

King James I Academy, Bishop Auckland

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	136770
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	384814
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2012
Lead inspector	David Selby

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	730
Of which number on roll in the sixth form	119
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Varley
Headteacher	Nicholas Grieveson
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
School address	South Church Road Bishop Auckland DL14 7JZ
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Introduction

Inspection team

David Selby	Ofsted secondee
Jim Bennetts	Additional inspector
Lynne Horton	Additional inspector
Jim Hall	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 36 lessons taught by 36 teachers and visited morning registration sessions and two assemblies. They held meetings with senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and groups of students. Inspectors examined documents including the academy's self-evaluation and improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings, records of attendance and behaviour, the bullying and racial incidents logs and the single central record of safeguarding checks. They scrutinised a broad range of students' work through sampling their books and files and in lessons. An inspector visited the academy's off-site provision at the 'You Can' centre. Inspectors considered the responses to the on-line (Parent View) survey in planning the inspection and the completed questionnaires from 100 students, 50 members of staff and 94 parents and carers.

Information about the school

King James I Academy is a smaller than average-sized secondary school with a small sixth form. Almost all students are of White British heritage. Overall, there is a significantly higher proportion of students supported at School Action Plus or with a statement of special educational needs than is found nationally. This reflects, in part, the academy's resource base provision for young people with physical difficulties. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is approximately twice the national average. The academy serves a mixed urban and rural community. Many of the students attending the academy make use of school- and local authority-provided transport. The former King James I Community Arts College converted to academy status in June 2011 and at the same time the current headteacher was appointed. The academy leads provision in an off-site centre for students at risk of exclusion. It has a specialism in Media Arts, holds Artsmark Gold and International School awards and is an Investor in People. It received the School of the Year Award and the Active Community Award in the North East Schools Awards in 2011.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Good leadership and management have included effective responses to weaker areas and achievement is now good. The academy is not yet outstanding because teaching is inconsistent and less effective teaching does not help all students to progress as quickly as possible.
- Overall attainment is well above the national average when all qualifications are included, although it is lower for English and mathematics. The progress of students in these core subjects was below national expectations in 2011. Achievement in vocational subjects is strong. Current information on student progress and inspection evidence indicate that achievement across all subjects, including English and mathematics, is accelerating and is now more consistent this year.
- Teaching is good overall. There are examples of outstanding and satisfactory practice. No inadequate teaching was observed. Teachers encourage students to work independently in some lessons, but do not always plan and deliver activities which take account of the learning needs of all students and adjust to respond to how students are learning. Marking is inconsistent.
- Relationships between staff and students are good. These support good behaviour in lessons and allow for good learning. Incidents of bullying are rare and any are dealt with quickly and effectively. The academy has worked effectively to ensure that the overall attendance of students has risen to be above average.
- Leaders evaluate the academy accurately and have clear and shared priorities for improvement. They used the conversion of the school to an academy to refocus its work. Their strategies for sharing good teaching and learning practice, including those relating to improving students' literacy skills, are not embedded fully.
- The performing arts give wide opportunities for students to develop their creative skills and cultural awareness and link the academy into the wider community.
- The sixth form is satisfactory, reflecting satisfactory achievement. Good leadership means that sixth-form achievement is increasing. The sixth form is small, but good partnership arrangements allow for a wider curriculum.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is consistently good, with a greater proportion that is outstanding by:
 - matching tasks and expectations to the needs and abilities of different groups of students
 - monitoring the progress of individual students during lessons and reshaping tasks to enhance learning and encourage independence
 - giving written feedback of consistent high quality which allows students to understand how they can improve their work
 - using existing effective approaches as models of good practice in developing their own work.

- Raise achievement across the age and ability range and in preparation for the sixth form by providing more consistent support to students in developing their literacy and wider learning skills.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Most students enter the academy with attainment which is broadly average although this was lower than average for the students who completed GCSEs in 2011. Progress in vocational subjects is strong, leading to high attainment. There is outstanding achievement in performing arts subjects. When all subjects are included, progress measures are high. Student progress in the core subjects of mathematics and, to a lesser extent English, has been slower and did not reach national expectations in 2011. Inspection evidence indicates that students' progress is now accelerating and progress observed in English and mathematics matched the good rates of progress seen across the academy. This is a result of changes to management strategies and better teaching. The academy tracks the progress of individuals and groups carefully and this is allowing an effective response to the lower rates of progress of girls and more-able students. The progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs is at least as good as that of others and is contributed to significantly by the academy's support systems. These are based on a detailed understanding of the needs of students. Inspection evidence confirms the academy's view that achievement is good and more consistent across subjects this year.

Achievement in the sixth form is satisfactory with attainment which is above average in applied subjects and average but increasing for traditional AS and A-level courses.

The literacy skills of some students are relatively weak when they join the academy. The academy correctly identifies this as an important issue as it seeks to ensure that all students achieve well and are prepared for the future. While students with lower prior attainment make good progress, not all staff use approaches which ensure that reading and writing are supported consistently.

Ofsted questionnaires and discussion with students confirm that most feel they learn a lot in lessons and are helped to do well. The very large majority of parents and carers who

responded to the questionnaire are right to feel that young people make good progress and are happy with the education provided.

Quality of teaching

The majority of teaching is good. Inspectors observed broadly equal smaller proportions of outstanding and satisfactory teaching. Good and better teaching was observed in subject areas where student outcomes had been weaker in the past. There are positive relationships between teachers and students in lessons. These support good learning. Students respond well to teachers' instructions and requests. In the best lessons, students are encouraged to work independently and then judge their work against that of others. This was the case in a very effective Year 10 expressive arts lesson, where high-quality group work led to confident performances from individuals and thoughtful and constructive criticism from class members. The teaching in this lesson was enhanced by skilful use of older students acting as coaches. Small sixth-form classes allow teachers to respond to students individually, but they also limit the range of discussion possible. Where teaching is strongest, teachers judge how students are progressing as learning continues and then adjust tasks to match this. Where this is not the case, learning is not as fast and is often over-reliant on the teacher talking to the whole class. The academy has established systems for sharing good teaching practice, but not all teachers are involved with this fully.

Teaching assistants work well with disabled students and those with special educational needs to ensure they are included fully in the work of their classes. The academy's common lesson planning system requires all teachers to consider the particular learning needs of students. There is variability in the way this translates into classroom practice. In some lessons, work is pitched to those of middle ability in the class which means that both more- and less-able students are not stretched fully.

Standards of marking are variable. Most books and folders have marking which meets the academy's requirements for regular in-depth assessment. However, between marking opportunities there is little helpful comment on students' work in some books. In these, spelling and other errors in English are not challenged, misconceptions are missed and incomplete work is not identified.

Inspectors saw the best teaching supporting young people's wider awareness and skills in, for example, an emphasis on safe approaches in design and technology, good development of creativity in performing arts and awareness of the needs of others in a tutorial session.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour in the academy is good and is enhanced by the quality of relationships between students and teachers. Students are polite to visitors and pleased to talk openly about their experience. Movement around the academy is orderly and students show a good awareness of the needs of others, including the higher than usual proportion of disabled young people. Inspectors saw no instances of behaviour in lessons which disrupted learning significantly. The academy has systematic and thorough approaches to recording any incidents of poor behaviour and uses these to monitor patterns and plan actions in response. Staff have been trained in restorative justice approaches and these are starting to be used where they are appropriate and with indications of good longer-term effects. The rate of fixed-term exclusion from the academy is lower than average with the shared off-site provision, 'You Can', being used as an effective alternative. Students' tasks during 'You Can' placements are

linked to any work missed to ensure that they do not fall behind. Instances of bullying are rare and if they occur are followed up quickly. Students describe peer support and staff in the student support team as both contributing to them feeling safe and well looked after. Students are aware of different kinds of bullying and are taught about Internet safety. The behaviour of students in the sixth form is consistently good and actively supports independent learning.

The academy has a range of well-organised strategies to ensure that attendance increases. These have led to above average figures this year. Punctuality is good.

The large majority of parents and carers agrees that behaviour is good, although a few raised concerns through their questionnaires particularly about disruption to some classes and the use of the 'You Can' centre. Inspectors took particular note of these when scrutinising behavioural records, speaking with students and staff and observing work in the academy and at the centre. They saw good behaviour during lessons and found that the centre is used appropriately as part of the academy's wider behaviour management approaches.

Leadership and management

The academy used the opportunity of conversion to academy status and the confirmation of the permanent role of the headteacher as an opportunity to refocus its work. This was done to good effect and has contributed to a clear and widely-shared vision supported by a determination to consolidate the good practice in the academy and eradicate weaker areas. Members of the governing body contribute to academy leadership well. Academy self-evaluation and improvement planning are detailed and accurate with a wide range of priorities identified. Within these, the academy is aware of the most important issues and has taken clear management action when needed. The impact of this is clear in, for example, the current improvements in mathematics and in the improved quality of teaching in other subjects. Progress over the range of priorities is monitored and plans are modified if needed.

The programme of staff development is extensive. It ranges from a programme to support leadership skills developed in conjunction with the National College for School Leadership and offered to schools more widely to an extensive programme of internal professional development opportunities. There are shared approaches to improving teaching built on good practice both in and out of the academy. Staff development needs are linked to individual and academy needs through performance management.

The curriculum has matched the needs of students well and has led to a lower than average proportion of students leaving the academy without having definite plans for their further education, training or employment. The curriculum is evolving to take account of the changed national expectations between GCSE and other qualifications at the end of Key Stage 4. The sixth-form curriculum is supported by common timetabling and shared classes for some subjects with other local schools. The range of subjects offered allows the academy to respond to the needs of sixth-form students with relatively lower levels of wider skills development. The academy offers a good range of wider experiences. A large number of young people (including some from other schools) is involved in 'Bishop Auckland Theatre Hooligans' (BATH). This adds significantly to performing arts provision and is just one example of the well-established partnership and community work of the academy. Students describe how they enjoy being part of BATH and how this extends to a link with young

people in Jamaica. Inspectors saw how well this contributes to the good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all students.

The leadership and management of provision for disabled students and those with special educational needs including those supported through the academy's resourced provision for young people with physical difficulties is highly effective and indicates the academy's commitment to equality of opportunity for all. Inspectors received a number of positive comments from parents and carers concerning the way the academy helps all young people achieve in a caring environment and saw this in action during the inspection.

The academy understands itself well. Strong leadership has led to significant improvement in, for example, student outcomes including in the sixth form, attendance and the curriculum. It has a good capacity to improve further.

The arrangements for safeguarding young people meet national requirements and are thorough at both the academy and the 'You Can' centre.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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 May 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of King James I Academy, Bishop Auckland, DL14 7JZ

Thank you for the help you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school recently. Particular thanks go to those of you who gave up their time to speak to inspectors and to those of you who completed the questionnaires.

The inspectors judge King James I Academy to be a good school. We were pleased to see the positive relationships in the academy. We were impressed by the performing arts work in the school and the opportunities BATH gives you. Standards of attainment in the school are high in many subjects and most of you make good progress. We agree with the very large majority of you who told us you are helped to do as well as you can by the school and learn a lot in lessons.

We saw that, while teaching is good overall, it does vary in quality and so we have asked the academy to make sure that all teaching is at least good and more is outstanding. We have asked your teachers to plan lessons which will challenge each of you and support this by marking your work more consistently and with information on how you can improve. We would like them to check your progress more effectively during lessons and adjust what you are doing when that will help you to learn faster. They have all kinds of expertise at teaching and have started to share this well; we have asked them to do this even more. Some of you find developing your literacy skills quite hard so we have suggested that the academy should look at this again and make sure you have good approaches to help you improve these skills in all your lessons. This will help you do even better now and in the future.

You have an important part to play by continuing to do your best, trying hard to be independent in your learning and following your teachers' advice. We are sure that you will aim to do these.

Yours sincerely

David Selby
Lead inspector

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