

# Paddington Academy

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	130912
<b>Local Authority</b>	NA
<b>Inspection number</b>	331403
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kekshan Salaria HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Academy
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	1155
Sixth form	269
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Jenny Richards
<b>Principal</b>	Mrs Oli Tomlinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Academy address</b>	Marylands Road London W9 2DR
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7479 3900
<b>Fax number</b>	020 7479 3993

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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 January 2009
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## Introduction

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

### Description of the school

Paddington Academy opened in September 2006 with students from the predecessor school and moved into its new building in September 2007. Its specialisms are in media, performing arts, business and enterprise. At the time of the inspection, the Acting Principal had been in post for eight days.

The academy serves a community that experiences significant socio-economic deprivation. The proportion of students entitled to free meals is well above average. Students are from a diverse range of backgrounds. Currently the largest ethnic group is of Bangladeshi heritage and form 10% of the student population. Black Caribbean and Kosovan heritage students are the next largest group. About three quarters of students speak English as an additional language (EAL). There are between 40 to 50 languages spoken by the student community. The most common languages, other than English, are Arabic and Albanian. A well above average number of students have a learning difficulty and/or disability. This is mostly in the areas of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. A high number of students join and leave the academy at other than usual times.

### Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the academy

### Grade: 3

Paddington Academy is providing a satisfactory standard of education that is improving rapidly. Students join the academy with standards that are well below average. Standards by the end of Year 9 and 11 are now average and they continue to improve at a rapid rate. Students are making good progress. This in the main is due to the outstanding effectiveness of the senior leaders in driving forward change, the good curriculum, and the care, guidance and support students receive. As one student commented, 'the senior teachers have made the difference; we are not perfect yet but there have been so many improvements'. The quality of teaching is satisfactory; there are pockets of outstanding practice in some departments but this is not spread throughout the academy. Senior and some middle leaders are actively developing the capacity of all staff to improve teaching and learning. They are particularly aware of the need to ensure consistency across the academy in using assessment for learning to make sure teaching meets the needs of all students, hence reducing the variability in standards across subjects.

The senior leadership structure has been reviewed and senior leaders have put into place strategies which are helping students to achieve challenging targets; this is evident in the rapid progress students make. Supported by external reviews, the academy's self-evaluation is robust and the priorities for action, and individual roles and responsibilities for timely achievement of success of these are clearly understood by staff. The positive impact of structured opportunities for support and challenge to tackle weaker performance in some subject areas is becoming increasingly evident. Regular monitoring and evaluation of professional practice, good opportunities for professional enrichment and sharing of best practice, extended through teamwork, peer mentoring and coaching, contribute to the academy's good capacity to make the necessary improvements.

The curriculum is inclusive and responsive to the expressed needs and interests of the students and their families. To this end, new subjects and qualifications have been introduced; the introduction of astronomy and hair and beauty are such examples. The strong focus on personalising learning, particularly to meet the specific needs of vulnerable students, such as those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, ensures that all students have a chance to succeed. This is much appreciated by the students and motivates them to succeed despite the considerable barriers faced by some. The curriculum includes many forms of specific interventions and special support programmes which lead to accreditation. In addition, programmes such as reading recovery are used to improve the very low level of literacy skills of a significant proportion of students. A particular strength of the tailored curriculum is that it ensures students' potential in subjects is not hampered by their developing mastery of the English language.

There are limited opportunities for parental involvement in the life of the academy. The response to parental questionnaires indicates that there is a great desire amongst the parents and carers for a closer partnership.

### Effectiveness of the sixth form

#### Grade: 3

The sixth form is satisfactory overall. Standards are below average, but as most students commence their studies with lower than average levels of prior attainment, they make satisfactory progress. The academy is acutely aware of variations in the performance of subjects and that a significant minority of students fail to complete their A-level courses. Systems are

now being established to remedy these weaknesses but are not embedded and have yet to impact clearly on raising standards. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some examples of good and outstanding practice. The quality of guidance offered to students is also variable. Students commented that they get good advice about courses and future career and educational options. Students are confident, articulate and extremely mature in their attitudes. They work together well and are appreciative of the encouragement and personal support on offer. A broad range of academic and vocational courses has been introduced to interest and challenge students.

The leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory overall because senior leaders have put in place additional structures for monitoring and evaluation. However, certain key aspect of leadership and management, such as, monitoring and analysis remain ineffective.

### **What the academy should do to improve further**

- Improve the quality of provision and leadership further in the sixth form.
- Strengthen partnership working with parents.
- Make better use of assessment information to ensure all students make the progress they should and to guide improvements to teaching and learning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Students enter the academy with standards that are well below average. In particular, the literacy and numeracy skills of students are underdeveloped. In 2007, the standards achieved at the end of Year 9 were very low overall. Students' progress from Key Stage 2 to 4 was inadequate and standards at the end of Year 11 were well below average.

The academy's provisional Key Stage 3 results for 2008 indicate significant improvements. In English, mathematics and science there have been improvements at both Level 5 and Level 6. However, all three subjects remain below national average. The academy has responded appropriately to this and is successfully implementing an intervention plan, which includes, for example, personalised timetables, significant changes to the curriculum and out of academy hours study groups resulting in improving standards.

At the end of Year 11, the 2008 results showed a significant increase in the proportion of students gaining five higher-grade GCSEs, and in the percentage achieving five GCSE passes, including English and mathematics. Standards are rising rapidly. The rate of improvement is faster than the national trend so that the gap between the academy and national results is closing. This, however, has not been consistent across all subject areas. Strong performing subjects include English, mathematics, science and media studies. Students' achievement overall is now good including for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those with English as an additional language.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

Most students are very proud of their academy and the improvements they see. Almost all say they enjoy learning, find lessons interesting and try hard. Students are generally considerate towards each other and to those who work in the academy. While a small number of parents express concern over the behaviour of students, behaviour seen during lessons was always at least satisfactory and often good. Students move around the building sensibly and considerately. Where levels of supervision are lower, a small minority of students are less considerate; this is being addressed by staff. Students and staff report that behaviour has improved significantly and is continuing to improve. They say this is because the academy is developing an ethos which values personal responsibility and because of the effective system of rewards and sanctions to raise expectations. Inspection findings verify this.

Attendance is good. The academy has established a new system for tracking attendance and has put in place a range of robust strategies intended to raise attendance further such as the appointment of a home academy liaison worker to support students and families where attendance is too low. Students understand the dangers of drugs, smoking and alcohol. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, with moral and social development a strength. Students responded very well during a thought provoking assembly on the theme of world inequality. They understand and respect each other's beliefs and traditions and say that bullying is rare and effectively dealt with. Students also say the academy actively seeks and acts upon their views, and point to new arrangements to reduce queuing at lunchtime as an example. The academy is developing plans for closer links with the local and business community, although these links, particularly with the business community are at an early stage. Preparation for future economic well-being is satisfactory; while collaborative working skills are well developed, independent working skills are less so.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with pockets of outstanding observed in some lessons. Although common teaching methods, introduced recently, were evident in most lessons observed, considerable inconsistencies in the effectiveness of these approaches remain between the different subject areas. Stronger lessons are characterised by positive working relationships between students and teachers in the classroom. For example, in a Year 11 English lesson, inspectors observed the use of highly effective strategies to develop students speaking and listening skills, which resulted in increasing their confidence to express their opinions articulately. In these lessons, teachers have strong subject knowledge and provide structured work that enables students to make good progress. Additionally, marking and homework are used well to reinforce and develop learning and provide clear guidance to students on how to improve their work.

In the less effective lessons, planning does not take into account students' starting points. This is because assessment is infrequent and inaccurate. Although teachers' plans are detailed, tasks are not always appropriately matched to the needs of individual students. In some lessons, progress is slow because teachers fail to ask questions that encourage students to explain their thinking, a narrow range of activities are used and lessons are too teacher led. This results in

few opportunities for students to work independently. A new tracking system is in place and the academy is now better placed to assess standards and student progress.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good with an appropriately strong focus on students' literacy and oracy skills in English. The curriculum has been broadened to include a wider range of optional choices of academic, vocational and applied courses. The core subjects at Key Stages 3 and 4 also include aspects of specialisms. At Key Stage 3, the curriculum for Year 7 is being developed in line with the new National Curriculum guidance. The curriculum in Key Stages 4 and 5 has been reviewed to improve the balance between academic and vocational qualifications and more importantly, to secure better progression routes for students from ages 11 to 16 and beyond. Students welcome the increased opportunities for work-related learning and appreciate the positive impact of this provision on their academic and social skills, although these are not extensively available.

Except for business, the academy has made a good start on developing its specialisms in media, enterprise and performing arts. Interesting projects are in place in media and performing arts and ensure that skills and knowledge related to specialisms extend across teaching in other subjects to enrich learning. Students enjoy opportunities to work with specialist providers and showcase their achievements; but these are not yet embedded in a coherent way across the academy. The recent introduction of Social Enterprise Programme in Year 7 and Year 10 is positively influencing and reinforcing the improvements in teaching and learning styles, and fostering skills of teamwork and personal learning among students. However, the academy is acutely aware that the overall impact of the specialisms on enhancing the whole curriculum is yet to be realised. External partnerships to strengthen the broadened curriculum offer, particularly links with the employers, are in early stages of development.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The academy has developed effective systems to ensure good academic and personal guidance. Arrangements to monitor those students who are particularly at risk are thorough. The intervention system has resulted in regular assessments so that students are identified early, and effective support is provided. This has contributed to improved behaviour and a significant reduction in exclusions. Those students who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language receive individual support, which meets their needs effectively and prepares them well for the future.

Appropriate child protection procedures are in place. The learning support unit is effective in reintegrating students into mainstream classes and supporting those who sometimes find working in the classroom difficult.

The relatively new 'two stars and a wish' assessment procedure is effective in ensuring most students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further. Targets are in place and most students know what they are expected to achieve. The quality of marking is inconsistent across classes. The best involves students in a dialogue about how to improve their work but some consists of encouragement and praise without advice.

Students express their gratitude for the time their teachers give to them, particularly, during out of academy hours on supported study, hence improving their chances of attaining higher

standards. They also comment on the good advice they receive when making curriculum choices. Parents and carers also endorsed this view, as a parent wrote, 'the academy provides strong support for students, especially with regard to university applications and A-level revision'.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The outstanding leadership of the senior team has successfully focused on accelerating the improvements in standards, achievement and personal development of students in a relatively short time. The inclusion of all learners and a desire to make a difference are strong drivers for the team's vision for the academy. A dedicated and expanding team of senior and middle leaders, many of whom are new to their positions, take their role in dismantling the barriers to engagement and success very seriously; this is proving a binding force for all those working with students. A relentless attention to improving the quality of teaching and learning, and the rapid improvements in the results at Key Stages 3 and 4 have instilled a renewed sense of confidence and significantly raised aspirations amongst the students and staff. The academy has come a long way in a short period.

The local governing body makes a satisfactory contribution to the governance arrangements set out by the United Learning Trust (ULT). The ULT effectively supports the academy by becoming involved, particularly in the appointments of staff, exclusions of students and facilitating external partnerships to enhance the curriculum. Through frequent and regular communication on strategic and operational matters with the Principal and the Chair of the Governing Body, the ULT ensures that the progress and quality of the academy's work remains on track. The local governing body has found it difficult to recruit parent governors.



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**Annex A**

**Inspection judgements**

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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**Overall effectiveness**

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	3

**Achievement and standards**

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2	

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<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

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

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	3	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	3

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

04 February 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Paddington Academy, London, W9 2DR

As you know, a team of inspectors visited the academy recently. I would like to thank you for your welcome. We appreciate the help many of you gave us by talking about your work and sharing your views. You clearly enjoy being at this academy which provides a satisfactory quality of education overall.

These are the best features about your academy.

- Students in Years 9 to 11 achieve well particularly in some subjects such as English, mathematics, science and media. Students in the sixth form achieve satisfactorily.
- You are provided with a wide range of educational experiences in the courses offered.
- You are confident, have good attitudes to work, and show respect to each other, staff and visitors.
- Some lessons are excellent and many are good. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory.
- You are well cared for so that you feel safe and supported. Students who have difficulties of any kind are supported very well.
- Your Principal and the senior staff lead and manage the academy very well. They are very clear about what the academy does well and how it can improve.

We have highlighted the following as being the most important areas for improvement, so that you all achieve your best. The academy now needs to:

- improve the quality of provision and leadership further in the sixth form
- strengthen partnership working with your parents and carers
- use assessment information well to ensure that you all make better progress.

We know that you will do your part in this by giving teachers your undivided attention. We wish you and your academy continued success in the future.

Yours faithfully

Kekshan Salaria

Her Majesty's Inspector