

Brighton Aldridge Community Academy

Lewes Road, Brighton BN1 9PW

Inspection dates

5–6 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	3
	This inspection:		
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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 school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although achievement is improving, it is taking time for good teaching to bring students up to expected levels. Students have a lot of catching up to do because many have weak skills in reading, writing and mathematics which limit their progress.
- A few subjects are lagging behind in providing consistently good teaching. Teachers of different subjects do not tackle weak presentation, spelling and number work in the same way.
- The features of outstanding teaching, especially how to adapt teaching during lessons to match the pace of students' learning, are not shared across the academy.
- The sixth form requires improvement. It has not had time to develop a full range of courses or to provide enough opportunities for students to contribute to the life of the academy.

The school has the following strengths

- Results in GCSE are improving rapidly, particularly in English, where students make outstanding progress.
- Support for students who are disabled or have special educational needs and those eligible for extra help is well managed. No money is wasted because support is focused on raising achievement.
- Behaviour is managed in the same way by all staff. As a result of high expectations, students behave well in lessons and around the academy.
- The Principal and senior leaders work in close partnership with the governors and the academy sponsors to provide excellent leadership. A transformation has taken place in behaviour and teaching since the academy opened.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 28 lessons, of which six were joint observations with senior staff. Visits were made to a further six lessons to observe the progress of specific students.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, deputy and assistant principals, heads of subjects, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Chair of the Education Committee, groups of students and a representative from the academy sponsor.
- Inspectors took account of nine responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) received during the inspection.
- The inspection team observed the academy's work, scrutinised the academy's data about students' achievement, examined records relating to behaviour and attendance and looked at documents used by leaders to monitor and evaluate the academy's work.

Inspection team

Anne Wellham, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mina Driver	Additional Inspector
Patrick Hazelwood	Additional Inspector
Helen Harwood	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Brighton Aldridge Community Academy is a smaller than average-sized secondary school that opened in September 2010. It moved to a new purpose-built site and a small sixth form in September 2011.
- The academy is one of four sponsored by The Aldridge Foundation.
- The academy is an entrepreneurial academy with a specialism in sport. A large majority of students are White British who speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is well above that found nationally.
- The proportions of students supported through school action, at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are well above average.
- A small number of students in Years 10 and 11 attend work-related courses at City College and Plumpton College.
- The academy meets current government floor standards, the minimum level expected for students' attainment and progress.
- A specialist unit for students with speech, language and communication needs and autistic spectrum disorders, funded by the local authority, is sited at the academy. There are 14 students who have access to education across the academy, as well as being taught in the unit.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that the achievement of all students is consistently good or outstanding in all subjects and across all year groups by:
 - sharing expert knowledge and features of outstanding teaching across the academy so that all leaders of subjects and teachers can learn from what is working well
 - making sure that all teachers check students' learning during lessons and adapt their teaching as a result, so that all students make good progress.
- Make sure every teacher plays a part in improving students' skills in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - providing clear rules about how to present work and checking that they are followed
 - giving examples of how to complete tasks and set out work so that students know what to aim for
 - building time into lessons for students to read aloud, speak about their work and practise number and problem-solving skills.
- Further develop the sixth form by providing a full range of courses and more opportunities for students to contribute to the life of the academy.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils **requires improvement**

- Since the academy opened, there has been a steady rise in the proportion of students achieving five or more A*-C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics. The gap between the academy's results and the national average is closing. Results in English in 2012 rose sharply to above the national average. This represents outstanding progress because some students had exceptionally low starting points. Results in mathematics in 2012 improved, but not at the same rate.
- Students' reading, writing and number skills are weak. They do not make consistently good progress across all subjects and year groups because not all teachers do enough to help them catch up and develop these skills in their lessons.
- The progress of students who enter early for GCSE examinations in English and mathematics is checked carefully. Early entry and extra revision classes have been used well to increase students' confidence and motivation. The proportion of C grades achieved by students has increased.
- Students who are supported by extra funds make similar progress to other students in the academy. In 2011, the average scores that they gained in examinations were below those of students in other schools. School data for 2012 show that the gap is narrowing. Additional funds have been spent wisely on extra staffing to provide one-to-one tuition, programmes to improve reading, trips, and projects to help these students make rapid progress.
- Staff who provide extra support for students who have special educational needs and need extra help are well trained. They investigate factors that are preventing students from succeeding and act quickly to help them to try different ways of learning and provide extra resources. Some students make exceptional progress as a result of this intensive support.
- Students who attend the specialist unit are well supported and most make good progress. In some lessons, they do not get the chance to work with other students, which limits the development of their social and communication skills.
- Leaders carefully check the quality of learning and progress of students who study work-related courses at college. As a result, all students are making good progress.
- Students in the sixth form are on track to make the progress expected of them.

The quality of teaching **is good**

- Good and outstanding teaching is helping to raise standards and to make up lost ground but has not had time to make students' overall achievement good. The quality of students' learning is improving because attendance has improved dramatically and teachers have consistently high expectations of behaviour. This helps to create positive relationships and develop good attitudes to learning.
- Teachers use good questioning and a range of approaches to check how well students are learning. They know the students who are learning quickly and those that are struggling to keep up. The most skilful teachers use this information to adapt their teaching during the lesson so that all students can make rapid progress.
- Teaching is most effective when a broad range of skills is developed whatever the subject. An outstanding sports lesson did not just focus on developing agility skills. Through the teacher's breaking down of words and meanings and skilfully directing discussions and feedback, students were able to use and apply what they were learning in English.
- Students know how to improve and meet their targets in many subjects because they receive good quality feedback through detailed marking. In a few subjects, they are not given clear advice on how to present work, correct mistakes and improve spelling and grammar. This slows

their progress.

- Carefully planned tasks in lessons and memorable activities, trips, competitions and rewards are helping students to develop an understanding and appreciation of different cultures, beliefs and values in British society and across the world.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour has been transformed since the academy opened. Poor behaviour is not tolerated and good behaviour is rewarded and celebrated. Students usually move around the building calmly and sensibly, although staff keep a watchful eye in case they need reminders.
- Students' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are mostly good because the rules and sanctions are clearly understood by students and staff. Occasionally, students lose interest and concentration if they have to listen for long periods or if they cannot understand what to do.
- Students receive remarkable care and support from teams of dedicated staff who help with attendance, behaviour and academic and personal needs. Supportive relationships between staff and students and between the students themselves are developing strongly, which makes it easier for students to learn.
- Students' understanding of the importance of coming to school is growing. Attendance has improved rapidly for all groups of students since the academy opened. Persistent absence is now lower than that found nationally and exclusions have reduced.
- Students feel safe and well supported. They know how to stay safe when using the internet and understand the different forms that bullying can take. They say that racist or homophobic name calling is very rare. If it does happen, they are confident that it will be dealt with quickly and effectively by staff.
- Year 7 students reported how much they like being at the academy and could not think of anything they wanted to improve. They work hard to earn 'Vivo miles' which reward good behaviour and achievement and recognise the contributions they make to the academy community.

The leadership and management are good

- The principal provides excellent leadership. She is supported by senior leaders, governors and staff, who share her passion and commitment to achieve the academy's mission statement, 'Believe you can'. The academy's own evaluation of its work is hard-hitting and accurate.
 - Governors and senior leaders check the quality of teaching very thoroughly. Teachers' lessons are observed and they receive good quality feedback on how to improve. They are set challenging targets linked to students' progress, which they have to meet before they move up the pay scales.
 - Training is used effectively to refine teachers' skills and to give them the confidence to try new approaches. Expert knowledge and features of outstanding teaching in English are shared across the department but not across other subjects.
 - Strong leadership is not consistent across the academy. A few subjects are lagging behind in raising standards and providing consistently good teaching, because leaders of these subjects are still developing the skills needed to drive forward rapid improvement.
 - Since the academy opened, changes have been made to the range of subjects taught, in order to reflect students' changing needs and developing abilities. Extra guidance, support and help are tackling underachievement effectively.
 - Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is given a high priority. Strong links
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with local businesses and universities, community groups, artistic, musical and sporting organisations, together with strong partnerships within the academy foundation, provide an exceptional programme of activities to further the development of entrepreneurship and sport.

- Extra money that the academy receives to support the achievement of students known to be eligible for free school meals is used specifically to provide activities and resources that improve their learning, build their confidence and raise their self-esteem. No resource is wasted because leaders check to make sure that learning is improving as a result of the extra support.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The trustees steer the development of the academy well and provide expertise and financial support. Governors are strong leaders, with complementary knowledge and skills. They have a clear understanding of how the academy's results compare with those of other schools and of the progress made by different groups of students.
 - The governing body knows exactly what is happening in the academy and will challenge decisions if they feel that students' achievement is not improving quickly enough. They expect teaching to be good or outstanding and know how targets are set to reward teachers or challenge them to improve. They check that additional money is spent on things that help students learn and they want to know what difference it makes.
 - Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities. They attend training and are very thorough in making sure that students and staff are safe.
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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	136164
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	399767

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	638
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	36
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Kyle
Principal	Philomena Hogg
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01273 691191
Email address	office@baca-uk.org.uk

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