

Bower Park Academy

Havering Road, Romford, RM1 4YY

Inspection dates 24–25 September 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Standards of attainment are below national averages, and in some subjects, including mathematics, they are well below the national average.
- Gaps between the progress of students eligible for the pupil premium funding, those with special educational needs and others are closing, but are still too wide.
- Boys do not achieve as well as girls.
- Standards of literacy across all year groups are not consistently high enough.
- Teachers' expectations of students are not consistently high. Some teachers do not make use of information about students' needs or prior learning. Marking and feedback are not used well by some teachers to improve the quality of students' work.
- Some teaching does not have enough impact on students' literacy or their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
- Teachers have different expectations of students' behaviour and conduct. As a result, some students are not clear about the academy's expectations.
- A small number of students do not sustain good behaviour. Leaders' use of behaviour records to act on patterns and trends is in its infancy.
- Some middle and senior leaders are still developing the skills required to ensure they have sufficient impact on improving teaching and achievement.
- Leaders' use of pupil premium funding to support students and close the gaps in their achievement has not had enough impact.
- The academy's governing body has expanded and a significant number of governors are new. Governors have not been able to challenge all areas of the academy's work equally well.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, supported by governors, has created a culture of reflection and honesty. Leaders at all levels have used this to ensure they have an accurate view of the academy's strengths and areas for improvement.
- Governors are having greater impact because they have increased their challenge of many areas of the academy's work.
- Senior and middle leaders' knowledge of the quality of teaching has been used well to secure some improvements to teaching.
- Teachers and other adults pay close attention to the safety of students and guide students well. Students are very positive about the relationships they have with all staff.
- Students' outcomes improved significantly in 2014. Standards in English are much improved. Gaps in the progress of younger groups of students are reducing quickly.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 31 lessons to observe teaching and learning, scrutinise work and talk to students.
- Inspectors visited five lessons jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held formal meetings with groups of students and had informal discussions with other students around the academy.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders and teachers. Inspectors met with three members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the views of 33 parents through the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also considered the views of parents surveyed by the academy.
- Inspectors considered the views of 63 staff who responded to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at the academy’s improvement plans, self-evaluation records and the minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors scrutinised records of students’ progress, anonymised performance management records, records of professional development, the single central record, incident logs and attendance data.

Inspection team

Michael Pennington, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Evelyn Riley

Additional Inspector

Ruth Symington

Additional Inspector

Genevieve Usher

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Bower Park Academy converted to become an academy on 1 February 2013. When its predecessor school, Bower Park School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be satisfactory overall.
- Bower Park Academy is smaller than the average-sized academy.
- The large majority of students are White British or of other White backgrounds. A small proportion of students come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds including Asian, and Black and Mixed heritages. About one in 10 students speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is similar to the national average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also similar to the national average.
- Nearly a half of students are eligible for the pupil premium funding (additional funding to support students who receive free school meals and students who are looked after).
- The academy uses two additional providers to support a very small number of students with alternative provision, including Barking and Dagenham College in Barking and Dagenham and the Havering Business Education Partnership in Havering.
- There is currently no published information about whether the academy meets the current government floor standards.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that the achievement of all student groups across all subjects is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - all teachers have the same high expectations about what students can do and achieve
 - all teachers make best use of information about students' needs and prior learning
 - all teaching makes effective use of assessment during lessons to ensure that the pace and direction of learning are suitable for students of all abilities
 - marking and feedback consistently meet leaders' expectations and are used more frequently by students to make improvements to their work
 - all teachers contribute to improving students' social, moral, cultural and spiritual development
 - all teachers make good use of opportunities to develop students' reading, writing and communication skills.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - all staff understand and apply agreed expectations for the behaviour and attitudes of students
 - leaders and teachers at all levels make greater use of records of students' achievement and behaviour to identify and respond to emerging patterns, trends and issues
 - governance has the capacity to offer effective challenge to every aspect of the academy's work.

An external review of the academy's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Senior and middle leaders are the first to acknowledge they have much more to do to ensure teaching and achievement reach consistently high standards across the academy. They have absolute and accurate clarity about what they must do to secure improvement. This is because the headteacher has developed a culture of honest self-evaluation which many leaders at all levels have bought into.
- In the academy's first year, leaders have introduced wide-ranging and rigorous checks on teaching and students' achievement. As a result, leaders and teachers at all levels understand the true picture of these aspects of the academy. However, not enough use is made of information about students' behaviour, for example from behaviour logs, to identify clear priorities for improvements to the attitudes and conduct of some students.
- Leaders have set the standards they expect for teaching to be good or better and teachers are responding well. Teachers offer each other effective support and challenge so that they can aspire to leaders' expectations. As a result, teaching is beginning to improve. However, leaders recognise that they must do more to ensure that the quality of all teaching is improving fast enough.
- Teachers, including those at the beginning of their careers, benefit from well-targeted development opportunities as a result of the performance management that they receive from leaders. Leaders ensure that performance objectives and judgements are firmly rooted in the outcomes of students. As a result, teachers understand their contribution to improvement.
- The quality of middle leadership is inconsistent. As a result, some subjects are improving faster than others. Where subject leadership is less strong, the quality of teaching is weaker. For example, support for students with special educational needs, the development of literacy skills and students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development have much more impact in subjects with stronger leadership.
- Leaders are setting higher expectations about how much teachers should expect students to achieve and are holding teachers more to account for students' progress. Tracking systems introduced in the last year expect students to make greater levels of progress. These systems also ensure that teachers can identify and respond more quickly to students who are falling behind.
- Provision for disabled students and those with special educational needs is well informed by leaders' knowledge of individual students. However, leaders have only recently begun to make better use of the greater volumes of information about the achievement of these students in different subjects. As a result, systems to coordinate support for individual students with special educational needs across subjects are yet to have the impact that is needed.
- The curriculum offers a good range of subjects and pathways to all students. Leaders adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of individual students. Consequently, students are very positive about what they can choose to do and the guidance which they are given.
- Leaders' use of assemblies and other focused events make a significant contribution to students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Senior leaders have an overview of the contribution they expect teachers to make through lessons. However, systems to check the extent, quality and impact of this provision across all subjects are not well developed.
- Care for students is a strength of the academy. Leaders ensure teachers and other adults are kept up to date about best practice in keeping students safe. As a result, staff are vigilant in their care for students. Leaders make good use of partnerships with other organisations to ensure that statutory safeguarding requirements are met.
- Pupil premium plans and spending in the last academic year had little impact. Consequently, large gaps remain between the progress and outcomes of students who are eligible for funding and others. Leaders are currently reviewing their processes for managing, planning and spending this funding.
- Leaders have correctly identified the need to develop students' literacy further. As a result, a wide variety of literacy strategies, including reading, writing and communication initiatives, have recently been set in place across the academy. However, the impact is variable and some of the strategies need a sharper focus.
- The academy is in the early stages of discussing what level of monitoring and evaluation it would like from the local authority.
- The headteacher's leadership is characterised by honesty, challenge, care and support. As a result, the academy has improved significantly in its first year. The headteacher and other leaders have demonstrated the capacity to galvanise the staff at the academy so that they are able to face up to the

challenges of improvement.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body has increased in size during the first year of the academy. Governors regularly review their strengths and areas for improvement. As a result, they rightly acknowledge the development needs of a governing body where a significant proportion of governors are new.
- Governors have developed a good knowledge of the achievement of students in the academy's first year. This is because more detailed information has been provided by senior leaders. Governors are beginning to take part in learning walks and other checks by leaders on the quality of teaching. Consequently, they are getting an accurate view of the strengths and areas for improvement of teaching.
- Governors ensure that the headteacher's performance management objectives are challenging, realistic and focused on key aspects of students' performance. Governors take external advice to ensure that reviews are stringent.
- Governors have accurate knowledge of strong and weak performance by teachers at the academy. They use their knowledge well to inform decisions about salary progression and to ask challenging questions where teaching is resulting in poor outcomes for students.
- Governors recognise that they have not been able to challenge leaders' plans, spending and evaluation of pupil premium funding as well as they have challenged other areas.
- The governing body encourages a culture of openness so that leaders and all staff are able to recognise strengths, identify areas for improvement and take necessary action.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of students requires improvement because some of it is not consistently good. A small amount of learning suffers because some teachers do not manage students' behaviour well. There is still too much use of the academy's 'call out' system which removes students from lessons to avoid disruption.
- Leaders and students recognise behaviour is not always well managed by staff. Some students do not have a clear understanding of behaviour expectations across the academy. Consequently, students exhibit a range of behaviours and attitudes that varies across subjects and with teachers.
- Behaviour has improved significantly over time. This is because of more effective behaviour management systems. Academy records show that the number of incidents of poor behaviour and the use of exclusion are falling. Parents and staff recognise these significant improvements.
- The overwhelming majority of students are courteous and polite around the academy. Most have no hesitation in offering help to fellow students and adults. This is because teachers and other adults build and model strong relationships with students based on mutual respect.
- Students' attitudes to learning vary and, as a result, their engagement in learning is inconsistent. This is often linked closely to the quality of teaching. Some students' positive attitudes to learning are much more apparent in class discussions than in their written work. This is because teachers do not have consistent expectations about the quality of students' work.
- The behaviour of students who attend the alternative provision is not consistently good. Leaders check regularly on their behaviour and they work with providers to guide and improve students' behaviour when necessary.
- Students' punctuality to lessons is good. Music played during lesson changes gives students a very clear indication of when they should have arrived at their next lesson. This approach also gives students a brief respite from learning and contributes to most arriving for their next lesson with positive attitudes.
- Students' attendance is below the national average, but is improving markedly. This is because the academy has invested in its own full-time education welfare officer. A wide range of tailored support is promoting better attendance. Leaders also offer robust challenge to parents about students' attendance where necessary.
- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Behaviour records confirm students' views that bullying is rare. The student-led anti-bullying group listens to concerns and makes suggestions to deter and educate others about the implications of different types of bullying.
- Students feel safe at the academy and their parents agree. Leaders have ensured that students are given good opportunities to understand and consider risks as they get older. Academy records show that, very occasionally, a small number of students do not give enough thought to the academy's guidance about

safety. Prompt and appropriate action is taken by leaders in these rare circumstances to work with students and their families to keep them safe.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- While teaching is improving markedly and some is good or better, too much requires improvement. Leaders acknowledge that inconsistencies in teaching mean that a significant proportion of students are not achieving as well as they should.
- Some teaching does not set high enough expectations for students. For example, sometimes work is over simplified to make tasks unnecessarily easier for students. On occasion, teachers set activities which take more time than is required to achieve the planned outcome. Consequently, some students' learning is not rapid enough and students do not achieve as much they could.
- Some teachers make effective use of information about individual students' needs or their previous learning. Although rigorous systems are in place to inform all teachers about students' prior achievement, some teachers do not use this well enough to ensure that lessons challenge all students. Similarly, while leaders expect teachers to consider specific students' needs in their planning, teachers do not always ensure this results in good enough support in lessons.
- Where teaching is better, teachers regularly check on students' learning to make sure that students acquire and apply new knowledge well. In a Year 7 physical education lesson, students rapidly developed and applied their understanding of good passing principles in netball because the teacher carefully observed and questioned them. As a result, new concepts were introduced at the right time.
- Some teachers do not check on students' learning well enough. As a result, they sometimes do not spot students' misconceptions quickly enough. Equally, students sometimes spend too much time on activities which do not challenge them.
- The recently introduced marking policy is having a positive impact on the feedback that students receive about their work. As a result, some students are improving the quality of their work in response to some high-quality guidance. However, not all teachers are meeting these new expectations. Sometimes, teachers are not providing students with sufficiently detailed guidance and, in some cases, students rely too much on their own assessments of each other's work.
- The teaching of literacy is variable. Some teachers confidently incorporate aspects of literacy into their subjects. For instance, in a Year 11 geography lesson, the teacher modelled a good response to a question. Students were then able to develop their own responses because of the teacher's helpful writing structures. However, in some cases the development of students' literacy is limited to the inclusion of key subject specific words, without enough attention to how well they are used.
- Students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is very strong in some subjects. In a Year 9 history lesson, students explored the issues of propaganda designed to shame men into joining the army in the First World War. As a result, they were able to write about their understanding of the social and moral issues of the time. However, this is not consistent enough across the academy. There are too few opportunities for students in some other subjects.
- Leaders' recent introduction of 'drop everything and read time' is starting to help students develop their reading skills across the curriculum. In a Year 7 drama lesson, the teacher was able to develop students' confidence in reading by including skilful questioning during their reading time. This development is inconsistent; some teachers demonstrate less confidence and, consequently, reading time has less impact because it is limited to a quiet opportunity to read.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Standards of attainment at the academy are improving but are below the national average. The progress made by students from their starting points is too variable. Although the majority of students join the academy with low starting points, outcomes across subjects are inconsistent and too many students did not reach the standards they should in 2014.
- The standards of students' literacy are variable, but improving. Students' outcomes in English improved significantly in 2014 and are much closer to the national average. Many more students are making good or better progress. This is because teachers have begun to focus on developing students' reading, writing and communication skills.

- Students are not reaching the same standards in mathematics. Outcomes in 2014 are well below the national average because some students are not making the progress they should.
- The wide gaps in the progress of some student groups are beginning to close. In 2014, Year 11 students with special educational needs made much less progress from their starting points than others in the academy. In addition, Year 11 boys did not make as much progress as girls. Accurate academy data show that these gaps are closing quickly for other year groups at the academy, but still require improvement.
- The gap between the attainment of Year 11 students who are eligible for pupil premium funding and others in the academy did not close in 2014. The gap in mathematics remained at about one grade and despite recent improvements in English, the gap widened to about one and a half grades.
- Leaders make effective use of early examination entry in English and mathematics. This is because they ensure students are selected carefully for early entry if they are likely to make expected progress and achieve well. Targeted use ensured that the majority of students who achieved their expected outcomes were also successful in the additional English and mathematics courses that followed.
- A small proportion of more able students join the academy. They make good or better progress in the majority of subjects. However, a small number does not reach the standards they should in some subjects. For example, outcomes in humanities subjects are not as high for some of these students.
- Leaders make successful use of catch-up funding for those students who joined the academy with the lowest starting points. Targeted spending has ensured that these students make faster progress than others in English and mathematics at Key Stage 3.
- The rigour with which the academy checks on the progress and outcomes of students from different ethnic groups demonstrates leaders' commitment to equality of opportunity. As a result, most students from most ethnic groups make similar progress. The small number of students who speak English as an additional language are well supported and, as a result, make slightly better progress than their peers.
- The academy's use of alternative provision is proving successful for some students. Where checks indicate that students are not making as much progress as they could, leaders take steps to understand and resolve the reasons why.

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	139307
Local authority	Havering
Inspection number	448000

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	800
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Shaw
Headteacher	Mary Morrison
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01708 730244
Fax number	01708 741748
Email address	office@bowerpark.havering.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

