

King's Oak Academy

Brook Road, Bristol, BS15 4JT

Inspection dates 11–12 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	N/A
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Students' achievements are improving rapidly. Students make good progress from their starting points, particularly in English. Students are well prepared for the next stage of their education or for work.
- Teaching is usually good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers are skilful at encouraging students to reach beyond their targets and aim even higher.
- Students behave well at all times. They are very positive about the academy and the help they receive to achieve their best.
- Leaders and managers have created a strong culture of learning amongst staff and students. They receive excellent support from the Cabot Learning Federation.
- The attention to monitoring and evaluation by leaders and governors is commendable. It challenges everyone to raise their game and play their part in driving for excellence.
- The students are well cared for and feel safe. They recognise the respect the staff show them and this helps them develop confidence and independence in their own abilities.
- The sixth form is good because teaching is good courses are carefully matched to students' abilities so that the students achieve well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attendance is not yet good.
- There is still work to do to build a strong partnership with parents.
- The quality of teaching in mathematics is not yet consistently good enough because teachers do not always plan enough work to deepen students' thinking and understanding.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 29 lessons and part lessons. Seventeen of these were seen jointly with school leaders.
- An inspector also visited the Studio. This is alternative provision for some students with behavioural needs who attend five of the academies within the Cabot Learning Federation. The inspector's evaluation was sent to the lead inspector of one of these other academies that was being inspected at the same time.
- The inspectors met with groups of students to discuss their work and seek their views and hear them read. They joined students during their tutor group time.
- Inspectors reviewed the work in students' workbooks during lessons and also a selection with school leaders. They considered a wide range of school documentation, including information on students' progress, teaching guidance and policies. One of the inspectors carried out case studies of two students with specific educational needs. Inspectors paid close attention to the school's information on attendance, behaviour and all aspects of safeguarding.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders. There were discussions with three members of the academy council, the executive principal of the Cabot Learning Federation, the principal and vice principals, subject and phase leaders, the coordinator for the learning of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and the personalised learning tutor.
- The views of parents and carers were taken into account through the 49 responses on Parent View, the on-line survey.
- A survey of the views of 44 staff was noted

Inspection team

Jonathan Palk, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Additional Inspector

Jean Walley

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Phil Taylor

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Full report

Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The academy is a member of the Cabot Learning Federation which is sponsored by Rolls Royce PLC and the University of the West of England. The federation has been the sponsor of King's Oak since September 2011 when the academy opened. The federation consists of a group of five local primary and six secondary academies who work together to share effective practice and leadership strategies to accelerate school improvement. This work is led and coordinated by an executive principal.
- There is a small sixth form, although students may attend any one of the four sixth forms within the learning federation.
- The academy shares alternative provision, called the Studio, with four of the other secondary academies within the learning federation. This provides support for students who are at risk of permanent exclusion, to help them re-join their home academy.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who receive extra help through school action is below average. The proportion of students supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The proportion of students eligible for additional government money allocated for those who are known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and children of service families (known as the pupil premium funding) is similar to the national average. There are no children of service families in the school. Twenty per cent of students are entitled to the catch-up premium for those joining the school who have not achieved Level 4 in their national tests at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the teaching of mathematics by ensuring that teachers:
 - have the highest expectations of the most able students and plan lessons that fully challenge them
 - give enough time in lessons, and through discussions, for students to reflect on and demonstrate their understanding
 - increase the students' use of mathematical skills in other subjects such as history
 - ensure students' mathematics books are marked close to the time the work is completed and include comments that draw students' attention to any misconceptions and misunderstanding that the students may show.
- Improve attendance by continuing to work with families whose children do not attend as well as others.
- Further develop the partnership with parents, focusing explicitly on those families whose children are entitled to the extra funding through the pupil premium and addressing the concerns some parents have about homework.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students who took GCSE and equivalent examinations in 2012 made less than the nationally expected progress from their starting points. The proportion of students attaining five A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, was broadly average in 2012. This was a much improved set of results. Students are now making good progress on their GCSE courses; this was inconsistent in the past.
- Students who start with very low levels of attainment make good progress in English and mathematics and far more of the students with lower and average attainment make good progress when compared to those of similar students nationally. More able students are making better progress than they have before because of improved target setting for students.
- Boys too are making better progress and the gap between their achievement and that of girls is beginning to close rapidly. This is due to adjustments in the curriculum and small group teaching carried out as part of an additional raising attainment session each fortnight.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress because the work is carefully matched to their individual needs. The very few students who are taught in the Studio benefit from a tailored programme to help them with their behavioural and emotional difficulties. Almost all students continue with their courses and proceed into training or work.
- The academy is much more effective at ensuring that less able students are well prepared for their next stage of their education or for work, by ensuring they are literate, numerate and are studying the courses best suited to their needs.
- Students' literacy skills benefit very well from the well-used pupil premium funding and Year 7 catch-up funding. This is a considerable improvement since 2012 when students who received pupil premium did not do as well as their peers. When compared to national averages, there is still a small gap between the progress they make in mathematics when compared to their peers nationally.
- The academy is increasingly successful at matching the right combination of sixth form courses to students' abilities. All those who started in Year 12 stayed on to complete their final year in the sixth form. Their predicted grades are significantly higher than they have been in the past across a range of qualifications, and this represents good 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 the high aspirations students are setting for themselves.
- In outstanding lessons students were fully engrossed in their learning. Teachers set tasks that were exactly what students needed, thoroughly checked that they were understanding and could apply their learning to the task in hand. Students were liberated and not constrained by the learning objectives. Teachers gave time in these lessons for students to analyse what they were doing, reflect and strengthen their learning.
- The teaching of writing is good. Students get the time to complete longer pieces across a range of subjects. The well-established systems for students to mark their own and each other's pieces of writing mean that the work is revised continually and results in high quality pieces produced before the end of the lesson. The personal satisfaction this generates only serves to strengthen student resolve to do even better.
- A small amount of teaching requires improvement. This is because teachers take too long to explain things and do not use the time to help students learn in enough depth. In mathematics lessons, teachers do not always help the more able students to move on to harder work. For some less able students work is not recorded methodically and, consequently, mistakes are made.
- Teachers generally mark students' work well, with some outstanding examples in English,

geography and design and technology books. Infrequent marking in some subjects, however, does not help students keep track of how well they are doing. Also, in written work, marking does not always insist on correct punctuation or grammar.

- In mathematics, a general lack of detailed marking and poor presentation of students' work hinder progress. Students do not get the opportunity to respond to the teachers' comments. Students are not always required to work on suggestions for improvement or encouraged to set out their work carefully to avoid mistakes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- King's Oak Academy is a happy school where students get on well together. Those who find learning difficult feel safe and well cared for.
- Behaviour is good around the academy. Students know that good behaviour helps them to learn well in lessons. Highly effective strategies are in place to help students manage their behaviour. Incidents of removal from lessons are diminishing fast and cases of bullying and exclusions have reduced significantly.
- Assemblies, tutorials and, where necessary, one-to-one support provide good help and advice to protect students from cyber, racist and homophobic bullying. Most parents are confident that bullying will be handled well.
- Attendance is below national average, although much improved from 2010 to 2011. Students' attendance is checked closely and on a weekly basis through the pastoral team leaders. Individual support is provided to help manage the start of the day, for example for those who are young carers. Punctuality to school and lessons is good. Systems are strong with all students entering through the same gate. Students are fully aware that any lateness will lead to detention.

The leadership and management are good

- The academy has transformed under the determined and inspiring leadership of the principal. All those responding to the inspection were unanimous that they were proud to be members of staff at the academy. Morale is very high and all staff feel well supported.
- The way in which academy leadership at all levels, including the support from the Executive Principal, the Cabot Learning Federation Board and the academy council, has secured improvements in the quality of teaching is impressive. The unwavering belief that everyone can achieve the highest possible goals is woven into leadership and management at every point and sustained through extremely well targeted professional development, training and coaching provided by the academy and the learning federation. There is a strong commitment to attaining the highest professional standards that provides an excellent role model for students. It is very much a case that 'we are all learners here'.
- The impact on students' outcomes is secured because of continuous monitoring by all staff of what is, and is not, working. Year group and subject performance reviews provide rigorous and comprehensive analysis of a wide range of data relating to all outcomes and provision. When practice is not as good as it should be, action is quickly taken to bring about improvement.
- The strong team of senior and middle leaders and managers are central to improvements in achievement and the quality of learning. They are rigorous in their checking on students' progress and adjusting the offer of additional learning groups through the expertise of the raising attainment team. Their drive and determination to become senior leaders themselves contribute to the vision of excellence in the academy.
- Rigorous performance management systems and the secure link between successful outcomes, for example boys' motivation, and salary progression ensure that only good practice is rewarded.
- Self-evaluation is precise and made more effective by the collaboration of expert teams drawn from within the learning federation and teaching school. Development plans accurately highlight areas for improvement within the phases and subjects. The clear timelines and objectives ensure

that no time is lost in securing and sustaining improvement.

- The school has been successful at developing a range of lessons designed to meet students' needs, and this is reflected in the excellent individualised programmes for boys and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs.
- The innovative way that subjects are taught in Year 7 is helping students to link what they learn in the academy with everyday life and use this in the next stage in their education. For example, Global Literacy lessons, which have a specific focus on developing key skills, support the students well in their ability to use different ways to learn, helping them to develop an individual approach to their studies.
- The quality of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is strong and helps students respect each other and value their differences. The academy promotes equality of opportunity well and tackles discrimination of all kinds very effectively.
- The confidence of parents in the academy is improving and this is evident in the rapid rise in students staying on to join the sixth form. Parents are more willing to come into school to get information on how well their children are doing. However, some parents' views on the appropriateness of homework indicate that this element of the partnership requires improvement.
- Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements and reflect positively the leaders' determination to ensure all students can get the most from their education.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Councillors make an excellent contribution to the improvement of the academy's effectiveness. They provide strong challenge to the school leaders through a robust process of checking that action taken has made an impact to students' achievement and the quality of teaching. Councillors have a very good understanding of how the students' performance compares to national data. They work alongside academy leaders to ensure that performance management and staff development are rigorously evaluated.
 - Councillors demonstrate their independence by selecting areas of the academy work to check up on, and use their findings to steer further improvement. For example, they have observed the working of the raising attainment team, and recommended a series of actions to improve the impact of these additional group sessions on boys' achievements.
 - Additional government funding is used effectively to provide a reading recovery programme for low attainers in Year 7, and to appoint additional staff to help coach and mentor students through their difficulties in becoming learners. They are working more closely with those parents who find it hard to approach the school to help with their child's learning, through a parents' forum. This is successful in linking parents to the staff working with disability and special educational needs.

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	137106
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	399865

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

Type of school	Academy sponsor-led
School category	Community
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	656
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	99
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susannah Hill
Headteacher	Ian Frost
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01454 866538
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