

# The Bushey Academy

London Road, Bushey, Hertfordshire WD23 3AA

## Inspection dates

15–16 May 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and governors have not established acceptable standards of behaviour. A significant group of pupils do not attend or behave as well as they should and the improvements made by school leaders have not had sufficient impact. Consequently, pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are inadequate.
- Too many lessons are disrupted by poor behaviour. Adults do not deal consistently well with the significant minority of pupils who do not have positive attitudes to learning. As a result, learning is often interrupted.
- Staff do not consistently apply the school's behaviour policy. As a result, behaviour across the school is not improving quickly enough.
- Some pupils and parents do not have confidence that staff will deal with their concerns about bullying.
- Leaders have not ensured good teaching, learning and assessment. Not enough importance has been put on the impact of teaching on increasing pupils' achievement.
- Teachers do not use assessment consistently well to plan suitable activities that meet all pupils' needs. Too often, pupils are set work that is too easy or too hard.
- Teachers do not use questioning well enough so that pupils deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop skills that they can use across a range of subjects.
- Middle leadership is underdeveloped. Subject leaders do not have a grasp of the standards in the areas they lead, or how to steer improvement.

### The school has the following strengths

- The sixth form provides a good standard of education. Teaching is strong, and outcomes are improving.
- The new headteacher, the trust and governors have demonstrated that they know what needs to be done to improve the school.
- Suitable improvements are being made to teaching and pupil outcomes. Stronger teaching is improving pupils' progress across year groups and subjects.
- Pupils' attitudes towards reading are improving and standards in reading are rising.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

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

- Improve the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils by:
  - leaders establishing a culture of high expectations of behaviour and developing pupils' pride in their school
  - ensuring that staff consistently apply the school's behaviour policy and rigorously tackle all incidents of disruption
  - raising pupils' aspirations so they demonstrate consistently positive attitudes towards their learning
  - ensuring that all pupils and parents have confidence that leaders deal effectively with issues of bullying.
- Improve pupils' attendance and reduce persistent absence so it is at least in line with the national average.
- Raise pupils' achievement by improving the quality of teaching so that:
  - teachers consistently plan activities that are well matched to their pupils' learning needs and interests
  - teachers' questioning enables pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding across all subjects
  - all teachers consistently apply the school's assessment and feedback policy so that pupils understand how to improve their work
  - pupils' attitudes to learning improve so that they see the relevance of acquiring skills that will enable them to learn effectively across a range of subjects.
- Increase the impact and effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - quickly establishing a consistent and effective approach to behaviour management
  - ensuring that the monitoring of teaching improves classroom provision and accelerates pupils' learning and progress
  - developing the roles and responsibilities of middle leaders so that they play a full part in steering school improvement.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The good standard of behaviour that was found at the previous inspection has declined to inadequate. A significant proportion of pupils, parents and staff do not have confidence that leaders deal with issues of poor behaviour well enough. Many pupils spoken to consider that adults do not deal consistently or fairly with incidents of poor behaviour, even though inspection evidence shows that incidents of misbehaviour are slowly declining.
- The principal has been in post for only 13 months. He has correctly identified priorities and has taken suitable steps to strengthen provision across the school. However, as most of this has been in place only since the start of this academic year, it is too early to see the full impact on improving the standard of behaviour, the consistency and quality of teaching, learning and pupils' outcomes.
- New leaders are challenging some adults' low expectations and the evident inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. However, their actions have had only limited impact, particularly in terms of increasing pupils' progress. Leaders continue to face challenges in teacher recruitment to key subject areas.
- Leaders have not ensured that groups of pupils make sufficient progress, particularly pupils who are vulnerable. Some pupils do not attend school well enough to make the progress that they should. The steps taken to raise pupils' attendance and achievement have not had sufficient impact. Attainment by the end of key stage 4 has been below average.
- In the past, the curriculum has not met the needs of pupils well enough. Recently, leaders have modified the curriculum to suit the needs of the pupils better, especially in key stage 3. This allows pupils to develop knowledge and skills in the full range of subjects. A further and full review of the curriculum is planned for key stages 4 and 5 so that pupils can follow examination courses that are better suited to their needs.
- Teachers are increasingly held to account for the quality of their work. New teachers, and those who require support, are now provided with the training required to improve their practice. However, when monitoring the quality of teaching, leaders have not been rigorous enough in checking the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress.
- Most staff who responded to the staff online survey are proud to work at the school and state that pupils are safe.
- The views of the small number of parents who completed the online Parent View questionnaire are mixed. Around one half of respondents would recommend the school to others or consider the school to be well led and managed. Leaders are aware that there is a need to improve relationships with parents. One parent commented that they value the parent partners forum because 'it is a good way to find out about the school and be part of the decision-making process'.

- Leaders have appointed a number of new heads of subjects. Although some subject leaders have a detailed understanding of the quality of provision within their departments, senior leaders have identified the need to develop subject leader skills so that all subject leaders can effectively contribute to raising standards.
- The school is using additional funds, such as the pupil premium, increasingly well. Different strategies and interventions improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in Years 7 and 8. Older pupils receive support with their learning and all pupils have full access to trips and visits. However, leaders' analysis of the impact of spending on pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics is not evaluated in enough depth. Leaders do not know the difference that additional funds make on improving pupils' outcomes or on increasing the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.
- Additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is being used to provide strategies and interventions to support the differing needs of individual pupils. Where this happens, parents are positive about the quality of support that their child receives. One commented, 'As a result of receiving the right resources my child has made good progress and is now following the higher GCSE pathway.'
- The use of the literacy and numeracy funding to support Year 7 pupils who did not meet the expected standard at the end of key stage 2 is having a positive impact on improving pupils' attainment. The progress of these pupils, especially in reading, is improving rapidly.
- The multi-academy trust is providing additional support to leaders. They have provided advice and guidance to improve the quality of teaching in English, mathematics and science. As a result, teaching in these subjects is improving and a larger proportion of pupils are making better progress, especially in English and science.
- A range of clubs, sporting activities, trips and visits make a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils especially enjoy taking part in various sports. Pupils have taken part in a number of national and local competitions in a range of subjects. For example, representatives from Year 7 recently took part in the rocket car regional final.

## **Governance of the school**

- There has been a change in the governing body since the previous inspection and new governors appointed have the required skills to perform their roles and responsibilities. However, currently they do not have a sufficiently accurate view of the strengths and areas for improvement. They consider that the standard of pupils' behaviour is stronger than it is.
- Governors communicate high expectations of pupils and staff. They have been trained by the trust to carry out their statutory duties effectively. They understand the standards within the school and are becoming increasingly skilled at challenging senior leaders and holding them to account.
- Each governor has a specific responsibility for an area of the school and meets with senior leaders to discuss progress against improvement targets and to view the school in action.
- Governors ensure that policies are up to date and meet the latest statutory guidance.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All the necessary pre-employment checks are carried out on staff and volunteers before they are allowed to work in the school.
- All staff are trained at the appropriate level, and accurate records are kept to ensure that training is kept up to date. All staff understand key aspects of safeguarding such as extremism, radicalisation and child sexual exploitation.
- Staff understand their duty to protect pupils and the procedures they should follow if they have any concerns about a child. Referrals are followed through and made to the appropriate agencies. Records of actions taken are detailed.
- Most pupils spoken to report that they feel safe in school. However, some were concerned about fights which occur and said that they lacked confidence that their concerns would be dealt with effectively. An examination of current school records shows that the school has taken robust and appropriate action when incidents occur.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning over time has not been good enough to make sure that gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding are filled. Adults' expectations of pupils have been too low, mainly because they have not taken note of what pupils have already achieved, and so have not stretched pupils sufficiently.
- Teachers do not apply the school's assessment policy consistently or effectively enough. Consequently, pupils are not always given information about how to improve their work.
- The quality of teachers' questioning is mixed. In some lessons, teachers ask questions that develop pupils' knowledge, resulting in a deeper understanding of the subject. Inspectors saw some first-rate examples of questioning, especially in English and science. However, overall the quality of questioning is not good enough to promote pupils' learning.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. However, not enough teachers use it to match the work to the needs of the pupils or to plan activities that interest pupils. When this occurs, pupils lose interest in their learning and often misbehave.
- Inspectors saw some effective examples of pupils being able to develop a range of skills that they were able to apply across different subjects. This was particularly positive in English lessons where pupils discussed and debated. However, pupils do not have enough of these high-quality opportunities to apply their skills consistently in a range of subjects.
- Literacy is taught well. In most subjects, staff make sure that pupils use and understand subject vocabulary. Inspectors saw many examples of pupils correctly using specialist vocabulary, both in lessons and in pupils' books. Pupils are also provided with the opportunity to read a variety of books and other materials.
- Learning support assistants are generally used well in lessons. Pupils who receive their support make progress as a result of the help they are given because they check pupils' understanding and are able to clarify learning.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Inadequate

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. This is because too many pupils show little respect for one another.
- Some pupils have little faith in staff to resolve issues of bullying. Leaders have records of incidents of bullying and the actions they have taken. However, they have not taken sufficient action to allay the concerns of some parents and pupils that they will take appropriate action when incidents arise.
- A small group of respondents to Parent View do not consider that behaviour is good enough at Bushey Academy. However, there were a few who used the free-text facility to comment positively on other aspects of pupils' welfare and personal development, including the information that pupils receive on drugs awareness and online safety.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors all said that they are taught about keeping themselves safe in a range of situations. For example, pupils know how to keep safe online, they understand different types of bullying and have awareness of the threats of extremism and radicalisation.
- Pupils who use alternative provision attend regularly and the school keeps in contact with the three providers to ensure that the provision continues to meet pupils' needs and that they are making progress.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate. Too few staff consistently apply the school's behaviour policy. Inspectors saw too many incidents of disruption in lessons that were not challenged and, as a result, pupils found it difficult to learn and make progress.
- Leaders and teachers have not established high enough expectations of pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. Disengagement or low-level disruption is common across a range of subject areas and year groups. In some instances, pupils do not respond respectfully to staff who try to apply the behaviour policy.
- There is a significant minority of pupils who make little effort to comply with the school's code of conduct. They show little respect for one another and feel that it is acceptable to use offensive language when talking to one another.
- The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school is well above average. Leaders are working with parents and pupils to re-engage absentees in school. This work is beginning to have an impact on the achievement of some groups of pupils. For example, the attendance of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is improving as persistent absence is reducing. Leaders are aware that further work is required to improve the attendance of other groups of pupils quickly.
- Inspection evidence confirms that there are significant behaviour issues which leaders have identified as part of their school improvement. The recently introduced behaviour strategy is having an impact, but the number of incidents remains too high.
- Some pupils told inspectors that behaviour has improved since the arrival of the new

principal. A few parents commented that leaders and teachers are working very hard to tackle the significant minority of badly behaved pupils.

- Increasingly, pupils arrive to lessons punctually and with the right equipment. They are starting to take pride in their work and in their appearance.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress has been impaired by previous weak teaching and a curriculum that was not designed to meet the needs of the pupils. As a result, the overall progress score of pupils leaving Year 11 in 2017 was below average.
- 2017 results were affected by a small but significant number of pupils failing to take the full range of examinations due to a range of issues that resulted in their non-attendance.
- As a result of actions taken by leaders to recruit teachers, improve teaching and provide a programme of support that addresses the gaps in pupils' learning, outcomes for current pupils are starting to improve.
- Looking at a range of pupils' books across all year groups, inspectors found that progress is improving. This was particularly evident in key stage 4 science, English, humanities and creative arts subjects. In other subjects it was less consistent.
- Due to well-planned provision the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is improving. Inspectors saw evidence of good progress in pupils' books, especially in English, for example where pupils showed a good grasp of the texts they were reading, such as Shakespeare's 'Othello'.
- While the progress of disadvantaged pupils fell to well below average in 2017, the school's own progress information indicates that disadvantaged pupils are now making better progress than in previous years. This was confirmed following a scrutiny of pupils' work. Many disadvantaged pupils are now making more rapid progress in a wide range of subjects.
- Improving pupils' reading skills and fostering a love of reading has been a high priority for senior leaders. Inspection findings indicate that the actions taken by leaders have been effective. This is further confirmed by the fact that the current Year 7 pupils, who left primary school below the expected standard in reading, are now quickly catching up. This is largely because pupils in Years 7 and 8 are reading more books in school and at home. Pupils are reading books that are appropriate to their age and are challenged to read more demanding books.
- Leaders have reviewed and amended careers information, advice and guidance in order to raise pupils' aspirations. A thorough programme of careers advice and guidance is provided for pupils from Year 7. This covers a wide range of appropriate activities, including one-to-one impartial careers advice. However, the proportion of pupils who remain in education, employment or training at the end of Year 11 has been below average. The school's information on the destination of current Year 11 pupils indicates that more pupils have secured further education, training or employment than previous years.



## 16 to 19 study programmes

**Good**

- Students achieve well because teaching is good across the sixth form. Teachers have good subject knowledge which they use to pitch learning at the right level and to deepen students' understanding. Teachers also support students in developing study habits which will prepare them for the next stage in their education, employment or training.
- Students make good progress from their starting points, which are often comparatively low, based on their key stage 4 results. Outcomes in vocational courses are above average.
- Inspection evidence indicates that students currently in the sixth form are making accelerated progress and the proportion attaining higher A-level grades is on track to improve on previous years. The quality of work is thoroughly checked to make sure that teachers are assessing accurately.
- The new head of sixth form, supported by a vice-principal, has correctly identified the priorities for improvement. As a result, new methods of tracking students' progress give them the best chance of success. Leaders' knowledge of individual students, along with tracking results, enable students to receive well-targeted support. Leaders have secured the requirements of the 16 to 19 government regulations.
- Staff have high expectations of students to complete homework and private-study tasks. Students meet these expectations and act upon the advice they are given in order to improve their learning.
- Students take pride in their work. They have a mature attitude towards their studies and most are highly ambitious. They behave well, are smartly dressed and set a positive role model to younger pupils.
- Students are provided with a wide range of activities to develop leadership skills and many take an active role in supporting pupils in the lower school, for example through the reading buddy scheme. Students also have access to relevant work experience.
- Leaders ensure that students receive good-quality specialist careers information and guidance, including special events to raise aspirations. As a result, students are well prepared to make their post-16 choices. All students currently in Year 13 have an offer of a place in education, employment or training. Most of these students have chosen to go to university, including, for example, to top Russell Group universities.
- Students feel safe and are taught how to keep themselves safe. Students told inspectors that the information they are given is useful to them now and in future life.



## School details

Unique reference number	135938
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10054272

This inspection of the school 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 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1105
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	93
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Harmon
Principal	Jon Hebblethwaite
Telephone number	020 8950 9502
Website	<a href="http://www.thebusheyacademy.org">www.thebusheyacademy.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@thebusheyacademy.org">admin@thebusheyacademy.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	11–12 December 2013

## Information about this school

- The Bushey Academy is slightly larger than the average-sized secondary school, with a small sixth form.
- The school is part of the Meller Academy Trust. The school has its own board of governors who report to the board of trustees.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is broadly average. Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The percentage of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is broadly average.

- In 2017 the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations set for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The school does not meet the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 4 academic performance results in a relevant three-year period.
- The school uses the following alternative education providers: the Chessbrook Education Support Centre in Watford, The Prince's Trust and the Building One Zone.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons across subjects and across all year groups. Inspectors spoke with pupils and looked at their work. They were accompanied by senior leaders for a number of these observations. Inspectors also made a number of short visits to lessons to observe pupils' behaviour and check the quality of their work.
- Inspectors held formal meetings with pupils in Years 7 to 10 and sixth-form students. They also spoke informally with pupils and students from all key stages about their experience of school and their learning.
- Inspectors considered 45 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 18 written submissions via the free-text service and an email from a parent.
- Staff views were considered from 55 responses and additional comments to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors met with three members of the governing body. Meetings were also held with the principal and senior and subject leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised a variety of documentation, including the school's own evaluation of its performance and school improvement plan, anonymised performance-management documents, school policies and procedures, and the school's own assessment information. A range of documentation regarding safeguarding was scrutinised, including behaviour and attendance records and bullying logs.

## Inspection team

Caroline Pardy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Rodin	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Roche	Ofsted Inspector
Brenda Watson	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Pepper	Ofsted Inspector

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