

Westminster Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131262
Local Authority	Not applicable
Inspection number	343796
Inspection dates	15–16 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Alan Taylor-Bennett HMI

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	953
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jeremy Witts
Headteacher	Smita Bora (Principal)
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2009
School address	The Naim Dangoor Centre 255 Harrow Road, London W2 5EZ
Telephone number	020 7121 0600
Fax number	020 7121 0601
Email address	admin@westminsteracademy.biz

Age group	11–18
Inspection dates	15–16 September 2010
Inspection number	343796

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 1234 234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 45 lessons, including the work of 39 teachers. In addition, meetings were held with groups of students, representatives of the governing body and staff. A wide range of documentation was scrutinised, including the academy's development plan, its self-review, analyses of the attainment and progress of its students, records of lesson observations, policies, and the responses to staff and student questionnaires, and 39 parental questionnaires.

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

- levels of attendance, and trends and patterns in attendance across different groups of students
- the consistency with which teachers use information about students' prior attainment and their individual needs and circumstances to tailor their teaching to students' needs, and the use of marking to support good progress
- the impact of the academy's efforts to improve the health, fitness and well-being of older students
- the effectiveness of the academy's efforts to tackle the trend in recent years for some students to underachieve significantly at the end of Key Stage 4
- the degree to which there are opportunities built in to the teaching in all classrooms for raising students' levels of literacy and numeracy, and the impact of this work.

Information about the school

Westminster Academy is of average size for a secondary school and has a small but growing sixth form. It serves an area that is socially, culturally and linguistically very diverse and its intake reflects this wide mix. A significant proportion of students speak languages other than English at home, and many are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than average, indicating the significant challenges that many families in the area face. There is a high proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the majority of whom have moderate learning difficulties or behavioural, emotional or social difficulties. The academy was given a notice to improve following its last inspection. It has a specialism in international business and enterprise and it has recently achieved the International School Award.

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

Westminster Academy is providing a quality of education which is at least satisfactory in every respect. Some outcomes for students, and some aspects of provision, are good. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the academy no longer requires significant improvement. There are many indications of strong improvements in important areas of the academy's work. These are a consequence of the good leadership provided by the principal and her senior team. This positive trajectory is due to leadership that focuses on the right priorities, and the effectiveness of the way in which improvements are managed. This gives the academy a good capacity to drive further improvement.

Attainment has risen dramatically over the last two years and is now in line with national averages. Students' achievement is now satisfactory because of the secure progress that they make in lessons. Mathematics has not yet produced GCSE outcomes in line with the improved performances seen in many other subjects, but achievement in this subject is currently satisfactory in the academy. The identification of students who may underperform at Key Stage 4 is now good and special provision, including mentoring and more personalised curriculum structures, is used to support them. There are indications that this is having a beneficial impact on these students' current progress.

The curriculum is broad and relevant to students' needs. For example, the topic approach at Key Stage 3 successfully balances the need for the targeted development of numeracy and literacy with the requirement to maintain an emphasis on subject specific skills. The international business and enterprise specialism has a very positive impact on the curriculum generally, and to students' enterprise skills and their business and information and communication technology (ICT) capability.

Teaching is satisfactory and improving. A major factor is the success with which the majority of teachers now use the good quality information available, particularly on students' previous attainment and their characteristics as learners, to plan lessons and allocate resources. Marking is satisfactory because it supports learning. There is some teaching that is good and outstanding, but the proportion is relatively low because of the academy's concentration on eliminating inadequacy over the last year. A key feature of the good and outstanding lessons in the academy is the way it encourages the active participation of students in their learning, based on a thorough understanding of their needs and their potential.

The ethos of the academy strongly supports the provision of equal opportunities, but mechanisms to identify the specific needs of children quickly and with precision, and then identify appropriate support strategies, are not well developed. The extent to which students take part in, and enjoy, a wide range of sporting activities has increased due to the academy's activity passport scheme. Attendance has improved over the last year due

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

to the academy's rigorous monitoring procedures and the leadership's decision to determine acceptable levels of absence for religious holidays; this improvement is still fragile, however. The academy has not developed strong enough links with enough students' parents and carers to be able to involve them actively in improving outcomes.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Maintain the upward trend in attainment by:
 - identifying with greater precision the special learning, linguistic, social and cultural needs of individual students, and formulating responses to support those needs that are then enacted with rigour
 - improve the attendance and punctuality of students so that it is good.
- Improve the proportion of teaching that is good and outstanding by:
 - using the good quality information available about individual students' prior attainment and characteristics to plan lessons that enable all learners to make at least good progress
 - stimulating students to be more active participants in lessons by, for example, structuring group work carefully, and encouraging them to be more critical of their own learning and that of their peers.
- Bring about significantly greater involvement of parents and carers in the work of the academy to secure better outcomes for students by:
 - finding ways of ensuring easy and frequent two way communication between the academy and all homes
 - identifying opportunities to involve parents and carers in its day-to-day work, making use of their experiences, interests and skills
 - working with the governing body to involve significantly more parents and carers in decision making processes about the development of the academy.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The academy has successfully targeted the progress made by students, and their levels of attainment, for improvement over the last year and this has ensured that achievement is now satisfactory across all year groups. Levels of attainment in lessons are broadly in line with that seen nationally; this reflects the impressive step-change in examination outcomes at Key Stage 4 made in 2009, and built on in 2010. Only mathematics remains as a significant area of low attainment in the latest set of examination results and evidence that this is currently being addressed successfully in classrooms was seen during the inspection. Specialist subject targets have usually been exceeded over the last two years and the academy is in the process of raising them to provide higher levels of challenge. The quality of learning is usually satisfactory in lessons because students are attentive and willing to engage with the teaching. The quality of learning of students with

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

special needs and/or disabilities is similar to that of their peers, but is only good or outstanding when the precise nature of students' needs, and the implications for their learning, are identified well. While little disruption to learning is evident, students generally take too passive a role, working hard but too rarely speaking up to challenge an idea or their own grasp of it. In the best lessons, where learning is exciting, it is almost always because students challenge their own understanding and begin to steer the learning themselves. This best practice has the capacity to happen more often because students showed that they value the work of the academy and the improved life-chances it gives them. One new teacher remarked that he enjoyed teaching at the academy because he sensed 'an underlying respect for the importance of learning'.

The academy's communal spaces and classrooms provide a very pleasant working environment and students show respect for it. Students' behaviour is generally pleasant and respectful, and they are welcoming to visitors. They are honest about the occasional problems with the behaviour of some, particularly younger, students but they are pleased that this is addressed by staff quickly and effectively. They value the extent to which they feel safe, and that adults look after them during the day. The participation rates for sport are, as a result of the active passport scheme, significantly better than a year ago, particularly among girls. Many students choose healthy options in the dining area and in their packed lunches. They show a mature understanding of the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other substances and the majority are confident about making good decisions on the basis of this. There are a number of ways in which students can contribute to their academy and to the local community, and many students willingly do so.

Attendance is improving strongly and is now in line with national averages, and even better at some times of the year in some year groups. Some aspects of the ways in which the academy prepares students for their future are very impressive. The international business and enterprise specialism is used to influence the curriculum provision strongly and this, together with the internship programme in Year 10, plays a very strong role in developing a range of important enterprise skills in students. The extent to which numeracy and literacy skills are developed to prepare students for the world of work is less well-developed but is satisfactory. Students place great value on the diversity in the academy and its contribution to their development. One spoke of the importance of this in making them 'modern Londoners'. They show a good level of willingness to engage with new experiences and develop their cultural understanding, and many take advantage of the academy's exciting links with schools in several other countries as a part of the International School Award developments and the international aspects of the academy's specialism.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
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
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Students spoke warmly about the good quality of the support and care they receive from staff. There is outstandingly effective, and well resourced, tutorial provision which has a positive impact on individuals and groups. Tutors usefully challenge the extent to which students take advantage of what is on offer in the academy, as well as their current progress in all subjects. Specialist support staff respond quickly and effectively to the sometimes serious and complex needs of students. When doing this, they work very effectively with a range of outside agencies, including with the local police, so as to diffuse many potential problems.

The academy has successfully used a range of strategies aimed at eliminating unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers provide sufficient structure to enable satisfactory progress in lessons, and use assessment to gauge this accurately. Where teaching is good or outstanding, information about individual and group needs is used consistently well to inform the teaching, utilise a range of resources and to support and challenge students frequently and effectively. In these classrooms, well organised group work extends the range of activities for students to involve themselves in.

The curriculum meets the learning needs of students in the academy well. The opportunity to begin a range of GCSE courses in Year 9 provides challenge for the more able, and the recent implementation of a double science course is a welcome development. There is a good range of vocational qualifications at Key Stage 4, developed through strong

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

curriculum partnerships with local schools and colleges, appropriate to the learning needs of older students. The range of extra-curricular activities is good. A particular strength of the curriculum is the Year 10 internship scheme which gives students a wide range of experiences of the work of work, working alongside people of all ages and learning from them. Several parents remarked positively on this provision, and one boy reflected that his time in a local nursery had taught him not just to 'change a nappy and hold a baby' but to use his learning from such experiences to prepare him to be open to a wide range of challenges.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The principal maintains a very good balance between exercising strategic oversight of the development of the academy and having a detailed knowledge of all aspects of its work, the staff and the students. For example, she personally took responsibility for leading the improvements in the quality of teaching and the use of assessment over the last year which successfully targeted inadequate practice. Her vision is clearly communicated by her senior staff, through good development planning procedures and well organised systems for accountability, into classrooms. Self-evaluation procedures are rigorous and honest, and staff build on what they learn from the early stages of introducing an innovation to improve its subsequent effectiveness. There is a very clear understanding that further improvement requires different strategies and there are plans already for this next phase.

The governing body makes a good contribution to the development of strategy and holds the academy to account in searching and useful ways, but its members could be better informed about the day-to-day strengths and developmental needs in subject departments. Safeguarding is given an appropriate priority and there was a reassuring sense of its importance throughout the academy from all staff.

The academy works closely with a range of community partners to identify the needs of groups within its locality and joint planning is strong and effective. Actions to respond to need are coordinated well and often involve student participation, and the extent of their impact is evaluated carefully.

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

These are the grades for leadership and management

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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Students in the sixth form who have strengths and interests in more vocational learning make good progress, but progress in the International Baccalaureate (IB) has been less secure. The academy has become better at selecting for admission to the IB recently and this is enabling a higher proportion to benefit and enjoy the course, particularly its emphasis on independent learning which many of the students find challenging. The range of constituent courses in the IB programme is not yet broad enough and the academy is planning to improve the range offered to include, for example, physics and a higher mathematics course. The quality of learning in the sixth form is satisfactory because teachers have good subject knowledge and structure lessons well; students listen attentively, and they are prepared to practice their new learning and skills. However, there are insufficient opportunities built in to the teaching to provide a critical appraisal of the quality and depth of the learning taking place.

Students are happy in the sixth form and speak very positively about the way in which they are supported and cared for. Individually and collectively, they exert a positive influence on the quality of the provision in the sixth form. Students are aware of their target grades and they are encouraged to have high aspirations. The proportion that went on to university is impressive and this reflects the good information, advice and guidance provided about higher education and careers. Attendance has improved significantly recently, and students value the safe and attractive surroundings in which they work.

Staff leading and managing this still relatively new sixth form are committed to developing it in line with the overall vision of the academy, including the strong influence on the curriculum and on learning styles that its specialism has. This is done resolutely, and with honest and detailed self-evaluation. The extent of the impact is satisfactory because it is too soon to see the outcomes of this careful planning and hard work. However, the leadership of the sixth form has the capacity to capitalise on current successes and

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

thereby increase student numbers, and then capitalise in turn on the opportunity that affords to extend the diversity in provision that the academy needs in its curriculum provision.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

The number of parent questionnaires returned was very low. However, those seen strongly supported the inspectors' views that the quality of many aspects of the work of the academy had improved significantly over the last year, and that this was due to good leadership and management by the principal and her team. The levels of satisfaction expressed in all aspects of the questionnaires are uniformly very high.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Westminster 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 39 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 953 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	59	15	38	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	56	17	44	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	23	59	15	38	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	51	17	44	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	20	51	17	44	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	54	15	38	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	41	20	51	1	3	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)	19	49	16	41	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	54	15	38	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	56	16	41	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	46	18	46	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	49	18	46	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	59	15	38	0	0	0	0

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 pupils' 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.



17 September 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Westminster Academy, London, W2 5EZ

Thank you for the welcome you extended to my team and me during the recent inspection of your academy. You offered your views in a constructive and positive manner, and they formed a significant part of the evidence base on which we made our judgements. Your academy is providing a quality of education that is at least satisfactory in all respects, and aspects of its work are good. You can read the full report for yourself on the Ofsted website but I have provided a summary of the main findings below.

The achievement of students over the last two years has improved dramatically. Students now leave Key Stage 4 with results that are in line with national averages, and many students left Year 13 this year to embark on university courses. Attendance has improved because the academy is taking an appropriately stronger response to absence, and the good curriculum enables you to develop a wide range of important skills and knowledge. The international business and enterprise specialism means that many of you develop skills that will help you to secure economic well-being in the future. The quality of teaching is consistently satisfactory and there is some that is good and even outstanding. You are well cared for and supported.

Your principal and her senior staff, and the sponsors and governing body, have brought about these improvements by wanting the very best for you and knowing how to obtain it. I have agreed with them that there are three areas to concentrate on to secure further improvements. They are:

- to maintain the upward trend in attainment by identifying your individual needs better and driving up attendance even further
- increasing the proportion of teaching that is good or outstanding by making even better use of assessment information, and getting you more actively involved in your learning in lessons
- working much more closely with all parents and carers so that they and the academy, working together, can produce better outcomes for you.

You have a significant part to play in all of these developments and I know that you will do you best to actively support the continued improvement of your academy. I would like to extend my very best wishes to you for your future success and happiness.

Yours sincerely

Alan Taylor-Bennett

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.