

Platanos College

Clapham Road, London, SW9 0AL

Inspection dates 10–11 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	Outstanding 1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- All students make outstanding progress in a wide range of subjects including English and mathematics.
- Excellent achievement is based on students' quick acquisition of a wide range of valuable learning skills. These, which include the development of highly accomplished skills in literacy and numeracy, are central to the rapid progress they make in their learning.
- Disadvantaged students, those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, and students who speak English as an additional language are very well supported. They achieve equally as well as their peers.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have very high expectations of all students. This leads to teachers planning learning activities which ensure students are enthusiastic about their learning.
- Teachers gauge the quality of students' work very well and set appropriate, but challenging academic targets.
- Students' behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. They work hard and concentrate very well in lessons.
- Students' safety is a very high priority for all staff. They work exceptionally hard to make sure all students are safe and secure.
- The excellent range of subjects strongly promotes and sustains students' academic achievement, preparing them extremely well for life in modern Britain.
- The school provides students with a wide range of opportunities to engage in high quality extra-curricular activities, trips and visits. This excellent aspect of the school's provision excites students' imaginations and is highly effective in raising their aspirations to succeed.
- Students' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is promoted exceptionally well. They are helped to develop outstanding personal qualities and self-confidence, maturing into considerate and thoughtful young people.
- Leadership at all levels, including that of the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders, is outstanding. Leaders provide a very successful degree of drive and ambition to keep improving the quality of teaching and student achievement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made 30 visits to classrooms to observe students' learning. They were accompanied by a member of the senior leadership team on two of these visits. Inspectors observed an assembly and a number of tutor groups.
- Inspectors held meetings with several groups of students, members of the senior leadership team, and leaders in charge of subjects and other aspects of the school's work. Inspectors also met with recently qualified teachers new to the school.
- The lead inspector met with the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors had a number of discussions with teaching staff. They examined a range of documents, including the school's review of its own performance, its plans for improvement, and student progress information.
- Inspectors evaluated the school's own information about exclusions, attendance and behaviour. They considered evidence of how effectively academy staff monitor the progress of those of their students who are receiving part of their education in other settings.
- Inspectors also considered evidence of how effectively it spends the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding.
- Inspectors looked at a range of students' work in lessons.
- The inspection team took into account 110 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire, and considered questionnaires completed by 77 members of staff.

Inspection team

Jackie Jones, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Kanwaljit Singh	Additional Inspector
James Coyle	Additional Inspector
Alma Evans	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Platanos College converted to become an academy school on 1 February 2011. It is the only school within the Platanos Trust which was set up to oversee the school on becoming an academy. It is an average-sized secondary school, with specialisms in business and enterprise.
- When its predecessor school, Stockwell Park High School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding.
- The students come from a very wide range of backgrounds including White British, Caribbean, African, and White and Black Caribbean. The vast majority of the students come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is nearly four times the national average.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, and children who are looked after) is more than double the national average.
- There are 32 students for whom the school receives Year 7 catch-up funding. This is funding for students who did not achieve Level 4 (the nationally expected level) at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is 60% of the school's population, which is over three times the national average.
- A small number of students receive their education from five outside providers. They attend Treasure House for GCSE and work-related courses, Lambeth College for work-related courses and Your Story for GCSE and work-related courses. Some students attend Streetvibes for a specialist music course, and Fairbridge, which provides six weekly courses funded by the Prince's Trust.
- Platanos College is currently supporting, through the Platanos Trust, Winterbourne Boys' Academy. This is a junior school in Thornton Heath, Surrey. The predecessor school, Winterbourne Boys' Junior School, was judged by Ofsted as requiring special measures.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards in 2014, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all students consistently make equally strong progress by:
 - providing sufficient time for all students to respond to their teachers' detailed feedback and comments in marking, showing clearly that they have understood how to improve their learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher and her leadership team has been instrumental in continuing the very successful drive for improvements in achievement, quality of teaching and the behaviour and safety of students since becoming an academy.
- All staff are highly ambitious for the students. As a result, all students make exceptional progress in their personal development and academic achievement.
- The school's view about its own performance is robust and accurate. It is well informed by an excellent improvement plan that has clearly measurable outcomes. The plans for improvement are monitored regularly, progress is carefully reviewed and any required changes implemented quickly.
- The management of teaching and its impact on learning are outstanding. School leaders' judgements on the quality of teaching are very accurate, informed by extremely rigorous checks by senior and middle leaders. These checks are verified through a robust quality assurance programme involving the local authority and the use of experienced education consultants, as well as very experienced senior leaders within the school.
- Middle leaders have a very well-grounded understanding of how to improve the learning opportunities for students. They very effectively review the performance of their subject areas to ensure that the quality of provision remains high for all students.
- Training for all staff is highly personalised and based on an accurate analysis of need. All staff speak very highly of the quality of the training provided by the school, which is tailored to the stage that individual staff have reached in their career development.
- Systems for managing staff performance are extremely rigorous and salary progression only occurs when merited by good performance.
- Senior leaders have taken very robust action to challenge student underperformance. This is in line with the high aspirations set for the students, summarised in the school motto 'Attitude Determines Altitude'. This approach has been very successful in ensuring that where progress has faltered, underachieving students quickly catch up with their peers.
- A broad and balanced curriculum provides a wide range of academic and extra-curricular courses. The school is moving to an increasingly academic approach which has resulted in many more students choosing to take humanities and language courses for their GCSEs.
- An outstanding range of additional opportunities is provided to further enrich students' experience. This includes access to a wide variety of sports, the arts, and visits to places of educational interest. The school provides all students with the opportunity to visit universities and colleges including Cambridge, Imperial College and University College, London. This encourages high aspirations for their future education.
- Students take on leadership roles very effectively, for example as members of the anti-bullying committee, which is run by the students themselves. This helps to build a very strong school community, which thrives on its diversity.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a real strength of the school. It is deeply embedded throughout all aspects of the school's work. For example, during an English lesson based on George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, students showed that they had an extremely well-informed understanding of life in modern Britain when discussing their ideas about democracy.
- School leaders very effectively ensure that there is no discrimination and that all students, including those who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs, are able to participate fully in all activities provided by the school. Students have access to many activities which enable them to develop their leadership skills and consider future career opportunities. These include membership of the scouts, guides and the combined cadet force. Intervention classes and learning performance seminars promote their academic and personal development extremely well.
- The school monitors very effectively the performance and well-being of the small number of students who receive aspects of their education in other settings.
- School leaders are robust in addressing any instances of bad behaviour. The effectiveness of this action is seen in the continued decline in the number of exclusions, which is significantly below the national average.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. The school has highly effective safeguarding processes and procedures, and makes extremely effective use of outside agencies to provide excellent support for students as and when needed.
- Students at all stages are given excellent advice about their options for the future. As a result the majority

of students go into education, employment or training on leaving the academy.

- The school works very effectively with parents. For example, governors play an important role in working with the local community to ensure parents are clear about the expectations the school has of their children.
- The very large majority of parents who responded to Parent View (Ofsted's online parents' questionnaire) agreed that the school responded well to concerns and provided them with valuable information about their child's progress.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governance of the school is outstanding. Governors support and challenge the school very effectively.
- Governors are fully involved in reviewing students' performance and setting the school's priorities through discussion of the school's views about how well it is doing, and its plans for improvement.
- They are very well equipped to carry out their statutory duties, which they do very well. They have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and are fully aware of what the school needs to do to improve even more.
- Governors ensure that they remain fully up to date on all aspects of governance through regularly attending training and sharing their knowledge with each other.
- Governors manage the school's finances extremely well and ensure that spending is linked to students' learning. They are very knowledgeable about how additional funding is used to support disadvantaged students, and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs.
- Governors are very knowledgeable about the quality of teaching. They are keenly aware of what is being done to reward good and outstanding performance and address any underperformance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. Staff and parents commented exceptionally favourably on behaviour at the school and the way it is consistently very well managed. In lessons, regardless of the subject or year group, students' attitudes to learning are extremely positive. This is a significant factor in their excellent academic and personal development.
- Students work in a very positive way with both teachers and teaching assistants. As a result, staff and students develop exceptionally positive relationships, which enable students to make outstanding progress.
- Students arrive at lessons on time, with the correct equipment and ready to learn. They all keep to the school's 'movement' expectations, such as keeping to the left in corridors so that students move safely and quickly around the site.
- Students take enormous pride in their work, which is very well presented, and in their school through wearing their uniform exceptionally well. There is very little graffiti or litter around the school.
- Students are exceptionally polite to visitors. They willingly allow them to pass through doors first, for example.
- The behaviour of students attending off-site provision is very closely monitored by the school. This ensures that these students continue to make, at least, good progress in this area of their learning.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. All the students spoken to said that they feel very safe, a view which is fully shared by staff and parents.
- The school uses opportunities during lessons very effectively to ensure students know how to keep themselves safe in a wide variety of situations, including how to avoid the risks associated with any extreme political agenda. They are fully aware of the risks connected with the internet.
- The school is very active in ensuring that students know what to do if they have concerns, for example about bullying or safeguarding. Students reported that any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and firmly. There is virtually no racist or homophobic bullying; as some Key Stage 4 students explained, 'We are all in one big family.' The anti-bullying committee is highly effective and respected by all students.

- Attendance is significantly above the national average. The academy uses very effective systems to monitor the attendance of students who receive their education at other settings. Any absences are reported daily to the school by staff at the colleges they attend, and are immediately followed up by school leaders.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the school became an academy.
- A significant feature of the outstanding teaching in the school is the excellent relationship that has been established between staff and students. Students collaborate exceptionally well in lessons to improve their learning. In a Year 11 lesson, for example, students were encouraged to support each other when comparing solutions to mathematical problems. This ensured they were not reliant on the teacher for their learning, and led to excellent progress in their knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers make very clear the standard of work and behaviour expected from all students. As a result, students participate very willingly in all their learning tasks and make outstanding progress.
- Teachers use their extensive subject knowledge very effectively to extend students' knowledge and understanding. Strong subject knowledge enables teachers to use a wide range of techniques to probe students' own subject knowledge, as seen in a chemistry lesson about electroplating where students' knowledge of electrodes was tested very thoroughly.
- Support for disabled students and those with special educational needs is extremely good. Teaching assistants are used very well in lessons to support students in their learning. They work closely with the class teachers in agreeing how they will support students. This was seen in a Year 10 art lesson where both the teacher and teaching assistant worked very effectively to challenge all students. The teaching assistant was focused on ensuring that the more able students were stretched to achieve their best work.
- The school has a highly effective reading and literacy programme. The numeracy programme is developing rapidly. Students whose literacy and numeracy are below expected standards are very ably supported through specialised lessons and one-to-one mentoring, and make very rapid improvement.
- Students who speak English as an additional language make outstanding progress because they are helped by teachers specialising in teaching English as a foreign language. One student, speaking fluently to the inspectors, said that, 'before I came to this school I could not speak English, now look at me'.
- The school has very secure marking and assessment systems, but not all teachers give students enough time in lessons to respond to their detailed improvement points.
- The school's very clearly defined homework policy is put into practice consistently by all staff. Students benefit by developing the ability to work on their own to extend their knowledge, understanding and skills in a wide variety of subjects. Parents comment very positively about the homework set by the school.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students enter the school with levels of attainment significantly below national averages. The proportion who attain five or more GCSEs at grade A* to C, including English and mathematics, is significantly higher than found nationally.
- Year 11 students in 2014 achieved very well in a number of GCSE subjects including art, English literature, iGCSE English language, film studies and physical education.
- The proportion making at least expected progress in English and mathematics is significantly above the national average.
- African, Caribbean and Black and White Caribbean students make outstanding progress. The progress of White British students has improved significantly and is now in line with other students in the school.
- As the result of the high aspirations established by school leaders, the most able students, who had previously not achieved as well as others, are now making progress in line with other students, both in the school and nationally.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs receive highly effective support. They make exceptional progress due to the high quality support they receive.
- Disadvantaged students make outstanding progress, in line with other students at the school. In 2014 they did better than other students nationally in gaining five GCSEs at A* to C grades, the gap in English being less than a quarter of a grade, with no gap in mathematics. These students also made better than

expected progress than students nationally in English and mathematics.

- The school uses Year 7 catch-up funding very effectively. Specialist literacy programmes, small-group support work in both English and mathematics, and one-to-one tuition help students who speak English as an additional language to make excellent progress in both English and mathematics.
- The achievement of students who receive their education at other settings is monitored very carefully by the school, ensuring that they are placed on courses appropriate for them, and that they make progress that is in line with their peers.
- The academy has provided opportunities for early-entry to GCSE mathematics for students who are predicted to achieve their target grade. Careful monitoring showed that these students were not disadvantaged as a result, achieving at significantly above national averages.

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	136450
Local authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	449432

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	958
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Akin Alabi
Headteacher	Judette Tapper
Date of previous school inspection	
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