

# The Albany

Broadstone Road, Hornchurch, Essex, RM12 4AJ

## Inspection dates

20–21 March 2013

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement is not as good as it should be for GCSE results in biology, chemistry and physics.
- Teachers' expectations are not high enough, particularly in setting challenging tasks for the most able students.
- Students in Key Stage 3 do not always make good and rapid progress because their target grades are not regularly reviewed.
- Teachers do not always provide students with enough opportunities to explore ideas in depth, to engage in discussions or to work in groups.
- Teachers' marking is not consistent in quality and does not always tell students how to improve their work.
- Students do not always join in lesson activities or behave consistently well. Rates of attendance are not as good as they should be.
- Although senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness, not all other leaders with particular responsibilities apply school policies consistently. Leaders do not use the school website well enough to explain school policies to parents and carers.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher gives a strong direction to the work of the school. Leaders and managers across the school want the very best for students. Senior leaders and governors are working well together to raise achievement and the quality of teaching, and to improve behaviour and attendance.
- Students make outstanding progress in English language.
- The proportion of students gaining five A\* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, is slightly above average for all groups of students, including for disabled students and those with special educational needs.
- There is good and some outstanding teaching in English, mathematics, home economics and physical education.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 44 lessons, involving 42 teachers, 12 of whom were jointly observed with senior members of staff. In addition, a number of other lessons were visited to determine how well the needs of individual students are taken into account in lesson planning, and to look at the quality of marking and the help offered to ensure work can be improved.
- Meetings were held with five groups of students, the Chair, Vice-Chair and one other member of the Governing Body and a wide variety of staff including senior and other leaders, groups of staff, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 21 responses on Parent View, plus 44 responses to a parent survey provided by the school and one written communication received from a parent.
- There were 41 staff questionnaires returned and considered by the inspection team.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including examples of students' work, the school's own information on students' attainment and progress, records of attendance and behaviour, and information about meetings of the governing body, safeguarding, school planning and performance management.

## Inspection team

Sheila Crew, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Simon Blackburn	Additional Inspector
Angela Cook	Additional Inspector
Samuel Ofori-Kyereh	Additional Inspector
Babrul Martin	Additional Inspector
Kevin Morris	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Albany is smaller than the average-sized secondary school and has specialist business and enterprise status.
- The Albany, A Business and Enterprise College, converted to become an academy on 1 August 2011. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory.
- The Albany is part of a loose academy federation with Hallmead School, Upminster and Redden Court School, Romford.
- The school has a falling roll, which reflects the falling numbers of those of secondary age in Havering. Numbers are expected to significantly rise again in 2017.
- The proportion of known to be eligible for the pupil premium is average but increasing significantly in the current Years 7 and 8. This is additional funding provided for looked after children, pupils eligible for free school meals and children of service families. In this school, it includes looked after children and those eligible for free school meals.
- The proportions of students at school action or who are supported at school action plus and those who have a statement of special educational needs are all below the national average.
- The number of students from minority ethnic groups is above average, as is the number who speak English as an additional language.
- A small number of students in Key Stage 4 attend off-site courses in mechanics, construction and functional skills at Havering College and BEP Training, Romford.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- In June 2012 the school received an award from the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust for being in the top 10% of the most-improved schools in the country, over the previous three years.
- Apart from the deputy headteacher and one assistant headteacher, the senior leadership team is new. The headteacher has been in post since September 2012. A new assistant headteacher was appointed in September 2012. Two assistant headteachers have recently been appointed and take up their posts in April 2013.

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

- Raise the levels of achievement of all students through increasing the proportion of good or better teaching by:
  - raising teachers' expectations by planning tasks and creating challenging targets which meet the needs of all groups of learners, especially the most able
  - reviewing students' targets more regularly, particularly in Key Stage 3, to ensure that all groups of students make consistently good and rapid progress
  - making sure that teachers' marking of students' work provides clear guidance on how to improve
  - ensuring teachers talk less in lessons, so students are actively involved with more opportunities for discussion, exploring ideas in depth and for working in groups and by themselves.
- Strengthen the quality of leadership further by:
  - raising the quality of subject leadership in science, art and drama so that all departments are as good as the best
  - ensuring senior leaders check that other leaders with particular responsibilities fully implement the school's policies, especially in applying behaviour policies
  - further promoting good behaviour across the school and higher levels of attendance

- explaining the school's policies more fully to parents and carers through updating the school website.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Students enter the school with average attainment, but overall progress is too variable between subjects throughout the school.
- Attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 been rising over the past three years. Close to two thirds of students attained five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics in 2012 and attainment is now broadly in line with the national average.
- There has been a declining trend in achievement over time in science subjects at Key Stage 4. Progress in biology, chemistry and physics declined in 2012 for higher ability students and those entered for double sciences; attainment was below the national average for the number gaining A\* and A grades at GCSE.
- In general, higher and middle ability students do not always do as well as they could in achieving the higher GCSE grades by the end of Year 11.
- Governors have approved the use of pupil premium funding to buy in extra staffing for Years 10 and 11 to support students who need more help in lessons. As a result, students in these two year groups have made much better progress than in the past, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Most students, including those from minority ethnic groups, many of whom speak English as an additional language, make good progress in English and mathematics; this is particularly the case in English, where students' achievement is excellent. National data indicate that disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress from their starting points.
- Students eligible for the pupil premium, including those eligible for free school meals, have achieved well in gaining at least five GCSE passes at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics, for the past two years and their attainment in English was above average. Progress for this group of students in lessons observed by inspectors was in line with that of other students.
- The school enters a large number of students early for GCSE mathematics and English in the autumn term of Year 11. In 2012, students were also entered early for English literature. The school has reviewed this policy, taking into account the potential of the most able students, and has stopped early entry for mathematics and English literature.
- The small proportion of students in Key Stage 4 who attend courses in local colleges achieve well in the various subjects which have been selected to meet their personal needs. Year 7 catch-up funding has been used well to provide students whose circumstances make them vulnerable with targeted support to improve their work in English and mathematics.
- Reading is strong in English but weaker in the Year 7 integrated curriculum and there is little evidence that the habit of regular reading is consistently promoted across the curriculum.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- There is not enough consistently good teaching to result in good achievement in all subjects and year groups. However, there is some good teaching in most subjects. Weaker teaching occurs when teachers talk for too long and students are not given enough time to think for themselves or to work on their own.
- In some subjects, for example in science, standards are not rising fast enough. This is because teachers do not assess students' understanding well enough in lessons to ensure good learning and progress. In some lessons, teachers' expectations are not high enough and the level of challenge is not appropriate. Too often, lessons are not well planned to meet the different learning needs of students. As a result, students make some progress, but they could achieve

more.

- Teachers provide helpful comments in their marking in some subjects, particularly in English, but in others there is no comment or guidance provided to students on how to improve. In some lessons, teachers do not check carefully enough whether students fully understand the work.
- Teaching at its best is evident in the positive relationships between teachers and students which enable students to contribute effectively to the lesson. In physical education lessons, teachers provided a good climate for learning which engaged students and created interest and enthusiasm.
- The support provided for developing students' literacy skills across the curriculum is variable. There is some very good practice. In one religious education lesson, students were asked to decide whether it is ever right to take a life. The teacher motivated students with probing questions, linked the learning to real life and encouraged students to share their opinions in small groups. The teacher made very good use of key words and appropriate language. Students were encouraged to consider their opinions in depth and substantiate their views, whilst also having good opportunities for reflection to take into account others' opinions. Students were confident in writing about their own views while their reading and writing was effectively checked by the teacher.

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

### **requires improvement**

- Students, parents and staff all agree that behaviour requires improvement because in lessons where teaching is weaker and work given to students does not meet their needs, some lose concentration and interest and then may disrupt learning.
- Behaviour as seen during the inspection was orderly and polite. Behaviour in lessons is generally good; behaviour in corridors is noisy but not boisterous. A wet break was well supervised and generally well ordered. In many lessons, behaviour management is effective in maintaining a positive learning environment. Senior leaders monitor the behaviour and safety of those students who are educated off-site and it is seen as generally good
- Attendance figures are below average for all groups of students, apart from the most able. The headteacher and senior leaders have implemented rigorous measures to improve attendance and ensure all students attend school regularly. Governors have approved the use of some additional funding for extra staff to improve the behaviour and attendance of disadvantaged students.
- The rate of fixed-term exclusions is declining but it is still above the national average, particularly for students entitled to the pupil premium. Staff report that the school's firm stance on improving behaviour is, however, having a beneficial impact.
- Students relate well to one another and there is little evidence of bullying; they say that they feel safe in school and are confident that they know whom to approach in the event of a problem. Older students report that they feel happy in the school and they are aware of the different types of bullying through the life-skills programme. Some younger students do not consider the mixed-year tutor groups are working well or that they receive the amount of support they would like.

### **The leadership and management**

### **are good**

- The headteacher has taken decisive and successful action to improve the school, including restructuring the senior leadership team and recruiting additional senior leaders to help the school to focus on improving achievement and teaching.
- The school has an accurate view of its own performance and leaders are determined to move the school forward at a rapid rate. Rigorous appraisals have been introduced with regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning. Records show that the proportion of good or outstanding lessons is increasing, with improvements across departments and better lesson planning. The

quality of teachers' work is now linked to pay progression and the Teachers' Standards.

- The vision and drive of the new headteacher have been instrumental in getting the school to face up to weaknesses in key aspects of its work and in taking the required action to address the shortcomings. For example, the school's data tracking for Key Stage 4 has improved significantly and higher expectations have been set for staff and students. The headteacher has acted quickly to improve the leadership of some departments, such as science, art and drama, where the quality of teaching requires improvement.
- The headteacher has planned innovative changes to the Key Stage 3 integrated curriculum to provide a keener focus on achievement with more pace and challenge. The Key Stage 4 curriculum now offers greater variety in the provision of vocational BTEC courses.
- Leaders with responsibilities for academic departments and pastoral work have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They share the headteacher's vision and have rigorous targets with focus on improving teaching and learning. Senior leaders are effective in holding them to account.
- The school has continued to buy services from the local authority since becoming a converter academy, including the services of a school improvement partner who has worked closely with the headteacher to monitor the progress of departments causing concern. The school improvement partner was involved with governors in setting the headteacher's performance targets and in the appointment of new senior leaders. Safeguarding arrangements are good.
- The provision for students' social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is variable. There is some good practice in religious education, where students demonstrate a good understanding of right and wrong, but this needs more rigorous implementation within the tutorial programme. Senior leaders work hard to ensure there is no discrimination and that all students have opportunities to take part in all activities.
- Pupil premium spending is well managed, and the tracking of these students' progress is improving. The funding has had a positive impact on the GCSE results for English and mathematics in the past year as a result of the intervention measures funded by the additional grant. It has also been used for additional support to improve behaviour and attendance.
- The school's website is undergoing an update and the headteacher has prioritised the need to improve the way it is used to keep parents informed about their children's learning and wider school issues.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire said they were pleased with the way the school is led and would recommend it to others.
- Staff questionnaire responses indicate that the majority believe the school to be well led, although they express concerns regarding the consistency with which school policies are applied, particularly with regard to behaviour. Senior leaders rightly acknowledge the need to ensure a consistent approach to areas such as the management of behaviour.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body appointed the new headteacher with the clear priority to raise the quality of teaching and learning. Governors hold the headteacher to account for the accuracy of predictions for students' achievement, examination results, the quality of teaching and attendance. Governors have a good understanding of the data on how well the school is performing when compared to all schools nationally. They take up opportunities for training, having completed courses on child protection and understanding data on students' performance, for example. They have a firm grasp of the finances and of systems for pay progression and rewards for good teaching. They have a good understanding of performance management and the quality of teaching. Governors ensure that pupil premium funding is well managed and they have a good awareness of how to evaluate its impact on students' achievement.

## 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>	137189
<b>Local authority</b>	Havering
<b>Inspection number</b>	402749

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy – Converter Mainstream
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	887
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tim Brown
<b>Headteacher</b>	Adam Thorne
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	N/A
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