

Acland Burghley School

Burghley Road, London NW5 1UJ

Inspection dates

9–10 February 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Not enough pupils are making good progress across a wide range of subjects. Too many pupils underachieved in 2015 in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- Too many pupils are not achieving well enough in mathematics, because their learning needs are not identified.
- Teaching does not consistently support pupils to make good progress. The most able are not always challenged sufficiently well.
- Some teachers do not provide specific advice for pupils about how to improve their work, and check that pupils respond.
- Not all teachers have high enough expectations of what sixth-form learners are capable of achieving.
- Pupils are not given enough chances to think more deeply about their learning through good-quality questioning that engages them well.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are not always strong enough in lessons. Not all teachers implement the school's behaviour expectations.
- Leadership and management require improvement because gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and their peers have not narrowed fast enough.
- Subject leaders are not equally skilful in using information about pupils' progress to improve teaching and raise achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- The leadership of the new headteacher is a key strength. He is ably supported by a new and effective senior team.
- Governors have been instrumental in successfully tackling underperformance.
- The school's leadership is successfully changing the culture of the school. Teaching and standards are improving, especially in English.
- The capacity to improve further is strong.
- Rich learning experiences improve the skills and confidence of pupils in 'The Base'.
- Parents are strongly supportive of the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure good outcomes for all pupils in mathematics by identifying learning needs with greater precision and adjusting teaching accordingly.
- Improve the quality of teaching across the school by ensuring that:
 - the most-able pupils are set appropriately challenging work in all subjects
 - all teachers raise their expectations of what all pupils are capable of achieving
 - teachers' written and verbal feedback informs pupils how to make further progress, and teachers check that pupils respond to it
 - teaching interests and engages pupils, in particular through effective questioning that enables pupils to think more deeply about their learning.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and their peers are narrowed significantly in English and mathematics
 - all subject leaders are skilful in using pupils' progress information to act quickly to prevent pupils from falling behind
 - all teachers implement the school's behaviour for learning expectations consistently well.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable throughout the school to enhance the rate of pupils' progress as it needs to. As a result, too many pupils underachieved in English and mathematics in the previous year, in particular disadvantaged pupils and those of White British heritage.
- Some subject leaders, including those who are new to their posts, do not have the training and skills to use pupils' progress information effectively to drive improvements in teaching and achievement quickly enough. A strong team of senior leaders recently in post understand this and they are currently coaching and mentoring their subject leader colleagues with early signs of positive impact.
- The recently appointed headteacher and associate headteacher know exactly what needs doing. They have evaluated very accurately the school's performance and are addressing head-on the issues that are barriers to improvement. These include weaknesses in mathematics, which is a major priority for the school, and teaching and outcomes for pupils. Effective systems have been put into place to check all aspects of the school's work and to help it improve, demonstrating a strong capacity to improve.
- Leaders, including governors, are beginning to make significant progress in changing the culture of the school and the aspirations of its pupils. Many pupils told the inspectors how aspects of the school have improved, including teaching and behaviour, and how this is helping them to be ambitious for their future and to expect more of themselves.
- As a result of the underachievement of disadvantaged pupils, leaders have taken a long hard look at how pupil premium funding is being spent so as to maximise its impact and ensure best value for money. The residentials they have attended over the weekend have given them greater confidence as learners, and have helped to instill a sense of ambition. Although there are still gaps in achievement in both English and mathematics, disadvantaged pupils are currently achieving better than last year, including in Year 11.
- The school has prepared appropriately for the new curriculum and is in the process of organising it to ensure the best coverage of academic learning and pupils' readiness for life after school. A more diverse range of courses in Key Stage 4 than previously matches pupils' abilities and aspirations well. For example, leastable pupils have courses to suit their specific abilities.
- The school ensures that pupils develop skills and knowledge for life, through careers information and guidance and through teaching about safety and lifestyle choices. A wide range of sports, music and arts programmes enrich pupils' learning experience outside school hours.
- The school checks safeguarding procedures robustly and has thorough checks in place to keep pupils safe, including those who learn off site. The behaviour, attendance and progress of the few pupils who learn off site are also checked effectively.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is promoted well. It includes British values, which are modelled well by staff and also promoted through assemblies and lessons. Pupils understand the importance of democracy in a fair society through, for example, taking part in elections to school council posts. Through these aspects, the school is focusing on fostering good, positive relations.
- All parents who completed the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that they would recommend this school to others. Staff do not tolerate any form of discrimination. However, not all pupils yet have an equal chance of success in school because teaching is not yet good and achievement gaps have not narrowed fast enough.
- The school has benefited from the effective quality assurance work undertaken by the local authority and the support brokered with a local primary teaching school for improving teaching in Key Stage 3 mathematics. The recommendations provided have helped leaders to focus on the right priorities.
- **The governance of the school**
 - There have been significant changes to the governing body since the previous inspection, resulting in a very clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Governors know that teaching needs to improve and where the weaknesses are, and check that leaders are addressing this.
 - They regularly challenge school leaders about the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and those of White British heritage. The level of challenge is sharp because governors have a well-developed understanding of the school's performance compared with other schools.

- Since the previous inspection, the school has had two reviews of the provision for disadvantaged pupils and its impact, the most recent one in December 2015. Governors have ensured that key recommendations have been put into practice, and regularly check the impact of actions. The right mix of support and challenge has helped leaders to maintain a sharp focus on narrowing achievement gaps, although much work remains to be done.
- Governors understand the value of staff targets in improving teaching, and ensure that financial reward is based firmly on performance. They check that any underachieving teachers get the support they need.
- Strong support has been provided to the headteacher for balancing the books and ensuring that school finances are sound.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders engage well with parents and a range of external partners to identify potential risks to health and keep pupils free from harm.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teaching has not ensured that all pupils make good progress.
- Teachers do not always help pupils to think deeply enough about their work, or check their pupils' understanding. Pupils' responses to their questions are often too brief, because teachers do not always encourage them to give the fuller, more detailed responses that would help them to extend and deepen their understanding.
- Teachers do not always plan activities that are well matched to the learning needs of the most-able pupils, building on what they already know and can do. As a result, the most-able pupils sometimes find the work too easy and become bored, making slow progress.
- Sometimes teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils, including the least able and those of average ability, are capable of achieving. As a result, pupils' progress, as seen in some lessons and in the lack of evidence of progress in some pupils' work, is limited.
- The quality of marking and feedback to pupils varies across the school, although it has improved since the previous inspection. There are examples of strong practice in many subjects of both written and verbal feedback, having the desired impact of consolidating and deepening learning. On the other hand, too many teachers do not give enough feedback to pupils about their work and so pupils do not know how they can improve, and their progress suffers as a result.
- There are many pockets of good practice in the school across a wide range of subjects, indicating that the quality of teaching and learning is improving. In English, for example, better teaching has resulted in improved attitudes to learning, and stronger progress. Teachers are more skilful in assessing understanding and using the information to improve pupils' skills in using the power of language to communicate different messages.
- There is inconsistency in the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics. Although it is improving, the learning needs of pupils are not always identified well enough in lessons, and teaching adjusted to meet these needs more precisely. As a consequence, sometimes pupils carry with them some misconceptions that may limit future learning and progress.
- Teaching assistants are mostly effective in supporting those pupils who need additional help in understanding what they are taught, including those in 'The Base', so that they make secure progress.
- Pupils' chances of strengthening their literacy skills in lessons other than English are improving: for example, in the humanities subjects inspectors saw good examples of pupils extending their imaginative writing skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils in all key stages have a good understanding of different types of bullying, particularly cyber bullying. For their age they have a reasonable awareness of the sort of prejudices which lead to bullying, such as homophobia.

- Pupils know about the dangers of grooming and child sexual exploitation which helps to ensure that they are well informed and prepared for their lives after school. Their knowledge of the dangers of extremist views and radicalisation is sound and rapidly improving as a result of the school's focus on this aspect of safeguarding.
- Pupils feel safe in school because of the security of the site and the strength of the help and support they get from the staff.
- Attendance is improving and getting closer to the national average, because of much improved and thorough systems established by leaders for checking on it. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has fallen because of similarly good procedures.
- Pupils who learn off site stay safe because staff visit them frequently to check on their welfare and progress. Their attendance, which has improved, is checked on daily by the school.
- Some pupils say they are not given enough opportunities to shape the direction of the school and want to be involved at a deeper level.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Not all pupils have good attitudes to learning. If they do not find learning interesting, do not have enough work to do or their work is too easy, some pupils become inattentive, chatter and distract others from their work.
- By contrast, pupils work hard and learn well when teaching is good and work matches their abilities, for example in 'The Base'.
- Pupils say that behaviour in lessons has improved in the past 18 months and is better than it was at the time of the previous inspection. Most pupils know what is expected of them, and more staff use the behaviour policy promptly and to good effect. As a result, the number of fixed-term exclusions has more than halved. However, some teachers set the bar too low and do not implement the school's behaviour-for-learning expectations well enough.
- The behaviour of pupils who learn off site has improved because they like the work that they are given.
- Most pupils take pride in their work and move around the school in an orderly way. The sprawling site is not an easy one to manage and the level of supervision is good.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils do not consistently learn well. Standards were only broadly average in 2015. The proportion of pupils achieving five A* to C grades, including in English and mathematics, at the end of Year 11 have been close to the national average. However, in relation to their above-average starting points in Year 7, many pupils underachieved in English and mathematics because teaching had been too variable.
- This year, the school's sharper checking of pupils' progress coupled with improved teaching has ensured that a higher proportion of pupils are on track to achieve well than previously. This includes disadvantaged pupils and White British pupils, key groups that underachieved last year.
- Overall, pupils make better progress in English than in mathematics, although the rate of progress is improving in Key Stage 3. Progress is slower in mathematics because of the gaps in pupils' learning.
- White British pupils are making better progress in both English and mathematics this year, but it is not yet consistently good. There are good examples of more focused teaching taking account of these pupils' interests in a range of subjects, resulting in higher levels of motivation for this group.
- A higher proportion of the most-able pupils achieved the top grades across a wide range of subjects in 2015 than they did in the previous year. The school's current information, supported by evidence in pupils' work, indicates that this modest increase is on track to rise further in 2016.
- Disadvantaged pupils made slower rates of progress in 2015 by the end of Year 11 than their peers. They performed a grade behind other pupils in English and were around one and a third grades behind them in mathematics by the end of Year 11. Compared with other pupils nationally, the gap in standards was the equivalent of a whole GCSE grade in English and mathematics.
- The school has ensured that support matches the different needs of disadvantaged pupils more closely, for example by providing them with help to improve specific skills in literacy and mathematics. The indications this year are that rates of progress of disadvantaged pupils in Year 11, particularly in English, are set to improve. The standards of other pupils have also improved. However, gaps in achievement still remain.

- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make similar progress to their peers. Their achievement, and that of those who speak English as an additional language at Key Stage 4, is closely checked and additional support is in place to assist them in their learning.
- The school does not enter pupils early for GCSE examinations in English and mathematics.
- Pupils in 'The Base' make good progress because the adults who work with them understand them and how to address their learning needs. Pupils who attend other colleges for part of their education make steady progress in subjects like construction that have strong links to a range of work-related skills.

16 to 19 study programmes

require improvement

- The quality and range of feedback provided by teachers do not always help learners to make maximum progress. Sometimes, teaching is characterised by activities that are not sufficiently tailored to stretch and challenge learners, especially the most able.
- Occasionally, teachers' use of questions does not probe learners' understanding well enough. This sometimes puts a limit on how much progress learners are capable of making.
- Learners' behaviour and personal development are good. Learners work well in groups, listen to one another's ideas and conduct themselves well during independent study time. Learners are polite and courteous. Speaking to inspectors, they say they enjoy their time in the sixth form and feel safe.
- Many learners value the additional support they receive from staff. This includes guidance and support about the next stage of their study, applying for apprenticeships, preparing for further education or seeking employment.
- The leadership and management of the sixth form are effective in promoting high aspirations and self-esteem. This ensures that most learners succeed. The sharper focus on improving standards of teaching in the classroom is ensuring that learning is planned with a clear purpose and is interesting. This is leading to rising achievement and attainment levels in many subjects and for most groups of learners.
- Standards improved in 2015 both at AS and A level, reflected in better progress in both academic and practical subjects. By being a part of the local LaSWAP sixth-form consortium, the school is able to provide a better range of subjects for learners than it could offer on its own. Nevertheless, the school is currently undertaking a review of its offer to further improve provision and choices.
- Learners in the sixth form who have not achieved at least a grade C in GCSE English and/or mathematics are provided with weekly tutorials to prepare for these examinations. Most of these learners are now working at a grade C standard.

School details

Unique reference number	100053
Local authority	Camden
Inspection number	10008140

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	981
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Clark
Headteacher	Nicholas John
Telephone number	020 7485 8515
Website	http://www.aclandburghley.camden.sch.uk
Email address	genadmin@aclandburghley.camden.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 September 2013

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average secondary school. The number of pupils on roll is lower than it was at the time of the previous inspection.
- Approximately two-fifths of pupils are White British. A significant proportion of pupils are from other White backgrounds, White and Black Caribbean, and other Black backgrounds. Several other minority ethnic groups are represented in the school.
- Around one-third of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- A well-above-average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average.
- The school has seven pupils attending off-site alternative provision at Kings Cross Construction Centre, The Royal Free Hospital School, Westminster Kingsway College or Symonds House.
- The school is part of the LaSWAP sixth-form consortium, which is a collaboration of four local schools.
- The school has a small unit for pupils with an education, health and care plan, called 'The Base'. There are currently 22 pupils supported by this unit from Years 7 to 11.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' performance.
- The previous headteacher resigned in March 2014. The school was led for 18 months by an executive headteacher who is a national leader of education and head of a good local school, Parliament Hill. A substantive headteacher was appointed in September 2015.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in parts of 40 lessons, four of which were visited jointly with school leaders. In addition, inspectors scrutinised pupils' books and looked at how pupils were learning across a range of subjects.
- Meetings were held with four groups of pupils, four governors, including the chair of the governing body, the local authority's school improvement advisers and school staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents. These included the school's attainment and progress information, planning and monitoring documentation, the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation summary, the safeguarding policies, and behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors took account of the 130 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about the school's work and listened to some pupils read.

Inspection team

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