

Rivers Academy West London

Tachbrook Road, Feltham, TW14 9PE

Inspection dates 18–19 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The executive Principal, other leaders and the governing body have extremely high expectations of both students and staff, and have continued to make substantial improvements since the last inspection.
- Students make rapid progress from very low starting points. They achieve extremely well across all year groups and in the vast majority of subjects.
- Leaders have established highly effective systems for checking and improving the quality of teaching. As a result, rapid improvements have been made and teaching is now outstanding.
- Teachers know their students well. They carefully plan lessons to ensure all students make excellent progress. They mark students' work regularly and check carefully that their comments have been acted upon. Therefore, students make outstanding progress.
- The sixth form is good. Students have high ambitions and work very hard. They feel very supported by their teachers and achieve well, particularly in vocational subjects.
- Students' behaviour is exemplary. Students are extremely polite and courteous. They work very hard in lessons and are proud of their school and achievements.
- Students are encouraged to believe that they can achieve high standards and make excellent progress. Consequently, they set themselves high aspirations. They are supported to make good choices and are, therefore, well prepared for the next stage of their lives.
- The academy has excellent systems in place to ensure the safety of all students. Students feel safe and know who to go to if they have a problem.
- Governors are extremely effective. They are very clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses, and fully support and challenge the school leaders to further improve teaching and achievement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 37 lessons across a wide range of subjects. Eight were visited jointly with a senior leader. In addition, inspectors undertook a number of short visits to lessons to check on the learning of specific groups of students.
- Inspectors studied students' books and their work in lessons. They spoke to groups of students, both informally and in a series of planned meetings. Inspectors listened to some students read.
- Inspectors met with the executive Principal, other senior and middle leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector also met with representatives of the governing body, including the Chair of Governors.
- The inspectors studied 34 questionnaires returned by staff.
- Inspectors took account of 10 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors also looked at a wide range of academy documents and other information, such as records about behaviour, attendance and progress. They scrutinised the school's procedures and records for safeguarding and child protection.

Inspection team

Deirdre Fitzpatrick, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Helen Matthews	Additional Inspector
Jim McVeigh	Additional Inspector
David Powell	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Rivers Academy West London is a slightly-larger-than-average secondary school and became part of the Aspirations Academies Trust in August 2013.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for children who are looked after and students known to be eligible for free school meals) is above average.
- The number of students who join the school at other than the usual times is above the national average.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is above average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- No students attend any off-site provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the achievement of all students in the sixth form by:
 - reducing any variation in performance between academic and vocational courses
 - creating further opportunities for the best teachers in the sixth form to share their expertise with their colleagues, so that all can learn and benefit from their experience
 - working more closely with students and parents to ensure that students entering the sixth form choose appropriate courses.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The executive Principal provides remarkable leadership. Since her appointment, she has enabled the academy to make impressive and rapid improvement. She is exceptionally well supported by outstanding senior and middle leadership teams who aspire to excellence in all that they do.
- Leaders, at all levels, have extremely high expectations for the progress and outcomes of students. The curriculum is carefully planned to ensure a regular focus on developing student aspiration. As a result, students have high ambition and are driven to succeed. This, combined with guidance to support students to make effective choices, means that students are well prepared for the next stage of their life.
- The academy's impressive and highly effective performance management processes ensure that all members of staff are supported to achieve highly. Senior and middle leaders have established effective systems to check and improve the quality of teaching. Monitoring of teachers' performance is rigorous and appropriate training is swiftly put in place, where needed. As a result, further, rapid improvements have been made in both teaching and achievement since the last inspection.
- The Aspirations Academies Trust also supports the academy to monitor the quality of teaching and achievements. This has led to further recommendations for improvements which have helped to ensure rapid progress. Staff are encouraged to share best practice across the full range of schools in the trust. Consequently, they learn from each other and understand the needs of those students arriving from the trust's primary schools.
- Staff value the exceptional training opportunities provided to them by the school. Staff regularly attend courses run in school to improve teaching and learning, and are involved in mentoring and coaching programmes. Training is carefully matched to meet teachers' needs, and there is an expectation that staff at all levels will be involved in delivering training. As a result, rapid improvements have been made in delivering consistently high quality teaching within the school since the last inspection.
- The academy offers a wide and varied curriculum and strives to ensure that all students are given equality of opportunity. Students are encouraged to participate in both academic and vocational subjects and supported to make effective choices at the start of their GCSE courses. They are offered a wide range of extra-curricular activities including sporting, musical and subject-related clubs such as science.
- The academy prepares students well for life in modern Britain. They are given plenty of opportunities to understand and reflect on moral dilemmas and fundamental British values. 'Deep Learning' days throughout the year encourage students to reflect on a range of issues, including prejudice and radicalisation. A carefully planned programme of social, moral, spiritual and cultural education supports this. Leaders do not tolerate any form of discrimination and work tirelessly to foster good relations in the academy, with parents, and in the local community.
- The whole school focus on improving students' literacy enables students with levels of literacy on entry that are low for their age make exceptional progress.
- The school has rigorous systems in place to ensure that safeguarding and child protection arrangements meet statutory requirements. Staff are highly trained, and the academy environment is a secure place where students regularly comment on how safe they feel.
- Pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding are used extremely effectively to ensure the rapid progress of disadvantaged students. Their progress is carefully monitored, and they quickly catch up with other students at the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is extremely effective. It is clear that governors hold the same high ambitions for the school as the senior leadership team. They are fully aware of the academy's strengths and weaknesses and make use of regular opportunities to discuss this with senior leaders.
 - The strong support and incisive challenge offered by the governors are clearly evident in their minutes. They challenge the senior leadership for clear evidence of progress and improvements in teaching, and regularly visit the school to see for themselves how teaching is developing
 - The governing body scrutinises the academy's finances and makes sure that additional funding, in particular, is used to raise standards. The governors monitor performance management to ensure that teachers' salary progression is related to students' achievement. They fully support senior leaders on those few occasions when they have to deal with any shortcomings in performance.
 - Governors fulfil their safeguarding duties extremely well and ensure that all policies, including those on equalities and discrimination, are kept up to date and adhered to.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. They are polite and courteous at all times, whether that be in lessons or during breaks. They are very clear about the academy's expectations around their behaviour, for example lining up for lunch or moving about between lessons. They keenly show visitors around and are very eager to talk about the rapid improvements at the academy over the last few years.
- Students take pride in their appearance and in the school environment. They dress smartly in their school uniform, or in business attire in the case of sixth formers. The inspectors saw no evidence of litter or graffiti, either inside or outside the school buildings.
- Their sense of pride is also evident in the neatness of work in books. Students are punctual and come well equipped to lessons, enabling lessons to begin quickly and on time.
- In lessons, students engage in their learning exceptionally well. They are keen to participate, often asking questions of the teacher in order to further their understanding. They work confidently and respectfully, whether alone, in pairs or small groups, and are often eager to support others to improve.
- In the responses to the staff survey, 100% of staff agreed that behaviour was managed well by the school.
- Students who have the potential to display poor behaviour are identified early. They are assigned well-trained mentors, and a range of strategies is employed to help them modify their behaviour. Consequently, they are quick to re-engage in their learning, in line with the academy's high expectations.
- There has been a marked reduction in the number of fixed-term exclusions for poor behaviour. The academy's tracking information shows that the proportion of students who receive internal exclusions for poor behaviour has reduced rapidly.
- Leaders work very hard to integrate new students who join the academy part way through their secondary education. Some students arrive from other schools and academies and find it initially difficult to adhere to the very high standards of attire and behaviour required by the academy staff. The academy is successful in helping these students transform their attitudes and behaviour. As a result, they are able to adapt their behaviour to meet the academy's high expectations.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Students are fully aware of the different forms of bullying including cyber bullying, racist, homophobic and prejudice-based bullying. They say that very little bullying occurs at the school and they are clear who to go to should it happen. School records show that there are very effective processes in place to prevent bullying, and any such occurrences are very firmly tackled.
- Students told inspectors that they feel safe in the school and are highly aware of how to keep themselves safe. They talked knowledgeably about internet safety.
- Arrangements around child protection and safeguarding are of the highest standards. The staff are extremely well trained and all safeguarding procedures are fully in place.
- The school has put in place very effective procedures to ensure rapid improvement in attendance for the very small number of students who are persistently absent. Very clear processes, rigidly adhered to, check the welfare of vulnerable pupils if absent, including visits to the family home and liaising with external agencies.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The outstanding quality of teaching is clearly demonstrated by the rapid progress made by nearly all students, in all year groups, and across a wide range of subjects. The improvement of teaching and raising of achievement is the key priority within the school. Senior leaders have made a number of significant changes since the last inspection to significantly improve teaching. This includes the appointment of new senior and middle leaders and a highly effective system of assessing how well students are learning.
- Teachers have extremely high expectations of their students. Skilled questioning challenges all students to think deeply and develop their understanding. This was evident across all ability ranges and in most subjects. In one drama lesson, for example, students were challenged to reflect on their own learning. They showed they could talk with confidence about how they had progressed from a previous lesson. Students could identify how the task was a challenging one based on their previous performance and

they thoroughly relished the challenge given to them.

- A highly effective system of marking is used consistently across the school to help ensure accelerated progress. Regular written assessment of student work in books provides clear feedback to the student on what they have done well and sets clear targets for improvement. Students respond well to opportunities to improve their work and teachers are rigorous in following up any work which has not been improved properly.
- Teachers know their students very well. Class records indicate the learning needs of students and note strategies to encourage engagement and promote learning. This is reinforced by provision of comprehensive information and proposed strategies to support specific learning needs. As a result, lessons are planned to ensure that all students make the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders carry out regular and rigorous monitoring of learning. The senior leadership team carries out thorough analysis of student progress information and organises effective and timely initiatives to be put in place to ensure rapid progress. Appropriate training has been provided, with the result that teaching has improved significantly over time. Nearly all departments are developing rapidly.
- The teaching of reading, writing and communication is highly effective. Extensive and well-led initiatives have had a direct impact on raising teachers' expectations and improving literacy levels. Recent training to support the use of language, such as using conversation to aid writing, has proved successful, particularly for students who might find learning difficult, or whose first language is not English. They become confident speakers and appropriately show their understanding of ideas when talking them through.
- The inspectors observed students making good and outstanding progress in a range of mathematics lessons. Scrutiny of workbooks shows that students respond very well to the very good and timely support they are given.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students at Rivers Academy make outstanding progress. From starting points that are significantly below those typical for their age, the proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, is above average. Students' current performance, particularly in English and mathematics, has risen further and information based on their current performance indicates above-average results in 2015.
- In 2014, students exceeded national progress expectations in English and mathematics, with those in English making more than expected progress compared to the national average.
- Mid-year assessments show that this rapid progress is continuing, with progress in English and mathematics again set to exceed the national averages. While mathematics results have been above the national average for the last two years, dramatic improvements this year show that it is likely to significantly exceed the national average. As a result of the outstanding progress in English and mathematics, students are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The majority of students attain at least in line with, if not higher than, national averages. The attainment of some students with special educational needs was lower than their peer group nationally. However, internal data and work in books show that the gap is rapidly closing for this group of students.
- Disadvantaged students do exceptionally well. Attainment on entry is lower than that found typically for their age, but the school is quick to put in place early interventions, such as one-to-one phonics (letters and the sounds they make) programmes. Their attainment in 2014 shows significant improvement over time. The proportion attaining five or more GCSE A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, now compares favourably with all students nationally. In English, there is a third of a grade difference between this group and other students in the academy, and a quarter of a grade difference between them and all students nationally. In mathematics, the gap is slightly larger, half a grade between these students and others at the academy, and just over half a grade compared to other students nationally. Current indications are that there will be no gaps in attainment this year.
- In 2014, a very small number of the most able did not make the progress expected of them. As a result, the school robustly reviewed provision for this group and has put in place a comprehensive and challenging support programme, which indicates that this group will make the same outstanding progress this year as their peers.
- All groups in the school make greater progress than their peers nationally, with the majority making significantly greater progress throughout year groups and across subjects.
- Reading is taught very effectively and good quality reading was observed across a number of subjects. Those coming in with low reading levels are placed on intervention programmes that have resulted in

rapid progress. Last year all students on the intervention programmes were able to make three years progress in one year. The recent addition of the well-stocked new library and full-time librarian has further raised the profile of reading. The academy runs a significant number of enrichment events to encourage reading for pleasure, and regular opportunities throughout the week for everyone in the school community to 'drop everything and read' are proving highly popular and successful.

- The academy entered all students for mathematics GCSE early and a smaller number for English GCSE. This had limited impact on their overall results.

The sixth form provision

is good

- The inclusive, and growing, sixth form is good. It is well led and has a clear vision to create a sixth form that aspires to academic excellence and high achievement. It offers a wide range of academic and vocational qualifications, including A-level and BTEC courses. Students who enter without a grade C in English and/or mathematics are given opportunities to resit the qualification. A number of students successfully undertake an independent Extended Project qualification, in preparation for university.
- Students work very hard and are well supported by knowledgeable teachers. They are set high targets and aspire to achieve them. Provision in the sixth form is not yet outstanding, however. Attainment in some of the academic subjects, particularly at A level, has been below national averages.
- Academic mentoring, close tracking of students and high quality teaching have led to students making better progress, particularly in vocational subjects. As a result, students currently in Year 12, who are the last group to have been taught in the predecessor school, look set to achieve very well in their AS and subsequent A-level qualifications. Progress and attainment in a range of vocational courses are very good and look set to continue.
- Leaders know that they have had to play 'catch-up' for those students who underachieved before the school became an academy, and this has had an impact on their results, particularly in some subject areas. As a result, a great deal of focus is put on supporting students, often from very average starting points, to excel. The students benefit from a high number of timetabled lessons with staff who are specialists in their field, as well as one-to-one sessions provided for those who need further support or guidance.
- School leaders, through the Aspirations Academies Trust, have sought out links with a huge range of businesses, entrepreneurs and inspirational leaders. External visits, speakers and work experience are organised for the students, to broaden their understanding of the opportunities available to them. They are inspired to succeed in their academic studies and be prepared for the world of work. Students were keen to share with inspectors the wide range of opportunities open to them, including enrichment visits, internships, Safe Drive Stay Alive programmes, university visits and summer schools. Some were successful in being chosen to attend a youth conference at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in Houston.
- School leaders are keen for students to aspire to some of the most competitive university places. Over recent years a rapidly growing number of students have been successful in their applications for a wide range of universities and courses.
- Students dress extremely smartly, are punctual and work very hard. They are mature, articulate and polite, and courteous to each other and staff. They work well with younger students, undertaking a range of activities, including mentoring. They are well supported by staff through the academic mentoring programme, and all of those spoken to felt safe and well cared for.
- The academy works hard to provide students with a wide range of information, support and guidance when choosing sixth form courses. The sixth form is very inclusive and encourages students to stay at the school, and works hard to recruit from other schools. However, at times, some students have attempted courses that they are not academically able to achieve well in. School leaders are continuing to work with parents and students to ensure that appropriate courses are chosen.

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	137009
Local authority	Hounslow
Inspection number	461683

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	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1100
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	168
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Pink
Executive Headteacher	Paula Kenning
Date of previous school inspection	23 – 24 May 2012
Telephone number	02088900245
Fax number	02088442441
Email address	general@atrivers.org

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