

# Bacon's College

Timber Pond Road, Rotherhithe, London, SE16 6AT

## Inspection dates

12–13 March 2013

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Standards in English and mathematics are consistently well above average.
- Students are very keen to learn and are proud of their school. Their outstanding attitudes and behaviour contribute to them achieving well over time.
- The quality of teaching is good. There is an unrelenting drive to develop good teaching that stretches students so that they achieve well.
- The quality of provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. This is a major contributory factor to them enjoying their education and achieving well.
- Effective pastoral support and early help make a significant difference to students in vulnerable circumstances improving their attendance and achievement.
- The Principal is an inspirational and strategic leader who has galvanised staff and increased their ownership of change. As a result, there is a resolute focus on school improvement.
- The sixth form is strong. Standards at A-level are above-average; teaching is of high quality and students are prepared well for higher education.
- Senior leaders' strategic use of extra government funding ensures that eligible students achieve above all expectations.
- The governing body provides challenge, seeks tangible evidence of the school's performance and is not satisfied unless outcomes are good or better.
- Strong partnership work with external agencies supports vulnerable students to learn well and enjoy their education.

### It is not yet outstanding because:

- Students' progress, although good, still needs to be consistently faster in all subjects.
- There is variability in the leadership and management skills of middle leaders.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 36 lessons. Thirteen of these were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, representatives from the local authority, the headteacher of the Southwark Inclusive Learning Service (a local pupil referral unit) and four groups of students. Inspectors listened to a small group of Year 7 students reading.
- The inspection team observed the school's work, scrutinised the school's data on students' achievement, and the way that the leaders at all levels and the governing body monitor and evaluate the school's effectiveness. The inspection team also looked at records about behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of the 22 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), messages received from parents, and 69 responses from staff.

## Inspection team

Carmen Rodney, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sa'ad Khaldi

Additional Inspector

Paul O'Shea

Additional Inspector

Susan Sutton

Additional Inspector

## Information about this school

- Bacon's College is a larger-than-average secondary school.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic heritages is much higher than that found nationally, as is the proportion who speaks English as an additional language. Few students are at the early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of students identified with special educational needs and supported through school action and school action plus is high. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides funding for children in the care of the local authority and for students known to be eligible for free school meals, is much higher than that found nationally.
- A very small number of students are occasionally placed at Southwark Inclusive Learning Service for a short period of time.
- In 2012, the college's GCSE results met the government's floor standard, which is the minimum level expected for students' attainment and progress.
- The academy is sponsored jointly by the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education and the Philip and Pauline Harris Charitable Trust. The Christian ethos underpins its work but does not determine the admission criteria. The college's specialism is media technology.
- Following the resignation of the previous Principal, the academy experienced some turbulence because the trustees were not able to appoint a suitable applicant to the substantive post. Interim arrangements under the supervision of the trustees were made and included the temporary promotion of the senior Vice-Principal and the secondment of a serving headteacher. The new Principal took up post in April 2012.

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

- Ensure that a higher proportion of teaching is outstanding and leads to students making exceptional progress in their work over time by:
  - developing the use of clear assessment targets for learning
  - helping students to understand and respond to comments on their work so they are clear about how to improve
  - making sure that students are more actively involved in all lessons, through individual and group work
  - providing more opportunities for staff to benefit from sharing existing good practice with each other.
- Build on the work started to develop the capacity of curriculum and pastoral leaders by ensuring that they are all fully equipped to carry out their leadership and management responsibilities to the highest standard.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- The number of students gaining five or more A\* to C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, has been significantly above the national average for the last three years. Attainment has been at least in line with expectations for most students given their starting points when they joined the school in Year 7. Although there have been slight variations, overall standards have been sustained. An increasing proportion of students are achieving A\* and A grades in English, mathematics, science, history or geography and languages. The academy's emphasis on an academic curriculum leads to a well above average proportion of students taking separate sciences in biology, chemistry and physics. In 2012, standards achieved in these subjects, as in virtually all subjects, were better than the national average. On average, students took ten separate GCSE subjects.
- Above-average attainment is linked to good-quality teaching that is leading to students making rapid progress which is being sustained over time. This is because of the drive and consistency of teachers in ensuring that students can exceed expected progress.
- Current students from all groups are making better progress in all subjects than in previous years. The academy's actions to accelerate progress in GCSE examinations and similar equivalent qualifications have been unrelenting. In 2012, higher attaining students and those of White British heritage did not make as much progress as those from minority ethnic backgrounds or those who speak English as an additional language. Consequently, the academy has given a much sharper focus on these students to ensure that they make better progress. Current and reliable assessment information shows that all groups of students, irrespective of their starting points or circumstances, are making better than expected progress.
- In 2012, students made better progress in English than in mathematics, primarily because staffing was more stable and the quality of teaching in English was consistently good. The school has dealt effectively with concerns around the slower rates of progress students made in mathematics, history and physical education to ensure that issues linked to stability in staffing, the quality of teaching and choice of exam papers do not compromise students' achievement.
- The academy enters students for GCSE mathematics at different times during Years 10 and 11. However, too few of the more able students gained grades A\* or A.
- In 2012, disabled students and those who have special educational needs, together with those at an early stage of learning English, made good progress.
- The academy's actions to accelerate literacy skills are good. Interventions are personalised and strategically planned to provide general support for identified groups. As a result, students learning English develop their understanding of the language and its nuances quickly. Actions to provide for students eligible for pupil premium are outstanding and extend to the sixth form where case studies show that those receiving additional support exceeded expectations by achieving two or more grades higher than expected based on the AS-level results. In 2012, while all students benefiting from the pupil premium attained, on average, half-a grade lower in their GCSE examinations, given their starting points they made broadly similar progress to their peers.
- Older students involved in work related learning and the few, who attend Southwark Inclusive Learning Service for a short time achieve well. Students' achievement is tracked to enable them to access the curriculum and gain GCSE qualifications in English and mathematics.

- Consistently good teaching motivates students to achieve very well. In the best lessons seen, the hunger for high achievement led to them taking responsibility for their work, as illustrated in a Year 10 English lesson where students demonstrated an excellent understanding of textual grasp and appreciation when analysing a writer's choice of language to express meanings about racial segregation as part of their coursework on poetry. Students enter the sixth form with broadly average GCSE grades and make good progress in the AS-level and A-level courses. The majority continue into higher education, with many transferring to Russell Group universities, including Oxford and Cambridge. They are very well supported to make the transition.

### **The quality of teaching**

### **is good**

- Teachers are knowledgeable and use their expertise and experience very well to facilitate good learning. This is because they are ambitious for students and there are systems in place to ensure that the academy's belief, 'high expectations, high achievement' is applied rigorously.
- Expectations of work and behaviour are typically high and are linked to the academy's planning format. Teachers use this well to structure lessons which lead to activities flowing well and students having opportunities to apply the skills that they have been taught.
- In effective lessons, high-quality planning and attention to individual needs lead to students making impressive progress. A positive work ethic underpins these lessons; pace and discussions about concepts and techniques, together with teachers' excellent subject knowledge develop students' thinking.
- Outstanding lessons are characterised by students, including those with additional needs, making rapid progress. Teaching assistants are pivotal in supporting these students to keep up with the fast pace. In these lessons, teachers work methodically with students to develop independent learning and research skills, and peer review. In-depth questioning leads to students' deep reflection as they grapple with understanding difficult concepts. This was well illustrated in a Year 13 mathematics lesson, where students worked on finding a solution to a complex 3D linear programming problem.
- In the few lessons which require improvement, students occasionally spend too long listening to teachers. Work is not always carefully matched to students' needs and there is insufficient emphasis on using talk to increase their understanding of set tasks. Too few students are engaged in feedback and passivity is tolerated. Lack of confidence hinders the development of independent learning skills; pace is not rapid, and there is insufficient sharpness about accelerating progress over time.
- In many instances, marking is concise and assessment grades are used extensively and purposefully to develop students' learning. Students know their targets and what they have to do to improve their work. However, they do not always respond to their teachers' comments.

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

### **are outstanding**

- Students are extremely positive about their learning. They thrive at the academy; they are nurtured very well and inspired to achieve their best.
- Behaviour for learning within lessons and around the academy is excellent. Students have been very responsive to the sharp focus on improving learning and the crackdown on any form of misbehaviour and disengagement, however minor. As a result, there has been a significant decline in exclusions, which are now below the national average.

- Attendance is above average for secondary schools.
- Students describe their school as a strong community because they are all one irrespective of personal heritage or circumstances. This sense of unity underpins the moral principles that govern the strong bonds between students and their teachers. The visibility of staff, teaching and non-teaching, provides added security at the start, during and end of the school day.
- Students are aware of different forms of bullying and are intolerant of negative behaviours that discriminate against anyone who is perceived as being different. A Year 7 student described it as 'simply wrong' to undertake homophobic bullying. Students confirmed that bullying is minimal, and if it occurs, it is dealt with swiftly and firmly.

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

- Within a short time, the Principal has steered the academy to become focused on the core business of education, the promotion of teaching and achievement. This has resulted in leaders and managers at all levels applying the academy's saying, 'the strength and virtue of collective endeavour' to advance students' achievement at a much faster rate than previously. This corporate approach has led to staff, students and parents confirming that the academy is a different place under the Principal's stewardship.
- The high level of commitment to increasing the school's effectiveness has been successful. Swift and decisive actions were taken within a short time of the Principal's appointment. Basic systems and school procedures for holding staff to account were refined and, where necessary, teachers' performance has been very well structured to ensure that students can be provided with the best practice.
- The drive to improve further has been unrelenting as senior leaders build on the work of the previous interim leaders. Improvement is therefore seen as a process and further changes are planned as the school moves forward. Staff are committed to the changes and know that the academy has more to do, if it is to reach its ultimate goal of providing an outstanding education.
- Performance management is very robust and aligned to the Teachers' Standards. Clear messages about high expectations for students' results are widely known. For that reason, teachers are not rewarded if the ambitious targets linked to students' starting points and other success criteria are not met. The academy has established a culture of 'no excuses'.
- There is a high level of accountability, beginning with the governing body and trustees through to senior and middle leaders, teachers and non-teaching staff. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching is regular and accurate. Feedback is forthright and includes clear areas for development. Effective professional development and other systems are used to support staff.
- The school's self-evaluation of its work and the next steps are accurate. Departmental plans dovetail well with the school's improvement plan. Regular meetings provide supportive structures for leaders to remain focused on addressing the needs of students and staff. Typically, there is a microscopic approach to examining the impact of their work on accelerating improvement. However, there is still more to do to ensure that good practice is shared widely and all middle leaders are providing high-quality work in the academy's drive for excellence. Improvement has also been possible because of the excellent use of data to track students' performance, interpret and analyse data and use the findings to inform planning.

- The highly effective pastoral system ensures that students who need protection are effectively safeguarded and supported to achieve well. Well-structured management of behaviour and attendance ensures that students benefit from their education. These include, for example, restorative justice, conflict resolution, and excellent partnership work with Southwark Inclusive Learning Service to support students at risk of exclusion. The academy combines pastoral and academic support for students very well and is persistent in championing the needs of vulnerable students and their families.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who participated in the school survey and Parent View are very positive about their child's achievement and report that their children are excited about learning.
- The curriculum has been well thought through to ensure that it is flexible and responsive to the needs of all groups of students. For example, it offers single-sex teaching in Year 9 and there is a highly structured provision for students' emotional wellbeing. The pathways established at Key Stage 4 and the sixth form courses have impacted on improving students' performance and created a better climate for learning and behaviour. The courses offered in Key Stage 5 have strengthened the sixth form students for higher education. The specialism is used well to develop all areas of the curriculum, improve teaching and provide students with opportunities to experience and use a range of media technological skills.
- Outstanding provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures that the whole student is developed. Each aspect of this provision permeates the curriculum and the wider life of the academy. Discussions with students indicate that the provision has a very positive impact on their behaviour, achievement and preparation for the next step of their lives, in particular, living in a diverse community.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body and board of trustees have worked very well with the Principal to build on the foundations started under the previous interim leadership arrangements to improve students' achievement. Together, they form a very experienced body that provides support, commitment and enthusiasm. While the trustees are primarily responsible for overseeing the appointment of the Principal, the governors play a greater role in monitoring the school's performance and effectiveness. Minutes of meetings and the wide range of sub-committees indicate that there is challenge and tough dialogue about the impact of the quality of teaching on students' performance. Governors are very knowledgeable about interpreting examination data and have not stood still since the previous inspection, when the academy was challenged to do better. Three years on, the governing body has an accurate understanding of the school's performance; they know the school very well. They have ensured that questions are raised about different groups of students if they are not doing as well as they might. They are involved in monitoring and use their expertise to make demands about students' progress improving over time. For example, evidence of the impact of the extra funding for pupil premium is requested and scrutinised. They have ensured that there is an unquestionable link between staff performance and pay increases. They also ensure that statutory requirements 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135401
<b>Local authority</b>	N/A
<b>Inspection number</b>	402701

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>	1070
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	185
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Eugene O'Keeffe
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Martin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 November 2009
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