

# Brompton Academy

Malborough Road, Gillingham, ME7 5HT

**Inspection dates** 11–12 October 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b> <b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The academy is a pleasant place to be. Students feel safe and well supported by staff. Students that inspectors met were welcoming and very friendly.
- Students achieve well, and make good progress from their starting points. Less able students make excellent progress in English and mathematics and are very well prepared for the next stage of their education or for work.
- Teaching is usually good and sometimes outstanding. Strengths include the way in which all teachers help to improve students' literacy skills.
- Students are very positive about the academy and attend regularly. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision is of high quality and promotes good behaviour.
- The governors and senior staff lead improvement very effectively. Well-developed systems are in place to check and monitor the academy's work.
- Effective action is taken to improve teaching and raise achievement. Leaders provide a wide range of training and development opportunities that are improving the teaching.
- The sixth form is good and examination results are rising. A range of changes, including an increased number of academic courses supported by the University of Kent, has improved the sixth form.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some teachers do not have the highest expectation of the most able students and this slows their progress.
- Teachers sometimes do not give students the time they need to work on their own and deepen their thinking and understanding.
- Achievement in academic subjects is not as consistently good as in vocational subjects. A few middle leaders are not effective enough in raising achievement in their areas.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the academy’s work over two days. They scrutinised documents and students’ workbooks and held discussions with members of staff, representatives of the governing body and the University of Kent about the students’ progress and achievements. They held formal and informal discussions with students about their work, learning and behaviour in the academy.
- The inspectors observed 37 teachers teaching 38 lessons. Ten were joint observations with senior leaders. Additionally, inspectors carried out two sessions of shorter observations of several lessons with the Principal and Vice Principal.
- They considered the views of 31 parents from the on-line Parent View questionnaire and met with a group of parents to discuss learning and behaviour at the academy. The views of 91 staff who returned inspection questionnaires were also taken into account.

## Inspection team

Peter Gale, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Daniel Burton

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Noureddin Khassal

Additional Inspector

Mary Myatt

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Joanna Jones

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## Full report

### Information about this school

- Brompton Academy opened in September 2010. The lead sponsor is the University of Kent. When its predecessor school, New Brompton College, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall. The academy is larger than the average-sized secondary school and accepts students of all abilities in an area where there is selective education.
- The academy now occupies the site of the predecessor school but is set to move to brand new buildings on a neighbouring site from September 2013. The academy is arranged in 'mini schools' which will be renamed after the schools of learning at the University of Kent when students move to the new building.
- The very large majority of students are of White British backgrounds, with 16% of students being from minority ethnic backgrounds. These students come from a range of backgrounds, with no group much larger than others. The proportion of students eligible for the 'pupil premium' (additional government funding for pupils entitled to free school meals, for children in local authority care and for pupils with a parent in the armed forces) is almost twice the national average.
- The proportion of students joining the school other than at the usual time of admission is higher than that seen nationally. There are 26 students from service families on roll
- The proportion of disabled students and students who have special educational needs is much higher than that found nationally. The proportions of students supported through school action and school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are well above average. Their needs include speech, language and communication difficulties and behavioural, emotional and social problems.
- The academy provides additional support and education for up to 100 students with a statement of special educational needs through specialist provision known as the Communications Centre.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching by ensuring that all teachers:
  - have the highest expectations of the most able students and plan lesson activities that fully challenge them
  - give students enough time in lessons to reflect on and demonstrate their understanding.
- Make achievement consistently outstanding in all subjects in the main school and sixth form by:
  - ensuring all subject leaders are equally skilled in bringing about improvement in their subjects
  - tackling any remaining weakness in teaching and learning, particularly in academic subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students who took GCSE and equivalent examinations in 2012 made good progress from well below average starting points. The proportion of students attaining five A\* to C grades, including in English and mathematics, remains below average but is rising. Students are now making good progress on most other GCSE courses; this was inconsistent in the past.
- Brompton students who start with very low levels of attainment make excellent progress in English and mathematics. Students with low and average attainment make better progress than students of similar ability nationally. More able students are making better progress because of the changes made to the curriculum and improved target setting and monitoring. Disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress, because the work is carefully matched to their individual needs. Students who are taught in the Communications Centre benefit from specialist teaching by fully qualified and knowledgeable teaching staff, and as a result they make good progress.
- The academy is extremely effective at ensuring that less able students are well prepared for the next stage of their education or for work by ensuring they are literate and numerate and have a good range of qualifications. Vocational courses, such as the BTEC in construction, make a very strong contribution to the future life chances of students who find academic courses more difficult. Students' progress on vocational courses is more consistently good than it is in academic subjects.
- Students, particularly those from families with parents in the armed forces, benefit very well from carefully targeted 'pupil premium' funding. As a result, these students are making faster progress than similar students nationally. Students from different ethnic backgrounds make equally good progress.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good and attainment is rising as the range of courses grows. A large proportion of students stay on to complete their courses. Work to tackle the previous variation in achievement between subjects is proving successful.
- A new range of A level courses has been introduced for the current Year 12 students and they are making good progress. Support from the University of Kent, in the form of weekly individual tutorials from students working towards doctorates, is making a strong contribution to Brompton students' progress.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is usually good. Some is outstanding. Teachers' very good relationships with students contribute a great deal to their enjoyment of learning.
- Where teaching is good or better, teachers have high expectations of students. They use careful questioning to test students' understanding and flexibly adapt planned activities to extend it. Students learn a great deal as a result.
- In outstanding lessons in English and mathematics, students were fully engrossed in their learning. Teachers set tasks that carefully matched students' abilities, while thoroughly checking their learning. Teachers gave time in the lessons for students to analyse what they were doing, reflect and strengthen their learning. Students consistently rose extremely well to the challenges.
- All lessons include activities relevant to the focus on improving students' abilities to read, write and communicate. Occasionally, too much focus on literacy slows down subject learning.
- A small amount of teaching requires improvement. In these lessons, teachers change activities too quickly and they do not give students enough time to think and work on their own. This can mean that while students are engaged in their tasks, they do not learn in enough depth. In weaker lessons, teachers do not always help more able students to move on to harder work quickly enough.

- Teaching in the Communications Centre leads to good progress for disabled students and those who have special educational needs. This is because it is carefully matched to their needs and is supported through additional expert teaching. For example, outstanding teaching developed speech and language communication for nine students with statements of special educational needs. The speech therapist was used to check students' understanding, and this helped the students to quickly improve their grasp of how to take part in conversation appropriately.
- Careful use of teaching assistants across the academy supports learning well. The assistants work with teachers before the lessons and know their roles well. They make a significant difference to the learning of lower attaining students, disabled students and those who have special educational needs.
- Written feedback to students about their work and how to improve it is of good quality. Teachers consistently mark for punctuation and spelling, as well as providing detailed subject feedback. However, students are not always required to act on suggestions for improvement.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Brompton Academy is a happy school, where students get on well together. The large numbers of potentially vulnerable students feel safe and well cared for.
- Behaviour is good around the academy. Students know that good behaviour helps them to learn well in lessons. Misbehaviour is rare and usually only happens when teaching is not inspiring enough to hold students' interest.
- The academy does not tolerate bullying in any form inside the school or in the wider community. Behaviour systems are very tight and leaders thoroughly follow up any incidents involving students at the academy, including any that take place outside school.
- Assemblies, personal tutoring and, where necessary, one-to-one support provide good help and advice to protect students from cyber, racist and homophobic bullying. Parents and students report that bullying is rare because students are very effectively taught to respect and appreciate diversity both in the academy and beyond.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions has reduced greatly since the academy opened. Leaders keep track of reasons for exclusions very carefully and are quick to help students who are at risk of exclusion.
- Students' attendance is checked very closely and on a weekly basis through the 'mini-school' structure. Interventions with individual students have led to rising attendance levels which were above the national average last year and are continuing to climb.
- Punctuality to school and to lessons is good. Systems are strong, with all students entering through the same gate; they are fully aware that any lateness will lead to detention.
- The large majority of responses to Parent View show that parents consider behaviour is good at the academy. Parents interviewed by inspectors were very appreciative of the level of care provided by the academy and the way it supports their children emotionally and academically.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The academy is well led. All those responding to the inspection questionnaire indicated that they were proud to be members of staff at the academy. Morale is very high and typical comments include: 'Senior leadership is outstanding, with an open-door policy where opinions and the like are taken on board.'
- Self-evaluation is precise and made more effective by the careful use of expert external evaluation, which accurately identifies the academy's strengths and areas for improvement. For example, the academy had accurately identified the progress of the more able students and achievement in some GCSE and sixth form subjects as its key areas for improvement.
- Development plans accurately highlight areas for improvement, with clear timelines and outcomes. As a result, many improvements have been made to teaching and students'

achievement since Ofsted's monitoring inspection in November 2011.

- Senior leaders know the quality of teaching in the academy very well and monitor it carefully. Inspectors and senior leaders carrying out joint observations of lessons were in close agreement on the quality of teaching.
- The Principal is the leader of learning in the academy and is very effective in leading professional development. Performance management systems are strong and lead to a broad range of coaching programmes for teaching staff and leaders. Senior leaders know that a small number of subject leaders are not yet performing at the expected level, sometimes because they have been quite recently appointed. Students enter the academy with low levels of literacy, and teaching policies have targeted this systematically. As a result, most students are helped to make faster progress in all subjects.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a strength. It is provided through high-quality assemblies and across a range of subjects. This is very effective in helping students respect each other and value their differences. The academy promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination of all kinds very effectively.
- Systems and processes that keep pupils safe meet government requirements.
- The academy works very closely with its parents and uses its links with the University of Kent to help parents to better support their children. More than 50 parents are engaged in adult learning at the university through the academy.
- The governance of the school:
  - The governing body monitors closely the behaviour and safety of students and considers the views of parents. Governors are linked to the different priorities in the academy's improvement plan and keep track personally of progress towards them.
  - Governors hold senior leaders to account for students' achievement by asking tough questions. They make sure, in coordination with senior leaders, that the pupil premium funding is used effectively.
  - Governors are keen to shape the curriculum and have pushed for, and supported, more academic options in the sixth form. The governors from the University of Kent offer extensive specialist support to the academy in the form of university staff and students.

## What inspection judgements mean

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

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136107
<b>Local authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	399803

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1060
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	88
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Nightingale
<b>Principal</b>	Judy Rider
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01634 852341
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