

Evelyn Grace Academy

255 Shakespeare Road, Lambeth, London, SE24 0QN

Inspection dates 6–7 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- Teaching is typically good. Teachers ask probing questions to make sure that students understand the work they are set. Teaching assistants and other adults give students effective support in class.
- Students achieve well and make good progress.
- Students known to be eligible for free school meals make good progress and achieve well.
- Students behave well in class. They listen to their teachers and each other, and they respect each other's views and ideas.
- Around the academy, students behave calmly.
- Students say that they feel safe in the academy, and there are excellent arrangements for keeping them safe.
- The academy gives good support to disabled students and those who have special educational needs. This helps them to catch up with the standards reached by other groups of students.
- Academy leaders know what the academy is doing well. Their actions are having a positive impact on teaching and behaviour.
- The governors support the academy very well. They have the right skills to challenge leaders and raise the quality of teaching and learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students' writing is sometimes let down by spelling, punctuation and grammar mistakes.
- Teachers do not always make sure that students act on the advice given in marking.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 27 lessons, some of which were jointly observed with a senior leader. Inspectors also conducted learning walks to look at students' behaviour around the academy.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, senior leaders, subject leaders, a group of less-experienced teachers, the Chair and other members of the Governing Body, groups of students and a representative from the academy sponsor. The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the academy's self-evaluation and improvement plan; records of teachers' performance; the analysis of students' progress; students' work; and records relating to the behaviour and safety of students.
- Inspectors looked at the 28 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the academy's own surveys of parents' views. The lead inspector spoke with parents on the telephone and inspectors looked at correspondence from parents. They also took account of responses to an inspection questionnaire from 79 staff.

Inspection team

Neil Stanley, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Webster	Additional Inspector
Michael Hiscox	Additional Inspector
Jalil Shaikh	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Evelyn Grace Academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- A high proportion of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, particularly of Black African and Black Caribbean heritage.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is very high.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium is well above average. This additional funding is for particular groups of students, including those who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those with a parent in the armed forces or those in local authority care.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- A very small number of students in Year 10 and Year 11 attend courses at Lambeth College and Building Lives.
- The Principal was appointed just prior to the last inspection, in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by making sure that teachers:
 - focus on improving standards of spelling, punctuation and grammar in all subjects, not just in English
 - through their marking, show students the next steps they need to take to move their learning on, and check that students follow the advice they are given.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the academy with attainment in English and mathematics that is typically lower than the national average. In 2013, the academy's first students sat their GCSE examinations and the proportion of those achieving five good GCSE grades A* to C including English and mathematics was in line with the national average. This year, the academy is not entering any students early for GCSE examinations.
- In 2013, the proportion of students making and exceeding expected progress in mathematics was above the national average. The proportion making expected progress in English was in line with the national average, and the proportion exceeding expected progress in this subject was above the national average.
- The academy's leaders rigorously monitor students' progress. The academy's data show that, in 2014, the proportion of students predicted to make and exceed expected progress for English and mathematics is on course to be better than that seen in 2013.
- Students supported by the pupil premium make good progress as a result of the additional support they are given. They make better progress than their classmates. By the end of Year 11, they are typically half a GCSE grade ahead of other students in the academy.
- The academy's more-able students do well and make good progress. This is because teachers raise students' aspirations; for example, through the academy's debating society, literary festival, Into University programme and visits to King's College, London, Imperial College and Oxford and Cambridge Universities.
- The academy closely monitors the progress made by disabled students and those who have special educational needs. As a result of extra help given, these students are gaining in confidence and are making good progress. The gap between their attainment and that of others in the academy is closing.
- The academy promotes equal opportunities well. For example, the Women in Science project and the Year 10 girls' social skills group are helping to make girls more ambitious.
- Students from different ethnic groups make similar progress in all subjects, including English and mathematics. Those who speak English as an additional language make particularly rapid progress and do better than their classmates. This is because of the additional help they are given.
- The academy has used its Year 7 'catch-up' funding to launch a scheme to encourage reading for pleasure. Although this is in its early stages, students express an increasing enjoyment of reading, particularly poetry.
- Students who attend courses at other providers attend well and make good progress.
- The academy has recognised the need to improve students' skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Events, such as the annual 'spelling bee' are encouraging students to improve these skills. However, writing is sometimes let down by technical errors. This is because teachers do not always give as much emphasis to correct spelling, punctuation and grammar in subjects other than English.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching in most subjects in the academy, including English and mathematics, is usually good. This is because teachers plan lessons carefully so that students are able to build on what they already know and to make sure that students make good progress over their time at the academy.
- Lessons in the academy are characterised by high expectations and very good relationships between teachers and students. As a result, students are confident when sharing their views. This was shown in a Year 9 English lesson on poetry. Students listened to each other's ideas maturely and showed respect when disagreeing.
- Teachers often use probing questioning in lessons to check students' understanding. This was evident in a religious studies lesson on festivals, where the teacher used questioning to help students develop their understanding of Hinduism. As a result, students made rapid progress.
- Teachers set regular homework and the academy runs homework clubs to support students who find it difficult to work at home. These are well attended and they help students to work on their own to build on what they have learnt in class. This also contributes to students' good progress.
- Students work well together in class. This was seen in a Year 8 mathematics lesson, when students were working together to calculate the volume of pyramids. Working in pairs gave students the confidence to try out ideas and to learn from their mistakes.
- Teaching assistants and other adults provide well-targeted support for students' learning. They encourage students to think for themselves. This support is particularly effective with students who speak English as an additional language, where students are given opportunities to practise speaking English and expand their vocabulary. This is why these students make such rapid progress.
- Students support each other to do better and to improve. When they comment on the work of others, they praise each other for work that is done well and offer each other helpful comments. This enables them to make improvements.
- Teachers mark students work regularly. Where marking is most effective, for example in science, teachers set out clearly for students the next steps they need to take to improve their work and move on to the next level. However, teachers do not always make sure that students act on the advice that they are given. This means that students sometimes repeat the same mistakes in consecutive pieces of work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. Students have good attitudes to learning. They quickly settle when they arrive at lessons and are keen for the teachers to get started. They take pride in their work and their books are well presented.
- Students listen attentively to each other and they respect each other's opinions. This encourages them to share their ideas confidently in class.
- Behaviour around the academy is good. Students move quickly and calmly to lessons. At

lunchtime, they respect each other and so contribute to the very safe environment.

- This is a friendly academy. Students are polite and courteous to visitors. They greeted inspectors, held doors open and helped inspectors find their way around the building.
- Students are encouraged to take responsibility in the academy. For example, older students mentor younger students in mathematics and reading.
- Students say the academy has a clear and fair approach to encouraging good behaviour. They say that this has led to significant improvements in students' behaviour since the current Principal joined the academy.
- Students say that they are proud of the academy. This is shown by the way that they wear their uniforms.
- Although exclusions have fallen sharply over the last year, they remain above average. This is why behaviour is not outstanding.
- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.
- Students say they feel very safe and secure in the academy. They display a very good understanding of the issues relating to safety. Students know about how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including when using the internet and social networking sites.
- Students do not feel that bullying is a problem in the academy. However, they say they are confident that if any did occur it would be tackled quickly and effectively by teachers. One student said, 'There are so many people you can go to.' Students are aware of different forms of bullying and harassment, including cyber-bullying and racism.
- Since the last inspection, students' attendance has continued to improve. It is now above average. Levels of persistent absence have fallen, although these are still above the national average.

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal has ensured that good relationships have been developed between students and teachers. This is why behaviour and students' attitudes to learning have improved significantly. Since the last inspection, the Principal and academy leaders have ensured that significant improvements in the quality of teaching and students' achievement have been made.
- The academy's leaders have an accurate awareness of what the academy is doing well and what it needs to do to improve. This is because they closely monitor all aspects of the academy's work, including teaching, students' progress, and behaviour.
- Good links have been built with parents, including those who find it difficult working with schools, through events organised by the Parent Teacher Association. Parent View and the academy's own surveys of parents' opinions show that parents think that the academy is approachable.
- The academy has strong subject leaders. They make sure that teachers accurately check how

their students are doing. Any underachievement is quickly identified and steps are taken to make sure it is tackled. This is why achievement across the academy is consistently good.

- The academy has strong links with its local community, particularly sporting groups like the Brixton Top Cats basketball team. Local primary schools use the academy's sporting facilities. The local police officer is a popular figure in the playground at lunchtime, talking with students and joining in their sports and games.
- The academy receives strong support from its academy sponsor, which provides support and challenge. This has helped the Principal to make sustained improvements to teaching and behaviour.
- The academy has a positive relationship with its local authority. The Principal meets regularly with his counterparts in other local schools and with local ward councillors. The academy and the local authority are collaborating in providing adult education classes for parents.
- The academy encourages students to respect each other and makes good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Examples include the Christian Union, the Muslim prayer room and the Promoting Education in African Schools charity, which the academy supports by raising money to buy bicycles.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The academy's governors know the academy well and they hold leaders to account for their decisions.
 - Governors challenge academy leaders. For example, they questioned decisions about early GCSE entry and made sure that the academy delayed opening a sixth form until it was ready to do this successfully.
 - Governors closely monitor the progress of groups of students, including those supported by the pupil premium. They have made sure that academy leaders focus on the progress of individuals and groups of students, rather than just C grades at GCSE.
 - Governors check on the academy's pay decisions for teachers. They demand that teachers' pay rises and promotion are justified by the progress of their students.

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	135389
Local authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	431631

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	852
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anthony Williams
Principal	Devon Hanson
Date of previous school inspection	26 September 2012
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