

# Westside Academy Trust

8–30 Galena Road, London, W6 0LT

**Inspection dates** 24–25 June 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management	Good		2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good		2
Quality of teaching	Good		2
Achievement of pupils	Good		2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Led by a passionate and motivational headteacher, this good academy is improving rapidly.
- The strong ethos and vision, shared by trustees, leaders, staff and parents, creates a solid foundation. Members of the school community refer to themselves as 'like a family'.
- Students' behaviour is outstanding as a result of high expectations and very positive relationships between staff and students.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the academy. Opportunities to develop these themes are threaded throughout the curriculum.
- Trustees know the academy well and, together with leaders, have a clear vision of how they want it to develop and improve. Trustees have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching, and the achievements of students.
- Students attend well, and grow in self-confidence. This enables them to make very good progress in academic subjects and gain recognised qualifications including a range of GCSEs.
- Teaching is good; teachers and other adults engage well with students and encourage them to work hard.
- Students are taught how to keep themselves safe in the real world and online.
- Students are offered a broad, balanced curriculum which is comparable to that in mainstream schools. Alongside their GCSE subjects, they are offered a range of vocational courses such as motor mechanics and hair and beauty.
- The academy prepares students for their futures exceptionally well. All of those who left the academy in 2014 are involved in education, employment or training.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is not outstanding. In some lessons, the most-able students are not stretched to extend their learning, and less-able students do not receive the support they need to progress.
- Not all teachers use questioning to full effect, and some do not insist that students complete unfinished work.
- Senior leaders rely heavily on the headteacher for guidance and there is no middle tier of leadership to take on some responsibilities. The headteacher is not receiving the robust support she needs to sustain the rate of improvement.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in six lessons, taught by five teachers. Four of these observations were carried out jointly with a member of the senior leadership team. The inspector scrutinised students' work in a sample of books.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders and three trustees including the Chair of Trustees. A telephone conversation was held with an officer from the local authority which places most students in the academy.
- The inspector observed students at breaks and lunchtimes, and asked them for their views of the academy. She met more formally with a group of students to talk about their work, and how the academy supports them. She also met with two Year 11 students who have recently left the academy.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised including information about safeguarding, plans for improvement, records of the quality of teaching and information about students' progress.
- The inspector met with two parents, and looked at the school's analysis of recent parent questionnaires. There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, for information to be reported.

## Inspection team

Gaynor Roberts, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Westside Academy Trust converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2013. When its predecessor school, Westside School was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- Westside Academy Trust caters for the needs of 35 students aged 13 to 16. The majority of students are placed in the academy because they have been, or are at risk of being, permanently excluded from their previous placements. The academy prides itself on its approach which aims to provide educational opportunities on a par to those available to their mainstream peers. As such, students study a fully accredited Key Stage 4 programme, including at least seven GCSEs.
- Around two thirds of the students on roll are boys, and one in five is in the care of their local authority. A very high proportion is eligible for free school meals.
- Around two thirds of students speak English as an additional language. Students come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds.
- The academy also caters for a small number of students aged 11 to 13 on a short-term full-time basis, supporting their return to mainstream provision within around six months.
- The academy does not place students in any other alternative provision. All students are educated on a single site.

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

- Improve the capacity of leadership and management by deepening the skills and experience of senior leaders, and considering the development of a team of middle leaders.
- Improve the quality of teaching to a consistently high standard by:
  - developing the questioning skills of some teachers and other adults
  - ensuring that students of all abilities are provided with challenging activities throughout the lesson
  - ensuring that the system for providing feedback to students about the quality of their work is embedded throughout the academy
  - checking that where teachers ask students to complete unfinished work, this is done.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. She inspires both staff and students to achieve their best, and engenders an atmosphere of positivity and high expectations. Leaders and trustees have ensured that teaching is good, and that students make at least good progress when they join the academy, both academically and in terms of well-being.
- Senior leaders are fully supportive of the headteacher and the academy's ethos. They have specific areas of responsibility for which they are held to account by both the headteacher and trustees. The depth of their knowledge and experience as leaders, however, is still developing. Therefore, they are sometimes too reliant on the headteacher to provide guidance. This small academy has not developed a team of middle leaders to take on specific responsibilities.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the students' needs. It has an emphasis on personal, social and health education (PSHE), and citizenship. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is threaded throughout all curriculum areas. In one PSHE lesson observed, students discussed the concept of community cohesion, and the impact of a gang-related shooting on a local community. Students demonstrated an embedded understanding of the tensions that can arise between different cultural and ethnic groups, discussed stereotypes and responded thoughtfully when the teacher challenged their opinions. As a result of this high-quality curriculum, students are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- With a focus on achievement in at least seven GCSEs including English and mathematics, leaders have developed a range of vocational subjects to add further breadth to the curriculum. These include home cooking, motor mechanics and hair and beauty. All courses are accredited. Leaders have skilfully adapted the curriculum to cater for the needs of each cohort. This year, for example, they have changed from geography GCSE to history because it suited the strengths of the small cohort. Despite the small number of students, leaders make sure that students at Key Stage 4 are offered a range of options and ensure equality of opportunity for all.
- Students are involved in leadership of the academy through a 'Junior Leadership Team'. These elected representatives are responsible for supporting students within their 'family', arranging meetings with staff, supporting high standards of uniform and behaviour and ensuring students know their targets.
- The academy's arrangements for the safeguarding of students meet requirements. Members of staff receive regular updates to training in this regard, and the designated safeguarding lead has received recent training. The academy keeps careful records of any child protection concerns and meetings with other professionals regarding the safeguarding of students. The school's policy regarding safeguarding has been updated annually as required, and makes reference to the most recent guidance, '*Keeping children safe in education*', first published by the Department for Education in April 2014. However, the requirements of this guidance were not fully in place at the start of the inspection as the documentation had not been carefully read and implemented efficiently.
- The academy's work to support students in making decisions about their futures, and enabling them to achieve their goals is exemplary. The pathways and guidance officer meets with each student individually when they first enter the academy and regularly thereafter to provide advice and guidance. Students move on to a range of colleges, sixth forms and workplace providers. Every one of the 2014 leavers is in education, employment or training. An alumni association has been set up. The pathways and guidance officer keeps in touch with former students, offering ongoing support in helping them to revise their curriculum vitae, for example.
- Additional funding to support those eligible for free school meals and those in the care of their local authority is spent effectively. The academy identifies specific projects or resources, such as boxing tuition, that would benefit these students and spends wisely.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance of the academy is effective. Trustees have high expectations and are determined that students at the school should achieve at least as well as their peers in mainstream settings. They receive reports about the quality of teaching, and the progress of students, and ask pertinent questions about these.
  - Trustees ensure that they are not reliant on the headteacher to provide them with information, and invite leaders, other staff and the student-led 'Junior Leadership Team' to report at trustee meetings. They also make visits to the academy to see its work for themselves.
  - Trustees are fully involved in the performance management of the headteacher, and oversee the

appraisal of other staff, including the relation of this to pay. They have supported the headteacher when tackling underperformance.

- Recently, however, with the departure of two members of the teaching team, trustees have allowed the headteacher to be overburdened with additional responsibilities. This reduces the capacity of the academy to improve as the headteacher is unable to focus on her strategic leadership role.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. In lessons students are engaged and motivated because teachers ensure that the content of the curriculum is interesting and relevant. Students told the inspector that their attitudes to learning have significantly improved since joining the academy. This is borne out in their increased attendance, and their participation in class. They explained that this is because the teachers genuinely care and help them to mature. One Year 11 student told the inspector that he 'owed this school my future'; such was the impact of their work in supporting him to improve his attitude.
- Students' conduct outside lessons is similarly strong. They move around the building sensibly, and are proud of the privilege of being allowed off-site at lunchtime. Occasional incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with fairly and swiftly by members of staff.
- Students get on well together and demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the different faiths, cultures and lifestyles represented within their community. Similarly, they show respect for their learning environment which is bright, airy and free of litter or graffiti. Students have been involved in the introduction of a uniform which is worn by all.
- Students and staff are grouped into 'families' which meet on a weekly basis to celebrate achievements, study together and reflect on the week. Students, staff and parents identify this as a strength of the academy in nurturing students' personal development. The inspector agrees.
- A clear system is in place whereby students can achieve 'thirst for knowledge' points in each lesson. Any student who does not receive at least two points meets with a senior leader to discuss any issues or concerns, and reasons for their poor attitude. The academy's comprehensive tracking system shows that over time behaviour has improved because the number of points acquired by students has increased.
- At break times, students choose appropriate activities to engage in and do so enthusiastically. School leaders have ensured that a range of activities are available at these times, many involving physical activity, despite the lack of outdoor space.
- Parents spoken to during the inspection identified significant improvements in their child's behaviour and attitudes since joining the academy. These improvements are borne out by the decreasing numbers of serious incidents and exclusions for individual students.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students are taught how to keep themselves safe in their local community. They are taught how to keep themselves away from crime and gang culture through personal, health and social education lessons. They are given guidance on ways to keep safe online, and understand the dangers of meeting someone they have met over social media, for example.
- Students attend well. More than nine out of every ten students improve their attendance within six weeks of joining the academy. Any absence is followed up rigorously by members of staff, and reported to other agencies if the whereabouts of a student are not clear.
- Students are aware of different types of bullying. Incidents are very rare, and when they do occur they are dealt with swiftly and fairly. Students understand that the use of homophobic or other derogatory language is unacceptable, even in jest.
- The academy has robust procedures for the planning and risk assessment of visits to places of interest. They consider the whole of the visit, from leaving the building to return. They include any risks associated with transport issues, the venue or activity, and possible student behaviour. Members of staff undertake a 'dummy run' to ensure they have covered all eventualities. In recent weeks, however, the risk assessments associated with daily activities have not been fully implemented with the same level of rigour and systems have become lax. This was addressed by the headteacher as soon as it became apparent during the inspection.

**The quality of teaching** is good

- Teachers plan lessons that engage and motivate students in their learning. They include practical examples of abstract ideas in their teaching to ensure that understanding is embedded. For example, in a computing lesson students made a smoothie. This enabled them to fully understand the computing terms of 'input', 'output', and 'process'.
- The quality of teaching in English is especially effective. As a result, students' progress in this subject is very strong. This is because teachers use carefully pinpointed questions, support staff and scaffolding techniques to ensure that all students are stretched to improve their work, whatever their level of attainment. In some other subjects, however, all students attempt the same work. This means that at times the less able do not make progress because they do not have the support they need. At other times, the most able do not make progress because they are attempting tasks that are too easy.
- Where progress and learning is strong, adults use carefully crafted questions directed to specific students which extend learning and make students think hard. Where it is weaker, general questions are posed and answered by whichever student is most eager to respond. This does not ensure that all students are making the progress they are capable of.
- Teaching in mathematics is good and, as a result, students make good progress. Teachers make reference to how concepts and ideas, such as Pythagoras' theorem, are used in working life to demonstrate why students should apply themselves to their studies.
- Teachers have high expectations of what students can achieve. They do not accept that previous poor experiences should impact on the opportunities for students to achieve well. Teachers do all they can to ensure that each individual student achieves their full potential.
- Teachers use consistent structures and systems to ensure that students know what they are learning, what level they are working at, and how to get to the next level. Students talk easily about the grade they were working at at the start of the year, and how their work has improved over time to move to their current grade.
- Other adults in the classroom support learning and behaviour well. Where they receive more detailed guidance they have a greater impact on the progress of students.
- Teachers mark work regularly and most use the academy's revised policy for doing so. This practice is not, however, consistent across all subject areas. Similarly, there are too many occasions in books where teachers have asked students to complete a piece of work and this has not been done. Therefore, students' learning is incomplete and they may not be ready to move on to the next stage.
- Leaders use a range of strategies to check on the quality of teaching. These include observations of teaching, short focused visits to lessons and work scrutiny. They make accurate judgments and identify appropriate priorities for improvements in teaching.

**The achievement of pupils** is good

- Students join the academy at various times of the year, and at different stages of their education. The vast majority of students have had disrupted or interrupted educational experiences. This means that they arrive with attainment below that which would normally be expected for their age. There is no published information regarding the achievement of students in the academy.
- When students join the academy they are assessed in a number of areas including reading, spelling, memory, and comprehension. Areas of priority are identified and students are provided with individualised support if needed. These assessments are then repeated on a regular basis to ensure that actions taken by the academy are having the required impact on each student's progress. Students who speak English as an additional language are assessed in the same way, and provided with specialist support as required. As a result, these students make at least as much progress as others in the school.
- As a result of the strong, caring ethos and very positive relationships, students settle quickly and rapidly improve their attendance. Their self-belief is nurtured by committed members of staff and consequently, they make significant academic progress in a short period of time.
- The most-able students make good progress. However, they are not always given challenging work throughout the lesson, and the potential to make more rapid progress is not fulfilled on these occasions.
- In 2014, all students in Year 11 gained five A\* to G grades at GCSE including English and mathematics. This marks a significant achievement for young people who were disconnected or disaffected from the

education system only a few months or years prior to gaining these qualifications.

- The academy sets ambitious targets relating to student achievement and students rise to these. Classroom walls display graphical representation of the grade or level at which students are working so that, term by term, they can see how they are progressing.
- The academy has comprehensive systems in place to track the progress of students in English, mathematics, science and computing. They have recently extended these systems to include other subjects. These systems show that in the current academic year, a very large majority of students on roll for the whole year have made expected progress in English. Many have exceeded expectations. In mathematics three-quarters have made at least expected progress, and in science more than half have done so.
- Leaders consider the achievement of groups of students such as boys, girls, those with additional needs, those in the care of the local authority and those eligible for free school meals. Due to the small cohorts it is not possible to quantify any differences in achievement between these groups. The academy's information shows, however, that there is little difference in the achievement of most groups. Those with special educational needs, however, are catching up with their peers within the school.
- The achievement of those younger students who stay at the academy for a short time is equally important to leaders. Their progress is tracked in exactly the same way as those with a permanent placement. One parent reported that in only two to three months, his son's mathematical skills, in particular, had improved significantly.
- The academy does not enter 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>	140201
<b>Local authority</b>	Hammersmith and Fulham
<b>Inspection number</b>	450117

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Academy alternative provision converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	14–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	35
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sarah Evans
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julie Sadler
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7504 0512
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