

The Samuel Lister Academy

Cottingley New Road, Bingley, West Yorkshire, BD16 1TZ

Inspection dates

19–20 February 2014

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Not previously inspected | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| | This inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Leadership and management | | Requires improvement | 3 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Students' achievement is not consistently good across the academy. For example, students' achievement in both English and mathematics has not been good enough since 2012, when the academy opened. Students have not always made the progress expected of them and the proportion making better-than-expected progress has been below average.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent and does not always enable students to make good or better progress in the subjects they study. Students' speaking skills are underdeveloped. Questioning and challenge in the classroom do not always require them to think more deeply about their work and to justify the answers they give.
- Planning and lesson activities do not consistently ensure that students make expected or more than expected progress in the subjects they study.
- Marking, while improving, is inconsistent across the academy. Students do not always receive the necessary advice on how to improve their work.
- On occasions, students do not show enough pride in the presentation of their work.
- There is some low-level misbehaviour in lessons and around the academy site.
- Attendance and punctuality are still not as good as they should be.
- The benefits of the vertical tutor system are not yet fully embedded.
- Although teaching and attainment are getting better, the sixth form requires improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- Perceptive leadership from the principal and good levels of challenge from the governing body are ensuring that students' achievement is beginning to improve.
- Indeed, students achieve well and, on occasions, outstandingly well in humanities, resistant materials, additional science and vocational subjects.
- The proportion of outstanding teaching is increasing.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is a strength of the academy. Each student has a mobile computer, can get their homework assignments from it and can gauge their progress and attendance.
- Students enjoy taking responsibility, particularly through the house system. Sixth formers have a high profile in the academy and enjoy looking after younger students in the vertical tutor system.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 32 part-lessons, taught by 31 teachers. Six lessons were observed jointly with members of the academy leadership team. Inspectors also visited a house assembly and several tutor group sessions.
- Inspectors spoke to five groups of students. They also held discussions with two members of the governing body, including the Chair, heads of academic departments, pastoral staff and members of the senior leadership team. In addition, they spoke to the director of school improvement from the Bradford College Education Trust.
- There were insufficient responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to enable the inspection team to access parents' views. However, inspectors were able to take account of the 17 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the academy at work and considered internal and external student progress and attainment data, students' work during lessons, academy improvement planning, and the academy's view of its own performance. They also scrutinised documentation in relation safeguarding, child protection, attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| James Kidd, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Bernard Robinson | Additional Inspector |
| Susan Hayter | Additional Inspector |
| Mary Lanovy-Taylor | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy opened in April 2012 and is sponsored by Bradford College Educational Trust. It holds specialist status in humanities.
- It is a smaller-than-average sized school, with a below average percentage of girls.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is high at over three times the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (extra money for those students known to be eligible for free school meals, those from service families and those looked after by the local authority) is high, at more than half the student population.
- Most students are from minority ethnic heritages, with nearly three-quarters of Pakistani heritage. There are increasing numbers of students from Eastern Europe, including those of Gypsy/Roma heritage.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There are small numbers of students who attend training at places away from school, at Bradford College and Keighley College, for example.
- There have been many staffing changes since the academy opened, including a recent restructuring of the senior leadership team.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to accelerate students' learning and progress and to ensure that subject performance is more consistent across the academy by:
 - embedding the recently-introduced literacy strategies, with a particular emphasis on promoting students' speaking skills
 - providing greater challenge and better questioning in the classroom which would lead to students thinking more deeply about the subjects they are studying
 - making sure that feedback in marking is more consistent and tells students how they can improve their work
 - encouraging students to take a greater pride in the presentation of their work
 - ensuring that planning and lesson activities consistently enable a larger proportion of students to make expected or more-than-expected progress in their studies.
- Further promote students' personal development by:
 - eradicating low level misbehaviour in the classroom and around the academy
 - ensuring that students are always punctual to the academy and to their lessons
 - working even more closely with the families of those students who do not come to the academy as often as they should, to convince them of the importance of regular attendance
 - embedding the obvious benefits of the vertical tutor group system.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students generally enter Year 7 with below and sometimes well-below average attainment in English and mathematics. By the time they leave, the percentage of students achieving five or more GCSE passes at grade A* to C including English and mathematics, although improving, remains below average. Achievement, therefore, requires improvement.
- Achievement is inconsistent across the curriculum. In 2013, for example, students in Year 11 achieved well and, on occasions, outstandingly well in humanities, vocational subjects, resistant materials and additional science. However, the proportion of students making and exceeding expected progress in English and mathematics was below average. The proportion of students achieving grades A* and A was well below average, demonstrating that the achievement of the most able also requires improvement. Disabled students and those with special educational needs made better progress in English and science than their peers did.
- Achievement in the sixth form, although improving, is also inconsistent. In 2013, students in Year 13 achieved outstandingly well in biology and well in applied business and history. Achievement in the six other subjects was not as impressive.
- Students' speaking skills are underdeveloped and their reading ages are below where they should be. However, a range of strategies to improve students' reading skills, including the introduction of reading mentors and reading activities within the vertical tutor groups system are having a positive impact. The majority of students in the current Year 8, for example, have improved their reading ages by more than 12 months in this current academic year.
- Inspection evidence, including lesson observations, the scrutiny of students' work in class and the consideration of the academy's own data, demonstrate that students in the current Year 11 are on course to reach higher attainment at GCSE than those who left the academy in 2013.
- The academy has appointed bilingual staff to support students with English as an additional language, including the increasing numbers of students from Eastern Europe, some of whom are of Gypsy/Roma heritage. The performance of these students is improving too, because language support ensures that they can take full advantage of what lessons have to offer.
- Students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium, including those eligible for free school meals, made less progress than others in English and mathematics in 2013. The proportion achieving five or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics was 10% lower than that of their counterparts. However, a range of holiday activities, full involvement in extra-curricular sessions and the appointment of an inclusion officer are having a positive impact on the current performance of these students. They are now making the same progress as others and reaching similar standards, as they did in 2012.
- The small numbers of pupils who attend alternative provision are monitored closely by the academy. They are safe and are making good progress in their studies.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the academy and some inadequate teaching remains. Teaching, therefore, does not always ensure that students make good and outstanding progress and requires improvement as a result.
- Nonetheless, there are examples of good teaching and the proportion of outstanding teaching is rising. Teaching is strongest in the sixth form overall, but, there is still some variation in quality between subjects.
- Students learn well and sometimes outstandingly well when teachers' questioning requires them to think more deeply about the subject matter and also encourages them to develop their speaking skills and give reasons for their answers.
- For example, in a Year 9 history lesson, the most able students acted as 'envoys' and visited groups to give detailed information on life in the trenches during the First World War. They also

answered questions put to them by their classmates and they justified these answers. However, questioning does not always require longer answers from students and, therefore, their speaking skills are not as well developed as they should be.

- Teachers' lesson planning is generally effective and takes account of what students have already learned and of what is needed to ensure that they continue to make progress. However, some preparation does not place enough emphasis on the differing needs of students in the class so not all students are sufficiently challenged to enable them to make good progress.
- The teaching of disabled students and those with special educational needs comprises effective small-group and individual support and these students do at least as well as their peers as a result.
- The quality of marking is inconsistent across and within subjects. The best practice is detailed, regular and gives students accurate advice on how they can improve their work. Indeed, inspectors observed students taking full account of the feedback they received and acting positively on it.
- Less than effective marking, however, is cursory and there is little feedback to students on how they can aim for higher standards in their work. This marking, too, does not emphasise neat presentation of work. As a result, too many students do not show enough pride in their work and presentation in exercise books is somewhat untidy.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Students' behaviour requires improvement. Although most students behave well and have good attitudes to learning, a proportion becomes involved in low-level misbehaviour in class and also around the academy at breaks and lunchtimes. On occasions, this misbehaviour prevents students from learning as well as they could.
- Similarly, students are generally welcoming to visitors, but a small minority shows a lack of respect to them. Nonetheless, students believe that the introduction of the 'consequences' system is improving behaviour; they also say, 'The academy teaches us that we are all together and that there is no place here for racism and homophobia.'
- The work of the academy to keep its students safe and secure is good. Students feel safe and comment, 'The adults are here for us all the time and older students look after younger students too.' In their view, bullying is rare and is dealt with rapidly if it occurs.
- Students are well aware of how to use the Internet safely. The academy's emphasis on ensuring that all students have access to modern technology is a strength and its use of a variety of software ensures that students' access to social media sites is monitored closely and blocked when necessary.
- Students value the opportunities they have to take responsibility, for example as 'reading buddies' and as officials within the house system. They enjoy the vertical tutor group system, in which sixth formers play a significant role supporting tutors and younger students. Several tutor groups were visited during the inspection and the majority was seen to be operating effectively. In a minority, however, the benefits of the system, in relation to students supporting each other, were not fully embedded.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively. The academy is racially harmonious. Students support a wide range of charities and express their views in the magazine 'Samuel Lister Voice', which is produced monthly.
- Although improving, attendance is still below average and a small minority of students does not attend as regularly as they should. Punctuality is also better than it was, but too many students are still late to lessons.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Good leadership from the committed and well-informed principal has led to improvements in the assessment of students' progress and also to the establishment of support, from talented teachers in humanities for example, for teachers whose classroom practice is not yet as good as it should be.
- However, it is too early to see the full impact of this support and, since the academy opened, students' achievement has been inconsistent. Leadership and management overall, therefore, require improvement.
- The skills of middle leaders are improving and heads of subject departments are under no illusion that their primary responsibility is the acceleration in attainment and progress of the students in their charge. Some heads of department are relatively inexperienced but a good proportion question achievement data accurately and use it confidently to enhance students' performance in the subjects for which they are responsible.
- Middle leaders speak positively of the senior team and comment, 'Senior leaders have high expectations of us and there is a shared vision among the staff to bring about improvement.' They add that target-setting for teachers is now more robust and that there is a wide variety of training opportunities for staff at all levels of experience.
- The curriculum is under continuous review and in Key Stage 4, for example, the variety of applied and vocational courses meets the needs of students closely. The academy recognises, however, that the recently-introduced strategies to improve students' skills in literacy are not fully embedded and that students' speaking skills are underdeveloped.
- Perceptive leadership in the sixth form places emphasis on raising the profile of sixth-form students around the academy and the curriculum now comprises a greater range of Advanced Level courses.
- Child protection and safeguarding policies and practice meet current requirements. Leaders ensure that the academy rejects all forms of discrimination and that it promotes equality of opportunity soundly.
- The Bradford College Education Trust provides strong support for the academy. Monthly task force meetings support academy development and the Trust promotes liaison between different academies in its charge, developing middle leadership, for example. The trust has also established governor training sessions on the accurate evaluation of data on students' achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good knowledge of the academy and, because they receive detailed information on academy performance, ask searching questions of the leadership about all areas of its life. They scrutinise data on students' subject performance, are fully aware of how pupil premium funding is spent and monitor the impact of this spending closely.
 - Members of the governing body keep a close eye on performance appraisal arrangements and ensure that teachers receive financial reward only if their students make the necessary academic progress. They know how the academy is attempting to enhance the quality of teaching and are kept abreast of the extent to which teachers are improving their classroom practice.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 137576 |
| Local authority | Bradford |
| Inspection number | 399901 |

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

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| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| 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 | 701 |
| Of which, number on roll in sixth form | 115 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Michele Sutton |
| Headteacher | Bec Osborne |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected |
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