

The Boulevard Academy

Massey Close, Kingston-upon-Hull, HU3 3QT

Inspection dates 13-14 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	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 staff, led by the principal, have the highest aspirations for the success of their students.
- Students are making rapid progress from their starting points as a result of high quality teaching over time and a strong drive for success from teachers and students themselves.
- The unrelenting focus on literacy and numeracy in the curriculum is a powerful force for improvement. Consequently attainment in English and mathematics is improving strongly. Most students are exceeding the standards expected for their age.
- Students' learning needs are met well, supported by small class sizes and additional adults in all lessons.
- Extra classes stretch the most able students, some of whom are already working at GCSE level. Students are proud to be identified as gifted and talented and enjoy the challenge provided.
- Extremely positive relationships between staff and students result in an ethos of respect which underpins the exemplary behaviour seen around the academy.
- Students and staff are justifiably proud of the academy.
- Senior and middle leaders have a relentless focus on improving the quality of teaching and raising achievement even further.
- Excellent procedures are in place to make sure students are safe in the academy.
- The extended academy day and the Saturday school provide very valuable opportunities for students to deepen their understanding of their work or engage in a range of extracurricular activities.
- The member board and the governing body have a detailed understanding of the academy's work and share the high expectations of staff and students. They hold leaders to account effectively and have ensured good financial management.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 parts of lessons, including 9 jointly with academy leaders. Brief visits were made to observe the activities in the last lesson of the academy day.
- Meetings were held with the Principal and other academy leaders, staff, students, the Chair of the Member Board and the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors spoke to students informally at break and lunchtime.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documents provided by the academy, including the academy's self-evaluation; the improvement plan; safeguarding documents, including those relating to behaviour and attendance; students' progress data; and the minutes of the member board and the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of 15 responses to the staff questionnaire, 16 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire and the academy's own parent questionnaire.

Inspection team

Helen Lane, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Anne McAvan

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Boulevard Academy opened as a free school in September 2013. At the time of this inspection only Year 7 and Year 8 were on roll. The academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school and will continue to be so when all year groups are full.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students (those supported by the pupil premium) is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups and who have English as an additional language are higher than the national average.
- No students are educated off site.
- The class sizes in the academy are smaller than those typically seen in secondary schools.
- The academy day is longer than the average school day and students attend the academy one Saturday morning of each month. The summer holiday is two weeks shorter than the average.
- There are currently 14 teaching staff in the academy. The academy uses teachers from St Mary's College in Hull to teach Spanish and music.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the curriculum develops as the academy grows to prepare students fully to reach their potential and achieve highly in all subjects at Key Stage 4 and beyond.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The Principal and the member board have an ambitious vision for every student to achieve academic success, whatever their background and their prior attainment when they enter the academy. This ethos of high expectations permeates all aspects of life in the academy. Staff say the Principal is a role model for the expectations in the academy. They describe him as 'the heartbeat' of the academy. Staff and parents are highly positive about the leadership in the academy.
- Teachers taking on middle leadership responsibilities are largely inexperienced in their roles. Despite this, they are leading effectively in both academic and pastoral areas as a result of support from the Principal and each other, as well as external training. One of the middle leaders will take up the role of assistant principal in September 2015, developing leadership at senior level further.
- The new leader for teaching has a very good understanding of the quality of teaching across the academy. Teachers have completed audits identifying their strengths and areas for development. As a result, the leader for teaching is able to link colleagues to share their good practice. There are regular opportunities for colleagues to observe each other teaching and to discuss their work. The impact of this is good or outstanding teaching across the academy and good acquisition of subject knowledge by teachers who are not specialists in a particular subject. Staff speak very highly of this collegiate approach to developing their skills. A programme of whole staff training prepares staff to understand academy policies, including the child protection policy.
- Performance management targets which reflect the emphasis on the outstanding progress of students are set for teachers. The performance management, including that of the Principal, is overseen by the Chair of the Member Board and the Chair of Governors. As a result of the excellent progress seen in the academy, all teachers who were eligible moved up the pay scale last year.
- Assessment in the academy is based on regular standardised testing. All students are assessed in English and mathematics on entry to the academy to provide a baseline. Challenging targets are set and progress is tracked carefully against this baseline. Although this process is rigorous, academy leaders recognise the need to include the information about students' starting points in their tracking processes.
- Pupil premium funding is used very effectively to contribute to the high numbers of good quality staff. This results in small class sizes and provides two members of staff in each lesson. This high staffing ratio is contributing well to the accelerated progress disadvantaged students are making.
- The academy has used the freedoms available to them as a free school to plan their curriculum. The curriculum is designed to be strongly focused on literacy and numeracy in Year 7 in order to prepare the students for the next stage in their school life. Progress in literacy and numeracy is tracked and reported to parents in Year 7. In Year 8 this tracking and reporting are extended to subjects required for the English Baccalaureate (EBacc), namely science, humanities and modern foreign languages. Movement to the next level of education is dependent on a student's stage in acquiring knowledge and understanding, rather than their age. The Principal's aspirational expectation is that all students attending the academy will attain five or more A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, at GCSE level. Some students will sit these examinations when they are ready, rather than waiting until the end of Year 11. Others may need to wait longer to start their GCSE courses. The academy is developing its curriculum to ensure that students can move from Key Stage 3 to 4 and fulfil their potential.
- The assembly programme, the 'learning for life' curriculum and extra-curricular activities make a strong contribution to the social, moral, spiritual and cultural learning of the students and the development of fundamental British values. Despite a year group of 40 students in Year 7 last year, the academy was able to attend all of the local sporting events with a full team. This reflects the high level of commitment of students and their pride in their academy. The students show a sophisticated understanding of their differences, including cultural and religious differences, and talk maturely about their respect and tolerance for each other. Students have opportunities to lead as buddies and as members of the academy council. Academy councillors are elected as a result of a democratic process.
- The high expectations for students' progress and behaviour, and the ethos in the academy that everyone will succeed, no matter what, mean that equality of opportunity is promoted highly effectively. Students spoken to clearly understand that discrimination is unacceptable and that good relations between those of different cultures and faiths are important. Students have high aspirations for their future. One Year 7 student explained the importance of his success with his learning for his future career. Assemblies include subjects such as 'aspirations and choices', 'team work skills' and 'resilience'. Students have been involved in enterprise activities, such as 'Dragon's Den'. The culture of success means students are well prepared to make informed choices about their next steps.
- There are exceptionally good relationships between the academy and families. Parents understand the

expectation that they will be fully involved in their child's education, including attendance at parents' evenings. All of the parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire would recommend the academy to another parent.

- The academy meets the statutory requirements for safeguarding. The arrangements for recruitment and checking of new staff are rigorous. There are very thorough safeguarding procedures to ensure that students are safe, both inside the academy and on educational visits. Health and safety policies are in place and are monitored regularly. Regular checks are carried out on site security.
- The Principal and the governing body receive external support from a school improvement partner. The school improvement partner checks on the work of the academy and is helping the governing body enhance their skills.

■ The governance of the school:

- Both the member board and the governing body contribute well to the governance of the academy. The Chair of the Member Board and the Chair of the Governing Body are experienced educational professionals. The member board provides rigorous challenge, both to the governing body and the Principal.
- The Chair of the Member Board meets the principal regularly to review the progress of students and the quality of teaching. She undertakes learning walks and speaks to students. As a result, she has a detailed understanding of the progress of students at different points since the academy opened, including disadvantaged students and the positive impact of pupil premium spending.
- The members of the governing body have been selected to provide a range of skills and, although not educational professionals, they are developing their effectiveness quickly in holding the Principal to account as a result of effective training from the school improvement partner.
- The member board sets the budget and has ensured financial sustainability, despite the need to grow student numbers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. Students' behaviour around the academy is exemplary. Staff and parents are unanimously positive about behaviour. Staff apply the behaviour policy consistently and as a result students understand and respond to the high expectations which pervade the academy.
- Students are polite to each other, staff and visitors. They work together very well. A strong feature of these positive relationships is the way students help each other to understand their work in lessons. There is an ethos of mutual respect and friendship.
- Students wear their uniform with pride. They respect the academy environment and are well prepared with the correct equipment for lessons.
- In lessons students work hard, have good attitudes to learning and are starting to develop a thirst for learning. Low-level disruption is very unusual during lessons.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding.
- The academy is highly pro-active in its work with vulnerable students and engages other agencies to provide good support.
- Students say they feel safe and there is no bullying or name-calling, but if any problems do arise they are confident an adult would help them. Students have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including racist and homophobic bullying. All the parents who responded to Parent View believe their child feels safe and is looked after well at the academy. Students are provided with a lap top computer and they understand the importance of keeping safe on line, following e-safety training.
- Attendance is high and students are punctual to the academy and to lessons.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Over time, high quality teaching has resulted in rapid progress for students. Staff spoken to said the strong team ethos for sharing good practice is resulting in an increasing proportion of outstanding teaching.
- Teachers teach a range of subjects. Despite this, subject knowledge was a strength in the lessons

observed. Thorough and frequent assessments mean teachers understand the ability of each student in their class. Learning is planned carefully so it focuses on the development of knowledge and understanding of individual students. Levels of success criteria provided in every lesson ensure that students know which activities to undertake to address their learning needs and can explain why they are doing particular work and what they need to do to improve.

- In all lessons there is at least one additional adult, many of whom are teachers. Support and challenge is readily available for students in lessons. Help is provided for those who need it and the most able students are moved on quickly in their learning. For example, in a Year 7 mathematics lesson about algebra, the class was divided into three groups. One group was receiving teaching from the class teacher to improve their understanding; one group was working independently; and a small group was provided with intensive support from another teacher to help them take the next steps with their learning. As each of them understood the next steps, they moved on to the independent learning task. Consequently, the students made accelerated progress.
- Regular high quality marking is an expectation in the academy. Marking is often detailed and very often feedback requires students to respond in a way that helps their progress and enhances their literacy or numeracy skills. Occasionally, students are not responding to the feedback.
- The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is an outstanding feature of the work in the academy. Students read at least once, and sometimes more often, every day. The love of reading and interest in books is promoted very well. In Year 7, the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills is a focus in the majority of lessons. This was evidenced well in science lessons observed during the inspection. As a result, accelerated progress is made in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching assistants contribute to the learning of individuals and groups very effectively by asking clear questions which encourage students to think and work things out for themselves.
- Effective use is made of the last lesson of the day in reinforcing and extending students' learning. During the inspection Year 8 students were designing an 'app' for their mobile phones; others were part of a gardening activity which was planned to extend the science learning of students with different abilities. For example, the most able were explaining why a greenhouse helps plants to grow more quickly as a result of enzyme activity. Year 7 students were engaged in a range of activities with good support from teachers, including reading, taking tests on what they had read, completing work and doing work to extend their understanding of English and mathematics. Others were enjoying opportunities to complete art work, play the guitar and engage in drama. The academy chooses to use this study period rather than provide homework.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- From their starting points Year 7 and Year 8 students are making rapid progress in English and mathematics. The academy sets very challenging targets for their students. The students understand these targets and demonstrate their desire to reach them. Some students have already exceeded their end-of-year targets and the academy has responded by raising the targets. Students in Year 7 have made much faster progress than expected in English and mathematics in the two terms since they started in September 2014. The progress of Year 8 students in English and mathematics is also outstanding.
- Students read widely and often. As a result, the reading ages of Year 8 students have, on average, increased by three years in five months and of Year 7, by one year in five months.
- The most able students are making outstanding progress which is driven by additional extension lessons where they are taught challenging concepts, often at GCSE level. For example, in mathematics and science Year 8 students are being stretched through the use of GCSE questions.
- Disadvantaged students are making similar progress to that of their peers. In Year 8, disadvantaged students are making more rapid progress than non-disadvantaged students in English. This progress is the impact of spending on high quality staff and the intensive support provided in lessons. It is not possible to make a comparison with other students nationally, because no students have yet completed their Key Stage 4 courses.
- The progress of students who have special educational needs or are supported through Education Health and Care plans is largely in line with the outstanding progress made by other students. Although in Year 8 the progress of students who have special educational needs or are supported through Education Health and Care plans is slightly behind that of their peers in mathematics, they are making good progress from their starting points.
- The communication skills of students with English as an additional language are developed well. They speak confidently in lessons. In Year 7, their progress in English and mathematics is in line with that of

their peers. In Year 8 progress of learners with English as an additional language is slightly behind that of their peers, but is at least in line with the challenging academy targets.

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	139395
Local authority	Kingston upon Hull City of
Inspection number	450211

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11-13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	140
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Tempest
Headteacher	Andy Grace
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an Academy
Telephone number	01482 217898
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	info@theboulevardacademy.com

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