

Capital City Academy

Doyle Gardens, London NW10 3ST

Inspection dates 18–19 November 2015

Overall effectiveness **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management Good

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment Good

Personal development, behaviour and welfare Good

Outcomes for pupils Good

16 to 19 study programmes Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good academy

- Since the last inspection, senior leaders and governors have been relentless in their drive to improve standards within the academy. As a result, teaching and achievement are now good.
- Subject leaders effectively monitor the quality of teaching and pupils' learning within their subject. This strongly drives improvements.
- Provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language is good.
- Teaching is typically good across the academy and some is outstanding.
- Gaps in the achievement of different groups of pupils currently in the academy are closing.
- The academy is effective in ensuring pupils are safe.
- Progress in English and mathematics is good.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the academy is good. The vast majority of pupils behave considerately towards one another.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is developed through a wide range of activities.
- Attendance has improved and now meets the national average.
- Learners taking vocational courses in the sixth form achieve exceptionally well. The achievement of learners on academic courses has improved since the last inspection.
- Governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the academy. They are highly effective in monitoring the work of the academy.

It is not yet an outstanding academy because

- Not all pupils, especially the most-able, are sufficiently stretched in lessons because some teachers are not setting work that is demanding enough.
- On occasions, teachers' marking is not giving pupils feedback that extends their learning.
- There are still a very small number of lessons where the quality of teaching and learning is not consistently good.

Full report

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

What does the academy need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement so that outcomes are outstanding for all groups of pupils, especially the most able, by ensuring that all teachers set work that is sufficiently demanding to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Improve teaching to outstanding, by:
 - sharing the best practice in the academy so that the quality of teaching is consistently high in all subjects
 - ensuring that marking always extends learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The principal, senior leaders and governors have worked relentlessly to successfully improve the quality of teaching, pupil outcomes, behaviour and attendance since the last inspection. The overwhelming majority of staff feel the academy has improved since the last inspection.
 - The governing body have very high expectations for the pupils. They work closely with senior leaders and as a result they have a detailed knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses within the academy. They check the quality of provision within the academy through visits to lessons and discussions with senior leaders.
 - The quality of the work carried out by subject leaders has improved since the last inspection. They rigorously track pupil progress and visit lessons to judge the quality of teaching and pupils' work. They have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve the achievement of pupils in their subject and hold teachers to account for the outcomes of their pupils. They have made a valuable contribution to raising standards. They work closely with their senior line managers.
 - The improvements made within English have been significant since the last inspection when pupils' achievement was inadequate. Pupils are now making progress that is above average at the end of Key Stage 4.
 - Teaching and learning is extremely well led as there are highly effective procedures in place to monitor both the quality and impact of teaching on pupils' learning. Training opportunities and focused individual support for teachers is linked to the identification of teaching strengths and weaknesses. Several staff told inspectors that they thought staff training was high quality and they valued the support that they have received in order to develop their teaching.
 - Teachers are fully accountable for the progress of pupils in their class. Any salary progress is determined by their meeting pupils' achievement targets.
 - Senior leaders know their academy well. They have accurately identified the strengths and have a focused plan for improvement. They have employed consultants to validate their judgement.
 - Leaders target the use of the pupil premium funding appropriately. For example, employing additional teachers in English and mathematics, for one-to-one help, funding curriculum trips and visits and providing a programme of activities on Saturday (SHINE). As a result, these pupils are now making progress that is at least in line with their classmates.
 - The Year 7 catch-up funding is used effectively to support those pupils who enter the academy with lower attainment in English and mathematics or both. Pupils receive small group support which is successfully improving achievement in these subjects. Inspectors saw the work here as having a marked impact on pupils' achievement, especially in reading. The 'Reading Buddies' scheme, where Year 9 pupils support Year 7, is very supportive. Inspectors noticed good relationships between the pupils and the older pupils provided guidance and corrected errors when required.
 - The provision for pupils whose first language is not English is highly effective. Many pupils arrive at the academy with little or no English. These pupils are well supported in specialist provision where the teacher and teaching assistants effectively support pupils to make progress. Once they have the necessary literacy and language skills, the pupils graduate to lessons and study the full range of subjects. The academy also runs weekly classes for parents.
 - Leaders are committed to equality of opportunity for all pupils. As one group of pupils told inspectors, 'The best things about our school are the opportunities we have and how it encourages diversity.'
 - Pupils study a broad and balanced suite of subjects throughout. Through the academy's sports and arts specialisms they have opportunities to develop leadership and performance skills and appreciate the arts. Subjects provide the opportunities to study a range of cultures and religions. The academy offers a full range of after-school clubs and activities along with trips and visits. As a result the spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is good. Pupils are taught about fundamental British values as part of their personal, social, health and citizenship curriculum.
- **The governance of the academy**
- Since the last inspection, governors have undertaken a review of their work and restructured the governing body. It is now more focused on school improvement and challenges leaders and managers about all aspects of the academy's work.
 - Governors have a detailed understanding of pupil progress and attainment data. They know how different

groups of pupils are performing compared to pupils nationally and the impact of the pupil premium funding on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

- Governors have an accurate view of the quality of teaching within the academy. They effectively manage the performance of the Principal. They have a good understanding of teachers' performance management targets and ensure that pay progression is linked to improvements in teachers' performance.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff and governors receive appropriate training related to safeguarding. Staff fully understand and follow the academy's safeguarding policy. The appropriate checks are carried out on staff and visitors. Leaders quickly identify pupils who may be at risk and act swiftly.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection. Teachers plan lessons that effectively build upon pupils' previous knowledge and skills. As a result, pupil achievement has improved or is improving in all subjects.
- There is a positive climate for learning within classrooms. This is because relationships between staff and pupils are good. Teachers encourage pupils to be confident learners. Inspectors saw many examples where pupils were confident in answering questions, contributing their ideas and making mistakes in front of their classmates. When they make mistakes, most pupils show a determination to 'get it right' and they are helped by the teacher and their peers.
- Literacy is a focus across all subjects. Writing is well taught and inspectors saw examples where pupils had the opportunity to write extensively in many subjects. Almost all staff consistently correct errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Reading is well taught and pupils have plenty of opportunities to read.
- Mathematics is taught well. Pupils use mathematical language correctly and confidently in lessons. Work in their books shows that they have the opportunity to develop their understanding through problem solving activities. Year 7 pupils told inspectors that they liked their mathematics lessons because their 'teachers take the time to make sure everyone understands the new learning'.
- Teachers expect pupils to take pride and care with their work and this was reflected in the quality of work seen in pupils' exercise books.
- Homework is set frequently and is relevant to the topics pupils are learning. Teachers expect pupils to complete their homework and pupils told inspectors that there is a consequence for not doing homework. Most parents who expressed a view felt that their child received appropriate homework.
- Inspectors saw examples where teachers used questioning very effectively to gauge pupils' understanding and deepen their knowledge. In these lessons pupils made rapid gains in their learning. However, not all teachers' are consistently using questioning to this effect.
- All teachers follow the academy's marking and assessment policy and pupils work is marked frequently. However, inspectors saw instances where a few staff are not giving pupils targets that are sufficiently focused on improving their learning.
- Part of the assessment policy is for pupils to reflect and comment on their learning. Inspectors saw some excellent examples of pupils commenting on how well they have understood their work and used their knowledge and skills. However, this level of reflection was not evident in all lessons.
- Most teachers are providing pupils with interesting and stimulating activities that provide them with a challenge. But evidence in pupils' books and through observations of learning in classrooms shows that this is not consistent practice and as a result not all pupils, especially the most-able, are deepening their understanding and knowledge as quickly as they should.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The academy's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The academy provides opportunities for pupils in all year groups to take on roles of responsibility. This includes student parliament membership, sports leaders and coaches, catering leaders, reading buddies, language leaders and lunchtime supervisors known as 'orange jackets'. Inspectors noted that pupils' carry out their roles with a high level of maturity and commitment. They told inspectors that they valued these

opportunities.

- Pupils learn about keeping themselves safe through their personal, social, health and economic education lessons and talks in assembly. They could explain how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations including using the internet and social media.
- An overwhelming majority of parents agree that the academy is a safe environment and that their child is well looked after. Almost all pupils and staff agree that the academy is safe. A group of pupils from Years 8 and 9 told the inspectors that the academy is safe because 'there are no fights and nothing to harm us'. They are confident that new pupils to the academy are welcomed and accepted.
- From Year 8, pupils have the opportunity to explore career opportunities through enterprise days. In Years 10 and 12 pupils have a 'futures week' where they have mock interviews, visiting speakers and make visits related to future opportunities. This, together with independent career interviews, ensures that pupils are prepared to make decisions about their options at the end of Years 9, 11 and 13. As a result, the proportion of learners who are not in education or employment is below average.
- There are rigorous procedures in place to monitor the attendance of pupils. These, along with the highly effective strategies for improving attendance, have resulted in the academy's attendance moving from well below average in 2014 to average in 2015. The proportions of pupils persistently absent has reduced. Inspectors noted high levels of attendance in lessons. Punctuality to lessons and school is good.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' are confident and take pride in their work.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. They understand the value of education and are keen to learn. Pupils told inspectors that lessons were rarely disrupted and say that teachers apply the academy's behaviour policy with a high degree of consistency.
- The academy is a calm learning environment and pupils move sensibly and promptly between lessons. They wear their uniform correctly and look smart. Pupils respect their learning environment which is litter- and graffiti-free.
- During social times, pupils of all ages mix well together and show respect for one another. Pupils told inspectors that bullying is rare and this is confirmed by the academy records. Parents and pupils are confident that should bullying occur it is dealt with effectively.
- The academy has a clear systematic approach to managing behaviour and pupils all understand the behaviour policy. A great deal of emphasis is placed on rewarding pupils for their positive attitudes and behaviour.
- Exclusions for poor behaviour are used sparingly. Pupils who find it difficult to manage their behaviour receive effective support. The academy has not totally eradicated all instances of disrespectful behaviour referred to at the last inspection but they are very rare. The number of pupils excluded continues to decline.
- Parents agree that behaviour is good in the academy.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils enter the academy with levels of attainment well below those found nationally. They are set challenging targets and their progress against these targets is carefully monitored. As a result, pupils leaving the academy with 5 GCSE A* to C passes including mathematics and English has improved since the last inspection. The attainment gap between pupils in the academy and all schools nationally is closing.
- Achievement in English has improved since the last inspection. The proportion of Year 11 pupils making expected progress has risen from below to above the national average. The proportion of pupils making more than expected progress has also risen and is now in line with all schools nationally. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher A* to C grades at GCSE has also improved from below average to broadly average.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics and the proportion of pupils leaving year 11 in 2015 making expected and more than expected progress was in line with the national average.
- The academy's progress data and 2015 GCSE results indicates that pupils make good progress across a range of subjects, especially modern foreign languages. The work in the books of pupils currently in the academy indicates that the current Year 11 pupils are on track to make good progress in almost all subjects. Progress is slightly slower in science, but is improving.
- Achievement in humanities has improved since the last inspection, especially in history and religious education. Progress in geography is now rapidly improving.

- The quality of work seen in pupils' books confirms that the academy's drive to improve literacy is having an impact. Pupils are able to write using a variety of styles and for different purposes. Their use of correct spelling, punctuation and grammar is developing as they progress through the academy.
- The extra support provided for pupils who have fallen behind with their reading is highly effective as they are rapidly making progress. Inspectors who listened to some of these pupils read found they were able to read confidently, know how to tackle difficult words and are starting to read with expression. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoyed reading and talked about the different types of books they read.
- Those pupils who receive additional support to improve their mathematics quickly make gains in their learning but their progress is not as rapid as it is in reading.
- The academy uses progress data effectively to quickly identify pupils who are falling behind with their learning. These pupils receive effective support in small groups or after-school classes which enables them to quickly catch up with their learning.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils at the end of Year 11 is improving. For the last two years the gap between their progress and other pupils nationally in mathematics and English has narrowed. It is now close to average. For pupils currently in the academy, the gap between them and their peers has either closed or is closing.
- The special educational needs team have high expectations for their pupils. They carefully monitor the progress of pupils and ensure that the support provided is tailored to their specific needs. As a result, there is less variation in the progress of these pupils than in previous years. The progress of almost all pupils is strong, especially in Key Stage 3, and gaps are narrowing in Key Stage 4.
- Pupils who enter the academy with English as an additional language are accurately assessed on entry to the academy. This means that they are provided with support that is tailored to meet their individual needs and as a result they make good progress. Pupils who enter the academy speaking little or no English make rapid progress with their spoken English.
- Scrutiny of work in pupils' books shows that most of the most-able pupils are making progress in line with national expectations. In some subjects, they are making more than expected progress because teachers set them demanding work and quickly move them on in their learning. However, this is not yet consistent practice in all subjects.
- Pupils leave the academy well prepared for the next stage in their education, employment or training. A higher-than-average proportion progress to a sixth form or college placement at the end of Year 11.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- Capital 6, the academy's sixth form, runs academic subjects at level 3 and vocational courses at levels 2 and 3. Learners have the option to mix vocational and academic subjects. Learners who wish to study economics or Spanish do so at Queens Park Community School.
- Learners typically enter the sixth form with grades below the national average. As a result, the progress of learners studying A levels and AS levels has been below average. The academy now ensures that learners taking academic subjects have the appropriate grade at GCSE in the subjects they are studying.
- In 2015, the progress made by learners taking both AS and A levels improved and is in line with the national average. The proportion of learners gaining both A* to E and A* to B grades at A level also improved. Attainment at AS level also improved. Assessment information and the work of current learners indicate that they are continuing to make strong progress in almost all subjects.
- The progress of learners taking level 3 vocational qualifications continues to be well above average. The proportion of learners attaining the highest distinction* and distinction grades is above average. A high percentage of learners progress to university from these courses.
- The provision for learners who need to re-take their GCSE in English and mathematics is highly effective. As a result, the proportion who gain above a grade C in English is above that nationally. In mathematics, it is in line with the national average.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good because teachers have high expectations of the learners. They have detailed knowledge of the examination requirements and provide learners with plenty of opportunity to practise questions and techniques. Teachers provide learners with focused feedback which allows them to deepen their learning. Inspectors saw examples of learners being set challenging work both in lessons and as part of their work scrutinies.
- Retention rates have improved since the last inspection. Learners who complete their Level 2 course at the

end of Year 12 either progress to level 3 qualifications at Capital 6, or on to further education or training.

- Learners receive effective independent careers advice and support with their university applications. They have the opportunity to visit careers fairs and universities. Almost all learners spoken to commented that teachers were providing good support with their current university applications. All Year 13 learners are encouraged to apply to university and the proportion going on the university has increased yearly since the academy opened.
- In 2015, virtually all learners who left Year 13 went on to higher education, training or employment. Those who did not are taking a gap year. Almost all learners progressed to university, including a small number who went to the top Russell group universities.
- The head of sixth form provides good leadership. As a result, achievement has improved rapidly. Learners' progress is monitored closely and support is available for those who may fall behind so that they can quickly catch up.
- Learners all have the opportunity to participate in work experience and most undertake activities related to their career interest or course choice. All learners studying level 2 vocational subjects spend a day a week in a work placement. Their progress and attendance is closely monitored. The academy is currently looking at developing its work experience offer, especially for those on academic courses.
- The vast majority of sixth form learners have a mature approach to their studies. They are highly ambitious and as a result they use their study time well. The learners are confident and are largely positive about their experiences at the academy. They provide a good role model for younger pupils.
- Learners' personal and employability skills are developed well and promoted through the academy's community and volunteering programme along with leadership opportunities.
- Learners have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They understand the risks associated with the internet, radicalisation and extremism. They receive advice about health issues, although some learners said they would appreciate more advice in this area.

School details

Unique reference number	134226
Local authority	Brent
Inspection number	10002545

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,175
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Garth Crooks OBE
Principal	Alex Thomas
Telephone number	020 8838 8700
Website	www.capitalcityacademy.org/
Email address	admin@capitalcityacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	21–22 January 2014

Information about this academy

- The academy is larger than the average-sized secondary school with a sixth form.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The sixth form is in a consortium with Queens Park Community School.
- The academy met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 11.
- At the time of the inspection of the academy, no pupils were being educated off site in alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 30 lessons to observe learning. Senior staff accompanied inspectors for 21 of these observations. The inspectors also looked at the work in pupils' books in lessons and conducted two work scrutinies. Inspectors completed 13 learning walks to look at learning across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors visited two reading support sessions where they listened to groups of Year 7 pupils read and talked with them about their reading.
- A formal discussion was held with a group of pupils, along with informal conversations with others at break and lunchtime. Inspectors also considered the 34 responses to the pupil online questionnaire.
- A range of documents were examined, including the academy's analysis of its own work and its improvement plan, information on pupils' academic progress, and documents relating to the quality of teaching, staff training, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Discussions were held with the Principal, senior leaders, subject leaders, head of sixth form, four members of the governing body and the academy's improvement adviser.
- The inspection team took account of the 39 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the academy's own parental surveys.
- The inspection team received and considered the views of the 101 staff who completed questionnaires.

Inspection team

Caroline Parry, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Janet Shadick	Ofsted Inspector
Niall Gallagher	Ofsted Inspector
Amy Jackson	Ofsted Inspector
Dennis Canty	Ofsted Inspector

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