

# Bexleyheath Academy

Woolwich Road, Bexleyheath DA6 7DA

## Inspection dates

4–5 May 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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Expectations of teaching quality and pupils' academic outcomes are not consistently high. As a result, leaders and members of the local governing board have not maintained good-quality teaching and pupils' good outcomes since the previous inspection.
- In 2015, too few pupils achieved five GCSEs at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics.
- Outcomes for pupils currently in Years 7 to 11 require improvement. Rates of progress for all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability, are variable.
- Senior and middle leaders are not consistently effective in securing improvements quickly and checking that they have the necessary impact on pupils' outcomes.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent. Tasks are not well matched to pupils' needs, including those with special educational needs or disability. Teachers' expectations of the standard and quality of pupils' work, including presentation, are not consistently demanding.
- Leaders have not made sure that assessments of pupils' learning are reliable. When assessments are over-positive, the school does not have a fully accurate view of its overall effectiveness.
- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement, particularly during unsupervised times. Pupils do not attend as regularly and on time as they should.

### The school has the following strengths

- Since joining the school, the principal has taken swift action to deal with challenging circumstances. Working effectively together with the local governing board, she has made sure a culture now exists to promote the safety of all pupils. Safeguarding is effective.
- The 16 to 19 study programme is good. Students make strong progress because teaching is good.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are good.

## Full report

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

- Improve pupils' outcomes by ensuring that:
  - all pupils make good or better progress, including those who have special educational needs or disability, and disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - expectations of all aspects of the school's work are consistently high
  - actions to secure improvement are measured by their impact on pupils' raised outcomes.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
  - assessment information is accurate and is used effectively to set pupils suitably demanding tasks
  - teachers have high expectations of the standards and quality of pupils' work.
- Improve the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils by ensuring that:
  - pupils' attendance rates and punctuality increase
  - pupils behave sensibly at all times

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be considered to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Since joining the school, the principal has worked together with senior leaders and the local governing board to secure improvements and provide stability during challenging circumstances. She has taken effective action in response to the disappointing key stage 4 results of 2015. Rates of progress are improving but inconsistency remains in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and pupils' outcomes.
- The principal has introduced a number of initiatives to increase consistency in teaching, learning and assessment across the school. These are not embedded sufficiently to show a sustained impact on improving pupils' progress. For example, inaccuracies remain in teachers' assessment of pupils' learning and progress. The impact of senior and middle leaders on improving teaching is variable across the school. Leaders have not made sure that teachers assess pupils' work carefully enough. As a result, pupils in some classes are not making as much progress as leaders believe them to be, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability.
- When leaders do not measure the effectiveness of new systems by their impact on pupils' better outcomes, or check the reliability of assessment information, the rate of improvement is hindered.
- Additional funding for lower-attaining pupils in Year 7 provides a range of support. This helps selected pupils to catch up with their peers.
- In the past, leaders have not used the pupil premium to support disadvantaged pupils effectively. Leaders and members of the local governing board have rightly introduced recent changes to the way the funding is used. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is improving but the funding is not used effectively in enabling these pupils to make as much progress as possible.
- Leaders use a more effective system than in the past to manage the performance of teachers. Where weaknesses in the quality of teaching exist, additional support and coaching are provided. Professional training courses help teachers to develop effective teaching skills. Newly qualified teachers noticeably understand their roles and responsibilities in securing good outcomes for pupils. However, leaders have not ensured that teachers have equally high expectations across the school.
- The curriculum is broad and includes vocational opportunities that meet pupils' needs. Extra-curricular activities promote pupils' good personal development and are popular. These include sport, art, music and leadership skills.
- The school's ethos, 'CARES' (creativity, aspiration, resilience, empathy and scholarship) promotes fundamental British values of respect and tolerance strongly and fosters pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully. Pupils are adequately prepared for their future lives in modern Britain through personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE).
- Selected pupils attend alternative provision outside the school that is closely tailored to their needs. Leaders check the quality of alternative provision and that pupils are safe. They measure the progress these pupils make, and ensure that they do not fall behind.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Members of the local governing board have worked closely with the principal since she joined the school and are more effective than in the past in helping the school to improve. The local governing board has responded well to significant human resource issues and financial challenges since the last inspection. The local governing board is strongly supported by the London Academies Enterprise Trust to meet their statutory duties. A new committee structure has been established and governors check the quality of the school's work and challenge it to improve rapidly.
  - Governors visit the school regularly and are well informed about the aspects of the school that require improvement. They recognise that the recent results at the end of Year 11 were too low and acknowledge that the use of pupil premium funding has not been fully effective. Governors are now focused on not allowing the weaknesses of the past to reoccur. They use all the information available to them to hold leaders to account and ask probing questions. Governors do not underestimate the challenges that are still to be faced in order to ensure that all pupils, including those who have special educational needs or disability and disadvantaged pupils, achieve well.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The principal, the leadership team and members of the local governing board have improved the culture of safeguarding across the school. Any incident is carefully recorded and action is taken swiftly to address concerns should they arise. Leaders work closely with parents and carers regarding safeguarding issues. Staff are regularly trained in a range of safeguarding aspects to ensure that they know how to recognise the potential signs of abuse and neglect. They have a thorough knowledge of the 'Prevent' duty and current guidance regarding female genital mutilation.
- The single central record and arrangements for checking the suitability of staff to work with children meet requirements. The academy trust undertakes additional recruitment background checks when recruiting staff. The medical room is well supervised and carefully monitored. Any matters that arise are sensitively dealt with to make sure that all pupils are supported and safe.
- Members of the local governing board have attended training on safeguarding including safer recruitment. Governors have checked the school's safeguarding procedures and practices through an independent audit. The school's policies and risk assessment procedures are thorough. The school works closely with the local authority in close partnership with external agencies including the police to safeguard pupils.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment** requires improvement

- The assessment of pupils' progress is unreliable. Leaders have not made sure that the assessment of pupils' work identifies where improvement is needed. Consequently, the information gathered on the progress pupils make is often over-positive. It does not support teachers in setting pupils appropriately demanding work. Teachers do not use questioning effectively to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. Some over-reliance exists on the responses of most-able pupils to articulate their answers while others listen. Consequently, there are times when pupils are not stretched enough to develop their ideas and use of vocabulary.
- Teachers' expectations of the standards pupils can achieve are varied and are often not ambitious enough. In a number of books seen by inspectors, the quality and presentation of pupils' work over a sustained period was poor and left unchallenged by teachers.
- The contribution that teaching assistants make to pupils' learning is variable. Their impact on pupils' progress is hindered, because assessments are not used well enough, particularly for those who have special educational needs or disability. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs or disability are not consistently well supported to make swift progress.
- Teachers' feedback on pupils' work in Years 7 to 11 does not typically make clear to pupils how to improve. Students in the 16 to 19 study programmes value the feedback they receive from teachers because it is effective in making clear how they can develop their learning.
- Teachers' strong subject knowledge in some subjects enables pupils to develop their own ideas. For example, in ethics, geography and psychology, pupils express their ideas well when they debate and discuss topical issues.
- Selected pupils in Years 7 to 11 attend regular English and mathematics catch-up and enrichment sessions to support their basic literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, these pupils now make better progress than in the past.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the sixth form is consistently good and enables students to make good progress from their starting points.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare** requires improvement

#### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good, including for pupils in alternative provision. The school works well with external agencies, including the police safer schools team to support pupils and their families.
- Members of staff receive high-quality training in order to help pupils keep safe. Leaders ensure that there are close links with the 'parent forum' and activities such as fundraising and social events that support what is considered by some parents as a 'family feeling' at the school.

- Pupils are confident and self-assured. They are respectful to each other and are happy to talk to adults about their feelings or concerns. Students in the 16 to 19 study programmes told inspectors how much they value PSHEE sessions on wide-ranging issues such as sexual relationships and personal safety.
- The majority of pupils across the school feel safe and are aware how to keep safe from bullying and sexting. They understand e-safety and how to keep safe when using information and computing technology. The pupils' 'executive council' and 'heads of house' follow up any concerns that arise.
- Pupils in key stages 3 and 4, and students in the 16 to 19 study programmes, benefit from good careers advice, the school's close links with employer partners, and guidance to make well-informed subject and career choices. A very high proportion progress on to their chosen next stage in education or training successfully.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. A few pupils take too long to arrive at their next lesson at lesson change times. Some do not attend regularly or arrive on time at the start of the day. As a result, attendance rates and punctuality are not as high as they should be. Pupils in alternative provision attend regularly.
- The school has efficient systems in place to manage attendance and follow up latecomers. There are signs of improvement but attendance remains below average and the number of pupils who are persistently absent is higher than expected.
- Fixed-term exclusions have increased. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability are over-represented in these figures. Permanent exclusions have risen since the last inspection because behaviour when pupils are not supervised by staff requires improvement. The majority of pupils demonstrate positive attitudes in the school. The behaviour of pupils receiving their education in alternative provision is closely monitored and generally good.
- Behaviour in lessons is generally good and during the inspection pupils were well behaved. Those pupils and staff who spoke with inspectors agree that behaviour has improved. A high proportion of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, share this view.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

### **require improvement**

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because pupils' progress is variable. Inconsistency in the use of assessment information hinders the progress pupils make.
- In 2015, too few pupils achieved five GCSEs at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils in Year 11 did not make the same progress in English and mathematics as other pupils nationally in 2015. Disadvantaged pupils currently at the school now make faster progress. Performance gaps are closing between disadvantaged pupils and the others at the school. However, they remain variable in some year groups.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability do not make rapid progress from their starting points. While progress is improving for these pupils, leaders have not made sure that all pupils who have special educational needs or disability are well supported and catch up.
- The school's work to support current cohorts to achieve better results in GCSE and vocational courses is much improved. Standards of work have improved since the last published results because more pupils now make better progress, particularly in Year 11. This is linked to the targeted support to develop examination techniques and identify gaps in pupils' learning. Current work suggests that pupils in Year 11 are on track to achieve better GCSE examination results, and pupils are better prepared for the next stage in their education than in the recent past.
- The most-able pupils currently at the school are now more assured of achieving the higher examination results of which they are capable. Work in pupils' books in a number of subjects shows that the most-able pupils are challenged to deepen their learning so their progress is often better than the others.
- Pupils who study courses in alternative provision make progress in line with their peers. They are well supported by leaders to move to their next stage of education or employment successfully.
- Students in the 16 to 19 study programmes make good progress from their starting points and achieve well.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- Leadership and management of the sixth form is good. Leaders are clearly aware of the progress of students. They have introduced effective solutions to address underperformance. The entry requirements to study in the 16 to 19 study programmes have been increased. The published results in 2015 were better than 2014, and progress was in the top 25% nationally. A high proportion of students who received support to retake English and mathematics achieved good grades at GCSE.
- Those students who are disadvantaged, those who have special educational needs or disability, and the most able progress well and meet expectations when they leave the sixth form. Outcomes for these groups are stronger at the end of key stage 5, in comparison to those in key stage 4, because teaching is good.
- The school's own assessment information and validated assessments indicate that current students completing vocational and advanced-level courses are on track to exceed their targets.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the sixth form is stronger than in other areas of the school. Teachers' secure subject knowledge challenges students to progress well. Teachers' skilful questioning deepens students' understanding and develops their discussion skills although, occasionally, the variety of vocabulary used by some students when talking about their subject understanding is limited.
- The provision of effective careers advice and guidance in the sixth form is a particular strength. As a result, far more students now proceed from Year 12 into Year 13. This figure has increased from 28.8% to 58%. Furthermore, only 1% of students fail to progress onto destinations which do not include higher education or employment.
- Students in the sixth form benefit from a broad curriculum. PSHEE is taught to all students to promote tolerance, respect and diversity. Students told inspectors that they are well aware of issues such as driving safety and healthy lifestyles. The study programmes are varied to meet the needs of students.
- Students are supported in their application to higher education and valuable links with employers support work experience and apprenticeship choices. Enrichment activities support the broader personal development of students and provide opportunities for them to contribute positively to the school.
- Safeguarding in the sixth form is a priority. Leaders have introduced a range of systems and procedures to monitor and promote a culture of safeguarding. Students have a good understanding of keeping safe. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is positive. Students respect the dress code and relate well to their peers and other adults.
- Leaders have introduced new systems to improve security in the sixth form. All students have lanyards and attendance is closely monitored. Leaders rightly recognise that attendance in the sixth form is below the school's own target. However, they have taken effective action to challenge students who fail to attend regularly and reward those who do.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137138
<b>Local authority</b>	London Borough of Bexley
<b>Inspection number</b>	10017334

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1418
<b>Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes</b>	200
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local governing board
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Irene Holliss
<b>Principal</b>	Mrs Jan Atkinson
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8303 5696
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bexleyheathacademy.org/home">www.bexleyheathacademy.org/home</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:info@bexleyheathacademy.org">info@bexleyheathacademy.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	18–19 September 2013

## Information about this school

- The school is larger than most secondary schools and has a substantial sixth form. Its sponsors are the London Academies Enterprise Trust. It has non-selective entry requirements in an area where many schools are selective grammar schools.
- More than a third of pupils are known to be eligible for additional government funding, including the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding. This is above the national average.
- While the school is a culturally and ethnically diverse community, only 12% of pupils speak English as an additional acquired language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is higher than average.
- The school's sixth-form curriculum is extended through partnerships with employers.
- Vocational courses are available to pupils in Years 10 and 11, including hairdressing and construction.
- In 2015, the school failed to meet the government's floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 38 part-lessons, many jointly with a member of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also attended tutor-group sessions and a Year 8 assembly. They discussed learning in the lessons jointly visited with senior leaders and observed their feedback to staff.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, senior and middle leaders, a range of staff, including newly qualified teachers, and groups of pupils. Discussions took place with a representative from the parent forum, the chief executive of the academy trust, a human resources director and the chair of the local governing board. Inspectors also held discussions with the regional director of the academy trust, two academy trust advisers, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation including the work of pupils and students, assessment information, the school's self-evaluation, and records relating to the quality of teaching and the management of teachers' performance. Inspectors also reviewed records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, and checked the school's records relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took into account 97 parents' responses to Parent View, and the views of staff and pupils.

## Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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