

# The Bushey Academy

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135938
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	381966
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Martin Cragg

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>	Independent
<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>	589
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	50
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Meller
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Hemmings (Principal)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	London Road Bushey WD23 3AA
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<b>Fax number</b>	020 8420 4038
<b>Email address</b>	admin@thebusheyacademy.org

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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	16–17 November 2011
<b>Inspection number</b>	381966

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 31 lessons involving 31 teachers. They met groups of students, staff and members of the governing body. They observed the academy's work, and looked at its improvement plan, assessment information, records of monitoring and evaluation, and the governing body's policies and minutes. They reviewed responses to questionnaires from 77 parents and carers, 81 students and 53 staff.

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

- How well do particular groups of students, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, make progress, especially in English and mathematics?
- How effective is the tracking of individuals and groups of students in identifying underperformance and providing prompt and effective support to overcome barriers to learning?
- How effectively do senior and middle leaders monitor performance, evaluate progress and identify priorities to drive improvement in outcomes for all students?

## Information about the school

The academy opened in September 2009, replacing a predecessor school, which had been in special measures. It is smaller than average with a very small sixth form. It has a specialism in business and communication. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Around a third of students come from minority ethnic backgrounds and about a quarter speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high. The academy was designated by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust as a 'most improved school' based on its 2010 examination results. Currently, parts of the academy's facilities are temporary while a major building programme is completed.

**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 provides a satisfactory education for its students. It has improved rapidly since its opening in 2009 and now has good features. Many of the parents and carers who returned questionnaires commented positively on the improvements they have seen. Students show good personal development as a result of the effective care, guidance and support provided by staff. Students mix well and respect each other. Most behave well around the academy and in lessons. When given the opportunity in lessons, they collaborate well with others and show initiative in their learning. However, they are not always challenged to participate in this way and, therefore, sometimes remain too dependent on their teacher.

The principal, with senior staff and the governing body, sets a very clear direction for the academy based strongly on raising achievement. Clear expectations of staff and students, supported by effective policies and practice, have led to significant improvements. For example, students' attendance moved from low to above average in 2011. The rate of exclusions has more than halved. The quality of teaching and students' behaviour are steadily improving. Senior staff have a good understanding of the academy's strengths and weaknesses. They set challenging targets and adopt ambitious plans for improvement. They have tackled underperformance promptly and rigorously. As a result, the academy's capacity for sustained improvement is good.

Students' achievement is satisfactory and improving. The proportion of Year 11 students achieving at least five higher GCSE grades A\* to C improved to 89% in 2011. The proportion with five higher grades including English and mathematics also improved to 30% but it remains below the minimum standard expected for secondary schools. This is partly because too many students achieved a grade C in one of English or mathematics but not in both. Also, teachers do not always take opportunities to reinforce students' literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Because of this, students' attainment is well below average, though improving. Students make satisfactory progress from their starting points and some groups, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, closed the gap on their peers. This is a marked improvement since the academy opened.

Well-directed training and support have helped teaching to improve. Almost all is now satisfactory with around half good or better. Teachers set clear objectives for learning and structure activities well. However, there are inconsistencies in the way they match work to students' differing abilities. Teachers do not always use questions effectively enough to check students' understanding at different stages in

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lessons and to develop learning further. There is some good marking which provides clear guidance to students on what exactly they need to do to improve their work but this is not routinely so in all subjects.

The curriculum is broad and meets the range of students' needs, providing practical and vocational courses for some alongside academic choices for others, such as separate sciences. The academy uses its specialism to expand opportunities for students, especially their awareness of business and enterprise. Sixth-form students make satisfactory progress on their courses. However, some have found learning difficult in the past and they have not completed their programmes.

Up to 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.

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

- Improve the progress of students in Key Stage 4 in English and mathematics and raise their attainment by:
  - providing better support for students at risk of not achieving a GCSE grade C or better in one of English or mathematics, so that they achieve it in both
  - ensuring that students' literacy and numeracy skills are reinforced through other subjects
  - developing students' capacity to work independently and take responsibility for their learning.
- Improve teaching and assessment by ensuring that all teachers:
  - match work more closely to students' differing needs and abilities
  - use questions effectively to check students' understanding and develop their ideas
  - mark work thoroughly and provide students with regular guidance on how they should improve their work.
- Raise students' achievement in the sixth form and improve retention by matching students carefully to courses, which interest and challenge them at the right level so that they complete their studies successfully.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Students enter the academy with attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 which is well below average. In 2011, provisional results indicate that their attainment at the end of Year 11 improved substantially on that from 2010 and many indicators were broadly average. However, the proportion of students with at least five higher GCSE grades including English and mathematics, although it improved, remained below the minimum standard expected nationally. Students made satisfactory and improving

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progress in 2011. Progress in mathematics was better than in English. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities made satisfactory progress and improved their attainment in 2011 because of effective additional support and well-targeted intervention. Students from different ethnic backgrounds, those who speak English as an additional language and those known to be eligible for free school meals continue to make better progress than their peers and perform well compared with all students. The academy's assessment information indicates that younger students are making at least satisfactory progress and many make good progress, especially in Year 7. In the lessons observed, students made satisfactory progress overall and good progress in around half of the lessons. They generally settle to work promptly and concentrate well. Students enjoy working collaboratively in pairs and small groups when they are given the opportunity to do so. Most are keen to contribute to discussion and answer teachers' questions willingly.

Students say that they feel safe and this is endorsed by the views of parents and carers who returned questionnaires. Students understand how to keep themselves safe because of effective thematic days and external speakers. They are confident that staff will deal promptly with any concerns they raise. Students behave well around the academy and in most lessons. The academy canteen provides a good range of healthy food and many students participate in a wide range of sporting and physical activities, including the popular table-tennis programme. Students enjoy their involvement in community activities and older students contribute well by leading assemblies, mentoring younger students and organising charity events. Attendance this term is above average at over 94% and few students are persistently absent. Students have a growing awareness of business arising from the academy's specialism. They have good collaborative and social skills but literacy and numeracy skills are more limited, though improving. Students from a wide range of backgrounds respect each other and show interest in their different faiths and cultures. They enjoy a good range of cultural opportunities, including links with local dance and theatre groups.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</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>2</b>

<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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<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers manage lessons well and form generally positive working relationships with students. Teachers know the prior attainment of students and their plans contain strategies to help individuals learn although these are not always acted upon. They present topics clearly, supported by effective resources. Where teaching is good, teachers set high expectations, use active approaches to stimulate learning, and provide opportunities for students to assess their own work and that of their peers. They maintain a good pace and ensure that students are challenged. However, in a minority of lessons, teachers talk for too long and do not challenge students to apply what they have learnt. Marking of students' work varies in quality. The best examples are helpful and guide students in knowing how to improve but others focus too much on effort rather than learning.

The curriculum effectively meets the needs of a wide range of students. All students follow courses in business and this enables them to complete an examination course in Year 10. Students in Year 9 choose combinations of subjects such as media and modern languages or art and technology, designed to promote some less popular options. They also begin to study some GCSE or BTEC work in Year 9. The academy uses local companies and agencies well to enhance learning. For example, an environmental health officer briefed health and social care students on hygiene issues. There are productive links with sports and arts groups. A wide range of well-supported extra-curricular activities, events and trips broadens students' experiences and raises their confidence. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those at risk of underperforming benefit from a comprehensive range of intervention and support activities, including mentoring, Saturday morning programmes and individual tuition. As a result, most of these students made improved progress.

Staff know students well and there are effective systems for tracking students' progress and identifying those in need of support. Students say the all-age tutor groups improve relationships between students in different years and reduce any likelihood of bullying. Those whose circumstances have made them vulnerable speak very highly of the quality of care they have received, the effectiveness of support from staff and external agencies, and the impact on their confidence, behaviour and achievement. Students say they are prepared well for the choices they have to make as they move through the academy and students in Year 7 felt they had settled in well.

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*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The principal and senior staff have successfully set a clear vision for the academy based strongly on raising achievement, and this is shared among staff and communicated well. Staff morale is high, and teachers and other adults are committed to helping students to succeed. Senior and middle leaders review the academy's performance rigorously and identify areas for improvement accurately. They use thorough action plans to drive improvements and these have led to higher attendance, rising attainment and better student progress. Staff set challenging targets for students and outcomes are improving strongly to meet them. The academy has robust systems in place for observing and analysing teaching and learning. Teachers benefit from individual support plans and staff share effective practice so that the proportion of good teaching is growing.

The governing body sets an ambitious and clear strategic direction for the academy. Its members regularly and rigorously review the academy's performance, holding senior staff to account by evaluating performance information and requesting further analysis or reports on trends. Consequently, they have a good understanding of the academy's strengths and weaknesses. They ensure that procedures for safeguarding students are effective. The academy's systems for child protection are very thorough, including regular training for staff. The close relationships with other agencies ensure very effective support for students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.

The academy regularly seeks the views of parents and carers. Those parents who returned questionnaires were very positive about the academy and its recent improvements. The academy has effective partnerships with local schools, extending sixth form provision and developing teaching approaches. Strong local business and cultural links provide good opportunities for students to widen their experience and gain specialist knowledge. The academy promotes community cohesion securely through its commitment to include students from a range of backgrounds. Students contribute to their community through local projects. They benefit from increasing opportunities to learn about other cultures with recent trips to Auschwitz and Iceland. The academy promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination well. It is an inclusive and harmonious community in which students from a range of different backgrounds mix well and show tolerance and respect for each other.



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

## Sixth form

Students enter the sixth form with attainment that is below average and make satisfactory progress. Results have improved at GCE A level but the trend is less rapid at AS level. As a result, a higher than average proportion of students leave courses after Year 12 because the advice and guidance provided has not always ensured students are on the right courses. Students make a positive contribution to the academy through the mixed-age tutor groups. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers use their sound subject knowledge effectively to plan learning. In the best lessons, they challenge students to apply prior learning and provide good opportunities for group work and discussion but this is not the case in other lessons. The academy offers a sound range of vocational and academic subjects in relation to its size and increasingly meets the needs of students by working with a local school to broaden choices. Students value the academic support they receive from their teachers and have a clear understanding of the progress they are making. Leadership and management of the sixth form are improving. Staff track students' progress against their targets and quickly identify underachievement. Leaders monitor provision closely and this has prompted many recent actions which show that weaknesses are being addressed systematically.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	3
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

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## Views of parents and carers

Those parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire generally valued the work of the academy. The most frequent comments celebrated the clear improvements in the academy and expressed satisfaction with the education provided. A few parents and carers raised behaviour as a concern. Inspectors observed teachers generally managing behaviour well, using clear expectations and suitable warnings to prevent any impact on learning. Students reported that behaviour had improved because of the clear expectations in the behaviour policy and the positive effects of the rewards system. However, there were a very few occasions when teachers allowed students' concentration to lapse and their progress to slow.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Bushey 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 77 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 589 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	44	39	51	3	4	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	37	48	38	49	2	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	47	61	26	34	2	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	35	45	37	48	1	1	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	26	34	47	61	2	3	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	31	46	60	5	6	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	38	43	56	3	4	1	1
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)	18	23	49	64	1	1	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	29	49	64	3	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	31	39	51	9	12	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	35	40	52	3	4	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	32	42	43	56	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	48	35	45	3	4	1	1

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 08 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.**



18 November 2011

Dear Students

### **Inspection of The Bushey Academy, Bushey, WD23 3AA**

Thank you for the welcome you gave us when we visited your academy. We enjoyed talking with you in lessons, meetings and at breaks. Thanks also to those of you who filled in a questionnaire. Your views helped us to find out about the academy.

The academy provides you with a satisfactory education and is improving rapidly. It has some good features. Your attendance has improved substantially and is above average. In 2011, Year 11 students reached national averages for five higher GCSE grades. The percentage including English and mathematics also improved. Achievement in the sixth form was satisfactory. Your teachers increasingly set clear objectives for learning and structure lessons well. They form good working relationships with you and your behaviour is improving. You benefit from a broad curriculum with the opportunity to choose some subjects and start some GCSE or BTEC courses in Year 9. There are good links with local schools, businesses and community groups. Your teachers know you well and track your progress carefully. They provide good support and you say that you feel safe. The principal and staff have a clear vision for the academy and the temporary buildings already have improved the environment in which you learn.

We asked the academy to improve some areas of its work. These were to:

- improve your progress in English and mathematics and your results in Year 11
- improve teaching and some aspects of assessment such as marking so you always get feedback on how to improve your work
- ensure that sixth-form students get support to choose the right courses so that they complete them successfully.

You can all help by applying what teachers suggest you do to improve your work.

We enjoyed our visit to your academy and wish you success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Martin Cragg  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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