

# The Totteridge Academy

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	137374
<b>Local Authority</b>	N/A
<b>Inspection number</b>	386092
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 September 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Deborah Zachary

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Academy
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	783
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	126
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ian Butler (chair designate)
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Ferrie
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	N/A
<b>School address</b>	Barnet Lane London N20 8AZ
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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The inspection team observed 31 lessons led by 31 different teachers, and made visits to other learning activities and an assembly. They held meetings with the headteacher, senior managers and a range of students, members of the governing body and staff. They observed the academy's work, and looked at a variety of documentation including policies and development plans, information about students' progress and students' work. They studied questionnaires returned by students, staff, and 47 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the academy's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- To what extent does the 2011 improvement in A-level results reflect securely good provision?
- Was there a significant rise in English standards in 2011, and if so how was it achieved?
- How successfully does the academy promote equal opportunities, particularly in 'closing the gap' for students who might be disadvantaged?
- How effective is the provision for students who have specific learning difficulties?
- To what extent is the governing body prepared for academy status?

## Information about the school

The Totteridge Academy is below average in size for a secondary school. Many students travel to it from outside the immediate area. There is a very wide range of ethnic backgrounds amongst students. About a third are White British, and other large groups include those from other White backgrounds or of Black or Black British African heritage. Over 40% of the students speak English as an additional language. There are significantly more boys than girls in every year group. High numbers of students join the academy after the start of Year 7, including during Years 10 and 11 when GCSEs are being taught. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is more than twice the national average, as is the proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The academy opened in September 2011, and term started the week before the inspection. The previous school's inspection report is no longer applicable. However, as the academy is a 'fast track' conversion from a previous school, inspectors took recent examination results into account in order to identify trends and evaluate leadership. The academy retained the specialisms of the previous school on the site, in technology and in applied learning. It also retained the previous school's headteacher and many of the staff. At the time of the inspection six new governors had been appointed and there was a new chair designate. The previous school's resourced provision for students with specific learning difficulties is continuing in the academy. Its designated number of places has been reduced to five, but twelve students remain in the academy who were originally on roll in the resourced provision. All these students are taught within mainstream classes.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

The academy is providing a good education for its students, in Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form. In many ways it is outstanding, particularly in its curriculum and the exemplary care, guidance and support provided for students. These strengths ensure that groups who may be disadvantaged – such as those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, those eligible for free school meals and those who speak English as an additional language – very rapidly catch up with what students achieve nationally. The students who benefit from resourced provision, for example, make outstanding progress to reach broadly average attainment. However, learning and progress overall are good rather than outstanding because at this stage, at the start of the academy, learning in lessons is much more variable.

Students and the parents and carers who returned questionnaires agree that they feel exceptionally safe in the academy. Behaviour is good. Students make an outstanding contribution to the academy, and there is a real sense of a cohesive community. Parents and carers are enabled to engage with the academy exceptionally well and local partnerships are highly effective, for example in supporting students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Links with other parts of the United Kingdom and international links have begun, but are more limited. Students make few visits to places of worship of different faiths and their understanding of how others may live is comparatively underdeveloped.

Internal records show a significant proportion of outstanding teaching. When inspectors sampled lessons they also saw some exemplary practice where learning was outstanding. However, inspectors also observed teaching in which the pitch of work was misjudged for the abilities of students. Sometimes students were not involved actively enough – opportunities for discussions were missed or timing over ran and there was no review of the lesson to establish what students had learnt. Teachers receive exemplary support and training to enable them to improve practice, and internal records show a year-on-year improvement in quality, reflected in steeply rising results. Changes to the curriculum and teaching have had an outstanding impact on English results in particular. Leadership of special educational needs and the excellent resourced provision is exemplary. These things illustrate the many strengths of leadership and management. Regular monitoring of all aspects of the academy ensures that it knows its strengths and weaknesses well. Some weaknesses persist because the system for recording lesson monitoring is not yet tight enough to accelerate improvements in teaching at individual teacher level. Nevertheless, the capacity to improve further is good.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by:
  - ensuring that work set in lessons is finely tuned to the different abilities within each teaching group
  - taking more opportunities to involve students in the lesson, for example in discussions
  - ensuring that the lesson ends with an appropriate plenary session
  - tightening lesson monitoring to ensure that points for improvement in teaching are prioritised and followed up.
- Improve the contribution made to community cohesion by providing more opportunities for students to gain an understanding of different faiths and of life in other parts of the United Kingdom and the wider world.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Students enter the academy with attainment that is well below average. By Year 11 it is average and securely above national floor standards. Results and internal tracking show that both genders and all ethnic groups make at least good progress, and some groups of vulnerable students make outstanding gains as they pass through the academy. One of the key strategies used to significantly raise GCSE English results in 2011 was to radically improve the way literacy is taught, and to focus on it across the curriculum. Students now demonstrate their effective literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in many subjects and are well prepared for the future.

Students say they enjoy school; they behave well in lessons and in breaks and are keen to learn. In almost all lessons seen they engaged in their work with interest. When their work was too hard they showed strong perseverance. Occasionally, when work did not challenge students they did lose interest and focus, and on very isolated occasions standards of behaviour dropped. There were examples of exceptional learning during the inspection, for instance when Year 7 students were delighted to try out their new Spanish phrases while throwing and catching a soft toy. In a Year 10 history lesson, students of all abilities made exceptional progress in their understanding of why Europeans went to America, thanks to very perceptive questioning and work that was finely tuned to the different abilities present.

Students are very well involved in strategic decision making in the academy. Their council is particularly active, and is included in appointing staff and working with the governing body on the change to being an academy. Work on the principles of 'restorative justice' has played a key role in developing the academy's community.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Many teachers demonstrate excellent subject expertise, and this enables them to provide skilful exposition, ask probing questions and respond quickly to students' answers and gaps in their knowledge. They use resources very well and an extremely effective feature of many lessons is the stress on key words and the understanding and use of subject vocabulary. In the best lessons learning is rigorously driven forward, for example when a teacher demanded that Year 9 students engage with layers of meaning in a speech by Martin Luther King. Teaching assistants are usually actively engaged in lessons and relationships between adults and students are extremely good. Students of all abilities are challenged well in many lessons, but not all. With new classes teachers sometimes had to adjust the pitch of work once a lesson had started, but this adjustment did not always take place when needed and so insufficient progress was made by some groups of students. Students' longer-term progress records indicate that the overall impact of teaching on learning is typically better than learning seen in some of the lessons during the inspection.

Courses in the academy's specialist areas make a significant contribution to the outstanding curriculum, and their impact is enhanced by the innovative approach to flexibility between courses that enables individuals to follow extremely well-matched programmes. Enhancements to the curriculum also meet the needs of individuals exceptionally well, including residential trips for identified groups. All students gain from memorable experiences such as applied learning days. Partnerships provide important extra opportunities, from alternative vocational courses to extended work

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

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experience. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as those who speak English as an additional language, benefit particularly from a range of individualised curricular opportunities coupled with exceptional support. Dynamic teamwork from a range of staff, including directors of learning, learning mentors, support staff and personal support assistants, ensures that an extensive range of strategies can be matched to individual needs. Progress is closely tracked and support quickly fine tuned when there is any stutter.

In questionnaire returns and in discussion, students and parents and carers stress their appreciation for the care and support students receive. There are numerous examples of the way these things have made a striking difference to the lives of students, often in circumstances that make them very vulnerable. New arrivals receive the help they need to settle. The breakfast club is well attended and, with a wide but nutritious menu, it gives students an effective boost at the start of the day.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, senior managers and governing body have risen to the considerable challenge of the 'fast track' move to a change of status and the start of the new academy. Very well-considered strategies continue to ensure whole-school endorsement of what the new academy stands for. For example, students are reflecting on the motto 'more than a school' in assemblies and tutor groups so that it can become a powerful focus for staff and students alike. Ambition is embedded at all levels in the academy. Students' progress is monitored with sophistication and rigour; a key reason why equality of opportunity is so exceptionally strong. The result is that students who might otherwise be disadvantaged are making exceptional progress.

Staff questionnaires show high commitment to what managers are trying to achieve. The thoroughly planned and extremely successful work on raising standards in GCSE English and mathematics illustrates what is possible for this exceptional leadership team. Well-founded groups harness teachers' enthusiasm for developing innovative approaches to learning. However, some of the systems underlying school management are not of the same quality. In lesson monitoring, whilst strong support strategies swing into action whenever points for improvement are identified, there has not been enough focus on the impact of these weaknesses or follow-up to ensure that improvement is maintained; there is no secure system for ensuring that

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future observers check them.

Governance is good. The governing body has been fully influential in the change of status and is dealing effectively with changes to its structure and composition. Established governors know the academy extremely well, and have constructive relationships with staff. They are aware that the provision for community cohesion is exceptionally strong within the academy, but that students’ experience of the wider world is less developed. The governing body ensures that good practice is followed in child protection and that no discrimination is evident. Risk assessments are monitored carefully. Other statutory requirements are also met, but, whilst all policies are monitored as required, comparatively little attention is given to their impact.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Sixth form

Students in the local area are able to consider a wide range of providers for post-16 education. Those interviewed stressed that the exceptional quality of support was a key reason why many of them stayed in the academy. One spoke of the sixth form staff team as ‘one in a million’, describing how teachers give freely of their time after school for individual help and tuition. The academy is proactive in discussing courses with students in Year 11, so that all possible steps are taken each year to make sure the curriculum is arranged to meet their individual needs. However, the comparatively small size of the sixth form means that despite cooperation with a local college, the range of courses is not particularly wide. Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. For example, in a Year 12 graphic design lesson extremely effective questioning and very well-chosen resources demanded students’ reflection and challenged their use of language. In a Year 12 history lesson very effective use



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of discussion and analysis of sources resulted from very good planning. As a result of the good provision progress is good, often from a comparatively low base, and students are acquiring very good personal skills that allow them to contribute very well to the rest of the academy. Leaders and managers monitor progress rigorously and are innovative in the strategies they implement to support achievement. Monitoring of teaching has the same strengths and limitations as in the main school.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	2
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

A comparatively low proportion of parents and carers returned questionnaires, but almost all those who did were extremely satisfied with the academy. Those who responded greatly value the teaching and the information the academy gives them. A few parents and carers disagree that the academy meets their child’s individual needs. The inspection evidence was that the academy meets many individual needs outstandingly well and learning is good overall. There were few comments that were critical and within these there was no particular pattern to the areas parents and carers mentioned for improvement.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Totteridge 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 47 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 783 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	12	26	33	70	2	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	12	26	33	70	1	2	1	2
The school informs me about my child’s progress	13	28	32	68	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	28	29	62	3	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	14	30	31	66	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	14	30	26	55	4	9	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	6	13	39	83	0	0	1	2
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)	16	34	25	53	3	6	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	12	26	25	53	6	13	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	28	30	64	0	0	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	19	30	64	5	11	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	17	36	28	60	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	19	40	26	55	0	0	1	2

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 8 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



16 September 2011

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Totteridge Academy, London N20 8AZ**

Thank you for welcoming us when we inspected your new academy this week. A particular thank you to those who gave us your views, either by questionnaire or face to face. You told us you feel extremely safe in the academy and we were impressed with how well you contribute to its success. Though it is very early in the term, we think the academy is giving you a good education. It has some great strengths.

- The academy's leaders have ensured an outstanding curriculum and exceptional care, guidance and support.
- These features are underpinned by exemplary ways of working with parents and carers, and with outside people such as nurses and social workers.
- The academy promotes equality of opportunity exceptionally well and, as a result, groups of students who entered with lower attainment are very quickly catching up to standards that are typically reached nationally.

We think the academy is well on the way to being outstanding. The reason we do not think it is quite there yet is that although results show some exceptional progress, learning in lessons is not always rapid enough to ensure this, and checking systems haven't been quite tight enough to improve all teaching. We have asked teachers to make sure the work they give you is always fine tuned to challenge you at the right level, to make sure that they involve you actively in things like discussion and to give you a chance to reflect on what you have achieved at the end of each lesson. You can help by ensuring you take these opportunities.

We have also asked the academy to find ways to give you more experience of the lives and faiths of people elsewhere in the country and in other countries.

With best wishes for the future

Yours sincerely

Deborah Zachary  
Lead inspector

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