

# The Totteridge Academy

Barnet Lane, London, N20 8AZ

**Inspection dates** 9–10 July 2015

| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Good                        | 2        |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Requires improvement</b> | <b>3</b> |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Good                        | 2        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils |                      | Good                        | 2        |
| Quality of teaching            |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |
| Achievement of pupils          |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |
| Sixth form provision           |                      | Requires improvement        | 3        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good or outstanding in all of the subjects of the curriculum.
- Leaders' provision of data to inform teachers' planning is not always as clear as it should be.
- Teachers' use of assessment is inconsistent, with the result that, over time, all students have not made the progress they are capable of.
- The standards reached by most of the students and the progress they have made over time have not been good enough, given their starting points.
- The school reviewed its sixth form in the autumn term 2014 and decided it needed a complete overhaul. It is too soon to tell how successful the new sixth form will be when it opens in September 2015.

### The school has the following strengths

- The ambitious leadership of the new headteacher has brought about significant changes to systems and structures that have led swiftly to improvements in all aspects of the school's work.
- Governors are sharply challenging and are highly ambitious for the school.
- Staff have responded very positively to the call for change and are passionate about students' success.
- Students behave very well. They try hard and are keen to learn. Relationships are a strength of the school.
- Systems for supporting students are very secure and, as a result, students feel very safe in school. The school community is a harmonious one. Students of all backgrounds get on very well with each other.
- Teaching is improving strongly as a result of clear, challenging leadership, and students' achievement is rising.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 21 part lessons and observed teaching with members of the senior team in three of these.
- Inspectors held discussions with students from Key Stages 3 and 4 and with teachers, including a newly qualified teacher.
- A meeting and a phone conversation took place between the lead inspector and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, with senior and middle leaders including the head of the sixth form.
- Inspectors considered a range of documents provided by the school, including the minutes of the governing body meetings, planning and review documents, and the self-evaluation document. They scrutinised other documentation including policies about safeguarding and child protection.
- No Year 11 students were in the school as a result of the ending of the examinations.
- No sixth form students were in school because Year 13 had also finished their examinations and no Year 12 students had been recruited in 2014/2015 as a deliberate policy.
- The Parent View online survey was completed by 13 parents.
- Inspectors took into account 21 questionnaires completed by staff

## Inspection team

Patricia Barford, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

David Boyle

Additional inspector

Kathryn Wright

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Totteridge Academy is much smaller than other secondary schools nationally and the numbers on roll are decreasing over time.
- The sixth form was closed to new students in September 2014 and is to be relaunched in September 2015 with a new curriculum.
- There are far more boys in the school than there are girls.
- Many more students than is the case nationally join the school outside the usual transfer point at age 11.
- The proportions of students who are eligible for the pupil premium grant is much higher than the national average. The grant is intended for the support of those pupils who are or who have been eligible for a free school meal and for those who are in the care of the local authority.
- Around one third of the students in Year 7 is eligible for the catch-up grant that the government provides to support students who have not reached the expected levels in English and mathematics at age 11.
- Around one half of the students speaks English as an additional language; this is much higher than the proportion found nationally.
- A much higher proportion of students than is the case nationally are from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or who have special educational needs is well above the national average.
- The school does not use early entry to GCSE examinations.
- The school meets the government's floor standards that set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- A very small number of students in Year 10 and Year 11 attend part-time courses run by alternative providers. The school uses the Pavilion Meadway, Northgate Youth Connexions Centre, Barnet and Southgate College, and Canada Villa Young People's Centre.

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

- Ensure that the improvements to teaching in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are part of the approaches to teaching in the new sixth form, by making best practice consistent throughout the school.
- Ensure that the data provided to teachers about students' starting points and about the rates of progress that the school expects are clear and presented in such a way that data can be used in the classroom to contribute positively to students' progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching in all subjects so it is consistently good or better by ensuring that all of the teachers:
  - make accurate assessments about the standard of students' work, particularly in knowing about the features of the highest quality of writing
  - provide clear and frequent feedback to students about the quality of their work and about how it can be improved
  - provide opportunities for students to develop their communication skills to a high level in their speaking, in particular for boys
  - challenge all of the students, in particular to those who are most able, by using the information the school provides about starting points and planning for maximum progress towards the highest grades.
- Develop numeracy across the curriculum and build on the school's success in developing students' reading skills so that students read independently and widely to support the development of their language skills.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- As a result of unflinching, very accurate self-evaluation and the actions taken by the new headteacher and the governing body, the school is improving swiftly. Students and staff are firmly behind the new drive for change. Robust systems and structures in the school are providing a framework in which everyone knows their role in improvement and how they are held to account for it.
- The school's motto of 'inspiration, aspiration and determination' can be seen at work in the daily life of the school; all members of the school's community aim high and all are determined to succeed. The staff that responded to the questionnaire and those who were interviewed by inspectors are proud to work at the school. Students speak highly of the support they receive from their teachers and appreciate the time staff devote to their well-being.
- The school has faced challenges as the numbers of students have fallen. It is an inclusive school and provides very high quality support for students whose circumstances render them more vulnerable.
- Leaders and managers make sure that whatever the disability or special need of each student, the right help will be given so they can develop both personally and academically throughout their time at school.
- Partnerships with external services, such as the local authority children's services, are strong and ensure that the support students receive is effective. The school works productively with a local outstanding school, The Compton School, a national support and teaching school, to develop practice in teaching.
- Leaders ensure that staff make regular checks on the attendance, achievement and behaviour of those students attending alternative provision as a part of their courses in Key Stage 4.
- The arrangements for safeguarding and child protection are secure.
- As a result of the care given to all of the students, relationships are very positive between adults and young people, and also among the students themselves. Positive relationships contribute well to learning in the classroom, as well as to social interactions outside it.
- Teachers, including those who are newly qualified, benefit from training that is closely matched to their needs and, as a result, the quality of teaching is improving. There is now a firmer link made with the evidence about students' starting points so that planning can be better tailored to their needs.
- The management of teachers' performance is used effectively to drive improvement in the school's priorities and the link between performance and pay progression is explicit. Line management is regular and challenging and middle leaders welcome the high levels of accountability.
- Subject leaders are provided with training to develop their skills in leading their teams. They are held to account in the system of curriculum area reviews that scrutinises all elements of the team's work.
- The curriculum is kept under review and includes effective provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. British values are also promoted in assemblies, during tutor time and in special events when students and staff devote time to reflecting on wider issues such as extremism of religious belief and how to avoid it. Careers education and guidance are effective for older students and are beginning to be provided in Key Stage 3.
- Leaders are using the pupil premium grant increasingly effectively to close the gaps, particularly in reading.
- All of the parents who responded to the Parent View online questionnaire reported that they would recommend the school to others; they reported confidence in the school's work and in the support the school gives to their children. Parent involvement in the school is growing, for example in the numbers of parents attending review meetings to discuss their child's progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are farsighted and highly ambitious for the school and insist on knowing how the school's performance compares with that of other schools nationally. They link the performance of teachers with pay progression and apply close scrutiny to arrangements for the management of teachers' performance so that it supports governors' ambitions for improvement and contributes to the development of the quality of teaching.
  - Governors are self-critical; they assess their own skills and plan training attached to each of their main meetings to keep abreast of understanding their roles and accountability.
  - Governors make regular focused visits to the school to enrich their knowledge first hand about how the school is performing and report back to the full governing body so all information is shared. They have an accurate view of the school and know what needs to be improved.
  - Finance is well managed and overseen by governors with the right skills to monitor expenditure and also to plan for the future.

- Governors make sure that all of their statutory responsibilities, including those for safeguarding, are fully met.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Students arrive promptly to school as a result of the very tight oversight of punctuality at the start of the day. Students arrive on time to their lessons and move very sensibly around the school building. The building itself is well maintained and free from litter and graffiti. Students benefit from extensive outside space for recreation and for formal physical education lessons. The exterior space is also very well kept.
- All of the students attend well. As a result of determined work by pastoral leaders and by staff in the Student Support Centre including the work of the education welfare officer, attendance in all years is at national averages. Students with lower attendance are helped to see how their attendance impacts on their achievement and, as a result, their attendance has greatly improved.
- The school provides a very wide range of expert support for students who might encounter difficulties in their school work or in their personal lives. Inspectors were shown anonymised case studies illustrating the very positive impact of the help the school gives.
- Students who have a disability, such as a visual impairment, or any other form of special educational need, benefit from very carefully planned and monitored help from the team led by the special educational needs coordinator. Teachers are trained to provide the right support to each student and teaching assistants are trained in how best to ensure students achieve.
- Fixed term exclusion from school is used carefully to emphasise high expectations for behaviour. There have been no permanent exclusions this year.
- Students take on extra responsibilities, for example on the school council led by the Head Boy and Head Girl. They welcome opportunities to provide support as 'buddies' for students who arrive at the school in the middle of a term or as 'interpreters' for students new to the school for whom English is an additional language. Students engage in fundraising for charities and understand their responsibilities as citizens.
- Students wear their uniform with pride; they are very positive about their school and the opportunities they have to learn and to enjoy a range of activities outside the formal curriculum.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students report feeling very safe in school and that they know about the risks that young people face in modern life, such as the risks of social media, as a result of the teaching they receive.
- Students say bullying is rare and always nipped in the bud. They are confident that there is always an adult to talk to if there are worries of any kind.
- Girls report feeling very happy in school, despite being in a minority, and are confident about their learning and progress.

## **The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because there are inconsistencies in practice that mean that not enough teaching is yet good or outstanding. For example, while there are good examples of feedback to students that enable them to improve their work, this is not yet seen in all subjects.
- The school has focused successfully on the development of students' reading skills, making good use of the Year 7 catch-up grant. The accelerated reading programme and the phonics (the sounds letters make) programme for students in the early stages of learning English that are available are making a very positive difference to students' reading skills. As a result, students' reading for pleasure and reading more widely are beginning to develop. The most-able students are provided with guidance about the challenging books they should be reading and the library, with its skilled librarian, has much potential, but it is still early days.
- Numeracy is well promoted in mathematics and the school's next steps are to develop numeracy across the curriculum.
- Teachers have high expectations of students and base their planning on the data that is provided to them as a starting point. The data teachers receive are not yet clear enough to ensure targets are set as high as possible to enable students to reach the highest grades from their lower starting points. Not all teachers are sufficiently accurate in assessing the quality of students' written work, hindering students' ability to

demonstrate the best features in writing.

- Teachers work effectively in partnership with teaching assistants who are clear about their role in promoting achievement, as a result of the training they have received.
- When teaching is most effective, students are enthusiastic and respond energetically to questions that challenge their thinking, so that lessons become exciting. Not enough teaching has this impact on students yet.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- The achievement of students requires improvement because, over time, it is inconsistent and standards have been low.
- Students enter the school with starting points much lower than those of other students nationally. The proportions of higher attaining students are half those of other schools and the proportion of lower attaining students is much higher than that found typically in other schools.
- A high proportion of students arrives at the school outside the usual transfer point at age 11, and many of these pupils have no standardised assessment test results to compare against their achievement at age 16 to measure their progress. The school's internal data show that these mobile students, some of whom join the school in Key Stage 4, do well as a result of the support they receive.
- Students in the school who have a disability or special educational needs are provided with strong support and they perform well from their starting points.
- Students from ethnic minority backgrounds and those for whom English is an additional language perform well in comparison with their peers nationally.
- Progress in English and mathematics improved slightly in 2014. In both subjects, however, progress is inconsistent. Students with lower prior attainment do well and middle and higher attaining students do less well than their peers nationally.
- Disadvantaged students made more progress than other students in the school in both subjects and in fact did as well as other students nationally. However, this was not the case when they are compared with other students nationally making more than expected progress.
- In 2014, the most-able students made less progress than they should and failed to reach the highest grades. Work has started this year to provide training for teachers in identifying and challenging the most able students. A programme of enrichment has begun, such as taking Year 9 students to Oxford to see university life at first hand.
- Attainment in GCSE has been stubbornly low over the last three years. Girls, who are in the minority, have consistently outperformed boys. Their attainment has approached national averages for girls, for example in the proportions who achieve grade C or better in both English and mathematics.
- Boys who are in the majority have done less well than other boys nationally in the standards they have reached. Opportunities to develop boys' speaking are not always taken by teachers, limiting the progress boys make.
- Disadvantaged students in 2014 scored a grade lower than other students in the school and two grades lower than other students nationally. However, the school's current records show the gap in attainment will close this summer. This is as a result of the targeted use of the pupil premium grant for intensive help, such as Saturday academies, a girls' conference in Brighton and a boys' conference in Watford – both in hotels.
- Standards are set to rise and boys' standards will be similar to those of the girls. Evidence seen in the form of data held in school and students' performance seen by inspectors in the classroom suggest that the school's forecasts are accurate.
- Named teachers closely track the achievement of a very small number of students in Key Stage 4 educated in part-time alternative provision off site, ensuring they make progress so that almost all remain in education, employment or training.
- Year 7 students who benefit from the catch-up grant because they did not reach the expected levels in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 are making good progress in their reading as a result of the use of the grant for extra support.
- The students who left the school at the end of Key Stage 4 in 2014 were given the help and guidance needed to continue in education, employment or training. Those who had intended to continue into the school's sixth form were given a great deal of support to find the right courses in other schools and colleges.

**The sixth form provision****requires improvement**

- The sixth form has been under new leadership from the start of the autumn term in 2014 when a thorough review of the sixth form was carried out. Senior leaders and governors decided that the sixth form was not providing what students required. Consequently, the decision was made to recruit no more Year 12 students, to support the 38 Year 13 through to the end of their sixth form studies, and to launch a new sixth form curriculum from September 2015.
- School leaders have taken the view that the vocational curriculum that is on offer from September 2015 is a good match for the local employment market. They believe it will better meet the needs of some Totteridge students and some students from other local schools.
- Provision for the current final cohort of students in Year 13 has been improved by the introduction of rigorous tracking planned to lead to higher standards and more secure progress than before. All of the Year 13 students have received a full programme of careers advice. Evidence provided by email by some of the Year 13 students shows that they have appreciated the intensive, personalised support they have received. This has included residential study opportunities and cultural enrichment, for example theatre visits.
- Year 13 students have ambitious goals and most intend to go on to university courses.
- There are several schools in the local area that are providing academic courses in the sixth form. As a result, the school plans to offer a range of vocational courses in order to provide an alternative to A level, linking with other schools to extend the offer to their students.
- The sixth form up to the end of the academic year 2013/2014 was small. Almost all of the students in Year 12 were students transferring from Year 11, but only around one third of Year 11 decided to remain in school for their sixth form studies.
- As a result of the small size of the sixth form, the range of subjects on offer was narrow and on most of the courses numbers were small.
- The proportions of students entering the sixth form with average grades below C were much higher than is usually the case in sixth forms nationally.
- Students' progress in their academic subjects over the previous three years was considerably less than in other sixth forms nationally, although progress in some BTEC subjects was broadly the same as in other sixth forms.
- The standards reached by students were much lower than for other students nationally over the last three years. Some students progressed to higher education and most continued to further study or to employment.
- Leaders have taken a bold step in the face of underperformance. They have devised a well-researched solution that responded to their own evaluation of weaker teaching that resulted in insufficient progress being made by students.
- While students attended the sixth form they made a very positive contribution to the whole school in positions of responsibility and as role models for younger students. They were provided with the same very good support and care to keep them safe and secure as was provided to other students in the school.

## What inspection judgements mean

| School | Grade   | Judgement            | Description  |
|--------|---------|----------------------|--|
|        | Grade 1 | Outstanding          | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.   |
|        | Grade 2 | Good                 | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.   |
|        | Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.   |
|        | Grade 4 | Inadequate           | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |



## School details

|                                |        |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 137374 |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Barnet |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 461681 |

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>                    | 11–18                     |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                       | Mixed                     |
| <b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>     | Mixed                     |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>    | 591                       |
| <b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b> | 38                        |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                  | The governing body        |
| <b>Chair</b>                                  | Miranda Coates            |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                            | Judith Fortune            |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>     | 14–15 September 2011      |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                       | 020 84459205              |
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