

Lambeth Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134815
Local Authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	341533
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Godfrey Bancroft

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	950
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John O'Farrell
Principal	Stephen Potter
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2007
School address	Elms Road Clapham SW4 9ET
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 76 lessons and teachers. Inspectors met with groups of pupils, governors, and staff. They observed the academy's work, and looked at data explaining students' attainment and progress, information about attendance and behaviour, lesson and curriculum plans, the minutes of the governing body's meetings, evaluation documents prepared by advisers and consultants, the academy's development plan and self-evaluation, and 38 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress of boys, and in particular the progress of boys not doing as well as might otherwise be expected
- the impact of the academy's specialist subjects on students' learning across the curriculum
- improvements in attainment by the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 over the last three years
- the impact of the recently introduced mixed-age tutor group system on students' academic and personal development.

Information about the school

Lambeth Academy is broadly average in size, although it has continued to expand each year since it opened in September 2004. The percentage of students entitled to a free school meal is much higher than usually found, as are the percentages from minority ethnic groups and those who come from homes where English is not the first language. The proportion of students who have special educational needs is broadly average, although the academy makes provision for visually impaired students and more students than usually found have a statement of special educational needs. The academy specialises in business and enterprise and modern foreign languages. It has been awarded Arts Mark and the International School Award and is part of the United Learning Trust.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The academy is steadily fulfilling one of its major aims to be at the heart of the community it serves. Students come from a wide range of ethnic and social backgrounds and the academy is culturally harmonious. It makes an outstanding contribution to the promotion of community cohesion and is improving in many areas of its work. Currently it provides a satisfactory quality of education and the sixth form is good. Attainment is improving, to the extent that by the end of Year 9 it is now close to the nationally expected level. Improvements in attainment are evident at the end of Key Stage 4, where it is now close to the national average. The academy's analysis of students' performance and their work seen during the inspection affirm that the percentage of students gaining five A*-C passes at GCSE level is set to rise significantly in 2010. This is mainly because teaching is good and the vast majority of students make good progress, often from below average and in some cases very low starting points. Standards in vocational courses are also improving and many of these are courses that are well suited to students' ambitions and interests. In recent years, girls have made much better progress than boys. At Lambeth an effective focus on improving boys' attainment is having a positive impact and the gap is closing. The progress of students who have special educational needs is good. In some cases, these students are making outstanding progress. Another measure of the academy's success is that all those students who left last year found work or chose to extend their education.

The academy specialises in modern foreign languages and in business and enterprise. In this respect, the work with other local schools and the partnership with the nearby further education college and local businesses are good. However, standards in these two subjects, when compared with others, remain relatively low. Not enough attention is given to their development and promotion across the curriculum and they do not have a sufficiently positive impact on students' learning and progress in other subjects.

Many students and their parents and carers are positive about the academy's provision and are proud of their achievements. During the inspection this was evident when students celebrated their recent success in the London Global Rock Festival. Even so, significant numbers expressed concern about students' behaviour. Inspectors judge behaviour in lessons and around the academy to be satisfactory. Behaviour in the sixth form and in Years 10 and 11 is good and sometimes outstanding. In Years 7, 8 and 9 there are times when learning is disrupted by the poor behaviour of a small number of students, mainly boys. At other times the pace of progress slows down because some students are not sufficiently well motivated to learn. These students are very reliant on their teachers and have not acquired the independent learning skills that might reasonably be expected for their age. In this respect the daily mixed-age tutor groups

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are beginning to impact positively on how students acquire learning skills. Some teachers also pay significant attention to this during lessons. When they do, students' progress is invariably good but practice across the academy is inconsistent because it is not sufficiently embedded.

Self-evaluation procedures are robust. Improving attainment, developments in the quality of teaching, the academy's contribution to its community, and strong partnership with the United Learning Trust serve to illustrate that the academy has good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the specialist subjects of modern foreign language and business and enterprise so that they make a positive contribution to students' learning and progress by
 - ensuring that opportunities to promote these subjects across the curriculum are given a higher profile in teachers' planning and during lessons
 - making certain that students are aware of how these subjects contribute positively to their learning.
- Enhance the focus on supporting students in acquiring the skills they need to become proficient, independent learners by
 - including objectives for the development of personal learning skills in every lesson
 - consistently reviewing students' perceptions and reinforcing the positive features of their personal learning skills during tutor times and towards the end of each lesson.
- Eliminate the instances of poor behaviour that occasionally inhibit the learning and progress of some students by
 - reviewing and embedding the strategies that are already in place to improve behaviour
 - ensuring that all teachers become proficient in applying the strategies consistently.
- About 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit from an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Attendance, through the good efforts of staff, has improved to the point where it is broadly average. In lessons during the inspection, students made good progress. This included those who come from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language. The majority of students enjoy their learning, especially in Years 10 and 11. However, at times in Key Stage 3, students' progress

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slows down. This is because some students have yet to acquire the skills they need to become independent learners and are very reliant on their teachers for guidance and support. In a minority of instances, unacceptable behaviour further disrupts learning, although such instances are often well managed by staff and are becoming less frequent.

A number of students commented that they do not always feel safe, although the academy does much to keep students well informed about the potential hazards they might face. Students are knowledgeable about how to lead a healthy life style with significant numbers participating in the exercise-related activities offered by the academy. Students also contribute well to the community and many are eager to participate in events. They act as reading partners with children in local primary schools, which they also visit in their capacity as sports leaders.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The majority of students get on well with each other. They show good understanding of the wide range of cultural heritage groups that attend the academy and clearly enjoy expressing themselves through mediums such as dance, drama and music. The academy's highly acclaimed production of 'Othello' provides a good example of this. Students are also proud to celebrate each other's achievements and successes. The academy does much to prepare students for the world of work, however their ability to apply the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, while improving, is currently satisfactory.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

<p>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</p> <p>Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms</p>	
<p>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</p> <p>Taking into account: Pupils' attendance¹</p>	<p>3</p> <hr/> <p>3</p>
<p>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</p>	<p>2</p>

How effective is the provision?

Increases in students' rate of progress and the resulting rise in attainment are based on predominantly good teaching. In the most effective lessons, activities are well planned to meet students' learning needs, especially when they are taught in groups based on their ability, such as in English, mathematics and science. The learning of those students who have special educational needs is addressed well and higher attaining students are suitably challenged. It is in these subjects that they are making the most telling progress. Expectations are usually clearly explained at the start of lessons, although too often, insufficient attention is given to the promotion of students' personal learning skills. A major strength of teaching is the way in which students are kept informed of their progress and are involved in frequent discussions about how to improve further. As a result many students are very clear about what they need to do to attain their expected grades and are well focused on doing so. Marking is often helpful in guiding students about how to improve, for example in English and mathematics, but this is not always the case.

The ever-broadening curriculum is meeting students' needs increasingly well, especially the widening range of vocational courses such as the diploma in engineering. However, the academy still has much to do to ensure that its specialist subjects are promoted sufficiently across the curriculum for them to impact fully on students' progress in all subjects. The academy provides a good range of additional activities and educational visits. Visitors, such as those from industry, make a helpful contribution to enhancing students' learning.

There is prompt identification of any student who is at risk of falling behind and effective action to ensure they can catch up. Those students who, because of their circumstances, might be in any way vulnerable are supported exceptionally well. Communications with parents and carers are well developed and the increasing use of personalised learning programmes often results in exceptional progress for these students. The academy's 'learning support rooms' provide students with support and guidance that enable many to flourish and overcome the challenges they face. For example, students who have visual impairment, those on the autistic spectrum and those who are at the early stages of speaking English are supported very well. Even so, there are still a number of students who require more help to become fully committed to their learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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<p>The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	2
	2
<p>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</p>	3
<p>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</p>	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The principal and senior leaders oversee a robust and largely accurate programme of self-evaluation. Middle leaders contribute effectively to this process, as illustrated by the well-prepared and detailed departmental self-evaluations. Senior managers and governors are not afraid to set very challenging targets, which are usually achieved, and are playing a central role in driving up standards. Their work has already brought about significant improvements such as the promotion of better quality teaching. They are also well aware that much remains to be done in some areas of the academy's work, such as raising academic standards and the rate of progress in the specialist subjects, and eliminating the small residue of inadequate teaching and poor behaviour. In this respect, plans to promote the academy's continued improvement are suitably ambitious and focused on the key areas for development.

Members of the governing body are great advocates for the work of the academy and are passionate about its contribution to the local, wider and international communities. The academy has forged strong links with schools in many parts of the world. Consequently, the promotion of community cohesion, often undertaken against a background of challenging circumstances, is outstanding. The academy also works successfully to ensure equality of opportunity for all and to eliminate all forms of discrimination. Governors are well informed about the work of the academy. Having forged a strong partnership with the academy's main sponsor, the United Learning Trust, they provide good support for the principal and senior managers in raising attainment and driving up standards. The academy makes excellent use of external advice and support to promote improvement, frequently seeking an independent view on the quality of its performance.

Arrangements for safeguarding and child protection are outstanding. Staff and governors are well informed by up-to-date training, and policies and practices are exemplary. Resources are used wisely and day-to-day management is efficient and effective. In relation to students' outcomes, the academy gives satisfactory value for money. Parents and carers are involved well in the work of the academy. For example, there is a strong parents' forum that, from time to time, meets to share information about key developments. A small group of parents also visit neighbourhood primary schools to act as advocates for the academy.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

As the academy reaches full capacity the sixth form, which experienced its first year in 2007-2008, is expanding rapidly. Students are often working from relatively low starting points, but are already making good progress and achieving well. This is because teaching is good and the curriculum is matched well to their needs.

Attendance compares favourably with that found in other sixth forms. Behaviour in the sixth form is good, with students applying themselves well during lessons, although a few lack confidence and are sometimes a little passive. That said, many others are enthusiastic learners who respond well to challenging questions. Students are often willing to pose thoughtfully structured questions of their own, revealing considerable understanding. They are mature, thoughtful and supportive of each other.

The curriculum is good and much is already in place to meet the diverse range of students' learning needs. There is a good balance between appropriate academic and vocational courses, such as the 'Roots and Shoots' development set up in partnership with a local training agency. Links with the nearby college are also good. Students are supported well and receive all the guidance they need to prepare them for the next stages of their education or for the world of work. They participate well in the life of the academy and make a valuable contribution to the community.

The sixth form benefits greatly from effective leadership and management. There is a strong determination to sustain the pattern of rising standards which is disseminated to staff and students alike. Students' progress is tracked closely and help is readily at hand should any fall behind. In discussion, students are full of praise for the help they receive.

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These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

Only a small number of parents responded to the questionnaire. Of these most are happy that the academy keeps their children safe and prepares them well for their future education or employment. A significant proportion of respondents are dissatisfied with other aspects of provision. However, inspection findings give a more positive view of the academy.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lambeth Academy to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 38 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 950 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	16	42	18	47	3	8	1	3
The school keeps my child safe	12	32	23	61	3	8	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	14	74	2	11	3	16	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	16	26	68	5	13	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	10	26	24	63	4	11	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	6	16	22	58	10	26	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	6	18	23	68	5	15	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	4	13	28	88	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	5	14	26	70	6	16	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	6	16	21	57	7	19	3	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	6	18	21	62	7	21	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	9	26	21	60	5	14	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	37	18	47	5	13	1	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



19 March 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Lambeth Academy, London, SW4 9ET

You may recall that I and a team of colleagues visited to inspect the academy on 17-18 March 2009. Firstly, I must say we greatly enjoyed having opportunities to talk with many of you and would like to thank you for your openness and honesty.

We think the academy provides you with a satisfactory quality of education and is improving in many ways. Because teaching is good and the curriculum is increasingly well matched to your needs, many of you, including those of you who sometimes find learning hard, are making good progress. As a result your test and exam results are improving, to the extent that they are very close to the national average.

Even so, there are still some barriers that mean not all of you learn as well as you might. A small number of you do not behave as well as you should and occasionally prevent others from learning. You can all help greatly by considering the impact of your actions at all times and applying yourselves well during lessons. We are also asking your principal and senior managers to attach greater importance to the academy's specialisms of modern foreign languages and business and enterprise in all the subjects. Finally, we are asking them to draw up a consistent approach to providing you with the essential skills you all need to learn well, such as working together, sustaining effort and becoming more independent learners.

Congratulations on your success in the Global Rock Challenge. I wish you all well as you continue your learning and for your futures in the world of work.

Yours sincerely

Godfrey Bancroft

Lead inspector

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