

Brighton Aldridge Community Academy

Lewes Road, Brighton, BN1 9PW

Inspection dates 3–4 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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
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 has improved since the last inspection, but progress in some classes, year groups and subjects, including mathematics, is not good enough.
- The gap in achievement between different groups of students is too variable. Disadvantaged students are not catching up with their peers at consistent rates.
- Students' achievement in the sixth form is not consistently good.
- Some teachers set the same level of work for all students regardless of their ability. More-able students are not challenged well enough.
- Senior leaders and governors hold an over-generous view of students' behaviour. They have not ensured that teachers have high enough expectations for good behaviour.
- Teachers do not consistently adjust their lessons to take account of how well students are managing the task set for them. Students lose interest and disengage from their work.
- Teachers are not typically asking probing questions that help students think deeply and learn more effectively. Marking is not always helping students improve their work.
- There is too much low-level disruption in lessons and teachers do not always tackle this effectively. Students do not always conduct themselves well around the school site.
- Some students do not take note of the academy's clear message that using the word 'gay' as an insult is not acceptable.
- Some subject leaders are not effective in driving improvements in their subject areas.
- The curriculum does not offer students practical pathways into engineering and related careers

The school has the following strengths:

- The academy is increasingly effective in promoting students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and preparing them for life in modern Britain.
- Leadership of the sixth form is good. Provision in the sixth form is improving and students are achieving more than was previously the case.
- Students typically make good progress in English
- Senior leaders know which teachers need support to improve and are making sure the training and coaching provided for these teachers are effective.
- Students' attendance is in line with that seen nationally.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 26 lessons, 11 jointly with senior leaders. In addition they undertook a number of shorter visits to lessons to look at students’ behaviour and engagement in learning.
- Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body, groups of students and a representative of the Aldridge Foundation. An inspector spoke to the Chair of the Governing Body by telephone.
- Inspectors reviewed a number of documents including safety procedures, behaviour and attendance records, self-evaluation and planning documents and the academy’s records on performance management and teaching and learning.
- Inspectors took into account 20 responses from parents and carers to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 20 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Diana Choulerton, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Simon Highes	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Cliff Mainey	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is much smaller than the average sized secondary school. It has a small sixth form.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of students eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional government funding for children who are looked after by the local authority and students known to be eligible for free school meals) is well above that seen nationally.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is much higher than the national average.
- The school has a small, local authority funded and managed unit for students with special educational needs related to speech, language and communication and autism, The Swan Centre. The unit has capacity for 16 students.
- A small number of students receive part of their education at other establishments, namely: City College, Plumpton College, Moulsecoombe Forest Garden project and Whitehawk Football Academy.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- There have been significant changes in leadership and teaching staff since the last inspection. The Principal retired in the summer of 2013 and at the same time over a third of the teaching staff left the academy. An interim Principal took charge of the academy until the current Principal took up post in January 2014. In September 2013, 14 teachers who were new to the profession joined the academy.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so it is consistently good by ensuring that:
 - all teachers have high expectations of students' behaviour in class, so learning is not disrupted
 - lessons meet the needs of students of varying abilities, especially the most able
 - teachers ask questions that help students think more deeply about their learning
 - teachers adjust lessons to take account of how well students are managing the task set for them, so time is not wasted and all students make good progress
 - lessons consistently engage students' interest so they are keen to learn
 - teachers' marking is consistently effective in helping students improve their work.
- Improve achievement by making sure that:
 - students' progress in mathematics at least matches that seen nationally
 - boys' achievement matches that of girls
 - gaps in achievement between disadvantaged students and others close consistently in all year groups and subjects.
- Make sure that all students understand why using the word 'gay' as an insult is unacceptable.
- Improve leadership and management by making sure that:
 - all middle leaders have the skills needed to improve teaching and achievement in their subjects
 - leaders have a precise understanding of how well staff are following the academy's behaviour policy and address any inconsistencies, so that students' behaviour improves
 - the curriculum provides opportunities for students to study design and technology or other practical subjects that would help them to progress into careers in engineering and related industries.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leaders have not made sure that all teachers have high expectations for students' behaviour. Some teachers are not following the academy's behaviour policy and they are not reporting incidents of poor behaviour. Leaders' views of the quality of behaviour are over generous.
- Since the last inspection over a third of teachers have left the academy. The teachers who replaced them were mainly new to the profession. As a result, the quality of teaching, which had previously been good, declined. The new Principal and his senior team have taken action to support these newer staff and improve the quality of teaching. Teaching is better than it was a year ago, but not yet consistently good. Senior leaders know where further improvement is needed and are addressing this well. Leaders provide intensive coaching for teachers who need to improve the most. All teachers receive training which includes sharing good practice with each other.
- Subject leaders are not consistently effective in driving improvements in their areas of responsibility. Successful middle leaders have been promoted into senior roles. These new senior leaders oversee improvements in subject areas where subject leadership is weak and support subject leaders to improve.
- Leaders have a comprehensive system in place for checking students' progress. Students who have fallen behind receive appropriate support to help them catch up. Support includes intensive literacy and numeracy sessions. Leaders make sure that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed.
- Leaders have mainly made good use of pupil premium funding. Disadvantaged students achieve much more than previously. Provision, including individual tuition and support in lessons for students who need it, has helped. However, the gap in achievement between disadvantaged students and others are not close consistently in all year groups and subjects.
- The academy's arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements. Staff and governors receive suitable safeguarding training. Leaders make sure that arrangements to keep students safe when they are studying at off-site provision are sound.
- The curriculum is, on the whole, broad and balanced. Students can choose from a range of academic and vocational subjects at Key Stage 4. However, it needs further development to meet the interests and aspirations of all students. The academy does not offer any design and technology subjects other than food technology. This limits students' opportunity to progress in engineering-related careers. Leaders plan to address this by working in partnership with a local university technical college. Leaders have ambitious plans for the curriculum. An approach intended to develop students' entrepreneurial and leadership skills is being tried out in Year 7. Leaders are also working in partnership with a local media company to provide students with a vocational pathway into Brighton's thriving media industry.
- The academy promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Tutor time, citizenship lessons and assemblies all provide opportunities for students to consider issues such as bullying, diversity, equality and democracy. Students make good links with the community and wider world through a wide range of activities. Examples include: work with local artists to produce an art piece exhibited in Brighton City Centre; catering students providing meals for residents from a local old people's home; and students attending a Global Entrepreneurs conference.
- The academy's sponsor, the Aldridge Foundation, provides useful support to the academy. The foundation carries out reviews of the quality of teaching, which correctly identify areas of teaching that need improvement. Subject leaders meet with peers across the foundation to share good practice.
- Leaders have made sure that students get helpful guidance about careers and course choices when they need it. All students who left the school last year went into further education or training.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors receive regular reports on the academy's performance, including on the quality of teaching and students' achievement. They question leaders to check that teachers who need it receive suitable training and support. In the main, governors have a reasonable understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the academy. However, governors have an inaccurate picture of how well students behave.
 - Governors have clear oversight of the academy's finances, including how the pupil premium funding is used and to what effect. Governors make sure that pay links to teachers' performance. They refuse to sanction pay increases when evidence suggests that a teacher's performance is not good enough. They fulfil their statutory duties in relation to safeguarding and have a good understanding of issues related to this. They understand the risks of extremism and make sure the academy prepares students for life in modern Britain.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**require improvement****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. Students do not always behave well in lessons. Boys, in particular, drift off task very easily and cause low-level disruption to learning. In some lessons teachers do not tackle this behaviour well, so the disruption continues.
- Most students conduct themselves well around the school site but there are too many incidents of boisterous behaviour.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure requires improvement. Some students do not have a good enough understanding of issues related to discrimination and bullying based on prejudice. Students are clear the academy does not tolerate discriminatory language, including that which is homophobic or racist. However, students told inspectors the word 'gay' is used by some students as an insult. An inspector witnessed this behaviour during the inspection.
- Students say that bullying is rare. Leaders deal with any bullying that does happen, quickly and effectively.
- Leaders make sure that students know how to keep themselves safe in the world outside of school and when using social media.
- Arrangements to keep students safe and to promote their good behaviour when attending off-site provision are sound.

The quality of teaching**requires improvement**

- Some teachers set the same work for all the students regardless of their varying abilities. More-able students, in particular, do not receive challenging enough work. Sometimes the work set is too easy for all students in the class.
- Not all teachers use lesson time effectively. Some teachers do not adjust lessons to take account of how students are responding to the tasks set for them. As a result, students sometimes spend too long on easy tasks. Some students lose interest and start chatting instead of working. Students who finish the task ahead of others have to wait for the rest of the class.
- Teachers check students' work regularly and suggest areas for improvement. In some lessons, students have frequent opportunities to improve their work in response to this feedback and consequently they learn well. In some classes these opportunities are too infrequent to be helpful. Students move on to new tasks without having the chance to improve their understanding of the previous topic.
- Where teaching is more effective, teachers have high expectations. Students undertake challenging tasks suitable to their varying abilities and all students in the class learn well. For example, in a Year 11 mathematics lesson on calculating the volume of spheres, cylinders and cones, all students tackled questions that challenged them to think and solve problems for themselves. The most able students started on harder questions straight away, so did not waste time completing questions that were too easy.
- Few teachers make effective use of questioning. Teachers' questions are too often focused just on checking if students know the correct answer, rather than on helping students think more deeply.
- Students typically have well-developed reading and literacy skills. Fortnightly reading and communication lessons, daily reading sessions and extra literacy support for those who need it have all contributed to this. Teaching in mathematics is inconsistent. As a result, students' rates of progress are too variable.

The achievement of pupils**requires improvement**

- Students are not making consistently good progress across the academy. Students do well in some subjects but not in others. Boys achieve less well than girls. The rate at which disadvantaged students are catching up with their peers is inconsistent.
- By the end of Key Stage 4 in 2014, many students had made greater than expected progress in English. Students' achievement in mathematics was considerably higher than in 2013, but remained much lower than the national figure. Students' achievement in other subjects was variable. Too few students made good progress in history, geography, business studies, Spanish, French or art. Academy information shows that students are making consistently good progress in English. Better progress is being secured in mathematics in most year groups, but not all. The proportion of students making good progress in other subjects remains too variable.
- Disadvantaged students are not catching up with their peers as rapidly in some subjects and year groups

as they are in others. In 2013 disadvantaged students achieved broadly the same as their peers in English GCSE but were almost a grade behind in mathematics. In 2014 the gap between these groups and their peers in school closed in mathematics to half a grade but widened to half a grade in English. The proportion of disadvantaged students making expected progress in English was much higher than that of other students nationally and in mathematics the gap between these groups was half that seen in 2013. The in-school gap in progress between these groups was almost halved in mathematics but widened in English. Academy information shows that gaps between disadvantaged students and others are not closing consistently. For example, the gap in expected progress remains wide in Year 10 in mathematics and is wider in Year 8 in English and mathematics. In other year groups the gap is small.

- Students who attend courses at other providers do not achieve consistently well. The information the academy shared with the inspection team showed that fewer than half these students are on track to make good progress this year.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs receive teaching and support that meets their needs. As a result they make good progress.
- Students who attend the Swan Centre receive support that enables them to learn well in their mainstream lessons. Typically these students make good progress.
- The progress of the most able students in the academy is variable. In 2014 the proportion of these students who made expected or more than expected progress in English and mathematics was better than that seen nationally in the previous year. However, in the current Year 11 most-able students are not making good progress in mathematics. The proportion of most-able students on track to make good progress throughout the school is variable in mathematics, science and some other subjects. Some teachers are not providing them with enough challenge.
- Leaders entered many students for mathematics GCSE early in the last academic year. This did not limit the most able students' opportunity to do well. Students who did not reach their target grade retook the examinations in the summer and most achieved their target grade. However, nationally published performance data for 2014 will only include the results from the first entry, so will not reflect this.

The sixth form provision

requires improvement

- Students' achievement in the sixth form is improving but still variable. Most students who sat examinations in 2014 reached their target grades. They made better progress than students of the previous year. However, too few students who retook English and mathematics GCSE were successful in gaining an A* to C grade. Current students are not making consistently good progress in all subjects.
- Leaders have worked effectively to improve the sixth form. Provision in the sixth form meets the needs of its learners much better than previously. Students increasingly study courses that suit their ambitions and prepare them well for higher education and employment. Most students study vocational courses, but an increasing range of A-level courses is available for those students suited to academic study.
- Teaching in the sixth form is typically good. Teachers' regular assessments of students' understanding ensure they set suitably challenging work. Teachers mark work regularly and provide students with useful advice about how to improve. This helps students learn effectively. Students show engagement and interest in their work.
- When not in lessons, students undertake supervised private study. They also spend time volunteering in other parts of the academy. For example, some students work as sports coaches in the school, others work with young children in the bilingual free school the academy shares its site with.
- Leaders check learners' progress in each subject regularly. Tutors meet with students individually to discuss what is going well and what needs improving. Students receive suitable support when they need it.
- Students understand issues related to discrimination and diversity and are tolerant of difference. They know how to keep themselves safe. A programme of assemblies and tutor time, including weekly discussions of the news, help them prepare them for life in modern British society.
- Students receive helpful, impartial careers advice and guidance and they have clear well-thought-out plans for their futures.

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	136164
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	449053

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	582
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	50
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Kyle
Principal	Dylan Davies
Date of previous school inspection	5–6 December 2012
Telephone number	01273 665455
Fax number	01273 665455
Email address	office@baca-uk.org.uk

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