

Westminster Academy

The Naim Dangoor Centre, 255 Harrow Road, London, W2 5EZ

Inspection dates 28 February–1 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Overall students make outstanding progress. The proportion of students achieving five GCSE grades A*-C, including English and mathematics, is well above average.
- Teaching in English, mathematics and many other subjects is outstanding. Teachers have outstanding subject knowledge and plan interesting activities which motivate students.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress as a result of the academy's targeted interventions to support their achievement.
- Students from a very wide range of backgrounds and cultures get on well with each other and with staff. Students are proud of the academy's achievements.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is greatly enhanced by an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities. As a result, students have high aspirations for their futures.
- Senior leaders' relentless focus on achievement has brought about outstanding improvements in students' examination results.
- The Principal's determination that every student fulfils their potential is well communicated to staff and students. Students now share her belief that they can succeed.
- Governors provide senior leaders with outstanding support in making sure the academy's efficient use of funds raises standards. Senior leaders are held to account for all aspects of the academy's performance.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Students studying the International Baccalaureate make outstanding progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 42 lessons, three of which were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, groups of students, the academy's sponsor and the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors considered the views of the 11 parents and carers who responded to Parent View, the online questionnaire, and the results from the academy's own surveys of parents and carers. They analysed the results of the staff questionnaire to which 45 replies were received.
- Inspectors analysed the 2012 examination results and the published results for previous years. They looked at the academy's data on students' progress, lesson plans, minutes of meetings and records relating to behaviour, safety and attendance. They also reviewed the academy's self-evaluation and improvement plans.

Inspection team

Lisa Fraser, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jacqueline Pentlow	Additional Inspector
Brenda Watson	Additional Inspector
Rosemarie McCarthy	Additional Inspector
Simon Hughes	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is an average-sized comprehensive with a sixth form.
- Almost all students come from a very diverse range of minority ethnic groups.
- Almost all students speak English as an additional language and the proportion of students who are at the earliest stages of learning English is high.
- The number of students who join the academy after Year 7 is high.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, from service families, and for students known to be eligible for free school meals, is very high. There are no students at the academy from service families.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is very high.
- The academy has an international business and enterprise specialism.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Westminster Academy was last inspected by Ofsted on 15-16 September 2010 and was judged to be satisfactory overall.
- The academy works in partnership with the City of Westminster College to provide a wide range of Post-16 courses.
- Forty students attend full-time off-site alternative provision at centres which include Westside Independent School, QK Aspire, Beechcroft, The Lighthouse Group and Marlborough Education Centre.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching even further by:
 - developing a 'virtual learning environment' for the academy so that students can continue their learning independently by using the internet to support study at home.
- Raise the standard of behaviour throughout the academy by:
 - making sure that all teachers follow behavioural policies consistently so that off-task behaviour in a small number of Key Stage 3 lessons is eliminated.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Students enter the academy with skills in reading, writing and mathematics which are significantly below average. In 2012 the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A*-C, including English and mathematics, was significantly above average, a considerable improvement on previous results.
- There are varied reasons for these outstanding results which include the academy's high ambition for all students and outstanding teaching in many subjects, particularly in English and mathematics. The academy also has outstanding tracking systems that monitor students' achievement and lead to highly effective targeted interventions which mean all students are on track to fulfil their potential.
- Good use of early-entry GCSE examinations for selected students in mathematics and English has been very effective in raising students' achievement, self-esteem and belief that they can succeed. More-able students in Year 11 are stretched by studying for AS Levels in English, mathematics and politics. These students develop their independent learning skills by working on the extended project qualification. Students also make outstanding progress on BTEC qualifications.
- Students who join the academy are immediately assessed to identify if they have reached the required reading, spelling and numeracy levels. Their timetables are then adjusted to provide extra support for any gaps in their literacy or numeracy. Inspectors observed good reinforcement of numeracy in subjects other than mathematics, including in sociology and information and communication technology.
- Students supported by the pupil premium are in the vast majority and make outstanding progress because of the academy's very effective use of additional funding to resource small-group teaching, particularly in English and mathematics. Students eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium also make outstanding progress.
- Average points scores for both English and mathematics indicate that students known to be eligible for free school meals are achieving significantly better than that expected nationally. Their attainment, however, is still a third of a grade behind other academy students in English, and half a grade behind in mathematics. Senior leaders are working hard to close this gap even further with a focus on Year 9 and the introduction of a project with Skillforce to raise the achievement of selected students.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress because of the academy's innovative approach to monitoring their progress and accessing appropriate support from external agencies. Adult-volunteers who are often well-qualified university graduates provide these students with outstanding support in the classroom.
- Although numbers on the International Baccalaureate in the sixth form are small, these students are making outstanding progress. Good recently established links with Westminster College have enabled significant numbers of students to make good progress on work-related courses.
- A number of students attend full-time off-site provision to meet their specific needs and make good progress. Students' off-site attendance and progress are monitored closely by the academy.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The quality of teaching is outstanding because of its impact on students' outstanding attainment and progress.
- Teachers have outstanding subject knowledge in most subjects. Teachers use the information they have on students' prior learning systematically to plan activities for all students to make outstanding progress.
- In many lessons, students in the same class are given different work which is finely-tuned to their specific needs. For instance, in a Year 7 mathematics lesson on 'rounding', students made outstanding progress by working at their own pace on a range of different activities.
- Senior leaders' expert use of additional funding means that many students benefit from being taught in small groups. Sometimes teachers work together to teach a lesson in pairs. This builds strong relationships between teachers and students.
- In all lessons the level of challenge is high and there are numerous opportunities for students to discuss their views or support each other's learning by working in pairs or small groups. For instance, in a Year 10 information and communication technology lesson on designing a suitable user-friendly online feedback form, students made outstanding progress as a result of the teacher's high expectations, creative tasks and by working co-operatively with their peers. Students in this lesson were able to seek extra support independently because the teacher had organised a help-video which they could access.
- Students work well independently when they are given the opportunity, however, the academy does not currently have a means for students to access their learning at home by internet, such as a 'virtual learning environment'.
- Students are supported to develop their numeracy skills in subjects other than mathematics. For example, in a Year 9 sociology lesson, students made outstanding progress in understanding the different types of statistics used by sociologists.
- Teachers have an outstanding knowledge of examination requirements and the work which students cover in class prepares them well for future exams. Marking across all subjects is consistently regular and of a very high quality. Students know their targets and what they need to do to get to the next level of attainment.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' behaviour and safety are good. Students' attitudes to learning are positive and their relationships with staff are very good. Older students appreciate the extra support they receive from teachers to improve their grades outside normal school hours.
- Students are proud of the diverse range of faiths and cultures represented in the academy and say that racist bullying does not exist. Other types of bullying are swiftly dealt with by senior leaders and students say they feel safe. Mixed-age tutor groups help support younger or more vulnerable students and tutor-time is used effectively to promote the academy's values of the week and raise students' awareness of other issues such as homophobia.

- Events such as the student debate on same-sex marriage attended by the local Member of Parliament during the academy's Parliament Week encourage students to appreciate that others may have differing viewpoints from their own.
- Attendance is improving over time and is now higher than that expected nationally. Fixed-term exclusions are above average but are reducing. There were some permanent exclusions in 2012. Students speak very positively about recent improvements in behaviour. However, they say that not all teachers apply the academy's behaviour policy consistently.
- The student council is well-respected by students and effective in making sure that senior leaders take account of students' views. Students were recently involved in refreshing the academy's vision and values, choosing 'HERO' – honesty, enterprise, responsibility and opportunity - as their motto. Some students take on extra responsibility as behaviour monitors at break and lunchtimes.
- Significant numbers of students are supported for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. During their time at the academy, these students make outstanding progress. However, both students and staff realise that some younger students take longer to get used to the academy's expectations and this results in a very small number of instances when students' learning at Key Stage 3 is affected by distracting behaviour.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leadership and management are outstanding because the achievement of students in 2012 was exceptional. The academy forecasts that the current Year 11 student cohort is likely to sustain these outstanding results.
- The Principal shows outstanding leadership in communicating her belief that all students can succeed to staff and students alike. Senior leaders insist on the highest standards regarding the recruitment of staff. As a result, experienced and skilled teachers, particularly in English and mathematics, are having a significant impact on students' achievement.
- Teaching is outstanding as a result of the relentless but supportive monitoring by senior leaders. Effective targets for teachers make reference to the 'Teachers' Standards' and there is a clear link between performance and salary progression.
- Targeted professional development and training help teachers to improve their skills. Some teachers are currently coached by the Principal in preparation for the headship qualification. The academy actively encourages teachers to mark for examination boards and this means they are skilled in preparing students for examinations. As a result, students are making exceptional gains in their literacy and numeracy development.
- The academy knows itself well and makes good use of external agencies to check its judgements. Academy development plans identify appropriate priorities and take account of changes in education which may affect students' achievement in the future. Subject leaders are fully involved in the monitoring of teaching within their departments.
- Modifications to the range of subjects that are taught make them less broad than previously. However, any limitations in terms of provision for sport are minimised by the outstanding range of activities and interventions which are available to students at lunchtimes and after-school, including 3-G football, tennis, parkour, beach volleyball, rowing and exercise machines, and table tennis. Students' participation rates are monitored by staff through the 'Active Passport' scheme

to make sure they have regular exercise. The 'Girls Allowed' activity has been successful in increasing girls' participation in sport.

- The academy uses its links and central London location to provide students with an outstanding range of extra-curricular support to raise their self-esteem and aspirations. Targeted mentoring schemes with international businesses have widened students' horizons and one-to-one support from highly-successful business people makes students feel valued. Older students speak positively about visits to universities including Oxford, Cambridge and Imperial College which have encouraged them to believe that they can aspire to higher education.
- The academy's links enable courses to be delivered in interesting ways. Established partnerships with a construction company mean that a group of Key Stage 4 students will have the opportunity to study on a new GCSE equivalent course combining elements of construction, science and engineering. Students in Year 7 recently worked with a management consultancy firm on a 'Dragons' Den' pitch, reflecting well on the academy's international business and enterprise specialism.
- The academy promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well because of the varied range of opportunities which have contributed to raising students' self-belief and contributed to their outstanding achievement. The Duke of Edinburgh scheme is popular, with a number of students recently receiving bronze and silver awards. The academy strives to promote understanding between cultures. Students in Year 7 study Anne Frank's diary and a survivor of the Holocaust recently visited the academy to share her experiences with students.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body makes an outstanding contribution to students' achievement through its ambition for students and its relentless pursuit of excellence. Link governors meet frequently with academy leaders to monitor all areas of the academy's work, often using high-quality external consultants to review performance. Financial plans are well-scrutinised by governors and this has led to the excellent deployment of staff and resources. Governors have supported senior leaders in the recent staff restructuring and are confident that the academy intervenes to address underperformance so that teachers' pay is closely matched to students' good achievement. The governing body has an excellent understanding of the performance of different groups of students, including those supported by the pupil premium. Governors also know about the quality of teaching. Governors regularly update their knowledge and skills through external training provided by Westminster City Council. Governors are very involved in working with senior leaders to determine the academy's plans for the future. The governing body makes sure that statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding students, are met.

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

Unique reference number	131262
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	406424

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

Type of school	Academy sponsor-led
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	990
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	146
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jeremy Witts
Headteacher	Smita Bora
Date of previous school inspection	15 September 2010
Telephone number	020 71210600
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