

The Albany School

Broadstone Road, Off Albany Road, Hornchurch, RM12 4AJ

Inspection dates 24–25 February 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Leaders and managers have not secured consistently good teaching. As a result, students' achievement requires improvement. There are too many inconsistencies in teaching, particularly in Key Stage 3 classes. This means that students do not achieve as well as they should.
- Teachers do not always plan activities at the right level of challenge. Sometimes work is too easy for students to achieve their best.
- Teachers do not always follow up on marked work. Some students do not respond to marking or correct their mistakes and this slows their progress.
- Teachers do not always insist on the highest standards. Sometimes students do not present their work well.
- Achievement requires improvement because students do not make enough progress in Key Stage 3.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, supported by leaders at all levels, has been successful in ensuring that the school is improving. Together they have instilled a positive culture for learning. This has had a strong impact on students' behaviour and aspirations.
- Governors are knowledgeable and bring a range of professional skills to their role. They are very effective in challenging the school to do better.
- Behaviour is good and students are safe in school. They value the very good relationships they have with each other and take pride in their appearance and their school.
- Students have successfully risen to the challenge of leadership in a variety of roles. This includes their own anti-bullying group.
- Staff work diligently with students and their families to ensure students improve their attendance.
- Students who speak English as an additional language make good progress and achieve well.
- Achievement in English is good for all groups of students and in all year groups. This is a result of good teaching in this subject.
- Students' attainment in GCSE science courses is now rising rapidly. This is because of focused and determined subject leadership.
- The school provides rich opportunities for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, in lessons and through a wide range of enrichment activities.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 34 lessons, of which 11 were joint observations with senior leaders.
- There was a number of shorter visits to lessons with the headteacher to evaluate the achievement of girls.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, teachers and support staff. A meeting was held with four governors and a representative of Havering local authority.
- Four groups of students talked to inspectors about their views of the school. The inspection team also spoke informally with students.
- Inspectors took account of the 42 responses to the online parent survey, Parent View.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including students' work, achievement information, school self-evaluation and development plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- The inspection team observed the work of the school at break and lunchtime. Inspectors visited tutor time and a house assembly.

Inspection team

Janet Hallett, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Ann Short	Additional Inspector
Angela Podmore	Additional Inspector
Paul Murphy	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Albany School is a smaller-than-average-sized mixed academy in Havering.
- There are many more boys than girls.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students for whom the school receives the pupil premium funding (additional government funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children) is just above the national average. There are a few looked after children.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is just below the national average.
- The school makes use of alternative provision for a few students in Year 10 and Year 11 to provide additional curriculum opportunities and to support students' behaviour. These centres are: Motorvation; Head Jogs; Wellgate Forum; and Lambourne End.
- The school meets the government current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school has professional links with good and outstanding schools in the local area to support and develop its teaching and learning. These are West Hatch High School, Hall Mead School and Sydney Russell School.
- Almost two thirds of teaching staff, including all but two middle leaders, have joined the school since the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of teaching on students' achievement by ensuring that:
 - all teachers implement the school's assessment policy and make sure students know what they have to do to respond to teachers' comments
 - all teachers check that students have responded to their comments and corrected their mistakes or completed the gaps in their work
 - all teachers implement the school's presentation policy and insist that students present their work well.
- Raise achievement for all groups of students, particularly those in Key Stage 3, by ensuring that:
 - all teachers use information available about students' progress to set the highest expectations of what students can achieve
 - all teachers plan activities that are set at the right level of challenge so that students learn better.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The leadership of the headteacher and senior team is good. They have developed a strong, whole school focus on developing a culture of learning and aspiration for the students as well as improving teaching. Students, staff, governors and parents say that the school has changed markedly in the last two years and the impact is clear to see in students' behaviour and attitudes to learning. There is good capacity to improve further.
 - Leadership and management are not outstanding because, although teaching and achievement are improving, school leaders have not secured consistently good or better teaching over time for all groups of students. The leadership of teaching is strong. Performance management is effective. Teachers compare their students' progress with targets and are fully accountable for their own students' performance. Training and support are customised to an individual teacher's needs as a result of observations of teaching. Encouraging self-reflection is at the heart of the drive to improve. However, leaders take robust action if staff performance does not meet the standards required.
 - Middle leaders are new, energetic and highly motivated. They embrace the core purpose of their role in improving teaching and are knowledgeable about the need to focus on the achievement of different groups of students. They believe that the school supports them well in holding them to account for student outcomes and say that the new progress tracking systems help them to do their job very well. Sharing of good practice across teams is effective.
 - Newly qualified teachers speak highly of the support they have received from school leaders and their mentors to develop their own professional skills.
 - School leaders and governors have a strategic overview of the impact of pupil premium funding as well as the expenditure and provision. They monitor this closely through the progress tracking system and it is increasingly effective in narrowing achievement gaps.
 - The range of subjects in the curriculum is good. It is reviewed annually, is broad and balanced and meets the needs of all students, preparing them for life in modern Britain. Enrichment subjects are also offered within the timetable in Year 9 to broaden students' outlook and experience. These are well planned and students respond positively to the opportunities. For example, in a photography session all students were engaged and enjoyed the creative experience.
 - The school is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination through its curriculum, target setting and tracking of students' progress. The range of student leadership opportunities enables students to articulate their tolerance and respect for diversity and each other.
 - Students' behaviour, attendance and progress at the alternative provision are good. The provision is carefully monitored by school leaders.
 - Students are given clear and unbiased guidance and careers information and they are well prepared for the next stage of their lives in education and employment.
 - The school has an active link with the local authority that provides effective support with quality assuring judgements about teaching and achievement.
 - Parents are increasingly supportive of the school and involved in their children's education as a result of the school's efforts to engage parents more effectively. A number of parents put themselves forward for parent governor vacancies and elections were held for the first time in several years.
 - Safeguarding procedures meet current requirements and are effective. The single central register and staff recruitment processes are a model of exemplary practice to ensure students are safe.
 - Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively promoted through the school's inclusive ethos of respect and tolerance. There is a range of artistic, sporting and cultural activities and events which support students' social and cultural development. Students have a clear understanding of right and wrong.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Governance is effective. Governors are ambitious for the school and have a clear vision of how they see the school continuing to improve and develop in the future. They receive detailed reports on school performance from senior leaders and provide very robust challenge. As a result, they know the school very well and accurately evaluate how far it has improved and what there is still to do.
 - Governors make sure that they have a direct input from students. They invite student representatives to meetings to give presentations and involve students in staff selection days.
 - Governors bring a wide range of interests and professional skills to their role. They value their own

training and make sure that members are up to date.

- Governors know about the quality of teaching and strategies to improve it, particularly where there was underperformance in the past. They are linked to key subjects and development areas, visit regularly and write feedback reports. They understand how the quality of teaching impacts on student performance and they are involved in determining salary progression from the outcomes of performance management. Staff who do not meet the requirements do not progress along the pay scale.
- The school is financially secure.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Students are very clear about the standards of behaviour expected of them and they understand and respect the behaviour systems.
- Most students are keen to learn, and behave well in lessons. There is a respectful and friendly atmosphere in classes. Students show positive attitudes to learning, which is now starting to impact on their achievement.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because, in a few lessons, a small number of students struggle to meet the expectations and so learning is occasionally disturbed. Students say this is always dealt with by staff.
- Students are smart and well presented. They are punctual to lessons and bring the right equipment so that they are well prepared for learning.
- Students' conduct around the school is good. Their movement around the school at break and lunchtime is calm and safe, and there is no litter.
- Staff work very effectively with students and families striving to improve students' attendance. As a result, attendance of vulnerable students and disadvantaged students is improving and now approaching that of the whole cohort.
- The number of fixed term exclusions for all groups of students has reduced rapidly as students' behaviour has improved. Improved attendance and behaviour are having an impact on students' achievement, including the achievement of disadvantaged students.
- There is a range of opportunities for students to develop their own leadership skills through the house system and in whole school roles. Students feel increasingly involved in determining the type of school they belong to and the student voice is now making a valuable contribution to school improvement.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Students feel safe in school. They know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.
- Bullying is rare, but students know what to do and can talk to their tutor and other staff if necessary. They are confident action will be taken. Students are very aware that racist and homophobic bullying is unacceptable. They run their own anti-bullying group to support each other when it does occur and this has raised the profile of tolerance and respect for diversity in their school.
- Students' behaviour and safety at alternative provision are good.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because leaders' actions to improve teaching have not impacted fully on students' learning.
- There is too much variation in the quality of teaching across the classes in Key Stage 3. Not all students make the progress that they should because it depends too much on what class they are in and the skills of the teacher timetabled for that class. Teaching in Key Stage 4 is stronger.
- Teachers do not always set high enough expectations of what students can achieve. There is sometimes a lack of challenge in the activities planned for students.
- This is because teachers do not consistently use information about their students' prior achievement to enable their students to learn well and make good progress. Some students find the work too easy.
- The quality of marking and assessment and feedback to students has been a priority for the school. Students understand the system of pink highlighters and different colour pens and commented on it very positively to inspectors. They say it helps them learn and take responsibility for their own work. Inspectors saw some very effective examples in written work where students had clearly made strong progress.

- However, this practice is inconsistent across the school. If students do not respond to the highlighter then teachers do not always follow up to make sure this happens. As a result, work is uncorrected and students have gaps in their learning or make the same mistakes again.
- The presentation of students' work is variable. The policy is relatively new but is not yet being implemented consistently by teachers.
- Teaching of reading, writing and communication skills is good in most subjects. All teachers aim to develop students' literacy skills, and teachers in a range of subjects correct spelling and grammar in written work.
- Teaching of mathematics is variable, but is improving. Good examples of numeracy and graph work were also seen in science books.
- Many good examples of questioning were seen. Teachers ask questions that enable students to give extended answers which deepen their understanding. For example, in a Year 10 English lesson on *To kill a Mockingbird*, the teacher modelled sophisticated vocabulary for students and asked challenging questions to probe their understanding.
- There are very good relationships in classes. Students engage well with their learning, ask questions of the teacher and work very effectively with each other. Students' positive attitudes are having an impact on their achievement.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students' achievement requires improvement. It is not yet good because rates of progress are not consistent across the key stages and for all groups of students. Students in Key Stage 3 do not make as much progress as older students.
- Achievement in English is good. In 2014, GCSE attainment in English was above the national average. For students currently in the school, students' progress in English in all year groups continues to be strong. This represents good achievement from starting points which are just below average.
- In 2014, students' attainment in mathematics was below the national average. Assessment information for Year 10 and Year 11 suggests that achievement in mathematics is improving and is now good. Observations of students' achievement in lessons and in their work support this view.
- Achievement in GCSE science is now rising rapidly from a low base. Entries for GCSE science have increased and the proportion of students achieving an A* to C pass has more than doubled. In the Year 11 additional science course, the proportion of students achieving an A* to C pass has quadrupled.
- In the year groups currently in the school, work in students' books and their progress in lessons indicate that achievement is rising, particularly in GCSE classes. However, it is not yet consistent across all year groups.
- In 2014, girls did not make as much progress as boys. However, the school has taken action and girls' achievement has improved. Scrutiny of girls' work and observation of their participation and response in lessons show that girls are now making better progress.
- The achievement of disabled students and those with special educational needs is improving. The school ensures that their needs are met with effective support and intervention. All Year 11 students in 2014 secured places to continue their education or employment.
- In 2014 the in-school and national gaps in achievement between disadvantaged students and other students widened for English and mathematics. The in-school gap and national gap for attainment in English was two thirds of a GCSE grade. In mathematics, the in-school and national gaps were just over one GCSE grade.
- In 2014, disadvantaged students at middle and low starting points in mathematics did not make enough progress. The funding has been effectively used to tackle this issue and current progress information shows that this is being addressed by the school. Disadvantaged students are now making better progress in English and mathematics. The gap between their attainment and others nationally is closing.
- The most able students achieve well. The number of A* and A grades achieved by these students continued to rise in 2014. The work of students currently in the school indicates that they are making good progress towards achieving their targets.
- Students who speak English as an additional language make good progress and achieve well.
- The school uses early entry for GCSE science, which is having a positive impact on students' achievement and motivation. It is no longer entering students early for other GCSE subjects, except in exceptional circumstances.
- Students who attend the alternative provision part time in Year 10 and Year 11 make good progress and their achievement impacts positively on their progress in school.

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	137189
Local authority	Havering
Inspection number	453656

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	874
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Brown
Headteacher	Adam Thorne
Date of previous school inspection	20–21 March 2013
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