

# Burlington Danes Academy

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131752
<b>Local Authority</b>	NA
<b>Inspection number</b>	332995
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Emma Ing 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>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	784
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Stanley Fink
<b>Principal</b>	Miss Sally Coates
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Academy address</b>	Wood Lane London W12 0HR
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8735 4950
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8740 5659

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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

The academy opened in September 2006 with the sponsorship of Absolute Return for Kids (ARK). Built on the values of the Church of England, it specialises in mathematics and arts and has been awarded Sportsmark status. It occupies a large site with three main buildings, one of which is Grade 2 listed. A performing arts building is due to open in January 2010. A new principal and senior vice-principal have led the academy since April 2008.

Burlington Danes is smaller than most secondary schools, and has a higher proportion of boys than girls, especially in Years 8 and 10. Many of the students come from areas experiencing economic and social challenges. Nearly half are eligible for free school meals.

Students come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds: 44% are of Black British, African and Caribbean heritage, 14% are from White British backgrounds and around 40% are from other ethnic groups. About 40% of students speak English as an additional language and around 7% are at an early stage of learning English. An above-average proportion of students have special educational needs, mainly learning difficulties or emotional and behavioural difficulties.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the academy

### Grade: 2

Burlington Danes Academy provides students with a good education. Parents, students, staff, governors and the academy's sponsor agree that a huge improvement has taken place over the last year. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and notes to the inspection team, parents wrote of their gratitude to the principal for, as one parent wrote, 'a new mood of calm, purpose, cohesive staff teams, energy and clarity ... has become the order of the day. The children seem to have quickly developed a new level of self-regard and respect for others.'

The principal is leading the academy exceptionally well. Together with the sponsors and governors, she has created an ambitious vision for the academy that is shared among staff. Coupled with this, the improvements achieved and the energetic determination of staff indicate that the academy has good capacity for further improvement.

Students are making good progress in lessons and are well supported by staff to achieve challenging targets. Teachers are helped in this by new systems that enable the progress each student makes to be closely monitored. The standards students reach are broadly average and are improving. Students enjoy lessons and it is unusual for learning to be disrupted by inappropriate behaviour to any significant degree. Around the buildings, students are generally well mannered and caring of each other. However, students are not taking enough responsibility for their own learning and are not developing strong leadership skills. Teachers talk too much in a high proportion of lessons.

Students arrive at their lessons expecting to work. Because teachers know their subjects well and prepare carefully, teaching is good. Teachers have refined their marking, which now gives helpful feedback to students. Generally, teachers are not matching their teaching to the differing individual needs within their classes. This means that some students are not getting as much from the work as they could.

The lives of students are enriched by a broad offering of extra clubs and musical and sporting opportunities. Students appreciate the educational trips and visits that are on offer very much and would like more opportunities to learn outside the classroom on such trips. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of students satisfactorily. However, there are weaknesses in the depth and range of provision of personal, social and health education, and in the amount of physical education that students access. In addition, there is a smaller than ideal range of course options that meet the needs of those with lower academic abilities.

### What the academy should do to improve further

Ensure that all students, and particularly those who do not find school work easy, make better progress by:

- ensuring that all teaching is closely matched to individual learners' needs in lessons and that there are more opportunities for individual and group work
- helping students develop independence, responsibility for their own learning and a strong voice
- developing diverse curriculum pathways and increasing provision in some areas to meet the needs of students with differing abilities, aspirations and interests.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

In the past, few students joining the academy in Year 7 have reached high levels of attainment by the end of their primary education. However, the standards being achieved by these students as they leave secondary school are broadly in line with national averages and are improving year on year. This is because students are making good progress in their learning.

The attainment of last year's Year 11 indicates that students of higher ability generally made very good progress. However, more able girls did not achieve as well as boys. The academy has worked with good effect to eradicate this disparity. Able boys and girls are now making very good progress. The progress of those students who find schoolwork less easy is not as good. However, they are making at least satisfactory progress and those who have learning difficulties are making good progress.

Last year, students from African Caribbean backgrounds did not do nearly as well as others. Again, the school's data and other inspection evidence indicate that this is no longer the case and that these students are now making good progress.

Students have been making excellent progress in mathematics and are making better progress in English and science than in other subjects. This is changing as the progress made in the foundation subjects is increasing.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Students are enjoying their education. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in the academy and a sense of racial harmony. This includes genuine respect for everyone's different background and circumstances. Although some parents expressed the view that there could be wider reference to different cultural heritages in lessons, students are sympathetic to one another's different cultural backgrounds. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Students work well with each other. They behave well in lessons and around the academy. They behave safely and adopt safe practices. They are punctual. Students generally maintain healthy lifestyles and a high proportion from all backgrounds participate in extra-curricular activities, while many engage in table tennis and table football during breaks.

Although students support a wide range of charities and initiatives, their contribution to their school community is not yet good because the student voice is not yet well developed and they are not taking important leadership roles within the academy. In lessons they are sometimes rather passive and do not take active responsibility for their learning. The development of these qualities, along with problem-solving skills and independence, is satisfactory.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Most lessons are either good or satisfactory, with some outstanding lessons taught across the curriculum. Teachers know their subject areas well and lessons are well structured. They share with students what it is that they are to learn and most allow time for reflection on learning at

the end of lessons. Teachers now ensure that they give clear feedback to students about how to improve their work. This, combined with the opportunities sometimes given to students to assess their own and others' work, is helping them to make better progress.

In some lessons teachers plan interesting, relevant activities, which students undertake in groups or pairs. However, in too many lessons teachers talk too much and control the learning too tightly, which is hindering students from taking an active role in their learning and from developing independence and leadership skills. Teachers generally do not match their teaching to the different needs and abilities of all students in their class. This results in some groups, particularly those who find academic tasks a bit of a challenge, making less good progress than they might.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The provision of extra-curricular activities is strong. Students respond well to a very wide range of opportunities and many are involved in music, dance and sporting activities, as well as academically challenging options such as writing, extra mathematics and Latin. Some of these options, such as 'Headlight' and the 'St James' Project', are helpful in enabling students to develop work-related skills.

The curriculum has been revised to ensure that it is balanced and to enable students to study a modern foreign language and technology. Further revisions are planned. However, at the moment there is not enough time allowed for physical education; the personal, social and health education programme is insufficiently developed.

At Key Stage 4 there are opportunities for students to start advanced level courses in mathematics and religious education, which are good for able students. There are fewer options and courses that meet the needs of those with lower academic abilities.

The academy's specialism in mathematics is reflected in very good student performance in this area. The department works with able children from local primary schools to support them to attain Level 5 and offers AS-level tuition not only to their own students but to some attending college.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The academy provides a safe learning environment and arrangements for ensuring students' safety are sound.

The recent improvement in students' behaviour is, at least partly, due to better management. Students have a good understanding of the academy's expectations and of the consequences of good or poor behaviour. In the last two terms the academy has worked hard to build links with parents (especially those who do not readily become involved in their children's education) and to involve them in their children's learning. Students report that they would like there to be more support for individuals who are experiencing troubled times.

Staff have worked hard to improve attendance, which is now in line with national averages, but there is need for a more secure overview of this work.

The academy has introduced systems to ensure effective support for students with learning difficulties. Learning mentors work alongside these students in lessons and give specific support, enabling them to access the curriculum more fully.

There are good data systems in place to enable teachers to track the progress of students and a range of interventions is used to support students who are at risk of failing to meet their target grades.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The outstanding leadership of the principal has ensured that there is a shared ambitious vision for the academy. Staff are working as a team to achieve it. The academy has rapidly achieved good provision because areas for improvement have been appropriately prioritised.

Self-evaluation is accurate throughout the institution.

Senior leaders have robust systems in place to ensure that middle leaders, who describe themselves as 'the engine-house of the academy' are well supported to secure consistently high standards of teaching and support for students. Staff are reflective about the impact of their work and robust in their monitoring of quality.

The academy knows its community well and has worked hard to develop community cohesion by ensuring that regular links are maintained with different religious, ethnic and social groups of local residents and business people whose needs the academy seeks to serve. For example, courses are offered in parenting, support groups have been set up for groups who share the same first languages, and efforts have been made to prevent students from congregating in areas that the community found a nuisance.

The academy is fully committed to promoting racial equality: staffing reflects the local and school community, which parents and students see as one of the academy's very positive features.

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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	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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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>	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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

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

26 January 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Burlington Danes Academy, London, W12 0HR

We really enjoyed working alongside you when we visited to inspect Burlington Danes. Many of you showed us your work and took the time to tell us your views about the academy. Thank you for this.

As you explained to us, things have improved rapidly at the academy and it is now providing you with a good education. We were impressed by the calm, purposeful community and by your behaviour in lessons and around the site. We like the fact that everybody is treated with respect. As many of your parents indicated, your new principal is leading the academy exceptionally well. She is well supported by governors, teachers and other staff.

We saw and heard that many of you enjoy lessons and we noted that you are making good progress with your studies. The teaching is good, but we have asked teachers to:

- make sure that the work in lessons is closely matched to your individual learning needs, and
- help you to do more group work and independent work, to take more responsibility for your work and develop your leadership skills.

The range of extra-curricular activities on offer, and the fact that so many of you and your parents participate in them, impressed us and we have asked the school to develop the curriculum further to ensure that it meets your needs, interests and aspirations more closely. You can help with this by sharing your views about what would be good and asking your parents and carers to do so too.

I congratulate you for your good behaviour and for improving your attendance. These things really make a difference to your chances of success in life. Keep up the good work, and seek now to develop your leadership roles in the academy and wider community. You all have a great deal to offer.

Yours faithfully

Emma Ing

HMI