

# Bolingbroke Academy

Wakehurst Road, London, SW11 6BF

## Inspection dates

3–4 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- The Principal and senior leaders have rapidly established a good school, with a clear vision, culture and ethos.
- Students who entered the academy in Year 7 with skills below those of their peers are rapidly closing this gap.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the academy's performance and provide both challenge and support for the academy's leaders.
- The academy's strong pastoral system has supported the creation of a strong community, focused on learning.
- Most teaching is of at least good quality and some is outstanding. Students make good progress as a result.
- Students behave well in lessons and around the academy in general. They feel safe and proud to attend the academy. Incidences of bullying are very rare.
- The academy provides an extensive and varied curriculum, allowing all students to engage with activities that enrich their life experience.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small proportion of teaching requires improvement, because not all teachers are making good use of information on students' prior learning when planning lessons.
- Achievement, while good across the academy, is not yet consistently outstanding across all subjects.
- The academy's evaluation of learning has not always taken sufficient account of students' progress from their initial starting points, and as a result development planning is not yet focused sharply enough on achievement across all groups and all subjects.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 17 lessons taught by 16 teachers; this included seven joint observations with senior leaders.
- Inspectors met students from both of the current year groups as well as a group of students receiving additional support for their learning. Inspectors talked informally to students before school and during their breaks.
- Inspectors observed a formal school assembly and the academy’s “family” dining arrangements.
- Meetings took place with the headteacher and other senior leaders, heads of subject areas and houses. A group of teachers and learning support assistants.
- Discussions were held with representatives from the governing body and the academy chain.
- Inspectors looked at the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) both before the inspection and during the inspection. A very high proportion of parents completed the questionnaire. In addition to this, one letter from a parent was received and considered as evidence during the inspection.
- A range of the academy’s documentation was reviewed, including: records of teachers’ performance management; attendance and exclusions information; minutes of governing body meetings; the academy development plan and review; information and analysis of teachers’ performance and development; data relating to students’ attainment and progress; and records of behaviour.
- The academy is member of the ARK academy chain.

## Inspection team

Kevin Flanagan, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Clifford Walker

Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- Bolingbroke Academy opened as a new academy in September 2012 with a Year 7 intake only. Now in its second year the academy has two year groups, Year 7 and Year 8. The academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The academy has plans to open a sixth form as students move through the academy, but does not yet have sixth form provision.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is above average. This is additional government funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, children in local authority care and those with a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is above average. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is low.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs.

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

- Further improve teaching, so that a greater proportion is outstanding, by:
  - ensuring that all teachers take account of all students' prior learning when planning lessons, so that all activities are always matched to the needs of every student
  - providing all students with appropriate opportunities to initiate their own learning and develop their independence.
- Improve the impact of leaders and manager by:
  - focusing improvement planning more sharply towards eradicating the remaining variation in students' performance.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- The academy is yet to have students sit externally assessed examinations. To ensure that teachers are in possession of accurate information about students' progress, the school moderates its students' assessments with the support of the academy chain.
- Students enter the academy with attainment broadly in line with their peers. Students' progress in English is at the expected rate. However, progress in mathematics, science and most other subjects is more rapid.
- The small number of students who do enter the academy with attainment below their peers make rapid progress. Carefully planned interventions and intensive support for literacy are in place. As a result, these students progress at a very rapid rate.
- The more able students make good progress. However, in some subjects, particularly English, their progress is a little slower than that of other students attending the academy.
- Students from minority ethnic groups now make similar progress to their peers. Where progress has been slower, the academy has identified this and acted to support these students. These interventions have brought the performance of these students in line with their peers.
- Teachers at the academy are developing their awareness of pupil premium students. They are now meeting their needs more effectively as a result of well-targeted activities. Gaps in performance are narrowing rapidly.
- The achievement of students who speak English as an additional language has been a focus for the academy. Intensive support for their learning has allowed this group to make faster progress than that of other students.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs also make good progress and achieve well. This is because they are given good quality support.
- The academy has made effective use of the Year 7 catch-up premium. These additional resources aimed at ensuring that the gap in achievement closes are used well. For instance, the drive to develop reading skills has led to the gaps in reading ages closing rapidly.
- The academy is successfully raising the profile of reading and literacy. Daily reading groups provide opportunities to read widely and discuss literature and are led by the full range of academy staff. This allows all staff to share their passion for reading and is built upon by teachers' careful planning of literacy opportunities in many lessons.
- The academy promotes equality of opportunity and achievement very well. For example every student in Year 7 is given the opportunity to learn a musical instrument. Additional funding has been used by the academy to ensure that all students, regardless of their personal circumstances, can have access to an instrument of their choice.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Students benefit from teaching that is good and a small proportion that is outstanding. Equally, a small proportion requires improvement. No teaching is inadequate.
- Good and outstanding teaching is characterised by a rapid pace and high levels of challenge. This is as a result of carefully planned activities, where teachers have a strong understanding of students' starting points. Skilful questioning checks students' learning and probes and pushes them to think more deeply. Marking then explicitly tells students how to improve their work and teachers ensure that there is time for students to make improvements.
- Where teaching is less than good, this is often because planning by teachers is not as clearly aligned to students' previous learning. This leads to activities that are not always closely matched to the needs of the students. At times there are not enough opportunities for students to initiate their own learning and develop their independence. Students' progress, particularly that of the most able students, is slower in these lessons.

- Additional adults in the classroom, often teachers, are used well. Involvement in planning allows for this additional support to be targeted carefully to students' needs. As a result of this, students receiving this support often make rapid progress.
- Teachers mark work regularly. Marking is at its best when teachers tell students how to further improve their work and then provide the opportunity for students to act on their advice. However, this is not yet consistent across all lessons.
- Homework is set regularly and supports students' learning. Students could explain the benefit of completing this work and understand how it promotes their understanding.

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

- The academy put a very high emphasis on students' behaviour in and out of lessons. Respect for others, themselves and their new facilities is a key component of this ethos. All academy staff take an active involvement in the management and organisation of students; as a result of this, students are polite and courteous at all times.
- Students and parents agree that behaviour is well managed. It is clear that strong values and support by the academy's pastoral system are impacting very positively on the learning environment. This creates a sense of purpose throughout the academy. There are very few disruptions to learning. Teachers skilfully and consistently encourage positive behaviour using the academy reward systems. Little or no teaching time is lost to poor behaviour and students have positive attitudes to learning.
- Behaviours that encourage independent learning are less well established. This is because teachers are not yet consistently planning activities to develop these opportunities through all lessons.
- The number of recorded incidents of poor behaviour is very low. Students say that bullying is very rare and homophobic or racist language is never used. The academy's behaviour policy is clear and understood by all students.
- Attendance is above the national average. The academy has worked with individual students and their families to effect a reduction in absence. There are now close links with feeder primary schools, so that this partnership with parents can begin before students join the academy.

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

- The Principal has established a clear vision, ethos and culture for the academy. This has allowed the academy to develop a very strong and consistent message of ambition and excellence throughout its community. This has in turn developed very strong foundations for the future.
- Senior leaders have set high expectations for middle leaders. This ensures that middle leaders are accountable and is at the heart of school improvement. Subject development plans have clear links to whole-school priorities and are effectively implemented and monitored by the subject leaders.
- Leaders gather a broad range of evidence to check the academy's progress and this is supported by the work of the academy chain. However, some of the analysis of this evidence is over generous. This lack of clarity has led to some targets for future development lacking sharpness around some groups of learners.
- The academy has placed a great deal of emphasis on the improvement of teaching. There is a regular, well-planned and structured development programme, which clearly identifies the needs of teachers and provides tailored development to them. Leaders then review the impact of this professional development and regularly monitor the quality of teaching.
- Many staff at the academy spoke of the support and development they receive. The carefully planned and tailored development programme allows teachers to share good practice and when they are ready, take a lead in the development of others. Teachers were fulsome in their praise for the impact that this programme has had on the quality of teaching in the academy.

- However, the monitoring of teaching did not always focus clearly enough on how effectively students are learning. As a result of this, some students have in the past made slower progress than others.
- The management of teachers' performance is both rigorous and supportive. Teachers acknowledge the level of challenge within the procedures, but appreciate its transparency and fairness. Leaders have evidenced improvements to students' outcomes as a result of this rigour.
- Teachers' progression through pay scales is clearly linked to their performance. Governors and senior leaders monitor pay progression thoroughly and all staff are aware that their own success is measured in terms of improved outcomes for students. This has contributed to a sharp focus on students' progress across the academy.
- The academy is very positive about the level of support it receives from the academy chain. This support has proved invaluable in developing a new academy in the midst of a building programme. The support has improved the outcomes for students who attend the academy.
- The Principal is rightly proud of the academy's extended curriculum. Enrichment activities before and after school, links to external partners, and involvement in the wider community give all students the chance to experience life-enhancing opportunities. Students echo the Principal's view that these additional components to the curriculum make the academy both an enjoyable school and a springboard to a successful future.
- Safeguarding arrangements at the academy meet the statutory regulations.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors of the school have a strong link to the academy chain. The Chair of the Governing Body is employed by the academy chain and was appointed to the governing body by it. This works to the benefit of the governing body, as it receives information from the academy and the academy chain. This helps to ensure that all governors have a detailed knowledge of the academy's performance so that they can provide a high level of challenge to leaders.
- Governors ensure that the performance management of staff is rigorous and that any underperformance by staff is tackled swiftly. They have a good understanding of the use and impact of pupil premium funding and ensure that the academy makes the best use of all the finance available to it.

## 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>	138267
<b>Local authority</b>	Wandsworth
<b>Inspection number</b>	425470

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<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>	244
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Michael Clark
<b>Headteacher</b>	Claire Edis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 79248200
<b>Fax number</b>	020 79248299
<b>Email address</b>	info@arkbolingbrokeacademy.org



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