progress. However, not all made consistently rapid progress because of variability in the quality of the teaching.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The pupils' personal development and well-being are good. The pupils behave well in lessons; they work diligently, often with good humour and enjoyment. They generally listen attentively to their teachers and, when given the opportunity, they engage in

mature conversations with each other about their work. The Year 11 pupils, who were interviewed, said that the improvement in behaviour was one of the biggest differences between the academy and the predecessor school, this was enabling them to work well in lessons. Most of the pupils move around the academy sensibly, many politely holding doors open for visitors and walking between lessons with reasonable urgency. Attendance is broadly satisfactory, including in the sixth form. Exclusions are decreasing in frequency and the re-integration of pupils is well-managed. The pupils' moral and social development is good. The pupils develop a keen sense of justice and are clear about the boundaries between right and wrong. Many of them commented very positively on the academy's code of conduct, typically saying 'There are no silly rules here, they're all meant to make things better for us'. The communal areas of the academy are used well. The atmosphere in the dining room is congenial and the outside play areas are used sociably by the pupils during and after the academy day; often supervised and supported well by the duty staff and inclusion team. Spiritual development is satisfactory and is enhanced through a wide range of activities, including a number of performing arts events. Cultural development is good and promoted well as an integral part of the curriculum, through activities such as Black History Month. The staff have worked hard with the pupil council and the caterers to promote healthy eating, but too many pupils still prefer crisps and chocolate at break times. The pupils generally adopt safe practices and have been sensible around the site whilst the building work has proceeded. The pupils' contributions to the community are good and the number of opportunities for the pupils to participate in work with local schools and groups is growing further. The progress made by the pupils in gaining essential skills in language, literacy and numeracy demonstrates that they are being prepared effectively for their future working lives. The sixth form students' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Sixth form students spoke positively about the friendly ethos of the Academy College, the good support that they receive and the very good resources in their chosen courses. Although the College is a separate part of the academy, sixth form students have too few responsibilities within the wider academy.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. A significant proportion of the teaching is good, and there is some outstanding practice. However, there is also a small proportion of lessons that is inadequate. The quality of sixth-form teaching is also satisfactory overall, although it has not yet been good enough to make up for the fact that most students have previously embarked on sixth form courses with very low levels of prior attainment. In general, teachers made effective use of ICT to present lessons and to structure the pupils' learning. There are common and high expectations of the pupils' attitudes and a consistent approach to the management of behaviour, based on clear routines and good relationships between adults and pupils. In the majority of lessons the pupils settled quickly to their learning and retained their concentration well, particularly when working independently. When given the

opportunity to work collaboratively the pupils responded positively and worked productively. The best teaching was soundly based on detailed planning. In these lessons a good range of interesting and varied activities was planned to optimise the full eighty minutes. When there were clear and challenging outcomes for pupils with different abilities and when learning was skilfully managed the pupils made rapid progress. This was most evident when excellent questioning probed the pupils' understanding, assessed what they knew and engaged the whole group in discussion and debate. The pupils made sound and sometimes good progress in lessons. However, teachers did not always make sufficient use of the extended lesson time and the quality of learning consequently dipped at key points in some lessons. This was most evident when lessons were overly teacher-centred and when weak or untargeted questioning did not engage the pupils. Groups of pupils were allowed to be too passive in many lessons. Teachers did not make sufficient use of assessment information to plan suitable outcomes and activities for pupils with different abilities. The deployment of learning support assistants in lessons was variable. Some were well briefed by the teachers and targeted to work with particular pupils, but others were underused in the classroom. The assessment of the pupils' attainment and progress is sound in the main part of the school, but is underdeveloped in the sixth form. The quality of marking is broadly satisfactory, but is too variable. There is some very good practice but too much marking is perfunctory and fails to guide what the pupils need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets pupils' different needs well. The academy's specialisms, the performing arts and business and enterprise, are appropriately represented. All Key Stage 3 pupils study music, dance and drama, and some continue these subjects to GCSE and beyond. Business and enterprise are areas of growth and are helping to raise pupils' aspirations. There is a good range of traditional and vocational options for pupils aged 14 to 19 years old. All pupils experience the world of work in Year 10. In addition to special events the understanding of enterprise is developed through the personal, social and health education programme. The location of the local primary school's nursery in the centre of the academy not only provides work experience opportunities for the pupils but is also a very good example of the academy living out its vision. The academy day is longer than at most schools. The eighty minute lessons, when planned well, provide good opportunities for breadth and depth of learning. The academy has very good ICT resources which many teachers use effectively and this is appreciated by the pupils. Classrooms are light and spacious. Displays in corridors and public areas are vibrant: they celebrate success and capture the school's inclusive and aspirational ethos. The emphasis on literacy, especially reading, in Key Stage 3 recognises that many pupils have weak basic skills. Pupils who are in the early stages of learning to speak English are provided with good support that enables them to develop fluency and gives strong recognition to their potential as learners. Most also have the opportunity to acquire a GCSE in their first language. The academy works hard to encourage the pupils to

study outside of lesson time through making facilities available, such as the learning resource centre, before and after the school day and running numerous sessions after school and during holidays, for example on coursework. Pupils who are gifted or talented benefit from a range of additional activities and study programmes, but they are not always fully challenged in lessons. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of extracurricular activities. Sports are a popular choice, as are performances in drama, music and dance. These activities add to pupils' personal development and promote their self esteem.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The academy provides a safe haven for its pupils, many of whom have turbulent lives outside. The care provided by the academy is good, with a number of outstanding features. For example, the procedures for protecting children are effective and the provision for those under the care of the local authority is thoughtful, thorough and caring. The academy has well-established systems of personal support and guidance. The systems used for monitoring the pupils' progress are comprehensive and link well with the wide range of schemes in place to improve academic and personal development. Usefully, homework is organised through a timetable, but for some pupils it is set infrequently, whilst others get too much, especially when coursework deadlines are imminent. A wide range of effective and some innovative intervention strategies are used to support pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities. The support given to pupils outside their normal lessons is well managed and is regularly checked for its effectiveness. In the sixth form the students are very well cared for and well supported, but their academic guidance is not as good as it needs to be as insufficient use is made of assessment information to track and guide their progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The leadership and management of the academy are good overall. The principal is an outstanding leader. The three vice principals lead their areas with confidence and obvious enthusiasm and with the principal they form an impressive team. The wider senior leadership team is an effective group who very successfully promote the vision for the academy through their work. Rightly they, together with middle managers are increasingly being held to account for the performance of staff and pupils within their areas of responsibility, many are responding well to this challenge. The academy is developing the sharing of good practice within the management teams, and senior staff are aware of and active in support of those colleagues in greatest need of professional development. The creation of a house system has been popular with pupils, although a number of the older pupils commented that they miss meeting as a year group. The sharing of good practice between the deans of the six houses is still

developing. Whilst sensibly establishing separate house identities there is no shared or common set of pupil entitlements for a member of any house. In particular age-related needs and interests should not be overlooked. The academy has many effective mechanisms to ensure that parents, carers and other local partners have a chance to both influence and be well informed about the academy's developments. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the academy and have influenced the way that the academy reports and discusses pupils' progress, sets homework and has extended the school day with optional activities. The academy's monitoring of performance through review and evaluation is good. The process is robust and systematic and leads to the setting of appropriately challenging targets. In a comparatively short time the academy has made significant progress, despite the intrusive building and renovation programmes which have occupied undue amounts of the governing body's and principal's time. Financial management is sound and resources are deployed effectively and efficiently. The governing body is experienced, well organised and passionate in its commitment to the academy aims. In its first year the management of the sixth form was not rigorous or effective in checking the students' progress. An incisive and challenging review of the sixth form, led by the recently appointed dean and completed in December 2005, has clearly and appropriately identified the areas in need of development. Good plans are proposed to monitor sixth form provision and to track the progress the students make. The academy recognises the need to implement these recommendations urgently and that the improvements are the collective responsibility of all the sixth-form teachers and tutors.

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	4
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	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	4
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	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	3
The behaviour of learners	2	2
The attendance of learners	3	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	3
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	3

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	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	2
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	2	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 the warm welcome we received when we visited the academy recently. We were pleased to see how much progress you were making in your lessons despite the building works still going on around you. We thought that some of the facilities you have, especially for the vocational courses are excellent.

We noted how much you respect and value the new school and we were delighted to hear you say that the teachers always help you whenever you ask. We were impressed with how much you want to work and you told us the improvement in behaviour was helping you to do that. We think Mr Crook is an outstanding principal and that he has a very strong team of staff who are helping to ensure that the academy improves rapidly. At eighty minutes long your lessons need careful planning and we have asked the teachers to make sure that they match the work closely to the right level for each of you. Standards are rising, and we think that this will help them to do so even more quickly.

The increase in the numbers of you choosing to stay on to the sixth form is very exciting. The staff have already carried out a really good review of the sixth form and know what they need to do to make it even better. We have asked the staff to make sure they implement these plans quickly. This will ensure that those of you in the sixth form already, and those choosing it in the future, are on the most appropriate courses. Also that at regular intervals you are told how well you are doing and what you need to do to get the highest grades you can.