

# The Brittons Academy Trust

Ford Lane, Rainham, RM13 7BB

**Inspection dates** 03–04 June 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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. It is not good because

- Students' achievement requires improvement because in 2014, GCSE results remained below average.
- Results showed that students had not made enough progress from their starting points. The proportions of students making good or better progress in mathematics were well below the national average.
- Teaching is not consistently good enough to ensure that all students make good progress, particularly in mathematics and science.
- The progress of different groups of students, including those who are disadvantaged or those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, has not been good enough over time.
- Teachers do not use information about students' current levels well enough to plan work that matches the abilities of different groups.
- Teachers' use of questioning is inconsistent. Some does not engage all students or challenge them to think more deeply to extend their leaning and understanding.
- Occasionally, a few students do not behave well in lessons when work does not properly match their abilities. Some staff do not deal with this disruption quickly enough or follow the academy's behaviour policy.
- Information from much improved systems to track students' progress is not used sharply enough by all leaders to identify trends and inform planning for improvement.
- The leadership of subjects is inconsistent. Some leaders are not yet holding teachers to account for the quality of their teaching and students' achievement.

### The school has the following strengths

- Since the previous inspection, the Principal and senior leaders have concentrated successfully on raising achievement and improving the quality of teaching and students' behaviour. Their work is bringing about significant improvements across the academy.
- The recently restructured governing body is much better informed and is providing more rigorous challenge. It is making positive contributions to improving the quality of leadership and teaching.
- The quality of teaching in English has improved considerably since the previous inspection. As a result, students' achievement in English is now good.
- The academy's work to keep students safe is good. As a result, students feel safe and secure.
- Students from different faiths and backgrounds get on well together.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 36 lessons to observe the progress and engagement of students. Four of these were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors reviewed the quality of the work in students’ books to judge the effectiveness of marking, the progress of students over time, and the accuracy of the academy’s assessment information.
- Other aspects of the academy day observed were students’ behaviour in tutor time, at break, lunchtime and between lessons, and students’ arrival and departure from the academy.
- Discussions were held with the Principal, senior staff and subject leaders. Meetings took place with the Chair of the Governors’ Performance and Standards Committee, and a representative from the local authority. In addition, a discussion took place between the lead inspector and the head of a local school that is supporting the academy.
- Inspectors spoke with four groups of students formally in meetings and with a number of students informally in lessons and at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors took account of the views of the 48 parents who responded to the Parent View online questionnaire. They also considered the 27 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents including: the academy’s information on students’ progress; self-evaluation and improvement plans; checks on the quality of teaching; attendance records and behaviour logs; minutes of governing body meetings; documents relating to students’ safety; and documents relating to the management of teachers’ performance.

## Inspection team

Ann Behan, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Paul Metcalf	Additional Inspector
Nicholas Phillips	Additional Inspector
David Powell	Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.*

### Information about this school

- The Brittons Academy Trust is an average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds with a minority from different ethnic groups. Very few students speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium is above the national average. This is additional government funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is average.
- Thirteen students, five from Key Stage 3 and six from Key Stage 4, follow alternative part-time and full-time courses away from the academy site. The providers are Manor Green College, Hornchurch; Sanders School, Hornchurch; Chafford School, Rainham; Motivations Project Limited, Romford.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- The academy receives support from Hall Mead School, which is a local outstanding teacher training school.
- During the inspection, Year 11 students were in the process of taking GCSE examinations so there were limited opportunities for inspectors to visit their lessons.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and students' achievement to at least good, particularly in mathematics and science, by making sure that all teachers:
  - use information about students' current progress more sharply to plan activities at the right level of challenge for groups of different abilities
  - use questions effectively to challenge and develop students' thinking and deepen understanding of their work
  - manage students' behaviour consistently well so that inappropriate behaviour is dealt with quickly to prevent learning being disrupted.
- Improve the effectiveness and impact of leadership and management by making sure that:
  - leaders at all levels look closely at tracking information to identify trends in their areas of responsibility and use this more effectively to inform planning for improvement and target additional support
  - subject leaders take full responsibility for the quality of teaching and students' achievement in their areas and rigorously challenge any underperformance.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management

### require improvement

- The Principal and the senior leadership are providing strong leadership. Since the previous inspection, they have raised expectations and have put many systems and policies in place which have had a positive effect on improving teaching and students' progress. However, the changes they have made have not yet had sufficient impact to make sure teaching and achievement are consistently good.
- Subject leaders, many new to post since the previous inspection, are receiving strong support from senior leaders to build their capacity to drive improvements in their areas of responsibility. They are now increasingly holding teachers to account for the progress of students in their classes and the quality of their teaching. However, their effectiveness varies across subjects.
- The leadership of teaching is improving. New strategies and policies for monitoring teaching and the provision of good quality training have already secured improvements in teaching and learning. However, leaders have not made sure that policies to improve the use information about students' current progress to plan work at the right level for different groups of students, and to manage students' behaviour, are applied consistently by all staff.
- Senior staff have revised the way they track students' behaviour, attendance and progress to make sure that resources are better targeted and that information is accurate. However, not all leaders are making the best use of the new systems. They are not using information sharply enough to identify trends. For example, the academy keeps detailed records of attendance and identifies that disadvantaged students do not attend as well as other students in the academy, but staff were unable to provide information to show that this situation is improving.
- The performance management system links the academy's pay policy closely to the quality of teaching and students' achievement. Staff do not progress to the next pay level unless they meet exacting targets. There is support and training for staff to improve their performance and these are having a positive effect on the quality of teaching. The Principal and governors deal with continuing underperformance decisively.
- Since the previous inspection, senior leaders have revised the way additional government funding is used to make sure that disadvantaged students get extra help. The funding provides for additional teaching in English and mathematics, extra teaching assistants, one-to-one tuition, extra lessons outside the normal timetable and additional pastoral support for more vulnerable students. Consequently, the gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged and other students are closing across all year groups.
- The academy's leadership team has revised the curriculum to give more time to English and mathematics. It has changed the timings of lessons to provide more opportunities for students to take part in extra lessons at the end of the school day. Students are very positive about these changes. They say they are better able to concentrate, and value the extra time given to English and mathematics.
- The academy has a strong understanding of its duty to prepare students for life in modern Britain and ensures that the curriculum promotes values of tolerance and respect. It provides well for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students talk positively about the arrangements for 'family time', where members of different year groups, cultures and faiths work together. They are very pleased with the varied and plentiful opportunities to take part in activities beyond the academy day.
- All students have the same opportunities to take part in all aspects of academy life and the achievement of all groups is improving. There is no evidence of discrimination.
- Careers guidance is part of the academy's citizenship programme and students have access to good quality internal and external advice so that almost all are successful in moving to education or training at the end of Year 11.
- Recently the academy has received good support from Hall Mead School, which has provided advice and training for subject leaders in mathematics and science and training for staff in these areas to improve their teaching.
- The local authority has provided a wide range of effective support for the academy, including training and advice for governors and the setting up of external support. They have also worked with leaders to check the accuracy of self-evaluation and the effectiveness of plans for improvement. This support is helping the academy bring about considerable improvements in leadership and teaching.
- Most parents who responded to Parent View are pleased with the care and education the school provides for students and say they would recommend the school to others.
- The academy's arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements and are effectively applied by all staff. They include detailed child protection procedures, the safe recruitment of staff and checks on the attendance, behaviour, safety and progress of the students who attend courses off site.
- **The governance of the school:**

- Since the previous inspection, governance has been subject to an external review and the governing body restructured. The newly formed governing body has received a large amount of training and different governors now bring a variety of experience to their roles. They are better equipped and skilled to challenge senior staff effectively to improve all aspects of the academy's work.
- Governors are clear about the actions needed to bring about improvements. They visit the academy regularly to check on the effectiveness and progress of the academy's action plan, particularly in relation to improving the quality of leadership and teaching. They look at students' work, talk to staff and students, and are able to use data to compare the academy's performance against other schools nationally.
- Meeting minutes show that governors are well informed, that they ask probing questions and are now closely involved in the decisions about teachers' progression through the pay scale. Governors are increasingly prepared to make tough decisions so that any underperformance is challenged and the academy continues to improve.
- Governors check spending carefully and have a three-year plan to take account of changing student numbers. They look closely at how effectively additional funding for disadvantaged students and those who need extra help in Year 7 is used.
- Governors make sure safeguarding procedures are in place and that staff consistently apply them. Relevant governors have received appropriate training in ensuring students are safe; for example, in relation to safer-recruitment of staff, e-safety and radicalisation. They make sure that the academy promotes British values of respect and tolerance.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils

## require improvement

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement.
- In some lessons, when teaching does not fully interest and challenge students they lose concentration, are distracted and there is low-level disruption to learning. Students told inspectors that not all staff follow the academy's procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour, particularly those who are not their regular teachers.
- Nevertheless, despite the inconsistency students acknowledge that the new systems of sanctions and rewards are having a positive impact. Students' attitudes to learning are mostly positive and they enjoy supportive relationships with their teachers and with each other. Academy information shows that incidents of unacceptable behaviour are reducing and the proportion of fixed-term exclusions is well below the national average. However, permanent exclusions are still above average.
- Behaviour around the academy is good. Students are polite and friendly and they show respect for their surroundings with little evidence of litter or graffiti inside the building, although some of the outside areas are not as tidy.
- Students are pleased to be part of the academy community. They wear their uniform with pride and contribute to its running through the school council and acting as house prefects. They enjoy representing the academy by providing reading support for pupils in partner primary schools.
- Attendance is improving to be close to the national average, and the proportion of students who are regularly absent is reducing. The academy keeps detailed records of attendance but this information is not always used sharply enough to check for trends in the attendance of different groups. Disadvantaged students do not attend as well as other students in the academy and staff were unable to provide information to show if this gap is narrowing.
- The behaviour and attendance of students following courses on other sites are typically good.

### Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students told inspectors that they feel safe and well cared for in the academy. They confirm that they have someone to talk to if they need any kind of help or support. Students say they receive good advice about healthy living, about misuse of drugs and alcohol, and are clear about how to use the internet safely.
- Most parents responding to the online questionnaire reflected the views that students are happy, well cared for and safe in the academy.
- Students are aware of the different kinds of bullying including cyber, homophobic (including transgender) and racist bullying. They say that bullying is rare and always dealt with effectively by staff.

- Students understand about the need to promote British values of respect and tolerance. They are clear about what constitutes extremist behaviour and show a high level of respect for different nationalities, faiths and cultures. They say these issues are addressed well through school assemblies, 'family time' (across year tutor time), and the citizenship programme. Students value the advice they receive and feel it is effective. One student said, 'Everyone is open-minded, we get on well together.'
- Systems for health and safety and child protection meet statutory requirements, and all staff apply policies consistently. The academy works well with the providers of off-site courses to monitor the safety of students.

### **The quality of teaching**

### **requires improvement**

- Teaching is improving but requires improvement because it is not consistently strong enough throughout the school to make sure all students make good progress.
- The quality of teaching varies across subjects. Leaders have concentrated on improving teachers' use of information about students' current progress to plan work that is challenging for all students. In most lessons, teachers follow the academy's policy for identifying different groups of students and many are planning work at the right level to match students' different abilities. However, this is not consistent across or within subjects.
- In some lessons, teachers do not use questioning well enough to challenge and engage students. Sometimes questions rely on very limited answers, are too simplistic and do not contribute or extend good learning.
- Students' engagement in learning varies depending on the subject. They are keen to learn when work is at the right level and teachers use their good subject knowledge to capture their attention and interest. However, when work is not well planned, a few students find it difficult to stay focused, lose concentration and distract others.
- Teaching in English is strong and improving rapidly. It has not been as strong in mathematics and science over time. However, there has been significant support and training given to staff in these areas and teaching is now improving at a faster rate particularly this academic year.
- Teaching assistants work effectively alongside teachers and play a key role in providing well-targeted support for disabled students and those who have special educational needs. Consequently, these students make progress at least in line with their classmates and in some cases progress at a faster rate.
- Increasingly teaching assistants are making a valuable contribution to the learning of disadvantaged students and the few who speak English as an additional language. As a result, the progress of these students which has not been good enough over time is now improving and gaps between them and other students are beginning to narrow.
- The academy has introduced a clear policy to develop students' literacy and communication skills across all subjects. This is contributing greatly to students' overall progress and success in English. Students are encouraged to read widely, and given many opportunities during lessons to read aloud and to practise their writing skills across different subjects.
- The quality and consistency of feedback to students on how to improve their work was an issue at the previous inspection. There is now an academy-wide marking policy. Students receive good feedback on how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. As a result, students' achievement is improving. Students told inspectors that marking is much better and that it is helping them to improve their work.

### **The achievement of pupils**

### **requires improvement**

- Achievement requires improvement because students have not made sufficient progress over time, particularly in mathematics and science, and have not reached the standards of which they are capable. Current information shows that achievement is now improving at a faster rate.
- Students join the academy with skills in reading, writing and mathematics that are typically average. In 2014, the proportion of Year 11 students gaining five or more good GCSE passes, including English and mathematics, was better than in previous years but remained below average. Current information shows a significant improvement in students' achievement as a result of improved teaching.
- In 2014, GCSE results in English were much stronger than in mathematics. The proportion of students gaining a GCSE grade C or better in English was well above the national average compared to mathematics, which was below average. The proportion of students who made good progress in English

was better than in mathematics and science. These results reflect the much stronger teaching in English compared to inconsistent teaching in mathematics and science.

- Current assessment information for Year 11 shows that progress in English continues to be strong and is improving rapidly. Progress in mathematics and science is improving and more students are making the progress expected of them, but not at the same rate as in English. Year 11 students are working at above expected levels in English and are catching up in mathematics and science. This is because teaching is improving, and students are receiving better feedback on how to improve their work.
- In 2014, not enough of the most able students reached the higher grades in GCSE examinations. Their progress is similar to others in the school; they do not achieve their full potential because work is not always challenging and at the right level to stretch their learning. Current information shows that their progress is improving and more of these students in Year 11 are working at the higher grades.
- The attainment of disadvantaged students is below that of others in the school and nationally. In 2014, in English, they were almost a quarter of a GCSE grade behind their classmates, and close to three quarters of a grade behind students nationally. In mathematics, the gaps were just under a grade when compared to classmates and one and a half grades compared to students nationally.
- The gaps in the current Year 11 are narrowing in both English and, especially, mathematics. Similarly, the progress of disadvantaged students is improving and gaps in progress are narrowing between them and others across the academy and other students nationally. This is because they are receiving better support than in the past.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs made similar progress as other students in 2014. However, because of better-planned additional support, and improvements in the quality of teaching, particularly in English, their progress is now improving at a faster rate and the gap between them and others is narrowing.
- The small number of students who speak English as an additional language do not always do as well as they should. They make similar progress as other students in the academy.
- Students following alternative courses away from the academy achieve at least as well as other students in the academy.
- Year 7 students eligible for additional help with numeracy and literacy as part of the government's 'catch-up' funding make good progress. The extra one-to-one and in-class support, in English and mathematics, is helping these students to narrow the gap between them and their classmates.
- The academy no longer enters students early for GCSE examinations.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136576
<b>Local authority</b>	Havering
<b>Inspection number</b>	462616

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	899
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sharon Roots
<b>Principal</b>	Stuart McLaughlin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4–5 December 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01708630002
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