



The Albany, A Business and Enterprise College

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 102346
Local Authority Havering
Inspection number 286349
Inspection dates 21–22 February 2007
Reporting inspector Adrian Lyons HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Broadstone Road
School category	Community		off Albany Road
Age range of pupils	11–16		Hornchurch RM12 4AJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01708 441537
Number on roll (school)	925	Fax number	01708 437157
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Tim Brown
		Headteacher	Mrs M Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–16	21–22 February 2007	286349

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The Albany, A Business and; Enterprise College is a slightly smaller than average secondary school in an outer London borough. Most students are White British and there are significantly more boys than girls. The proportions of students with learning difficulties and disabilities, from minority ethnic backgrounds, whose first language is not English or who are eligible for free school meals are all well below the national average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school. Inspectors largely agree with the school's self-evaluation. It correctly identifies strengths and weaknesses. These are understood by managers and action has been taken to raise standards based on this. Most of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been addressed; together with ongoing innovation and rising standards this provides ample evidence of the good capacity to improve. However, two issues identified in the last inspection report remain areas for further action; specifically insufficient opportunity for pupils' reflection and insufficient challenge for the most able.

The curriculum is good as are the school's links with other organisations in contributing to the education, standards and care of its students. The school takes its business and enterprise role very seriously. It has developed good links with local businesses. Work related learning permeates other subjects and is helping to raise standards. For example, a Year 8 music lesson was observed where students were required to set challenging but realistic targets and work out a plan to achieve them. The teacher skilfully related the process to skills needed in further education and employment.

The school has used its specialist status effectively, both to support and develop the curriculum as well as improving the facilities and provision. This further promotes the good overall use of resources by the school. All students benefit from a large number of "themed" days as well as a wide range of opportunities for additional involvement, trips and visits. As a result, motivation and achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) and business has improved and other subjects are able to integrate modules of relevant work into their schemes effectively.

Students enter the school with standards that are broadly average and by the end of Year 11 have GCSE scores that are above average. Where the performance of a particular subject has been relatively weaker, leaders have investigated the reasons and taken robust action to bring about improvement. This is also true of Years 7 to 9 where the progress of students has been identified as an area of concern and as a result, actions have been taken to raise standards across all subjects. Overall, achievement is good.

Teaching and learning are good overall. However, students and parents report that some teachers do not apply consistent policies to manage behaviour well. Representative of a minority of parents was the comment: 'My daughter will sometimes come home and say she has learned nothing, because of the behaviour of other children in the class and the lack of control of the teachers.'

The school has a lot of data for tracking the progress of students. The information has not been used effectively enough to identify and monitor students but this is improving. Students receive good care and guidance.

The school fails to fulfil its legal duty to provide a daily corporate act of worship. This is symptomatic of the lack of opportunities for students to develop spiritual awareness or a corporate identity. Evidence from parents and students suggests that there continues to be insufficient opportunities for students to reflect. Whilst there are

considerable strengths in many of the 'every child matters' outcomes, overall the personal development and well-being of students is the weakest element of the school's provision and is only satisfactory.

Whilst a minority of parents have concerns regarding behaviour or communication, the majority are very supportive of the school. Representing this majority view was the comment that 'the school is very strong. I have noticed that any problems I have had have been dealt with promptly.' Another parent wrote that her daughter left school last year, 'Over the past 5 years she enjoyed school and left with some pleasing exam results.' Students were similarly generally positive and most enjoy being there.

What the school should do to improve further

- Better promote the spiritual development of students.
- Use data more effectively to further raise achievement for all students and especially the most able students and boys.
- Increase the rate of progress of students in Years 7 to 9.
- Meet statutory requirements by providing a daily act of collective worship.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school judges achievement and standards as good. Inspectors agree as students' progress from Year 7 to 11 is good. The school has correctly identified a lack of achievement in the first three years and that of boys in all years as areas to improve. Actions put in place to address these issues are beginning to be effective as shown by the current standards seen in lessons and progress in the current Year 9.

Students enter the school with standards which have risen in recent years and are now average. During the first three years students make satisfactory progress in English and mathematics. Progress in science is less than expected. Progress is good in the last two years so that by the end of Year 11, students achieve at above national standards. As a result of specialist status, standards in business studies, business and communication studies, ICT and mathematics have risen sharply in recent years and are well above national standards.

Nearly all groups of students, including looked after children and those with learning difficulties and disabilities, achieve well as a result of well-targeted support. However, the achievement of the very highest attaining students at the end of Year 9 and 11 is only satisfactory, as target setting is at an early stage in raising expectations. Teaching is not adapted sufficiently to ensure these students are consistently challenged in lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Students' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is also satisfactory, although the spiritual dimension remains a weakness; it has not improved sufficiently since the last inspection.

Most students enjoy coming to school. Attendance is improving but remains broadly in line with the national average.

Students helped to select the catering company and as a result an increasing number of students now choose the healthy option at lunchtime. A wide range of sports clubs are well attended and students gain sports leader awards. Many walk or cycle to school.

Students have few opportunities to express their views and the school council is not as active as it could be. Younger students appreciate the support they receive from prefects in Year 11. As part of the school's business and enterprise status, students work within the community on a number of enterprise projects, and develop a good range of work place skills. Students achieve a wide range of community awards.

Inspectors observed generally good behaviour in lessons and around the school. There is evidence, however, from a variety of sources, that poor behaviour by a minority of students is a real concern that affects progress and safety. In a small number of lessons inspectors found that low-level disruption and immature behaviour, of boys in particular, prevented these classes from making enough progress. Most students say they feel safe in school but a minority do not, as a result of some bullying and even the occasional fight. The incidence of racist behaviour is rare.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge that provides confidence and authority to lessons. Teachers are beginning to make effective use of a range of assessments to monitor students' academic progress. There are many examples of helpful marking. Teaching assistants are developing their roles through wider involvement in assessing pupils' progress.

In an outstanding Year 7 physical education lesson, reviews of progress at regular intervals ensured that students developed a range of games and teamwork skills.

Relationships are good and most students listen attentively and follow instructions. Students mainly work effectively together, for discussion and during practical activities. They can also work independently, on writing tasks for extended periods. Homework is generally set regularly, although some students do forget to write it in their planners.

Teachers are starting to use interactive whiteboards effectively to ensure that students remain interested in the lessons. However, in some lessons, the work does not always challenge the most able students enough. There are examples of excellent classroom

management; although a small minority of teachers have difficulty managing disruptive behaviour, with the result that progress in these lessons is inadequate. As a result of good support from the senior leadership team the quality of teaching is improving.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum that prepares students well for their future economic well-being and adult life. As a result of its specialist status all students follow a course combining ICT with business education. There is good provision for the aspects of economic, business and financial understanding covered within the accredited course on preparation for work, which is taken by all Year 11 students. Results in both courses are impressive. There is good provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT. The local business community is used well as a resource to make learning relevant.

Participation in enrichment activities is high and a wide variety of opportunities in sport, music and drama are valued by students. They have a wide range of subjects to choose from in Years 10 and 11. There has been some innovation in offering courses such as the national vocational qualification (NVQ) at levels 1 and 2 in business French. However, attempts to introduce a broader range of vocational provision have not been implemented successfully.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support for learners are good. The school has recently introduced procedures to monitor students' academic progress and this information is shared with students and parents at both parent meetings and academic review days. This is supported by an increased focus on marking, target setting and feedback which is helping students to make further progress. As yet the data is not sufficiently rigorous to quickly identify all students at risk of underachieving, but this is improving.

The physical environment of the school is safe, with students moving around in a sensible manner. Students and parents report that although individual incidents are dealt with effectively, as yet there is no structure in place to foster an environment in which all students feel confident and secure. Vulnerable students are well supported.

Risk assessments are approached rigorously and thoroughly, including within lessons, across the school premises and on school trips. Child protection arrangements are clearly laid out and staff are aware of procedures to follow. Other policies, such as behaviour management routines, still need to be adopted consistently across the school.

The school works well with outside agencies and uses all resources to ensure that students have every opportunity to make good progress. For example extensive business links are used well in helping guide students in their options choices.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has established a strong team of senior leaders, who accurately identify the strengths and areas of development for the school. They set clear direction for appropriate actions to secure improvement, as demonstrated in their current focus on Years 7 and 8.

More rigorous monitoring systems are developing but this information now needs to be evaluated carefully and procedures put in place, so that the school can meet really challenging targets. For example, tracking does not yet provide sufficient information to plot the progress of individual students, particularly for the most able.

Middle leaders are becoming more involved in the monitoring of their departments and in self-review but for many this is a new development and inconsistencies exist. Professional development is now clearly focussed and is starting to address the needs as identified in the school's self-evaluation.

The governors are very well informed, both through disseminated information and a high degree of presence during the school days. This enables them to effectively hold the school to account and thus provide good support and challenge.

The school meets statutory requirements in all areas, including the current legislation on safeguarding students, but does not meet the requirement for collective worship.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you know, we have just finished inspecting your school and I am writing to tell you our findings. First of all, I would like to thank you all for welcoming us, for talking to us about your experiences in school and for letting us see your work. As a result of our inspection, we have found that yours is a good and improving school.

The best features of the school are:

- the way the headteacher and staff have worked hard to raise examination results and helped each of you to achieve well.
- the curriculum that equips you well for adult life through its emphasis on business and enterprise.
- the way that senior staff recognise the things that are good and the things that need improvement and as a result take actions to bring about improvement.
- the way the school is starting to use information about your performance to help you do even better.

We know that while most of you and your parents are very happy with the school there are still things that could be better and your headteacher and teachers understand this too.

To become an even better school it needs to:

- use assessment information to check even more carefully on the progress of each of you.
- help you to achieve as well in Years 7 to 9 as you do in Years 10 to 11.
- improve the atmosphere in school so that the security and happiness felt by the majority of you is felt by everyone. You can all contribute to this.
- meet legal requirements for a daily act of worship and provide more opportunities for you to pause and reflect.

The school would appreciate your ideas on how it could be even better. Perhaps you could support your school council more by making suggestions to them.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Lyons, Her Majesty's Inspector.