

Bristnall Hall Academy

Bristnall Hall Lane, Oldbury, B68 9PA

Inspection dates

5–6 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Requires improvement
		3
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils	Requires improvement	3
Sixth form provision	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 requires improvement. Not enough students, or groups of students, have made consistently good progress across subjects since the academy opened. However, this is improving.
- Teaching requires improvement because it has not enabled all students to achieve well. Teaching is also improving.
- Teaching does not take enough account of the different levels of students' abilities, including the most able. This means that at times students are completing the same work, which is therefore too hard for some and too easy for others.
- Teaching is not consistently inspiring and interesting.
- Teachers' marking is regular but does not always give students clear, subject-specific next steps for improvement. Teachers do not always expect students to improve the poor presentation of their work.
- An increased focus on teachers helping students to develop and use literacy skills has not yet had a substantial impact.
- The sixth form requires improvement. The first set of results after the academy opened was weak. However, there is now a substantial improvement in students' achievement.
- Not all leaders of subjects have been equally effective at improving teaching and the achievement of all groups of students.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders have quickly addressed previous weak progress, including in the sixth form. As a result, teaching is improving and students are making better progress, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Gaps between the progress made by the most disadvantaged students and other students are narrowing quickly.
- Revisions to the range of subjects offered to students mean that more of them are leaving the academy with valuable and relevant qualifications.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs, supported by the academy's specialist resource provision, do well in developing their academic, personal and social skills.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the quality of the academy's work and have good oversight of procedures to manage the performance of teachers and leaders.
- Different groups of students behave well and say they feel safe in the academy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and students’ learning and behaviour in 40 classrooms. Inspectors were joined on a number of these visits by senior leaders. They also observed an assembly, tutor times, breaks and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors scrutinised students’ books and folders during lessons and as a separate activity.
- Inspectors held meetings with the Principal, other senior leaders, subject leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors, and two representatives from the academy sponsor.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of students in meetings, as well as at other times in lessons and around the academy at breaks and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors considered the 20 responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire for parents, as well as the academy’s own survey of parents, and spoke to two parents by telephone. They also considered the 51 responses to Ofsted’s staff questionnaires
- A variety of information was analysed about students’ progress, attendance and behaviour. The inspection team also viewed a range of other documents, including the academy’s self-evaluation and improvement plan, and minutes from governing body meetings. The inspection team looked at records relating to the safeguarding of students.
- One inspector visited the Oak Tree Centre, a unit run in partnership with another local school, to look at the quality of accommodation and arrangements for safeguarding.

Inspection team

James McNeillie, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Chris Chapman	Additional Inspector
Helen Reeves	Additional Inspector
Mark Capel	Additional Inspector
Lynn Stanbridge	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Bristnall Hall Academy is an average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The large majority of students are from White British or other White backgrounds. The remaining students are mainly from Asian, Asian British, Black British and mixed heritages.
- A broadly average proportion of students speak English as an additional language.
- The academy has a specially resourced provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs related to autistic spectrum disorder. This provision is managed by the academy and all students are registered full-time as part of the academy. There are currently 28 students in Years 7 to 11 who are supported by this provision.
- Two-fifths of the students in the school are supported by the pupil premium funding (additional government funding that provides support to disadvantaged students who are eligible for free school meals or are in the care of the local authority) and this is above the national average.
- The academy has collaborative arrangements for sixth form provision with George Salter Academy and Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy.
- The academy runs an off-site behaviour unit, the Oak Tree Centre, in conjunction with Perryfields High School. Currently, one student attends this unit full-time.
- A number of students attend courses which take place away from the academy site. These courses are provided by Walsall College and West Bromwich Foundation.
- The academy meets the current government floor standards which set the minimum expectations of students' attainment and progress.
- The academy opened in December 2012 and is sponsored by the Academy Transformation Trust.
- The Principal took up his post in September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all groups of students make at least good progress, including in the sixth form, by making sure that teachers consistently:
 - plan lessons that take account of what students already know and can do, including the most able students
 - make teaching more inspiring so that students enthusiastically participate in their learning
 - plan lessons that regularly include opportunities for students to use and develop their literacy skills
 - provide written feedback to students that includes clear subject-specific areas for improvement and reflect high expectations in relation to the presentation of written work.
- Strengthen leadership by making sure that:
 - inconsistencies in the achievement of different groups of students are further reduced by ensuring that teaching is at least good for all students in each subject and across year groups
 - all subject leaders are as good as the best at improving teaching and students' achievement
 - all leaders make a good contribution to the academy's improvement by sharply analysing and continually evaluating what is working well and what could be improved further.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders are tackling weaknesses in teaching and students' achievement and as a result there is a clear pattern of improvement.
- The new Principal has galvanised staff's enthusiasm and set a clear direction of how the pace of improvement needs to continue to increase, including by linking this to the management of teachers' and leaders' performance. Teachers, support staff and students are overwhelmingly positive about the Principal's vision for further improvement and for the changes he has already made.
- Students are set challenging targets and their progress towards these are checked regularly by senior leaders who then ensure students receive additional support when necessary. The impact of this can be seen in students' improving levels of progress over the last year and currently.
- Leaders, including governors, have considered carefully how best to spend the additional funding for the most disadvantaged students. Improvements to these students' achievement and rates of attendance show that effective use of this funding is making a good difference. Gaps that exist between the most disadvantaged students' and their classmates' progress and attendance are narrowing well. This is one way in which leaders are securing better equality of opportunity.
- Teaching is improving as a result of regular checks and good senior leadership of teaching. Leaders can accurately identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and are now much better at making the links between what is observed in lessons and the difference this makes to students' progress over the years.
- Teachers have good training opportunities to develop their skills and told inspectors that they were happy with the arrangements for their professional development. Academy leaders have identified the most appropriate areas for further training for teachers.
- The range of subjects available to students, including those supported by the academy's specialist resource provision, is matched well to their interests. These options provide all students with opportunities to gain valuable academic, as well as relevant work-related qualifications. The decision leaders made to do this has had a good impact on students' achievement.
- Students are provided with good advice and guidance when choosing subjects to study during Years 10 and 11 and in preparation for what they will do beyond those years. Leaders have been very successful in making sure that when students leave the academy they do so to continue in education or training, or to start work.
- Students gain an understanding of life in modern Britain through the range of subjects and topics that they study, as well as experiences beyond the classroom. For example, students learn about respect and tolerance of different beliefs and cultures through their interaction with each other in this multicultural academy. This is then reinforced in religious and personal, social and health education lessons. The academy's curriculum also includes sessions where students develop an understanding of parliamentary democracy and why this is so important.
- Academy leaders collect a wide range of information on all aspects of their work. This information has been used to target where there needs to be the most improvement, for example in the progress students make in English and mathematics. However, not all leaders analyse such information sharply enough to be able to quickly identify what is working well and what could be improved further. In addition, some of the areas for improvement identified in the academy's self-evaluation do not then transfer into the improvement planning process.
- Leaders of subjects are involved in checking the quality of teaching and the range of study in their subject areas. This aspect of their work has intensified in the last academic year, along with increased levels of accountability. As a result, those who spoke to inspectors knew which aspects to improve in their own subjects. However, not all are equally effective in acting on this understanding. This is shown by the fact

that while there have been improvements in the achievement of students in many subjects, there continues to be variation including for different groups of students.

- The success of students supported by the academy's additional resource provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs is directly attributable to strong leadership. There are high expectations of these students' academic achievement and their personal and social development, both of which are improving strongly. They are fully integrated into the academy, including taking on positions of responsibility, such as senior prefects. Leaders are taking effective action to improve the achievement and attendance of some other students with special educational needs and who are provided with additional support but who do less well.
- Leaders pay appropriate attention to how well students attending alternative provision are achieving and developing their skills.
- The academy's arrangements to keep students safe meet requirements and are effective.
- The sponsor has provided a good level of challenge and support to academy leaders. A review of the academy's effectiveness in December 2013 highlighted that the pace of improvement was not quick enough. Consequently, the sponsor introduced regular review meetings to challenge leaders, and provided additional support. As a result of this intervention the effectiveness of all aspects of the academy's work improved.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good understanding of the academy's strengths and weaknesses including in the quality of teaching and how students in this academy achieve compared to national averages.
 - They hold leaders to account well and meet regularly with them to review the progress being made in various aspects of the academy's work, including in raising the achievement of the most able and disadvantaged students.
 - Governors have a good overview of the management of performance for teachers and leaders, including related to rewarding good work and challenging underperformance.
 - Governors were strong advocates of the need for the curriculum to change to provide more valuable academic qualifications. Individual governors use their own expertise and experience to support the academy's priority for the 'Bristnall Hall Skills and Attributes' to make sure that when students leave the academy they will be successful in employment.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Students have good attitudes to learning in lessons. There is a good level of mutual respect for each other and for adults and this includes in lessons that are being taught by non-permanent teachers and by teaching assistants. However, although behaviour is good, students are not always enthusiastically engaged in lessons where teaching does not spark their interest.
- Students are polite and courteous. Despite limited social spaces inside the academy building, most students behave sensibly and responsibly at break times and lunchtimes. Students from different backgrounds get on well with each other.
- The academy's records show that behaviour is typically good. This was confirmed in discussion with teaching and support staff, and when considering the views of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire and the academy's own surveys.
- Students supported by the academy's resource provision behave well and attend regularly. They are given good strategies to help them when necessary and staff set firm and reasonable expectations for them.
- There are occasional examples of poorer behaviour, such as students not listening carefully to the teacher or being silly at social times. However, records show that these are dealt with well by academy leaders

and that students' behaviour improves as a result.

- Students' attendance has improved and is now closer to the national average than it has been since the academy opened. There are also now fewer students who are frequently absent from school than in the past, including disadvantaged students. Both of these improvements are as a result of good partnership work with students and their parents to highlight the importance of regular attendance at school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Students describe feeling safe in the academy and well cared for. This includes those supported by the academy's resource provision. The 'buddy groups' are particularly effective in helping students to feel safe and happy.
- Students know about different forms of bullying and describe the inclusive ethos of the school as a major reason why bullying does not happen often. They are confident that if students are unpleasant to each other that academy leaders will deal with it quickly and records confirm this.
- Students have a broad understanding of how to keep themselves safe from potential harm when not in the academy. This is as a result of the range of topics which include risks associated with knife and gang crime, the dangers of drug addiction, sexual exploitation of young people and extremist views. These topics are explored in lessons, assemblies and during 'enrichment' days.
- The behaviour, attendance and safety of students attending lessons away from the academy are monitored carefully by leaders, and this was confirmed in a visit to one of the placements.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching has not helped students to make good enough progress. While there have been clear improvements to the quality of teaching, it is not yet consistently good.
- Teaching does not take enough account of the different levels of abilities of students, including the most able. This means that it is often the case that students are completing the same work, which is therefore too hard for some and too easy for others. For example, in some lessons students have been set aspirational targets but there is no additional challenge offered to make sure that students can reach those targets.
- Teachers' generally good subject knowledge is not always used to make learning as interesting as it could be and spark students' interest. Students behave well in lessons but sometimes there is a lack of real enthusiasm to engage in what they are learning.
- Not enough teaching is providing students with opportunities to develop and use literacy skills in lessons other than in English. As a result of recent training for teachers, there are some good examples of where this does happen, such as students completing better extended writing because of effective support in geography, or explaining their science understanding more clearly in writing as a result of helpful marking.
- Students receive regular feedback on their work but it is not consistently helpful to them.
- The quality of students' presentation of their written work is too variable because not all teachers are making clear their expectations in relation to this.
- Teaching assistants have been trained well to help disabled students and those supported by the academy's resource provision. On the whole, teaching assistants engage these students in productive talk and encourage them to work out answers. However, in some lessons, additional adults are not as well used to support other students who have special educational needs.

- The best teaching is characterised by teachers planning lessons that have the highest expectations of what students can and should learn. These well-planned lessons make clear to students what they need to achieve to be successful and give them strategies that help, but that do not limit their progress. For example, in a Year 8 physical education lesson, the teacher made sure that each time a fitness activity was repeated it was done so with an increasing level of difficulty.
- In the most successful teaching, teachers ask carefully considered questions. For example, in one English lesson observed, students were helped to strengthen the quality of their analysis of poetry because the teacher asked them to explain the reasons for their choices.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Over time, students and groups of students have not made consistently good progress in subjects and across year groups. This includes students from a range of different backgrounds and those who have English as an additional language. However, the achievement of students and groups of students is improving.
- The results of 2013 GCSE examinations, that students took six months after the academy opened, show that not enough students made the progress expected of them in English and mathematics, and standards were low in a range of other subjects. Disadvantaged students achieved less well than their classmates. The majority of students in that year group left primary school with broadly average levels of ability.
- In 2014, the proportions of Year 11 students of different abilities making expected progress in English and mathematics were close to the most recent national averages. The proportions making better than expected progress in these subjects were also much improved in comparison to the previous year. Disadvantaged students made similar progress to their classmates in English and mathematics. Gaps narrowed considerably from those that existed in the previous year when comparing the progress made by disadvantaged students to their classmates, but also to other students nationally.
- The academy's analysis of 2014 results shows that disadvantaged students attained a quarter of a grade lower in English and about one third of a grade lower in mathematics compared to other students in the school. Gaps between the grades achieved by disadvantaged students in the school and other students nationally were about one third for English and just under one grade for mathematics. The gap is smaller in English and slightly smaller in mathematics than the previous year.
- In contrast to the previous Year 11 students, the majority of students in the 2014 year group left primary school with considerably well below average levels of skills. The proportion of students attaining 5 GCSE qualifications, including English and mathematics, at grade 'C' or above, was below the most recent national average. This was also the case for disadvantaged students; however there has been a slight improvement compared to the 2013 results.
- The proportion of students' reaching the EBACC measure in 2014 (achieving a GCSE grade C or above in English, mathematics, a language, history or geography and two sciences) has improved by 14% on the previous year. This was as a result of staff encouraging students to choose a wider range of academic qualifications and the better quality of teaching.
- The academy's records and inspectors' observations of the quality of different groups of students' learning, including in their written work, show that improvements are continuing.
- The achievement of disabled students and those who have special educational needs also requires improvement. However, the students supported by the school's specialist resource provision make quicker progress than other disabled students or those who have special educational needs. This is as a result of the good quality of individual support these students receive in and out of lessons.
- The most able students have not done as well they should in the past. As in other aspects of achievement, this improved in the 2014 results and is continuing to improve for students currently in the school. However, the achievement of these students is not yet consistently good. Academy leaders no longer use

early entry to GCSE examinations. When they did use this strategy, it did not limit the potential of the most able students.

- Academy leaders have put in place a number of strategies to help to improve younger students' literacy and numeracy skills, and these are generally having a good impact. These are partly funded by additional government money for students who join with below-average levels of attainment. However, the academy's records show some provision for the least able students in Year 8 mathematics is not making a consistently good difference.
- Students attending alternative provision achieve in line with their peers overall and gain appropriate work-related qualifications.

The sixth form provision

requires improvement

- Students' achievement and the quality of teaching they experience require improvement. However, both of these aspects are improving as a result of good leadership.
- After a poor set of results in 2013, six months after the academy opened, results in 2014 were considerably better. For example, the proportion of students achieving A Level grades at A* to B in 2014 was close to the most recent national average. This represents a significant improvement on the previous year's results. The achievement of different groups of students is also continuing to improve, with disadvantaged students doing better than their classmates in some subjects.
- All students who left the sixth form in 2014 progressed either to university or onto an apprenticeship programme. This provides good evidence of the increasingly successful impact of the sixth form.
- Leaders have a clear vision for the strategic direction of this aspect of the academy's work which is planned to remain relatively small. The collaborative arrangements for the sixth form mean that there is a broad and balanced range of subjects on offer to students.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is carefully and regularly checked by academy leaders. The outcomes of these checks inform teacher training decisions and targets for the management of teachers' performance. Recent work with George Salter Academy has resulted in improvements to the quality of assessment.
- Students speak highly of the quality of teaching which they say is well balanced between teachers encouraging them to take full responsibility for their learning while providing high levels of individual support and guidance. Observations of sixth form teaching and checking students' work corroborate these views. The teaching observed was well organised, planned to meet the needs of the students and teachers used effective questioning to deepen students' understanding.
- Students' behaviour is good as are their rates of attendance. Leaders ensure students are safe and understand how to keep themselves so. The academy's personal and social education programme develops students' personal and employability skills. Opportunities for good quality work experience are growing. For example, completing an internship during the summer break with a mental health trust.

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	139043
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	449227

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	956
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	39
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Tilsley
Principal	Vince Green
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0121 5525425
Fax number	0121 5111325
Email address	principal@bha.attrust.org.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

