

Alec Reed Academy

Bengarth Road, Northolt, UB5 5LQ

Inspection dates 23–24 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires Improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The Principal, together with other leaders, has secured rapid improvement across the academy so that its effectiveness is now good.
- Leaders have high expectations. They have effectively tackled weaknesses in teaching, providing training that helps teachers to improve their skills.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get a good start to their education and achieve well.
- Pupils' achievement is good and improving. They are taught well through the school and now make good progress in different subjects, including English and mathematics.
- The sixth form has improved and most students achieve the qualifications they need to go on to university or into employment.
- Systems to check progress are detailed and thorough. Teachers use this information carefully to plan effective lessons that meet individual as well as class needs.
- The gaps between the achievement of different groups of pupils are closing. Pupils supported by the pupil premium funding or who speak English as an additional language make progress at a similar rate to other pupils.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and they behave well in lessons and around the school. Attendance is above the national average.
- The academy works successfully to keep pupils safe and to help them learn how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is very well developed in most aspects. They are keen to take part in a wide range of enrichment activities.
- The governing body is well informed about the school's performance. Governors both support leaders and challenge them to make sure that the academy continues to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding. Teaching does not always encourage pupils to think more deeply about their learning. Pupils' responses to the guidance they receive about improving their work are inconsistent.
- The outdoor area in the early years is not used as effectively as it could be to support learning.
- Students' results at A level, though improving, do not yet match those obtained in vocational subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors collected evidence on teaching and learning by observing lessons in all phases of the school and in all year groups from the Nursery to Year 13. They looked at work and talked to pupils about it to assess their understanding and attitudes to learning.
- The inspectors held meetings with the Principal and members of the leadership team, middle leaders, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority who advises the primary phase of the academy, staff and several groups of pupils and students in the sixth form.
- Inspectors took account of the 29 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the data from the school's own surveys of parental opinion.
- The inspectors looked at the academy's development plan, its self-evaluation, data on attainment and progress, records of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching, records of behaviour, a wide range of policies and procedures, and the arrangements for safeguarding.
- Inspectors attended assemblies, tutor periods and listened to pupils read.

Inspection team

Grace Marriott, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Stephen Box

Additional inspector

Michael Elson

Additional inspector

David Guttman

Additional inspector

Noureddin Khassal

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is larger than the average-sized school. It is an all-through school where children can start in the Nursery aged three and stay there until they leave from Year 13 aged 18. A few Nursery children attend full time but the vast majority attend part time. The primary phase has three classes in each year group and this expands to six classes in the secondary school. Some students join the academy each year for their sixth form studies.
- The proportion of pupils who join the academy at times other than the usual starting point each year is higher than in most schools.
- The academy is sponsored by Sir Alec Reed and The Reed Foundation.
- This is a very diverse school community where three quarters of the pupils come from Black and minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The academy shares a site with the John Chilton Special School, which is a local authority provision for children with physical disabilities. It was not part of this inspection.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the academy receives the pupil premium is above average. This is additional government funding for pupils in the care of the local authority or those eligible for free school meals.
- The academy does not use any alternative provision.
- There have been a number of changes at a senior level. The Interim Principal, in post at the time of the previous inspection, left at the end of the summer term 2013. A second Interim Principal took over until April 2014 when the current Principal took up his post. Assistant Principals with specific responsibilities for English and mathematics were appointed when the new leadership team was created in September 2014.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress of pupils in the different phases.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise teaching from good to outstanding throughout the school by ensuring that:
 - teachers' questioning encourages pupils to think and respond in greater depth orally and, for older pupils, in their written work as well
 - pupils consistently act on the guidance they have about how to improve their work.
- Develop the use of the outdoor area in the early years provision so that it more effectively supports children's learning.
- Raise students' attainment further in A-level subjects to match results in vocational subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal provides outstanding leadership for the academy with the result that the leadership team, supported by the staff, have changed the ethos of the academy to one where high expectations are now the norm.
- The headteacher of the primary phase provides excellent leadership of this part of the school. She leads a strong team who create a calm and purposeful environment where the youngest pupils achieve well.
- The impact of improved leadership and management is evident across the academy and sets the scene for higher standards and better teaching.
- Leaders analysed carefully the reasons for the drop in results in 2013. They were prepared to take difficult decisions to ensure that this was a blip and not the start of a trend. Results in 2014 improved and the evidence from current pupils' work is that they are well on track for further improvement this year.
- The additional funding received for disadvantaged pupils through the pupil premium is well managed. Pupils' needs are carefully analysed and support put in place to help them overcome any difficulties they may have. The impact of the support is carefully monitored and adjusted as necessary. As a result, the gaps in achievement between these pupils and their peer group are closing.
- The middle leaders, whether of subjects or of age groups, have a clear focus on creating the conditions in which pupils can achieve to the best of their ability. However, many of the systems that have been introduced have not had time to become fully embedded and show a long-term impact.
- Leaders thoroughly check the quality of teaching in the academy through observing lessons, reviewing the quality of pupils' work, and checking teachers' assessments.
- The academy provides staff with good training. A range of programmes and individual support, where necessary, are helping improve the quality of teaching. Teachers throughout the school are set targets and know that they are accountable for the progress of their pupils.
- The inspection team agrees with the views of pupils that the academy is a safe place to work. All statutory requirements and arrangements for safeguarding are met and regular staff training helps to ensure that everybody understands their responsibilities. Staff do not accept any type of discrimination.
- Few parents completed the Parent View questionnaire but the school's own surveys of parents show that they are very supportive of the academy and have no significant concerns.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs at nearly all levels and provides well for equality of opportunity. Basic skills activities are planned well in the primary phase of the academy, particularly phonics (the sounds letters and combinations of letters make). Outdoor activities are not as effectively planned in early years provision as they could be because the outdoor areas lack some facilities.
- In Years 7 to 13, in addition to English and mathematics, an appropriate range of academic and vocational subjects are planned well. Pupils enjoy a very wide variety of enrichment activities, in both the primary and senior parts of the school, particularly in sports, art and the performing arts.
- The academy prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education, whether this is moving from the primary to the secondary phase or moving on from the sixth form. Careers education helps them to make sensible choices and staff work hard to raise pupils' aspirations.
- The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well developed. In preparation for life in modern Britain, pupils learn about the importance of democracy, the rule of law and how to be good citizens. They learn to understand and respect other people's values.
- The school uses the primary physical education and sport funding well to increase the opportunities for pupils to take part in sport, improve the facilities and equipment available, and provide training for teachers to improve their skills.
- The academy has recently renewed its relationship with the local authority. It is providing useful support by checking the accuracy of school judgements.
- **The governance of the academy:**
 - The governing body uses its expertise and experience very effectively to hold senior leaders accountable for how well the academy is performing compared to others. It is knowledgeable about the academy's priorities and has high expectations for improvement. The support of the academy sponsor, through the work of the governing body, is promoting higher standards in all areas of the academy's work.
 - Governors know about the quality of teaching and where it has been, and still could be, improved. They make sure that the pay policy is linked to teachers' performance. They analyse information

about pupils' achievement very carefully, including the achievement of pupils supported by pupil premium funding. Governors have supported the school leadership in taking appropriate and robust action to deal with underperformance, whether in teaching or achievement. Governors carry out all their legal responsibilities, including ensuring the safety of the staff and pupils in the academy.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave well in lessons and around the academy, and are polite and friendly towards visitors.
- Pupils are particularly proud of their school and appreciate all that it offers them. They have good attitudes to learning and keep the school clean and litter-free.
- Much of the behaviour in the primary phase is outstanding. In the secondary phase, it is good; behaviour improves as pupils who join the academy in Year 7 learn what is expected of them.
- Behaviour is well managed and staff deal with issues very quickly. Occasionally, there is some low-level disruption, mainly when pupils lose interest in what they are doing. In general, pupils know that any misbehaviour will not be allowed to disrupt the education of others.
- Relationships at all levels are good. During discussions with inspectors, pupils were very positive about what the staff were doing to help them. Older pupils and sixth form students commented on how much the academy has improved in recent years.
- Pupils willingly take on responsibilities, for example as playground lunch leaders in Years 5 and 6 or as sixth form students helping younger children with their reading.
- Staff work closely with parents and different agencies to ensure that pupils receive specialist help, should they need it.
- The academy is rigorous in its approach to managing attendance and staff follow up absence very quickly. As a result, attendance is above the national average.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because some pupils are still too dependent on responding to adults' expectations rather than taking responsibility themselves for their own behaviour.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe is good.
- Records of behaviour incidents show that bullying is relatively rare. Discussions with pupils showed that they know that bullying and racist behaviour are never acceptable and believe they would be quickly dealt with.
- Pupils know about the dangers of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and the work they do on these topics helps them to learn how to stay safe outside school.
- Regular checks, risk assessments and careful supervision mean that pupils are safe. The premises are secure and the pupils are well supervised. They say that the staff visibility around the site helps them to feel safe.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers' expectations for behaviour and attitudes to learning are high and pupils respond well. This is as evident with the younger pupils, who talk enthusiastically about the books they are reading, as it is with older pupils working in some depth on sensitive issues such as The Holocaust.
- Teaching in all phases of the school ensures that work is planned to build on what pupils have already achieved. During lessons, staff question them carefully to check understanding and adjust their approach to take account of the responses. The best teaching also encourages pupils to develop their ideas in greater depth, but this is not consistently the picture in all classes.
- Teachers and teaching assistants, known in the academy as Curriculum and Learning Access Student Support (CLASS) workers, work well together to ensure that pupils' needs are met. CLASS workers know the pupils well and use their initiative to support individuals and groups. They also provide teachers with useful information on how well their pupils are progressing.
- The introduction of the academy marking policy has had a positive impact on pupils' achievement.

Teachers mark work regularly, provide pupils with good guidance and generally give them time to act on the advice. Though many respond positively, not all pupils take enough notice of the advice given and do not make progress as quickly. Sometimes, the presentation of work is untidy.

- The greater focus on the teaching of reading has helped to raise standards. Phonics teaching and guided reading sessions in the primary school give pupils a secure foundation in reading. Across the academy, teachers make sure that work in different subjects gives pupils many opportunities for practising their reading and writing skills in different contexts. This was evident in work and subjects areas as different as mathematics and religious education.
- From the earliest time in school, effective mathematics teaching and regular opportunities to use and apply mathematical skills give pupils a secure understanding of different aspects of the subject.
- Teachers, together with senior leaders, check pupils' progress regularly and thoroughly. Where they are identified as being at risk of falling behind others, individually planned support helps them to catch up. As a result, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs take part fully in lessons and make good progress, as do pupils eligible for support from additional funding. Those with English as an additional language also achieve well as the school ensures the support they have is at the right level.
- Attractive and interesting displays of work in classrooms and around the building help to raise aspirations by showing pupils what they could achieve.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Over the time that pupils attend the academy, they develop into mature young people who are well prepared for the next stage of their lives. Regardless of their backgrounds or beliefs, most of them leave with the qualifications they need to gain a place on an appropriate course at college or university, or go on to an apprenticeship or employment. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- In the early years, many more children achieve a good level of development in all areas of learning than previously. In the primary phase, the outcomes of the Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 tests also improved in 2014 compared with 2013; they were broadly in line with the national picture in writing and mathematics, though still with a relative weaknesses in reading.
- In 2014, results in Year 11 improved when compared with the previous year and the proportion of pupils achieving five good GCSE passes, including English and mathematics, was in line with the national average. Pupils achieved their best results in business education, health and social care, modern foreign languages, music, religious studies, performing arts subjects and sports studies. The academy does not normally use early entry to GCSE.
- Results at A level have improved. They are now in line with the national results in terms of the overall pass rate, but students do not achieve as many higher grades. Results in vocational courses were better than the A-level results and were above the national average.
- Checks on pupils' current progress shows that pupils in Year 2, Year 6 and Year 11 are on track to achieve considerably better results in national tests and GCSE examinations this term. The strong and systematic focus on improving teaching is resulting in more rapid progress and better achievement. This applies to all groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs. Pupils who speak English as an additional language often make better progress and achieve more highly than other groups.
- The most-able pupils have not always achieved as well as their peer group nationally. For example, some pupils who had achieved the higher levels at the end of Year 6 did not do as well as expected in their GCSE examinations. School-based information indicates that their progress is now improving.
- In the primary phase, the greater emphasis on the teaching of reading is increasing the rate of pupils' progress and raising standards. Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are competent and confident readers who enjoy reading a wide variety of books. Similarly, a greater emphasis on giving secondary-age pupils opportunities to use their literacy skills across the curriculum is having a positive impact on their progress and achievement.
- Daily checks on behaviour and attendance, and the weekly pupils' progress meetings at a senior level, ensure that pupils at risk of underperforming are identified and supported quickly.
- In Year 6, the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peer group has closed in mathematics, reading and writing. In 2014, disadvantaged pupils in Year 11 achieved just under a grade less than their classmates in English and mathematics at GCSE. The gap between them and other pupils in the school and nationally was smaller than in 2013.

The early years provision is good

- Achievement in the early years is good. Children join the Nursery or Reception classes with knowledge, skills and understanding which are mostly below, and sometimes well below, those typical for their age.
- In 2014, the proportion of Reception children reaching both the expected levels and a good level of development across the different areas of learning was almost identical with the national picture. This was better than the previous year and children's work in the current Reception class shows that they are on track to do even better this year.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes enjoy learning. In the Nursery, children developed good language and number skills as they managed a 'garden centre' in which they were also learning to look after real plants. In Reception, a circus theme gave children scope for activities, such as selling tickets for the performance, as well as imaginative writing and a wide variety of physical activities linked to the theme.
- Leadership and management are good. The early years leader is very well supported by the headteacher and deputy headteacher of the primary school. They have worked closely with staff to improve the quality of teaching and children's achievement.
- Teaching is typically good. Planning which takes account of what the children have already achieved means that the activities are suitably challenging for the children as well as being enjoyable. The introduction of the 'learning journeys' helps staff to record important evidence of progress and keep parents well informed about their children's progress and achievement.
- Children have many opportunities to develop good social skills in a welcoming and safe environment. They behave well. Children learn to follow instructions from staff and are generally able to concentrate on activities, happily sharing toys and other equipment. The work and attitudes of the pupils in Key Stage 1 show that they were well prepared for the move to more formal education.
- Staff have worked hard to provide interesting indoor and outdoor areas that encourage children to find learning exciting. The outdoor areas are more limited in scope, for example the Reception area has no fixed climbing equipment and limited space for children to use their wheeled toys and other resources. Staff recognise that there is still more needed for both Nursery and Reception outdoor areas to create an outstanding environment for learning.

The sixth form provision is good

- The sixth form has improved since the last inspection and it is now good. The well-led sixth form staff team have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for further improvement to become outstanding.
- Achievement is above average for vocational subjects. It has improved in AS and A levels, and is now close to the national average, though students do not achieve as many higher grades as their peer group nationally.
- The variation between subjects has been reduced but not eliminated. Retention rates are good and the majority of students successfully complete study programmes that are right for their abilities and interests. Their progress against challenging targets is reviewed effectively six times a year and reported to parents.
- Disadvantaged students achieve more highly than the average due to the high levels of support they receive.
- The range of sixth form study programmes is increasing and many participate in a wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities. Students provide caring community service to younger pupils, for example helping them to read. Students have the opportunity to retake GCSE mathematics and English if they need to, which helps more of them to move on to the careers of their choice.
- Well-focused careers guidance helps students move on to employment, and higher or further education. Students are encouraged to be ambitious in their choices, and most are.
- Students receive good personal support and as with younger pupils, appreciate how much the staff do to help them stay safe outside the academy.
- Teaching is good and relationships between teachers and students are excellent. This encourages students to behave well and have very positive attitudes to learning. They willingly take responsibility for their progress. Students receive regular and detailed feedback on their progress. Their work is constructively marked and students in this part of the school are better at acting on the advice staff provide.

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	134369
Local authority	Ealing
Inspection number	440250

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,420
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lawrence Carter
Principal	Gary Lobbett
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 April 2013
Telephone number	020 8841 4511
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