

The Bushey Academy

London Road, Bushey, WD23 3AA

Inspection dates 11–12 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- From their low starting points, students make good progress. The proportion of students achieving five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, has risen and is now in line with the national average.
- Teaching is good because teachers have high expectations and plan work carefully for the needs and abilities of different groups of students. There are examples of outstanding teaching in physical education, music and psychology.
- Students' behaviour is good because the school's house system is effective in supporting students' social and moral development.
- Senior leaders are ambitious for students. They are well placed to drive the academy forward because, since the last inspection, there have been many good improvements in achievement, teaching and behaviour.
- Governors provide a clear vision and a strong sense of purpose which is shared across the academy.
- The sixth form is good. Students' achievement at AS level is improving strongly.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some students do not always heed the advice their teachers give about how to improve their work.
- Attendance is below average.
- New systems to support the behaviour of students whose circumstances make them more vulnerable are not yet consistently applied.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 34 lessons, five of which were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and subject leaders, groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body and the academy sponsor.
- Inspectors considered the views of the 40 parents who responded to Parent View, the online questionnaire, and the parents who contacted the inspection team. They analysed the results of the 73 replies to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at the academy’s data on students’ progress, lesson plans, minutes of meetings and records relating to behaviour, safety and attendance. They also reviewed the academy’s checks on how well it is doing and academy improvement plans.

Inspection team

Lisa Fraser, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Gutmann

Additional Inspector

Jennifer Carpenter

Additional Inspector

Paul O’Shea

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is smaller than most secondary schools.
- The majority of students are from White British backgrounds. Any other White Background, Pakistani and African are the largest other ethnic groups.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after by the local authority or from service families, is above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- Eleven students in Years 10 and 11 attend off-site alternative provision for part of their learning at a range of providers, including West Herts College, Tabard Rugby Club, Building Zone and the College of North West London.
- The sixth form operates in a consortium with Bushey Meads School.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching
 - by ensuring that students take account of the guidance they are given in order to improve their work .
- Further improve behaviour and attendance by ensuring that:
 - students fully understand the link between regular attendance and good achievement
 - new systems of support for students whose circumstances make them more vulnerable are consistently applied.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students start at the academy with skills in reading, writing and mathematics which are well below the national average. By the end of Year 11, the proportion of students achieving five GCSE passes at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, is now in line with the national average. This represents good progress.
- Achievement in English and mathematics is strong because the proportion of students making expected progress is higher than that seen nationally. This is because teaching in both subjects is consistently good. Well-organised input in weekly tutorial time also supports students' literacy and numeracy development. Students are not entered early for GCSE examinations.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make the same good progress as other students because all students' achievement is carefully tracked and monitored, with timely interventions to support any students in danger of falling behind.
- Students learning English as an additional language also make good progress. Sixth formers say their speaking skills and confidence are boosted by their work in supporting students in lower years. Some teachers also ensure that their learning is supported with bilingual resources.
- Pupil premium funding is spent on a range of initiatives, such as one-to-one tuition and additional teachers in key subject areas. As a result, the attainment gap between students eligible for the pupil premium and others in school is closing. Students eligible for the pupil premium now achieve as well as their peers in English and are only half a grade behind in mathematics.
- Year 7 catch-up funding is being used effectively to provide reading schemes for weaker readers, with good success in improvements in reading ages. Students in Year 7 with particular literacy and numeracy needs achieve well in the transition group, which is taught by a primary-trained specialist teacher.
- A small number of students study off-site for part of their learning. Their attendance and behaviour are monitored by academy leaders and, as a result, these students make good progress.
- Under new leadership in the sixth form, students' achievement is improving, particularly at AS-level. Students make above-average rates of progress in photography, art, drama and sports studies. The vast majority of Year 13 students leave the academy to continue their learning on university courses.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching is good. Examples of outstanding teaching were seen in physical education, psychology and music.
- In the best lessons, teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan imaginative lessons which capture students' interest and enable all groups to make good progress. Students develop in confidence by frequently checking and advising on each other's work. For example, students in Year 10 made outstanding progress in developing their leadership and coaching skills by planning, carrying out and evaluating a netball-themed lesson for a group of Year 8 students.

- Teachers' detailed knowledge of examination requirements and clear explanations support students to achieve high marks. For example, students in a Year 9 music lesson made outstanding progress because they had a good understanding of the assessment criteria which they then applied to their own compositions.
- Marking is good across most but not all subjects. In most subjects, students receive clear advice on what they need to do to improve but they do not always respond to this feedback. Students do not readily share their perceptions of what they find challenging or difficult with their teachers. In a small minority of lessons, teachers do not always expect them to join in with discussions or answer questions.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good because teachers use a variety of resources, to build upon and extend students' learning. Students are encouraged to develop their evaluative skills by offering their own individual responses to their studies.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students have positive attitudes to their learning, and relationships with staff are good. Students' good behaviour, both in lessons and around the academy, contributes to the calm and orderly environment for learning. Sixth formers, in particular, are keen to emphasise how much behaviour has improved since the previous inspection.
- Good assemblies and the house system reinforce the academy's expectations. Students are successfully encouraged to develop their social skills in mixed-age tutor groups and by participating in an extensive range of regular inter-house activities, including drama, sports and photography competitions. Heads of house know students and their needs well and work with other agencies to support students' individual circumstances because the academy is committed to promoting equality of opportunity.
- Parents and students agree that students are safe in school. Students have a good understanding of the dangers of bullying in all its forms, including that based on racism and homophobia. In discussion, students say that any instances of bullying are dealt with effectively by staff. Senior leaders regularly conduct surveys to gauge parents' perceptions.
- Students' attendance requires improvement because it is below average. Leaders recognise the need to further raise the profile of attendance with students because of its link to good achievement.
- Leaders have introduced new systems to improve the behaviour and so reduce fixed-term exclusions of some of the students whose circumstances make them more vulnerable.

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management are good, including in the sixth form, because senior leaders have demonstrated a clear track record of improving the school. Standards have risen as a result of the high-quality tracking and monitoring of students' progress and the good range of support for students' academic needs.
- Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching because systems for monitoring and evaluating teaching are robust. Performance management systems link to the

national *Teachers' Standards*.

- Leading teachers drive the academy's training schedule and enable their colleagues to learn from their good practice. Subject leaders are closely involved in monitoring the quality of teaching in their departments by observing lessons.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is developed by such initiatives as the academy's 'proud to belong' week and black history month. Inter-faith week gives students the opportunity to find out about other faiths by talking to members of the local community, and students enjoy fund-raising for their annual chosen charity. There is a good variety of after-school clubs and activities. Students are especially proud that they are now national champions for under-13 table tennis.
- The range of subjects has recently been reviewed in the light of national developments, including in the sixth form. There are now more subjects on offer at GCSE level, and students in Year 9 begin their Key Stage 4 early.
- Leadership of behaviour has changed this year and the academy is in the process of introducing new systems to improve attendance and promote the good behaviour of students whose circumstances make them more vulnerable.
- The academy is not obliged to work with the local authority but good links have been maintained. Other schools highly rate the collaboration and support they receive from academy leaders to help raise standards.
- All statutory requirements for safeguarding are met.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors bring a clear vision and sense of purpose which is shared across the academy. The governing body is realistic in its assessment of the academy's strengths and weaknesses, and knows how the academy performs in comparison with other secondary schools nationally. Governors are now focused on ensuring that attendance improves and are committed to ensuring that students have the broadest possible education. Governors know about the quality of teaching and performance management. Since the previous inspection, the governing body has been actively involved in tackling underperformance and ensures that teachers' pay rises are linked to students' good progress. Governors seek to support the academy by attending regular training.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	135938
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	425332

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
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	787
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	71
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Meller
Headteacher	Andrew Hemmings
Date of previous school inspection	16 November 2011
Telephone number	020 89509502
Fax number	020 842074038
Email address	admin@thebusheyacademy.org

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