

Portslade Aldridge Community Academy

Chalky Road, Portslade, Brighton, BN41 2WS

Inspection dates 13—14 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent in the academy. This is impacting on the standards in mathematics, history, music, media studies and photography, as expectations are not high enough.
- Marking is not good enough and does not help students to improve their work.
- Not all groups of students, such as the disadvantaged and the most able, make enough progress.
- Progress in mathematics is not good enough
- The data that the academy uses to monitor the progress of all groups of students is not presented sharply enough. It does not help teachers to plan effectively nor does it show how all students are progressing from their starting points.
- The sixth form has not provided adequate guidance to students when making their subject choices. This has led to poor standards in academic subjects and students not completing their courses.

The school has the following strengths

- The students are keen to learn and want to do their best at all times.
- The Governing Body and the academy sponsors are providing effective leadership. Their guidance has supported the rigorous planning and monitoring needed to make the necessary improvements.
- Standards have improved for students in Years 7 to 10 and Year 12.
- Attainment and progress in English is good and in line with the national average.
- The behaviour of all students is good. They are polite and respectful of each other, staff and visitors. They understand the importance of keeping themselves and each other safe and practise this at all times.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 31 lessons of which 8 were observed jointly with senior leaders in the academy. Inspectors observed an assembly and visited the tutor time of students in Years 7 to 9. Inspectors visited the library, the Aspiration centre and the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematical centre.
- Meetings took place with students from Years 7 to 13, the Executive Director, senior leaders, the teacher

in charge of the most able, the special needs coordinator, the leaders of English, mathematics and science, representatives of the Governing Body and a sponsor for the Aldridge Foundation.

- The inspection team observed the academy’s work, scrutinised the academy’s data about students’ achievement, looked at students’ work, examined records relating to behaviour and attendance and looked at documents used by the academy leaders to plan and monitor work.
- The Principal of the academy was on leave of absence at the time of the inspection. The Executive Director was leading the school.
- Inspectors looked at the 51 responses to the online Parent View survey. They analysed 33 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Kathy Maddocks, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Teresa Gilpin	Additional Inspector
Una Stevens	Additional Inspector
David Grant	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is smaller in size when compared to other schools nationally.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of students supported with additional government funding, known as pupil premium, is higher than the national average. This is provided for those known to be entitled to free school meals and looked after children.
- The proportion of students in Year 7 benefiting from the funded catch-up programme is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of students for whom English is not their first language and who come from a multi-ethnic background is lower than the national average.
- Two students in Year 10 and seven students in Year 11 attend City College in Brighton to study motor vehicle maintenance, construction, catering, hair and beauty.
- The academy is sponsored by the Aldridge Foundation and co-sponsored by Brighton and Hove City Council. There are dance, cricket and football academies on the site.
- The academy met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress, in 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Present its data in a clear and easily read format for staff, students and parents that shows how all groups of students make progress from their starting points.
- Enhance learning opportunities so that progress for all groups of students, particularly in mathematics is improved by
 - effective planning for the different needs of students so that they are challenged and engaged by the activities
 - making sure that students understand the expectations of them when given feedback, written and spoken, and that they are provided with adequate time to respond.
- Ensure that the activities planned for the disadvantaged students are effective and help them to achieve at least as well as other students in the school.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- All leaders of the academy, including the governors and sponsors, consistently communicate high expectations and ambition. The academy leaders have made many improvements to the ethos and culture of the academy. It is a calm, purposeful and orderly place for the students to study.
- There are good processes in place to support the improvement of the academy in the areas in which it needs to make swifter progress. The Executive Director has made many important strategic decisions about staffing. Many senior leaders are new and have not had a chance to show the impact of their work.
- Plans have not always been sharp enough. The Chair of Governors has noticed this and has made sure that there is more detail to the actions and that reviews are more frequent.
- The monitoring of the quality of teaching is more frequent and rigorous and so the standards are improving for students in Years 7 to 10 and Year 12.
- Students make good progress in literacy because the teaching of reading, writing and communication is well led and managed.
- The academy's curriculum is under review. Senior leaders have reflected on the inappropriateness of some of the subjects offered in the past and are constructing a better offer to students that will match their needs more effectively. The curriculum for social, moral, spiritual and cultural education is enriching and rewarding for the students and prepares them for life in modern Britain. The specialisms of enterprise and science provide them with skills that enable them to become independent and resilient citizens.
- The academies for dance, cricket and football offer specialist courses to students in Years 12 and 13. They have attracted able students from a range of other schools and academies. They provide enrichment as well as suitable courses for students who want careers in their chosen field or to study at university.
- The academy's actions have secured improvement in achievement for disadvantaged students in English and there is no difference in the progress for students in Years 7 to 9. The gap is closing between the outcomes of those who are disadvantaged and the other students in the academy in science, music, art, and French.
- The culture of the academy is characterised by high expectations of the students; this is shown in the way they wear their new uniform with pride and speak about the academy.
- The systems for managing the performance of teachers are robust and appropriately linked to salary arrangements and rewards. The leader of teaching and learning, who was appointed in September 2013, has provided a programme of training to help the middle leaders manage their responsibilities more effectively. The focus for all teachers this year is to plan for learning that provides challenge and high expectations for all groups of students.
- Leaders are well trained in identifying students at risk of harm, and respond appropriately. The academy's arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body, ably led by the chair who was appointed in April 2014, is a strength of the academy. Governors know the strengths of the academy and where improvements need to be made, such as the lack of achievement of disadvantaged students in mathematics. They ensure that pay awards are linked to the progress made by students. The governors monitor and understand the academy finances, including the use of the pupil premium and the Year 7 catch up funding allocation. They fulfil their duties with regard to keeping students safe.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Their attitudes to learning are consistently positive whether being taught as a whole class or working on their own and in small groups.
- Regardless of year group and subject, the students retain a positive attitude. They manage this even when the teaching is less good.
- The students are ready to learn, arrive punctually and bring the right equipment to the academy.
- Students respond quickly to instructions and requests. Low-level disruption to learning is rare and is a result of being bored and not challenged in lessons.
- Students understand the importance of good attitudes and behaviour in life at the academy and beyond in

the world of work. This is shown in the way they take a pride in their appearance and in the academy buildings. There is no litter or graffiti on the campus.

- Students' attendance at the academy has improved significantly and is now in line with national average. The appointment of an educational welfare officer has supported this.
- Students' good conduct and behaviour reflect the academy's efforts to promote high standards. There are marked improvements in behaviour of individuals over time. The pupils commented on this in their discussions with inspectors. Fixed term exclusions have reduced significantly and are now in line with the national average.
- The systems put in place to monitor behaviour show that students are receiving rewards and praise eight times more often than they are receiving sanctions. The amount of sanctions received during the year reduced from over 2000 in the first half term to a few hundred by the end of the year. This was for the whole school.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying. Incidents have reduced from 15 per month to two, and these few are followed up by academy staff. There is a positive ethos in and around the academy. Students conduct themselves well throughout the day, including break and lunchtime. The students are respectful to each other.
- Pupils are safe and feel safe in the academy and at the City College. They understand the need to keep themselves safe and readily wear goggles and other protective equipment when necessary.
- Staff and parents do not have any major concerns about the safety of students.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The learning in mathematics in Years 7 to 10 is not effective. There is more progress for students in Year 11 but it is still below national expectations. The expectations and challenge have not been high enough. The marking is inconsistent and is not specific enough to help students make better progress. The Head of mathematics was appointed last Easter and he is sharing his skills with the rest of the department. The impact of this is not yet consistent throughout the school.
- The learning in English is good and students are achieving above national expectations in all year groups. Reading, writing and communication are well taught and expectations are high in these areas. Students are supported in their reading in tutor time and the excellent provision within the library.
- Where learning is successful, teachers create a positive climate and students are interested and engaged. In Year 10 English, the teachers and other adults are using a range of strategies to make the lessons enjoyable and purposeful. The students are learning from each other and are eager to articulate their thoughts and participate. Similarly, in French, in Year 8, the students are motivated and speaking the language through story-telling exercises.
- The other adults employed in the school provide effective support for the students. They are proactive in their work and relationships are good. They have a range of skills and receive effective training to make them more specialised.
- There are processes in place to assess students and manage interventions when progress is too slow. This is helping students to improve but there is a lack of consistency in its effectiveness. Students are not given sufficient time to respond to the advice nor enough opportunities to make sure that they understand the expectations.
- The most able students are not being challenged in their learning. The academy appointed a teacher in September to make changes in this area. The auditing and planning is secure but it is too early for the outcomes to be measured. The impact of the lack of achievement with regard to attaining the higher grades is felt in the sixth form, where the most able students are not prepared well enough to succeed and gain the highest grades.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students in Years 7 to 10 join the academy with attainment that is significantly below the national average. The students in the current Year 11 joined with attainment that is broadly in line with national average. Progress in English is consistently strong as even in the year groups where students have joined with attainment that is below the national average, their rate of improvement means that they are leaving with achievement and attainment that is above the national average. Progress in English work, across all year groups, indicates that they achieve well. Progress in art, French, geography, information technology, media, music, performing arts and photography is strong for current Year 11.
- Progress in mathematics is not strong because too much of the teaching is not challenging and expectations are not high enough. The students are not making expected progress before leaving the academy.
- Disadvantaged students in Year 11 are performing at just over half a grade below other students in English and a grade below in mathematics. They are one grade below others nationally in English and just over a grade below in mathematics. The progress of disadvantaged students is improving in English. Robust plans are in place to maintain this.
- Students for whom English is not their first language and who come from a multi ethnic background are performing as well as other students in the school and in line with the national average.
- Students read widely and to a high standard across the academy. Those who arrive at the academy with reading ages and mathematical skills below their chronological age are given extra support to help them improve and catch up with their peers. Students use the accelerated reading scheme with great success.
- The students develop a wide range of skills in reading, writing and communication that ensure they are well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment. Although the acquisition of skills in mathematics is not as good, there are signs of improvement for students taking A level mathematics in the sixth form. The Head of the Sixth Form is a teacher of mathematics and his students are achieving well in Year 12.
- The progress of students who have special educational needs is good in all years. It compares well with that of other students in the school. The extra support that is provided by the specialist staff in the Aspiration Centre is very effective.
- The progress of the most able students has been poor in comparison to others in the school. The academy has changed the way that progress is measured so that expectations are higher than before and in line with national expectations.
- The students who attend the City College are performing well as the subjects are at an appropriate level for their skills.

The sixth form provision

requires improvement

- Too often, students have not been able to follow study programmes that meet their needs so they have not been able to build on prior achievement and progress to a higher level of attainment. In 2013, this was the case for the students studying vocational study programmes.
- In 2014, students made better progress in these study programmes but did less well in the academic subjects offered at AS and A level. Sometimes, this is because students have not been given the right advice about which study programme would suit them best.
- At other times, students were allowed to study an academic subject when they had not achieved well enough in their GCSEs. As a result, they have struggled to complete the course or made poor progress.
- A new leader of the sixth form was appointed in September 2014. Each student was given an individual interview about which study programmes would meet their needs. The guidance has been far more personal and specific. More of the learning since September is good, as are punctuality and attendance.
- The students follow a personal, social and health education study programme. They spoke of feeling well supported and safe. They have been given careers advice and guidance.
- In the past two years, the majority of students have not stayed on into Year 13 and have not completed their study programmes. This has impacted adversely on the number of students who are not in education, employment and training. The students who study in the sports academies make good progress and stay on to complete their programmes and are well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment.
- All students who do not already have at least a GCSE in English or mathematics follow a programme that enables them to achieve this. There are other vocational programmes that they are able to follow which

prepare them for the world beyond the academy.

- The academy has not tracked sufficiently the progress of the students in the sixth form and, as a result, has not intervened when students are not making adequate progress. This has led to the low attainment in many subjects. The proportion of disadvantaged students is small; they are not achieving expected progress.
- The new leadership of the sixth form has demonstrated the capacity to maintain and improve on the level of support offered since September 2014.

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	137063
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	449062

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	656
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	129
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Zenna Atkins
Principal	James Fox`
Date of previous school inspection	6–7 December 2012
Telephone number	01273 416300
Fax number	01273 422129
Email address	contact@paca.uk.com

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