

West London Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134369
Local Authority	NA
Inspection number	341466
Inspection dates	13–14 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Gill Close HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1415
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Derek Beal
Headteacher	Dr Hilary Macaulay (Principal)
Date of previous school inspection	6 September 2006
School address	West London Academy Bengarth Road Northolt
Telephone number	020 8841 4511
Fax number	020 8841 4480
Email address	enquiries@westlondonacademy.co.uk

Age group	3–19
Inspection dates	13–14 January 2010
Inspection number	341466

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. The inspectors spent the majority of the time observing learning. They visited 40 lessons and support sessions, and held meetings with governors, staff, and students. They observed the academy's work, and looked at records of students' attainment and progress, improvement planning, self-evaluation forms, lesson monitoring files and attendance figures. They also evaluated questionnaire responses from 142 students, 22 staff and 123 parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- attainment in English and mathematics at Key Stage 4
- progress for high prior attainers and those who were, and were not, identified by the academy as having special educational needs
- the quality of teaching and other factors that contribute to students' progress
- outcomes and provision in the sixth form
- attendance.

Information about the school

West London Academy has specialist status for sport and enterprise. It runs a children's centre with wrap-around childcare and family learning programmes. Students from the special school located on its site attend some lessons at the academy. It holds the Cultural Diversity Quality Standard, Investors in Families award, and Inclusion Quality Mark.

Two thirds of the students are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. One half speak a first language other than English and 50 are at an early stage of learning English. Half of the students have special educational needs and/or disabilities, of which the main ones are behavioural, social and emotional needs or moderate learning difficulties. Two students out of every five are eligible for free school meals. One third join the academy part way through their primary or secondary education. These proportions are above national averages.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

West London Academy provides a good standard of education. Through a combination of outstanding care, guidance and support, good teaching and conscientious effort, students make outstanding progress. Their attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 has risen overall since the last inspection and is now above average in some measures. In mathematics, English and science, attainment remains significantly below the national average, but the academy's data shows that current Year 10 and 11 students are on course to reach standards that are closer to average. Improved attainment is also working its way through the academy. Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception. Since the last inspection, attainment has risen each year in Key Stage 1, where it is now above average. Teaching is good for both the primary and secondary age ranges, but is more variable in the latter. The good teaching actively involves all students and develops their understanding through effective questioning. In the weaker lessons, assessment is not used well enough to provide the challenge and support needed for all students to make good progress. In the sixth form, there is a small but increasing range of courses. Students make particularly good progress in vocational courses, especially sport, although their progress and attainment are variable in other courses.

The exceptional care, guidance and support make a significant impact on every student's access to learning. Staff know each student extremely well and work very closely with parents and a wide range of partners to match support to students' needs, assiduously improving the inclusion of vulnerable students. This incorporates extensive measures that have improved attendance, which is high for secondary age students but low for primary age students, partly because they take holidays in term time. Safeguarding procedures are outstanding. Students feel very safe; they have excellent awareness of how to stay safe and take appropriate steps to minimise risk, for example in practical lessons.

The school's own evaluation of its work is accurate. It has identified targeted actions that have led to substantial improvements in attainment, teaching and behaviour since the last inspection. Leaders and managers are well-focused and effective in tackling weaknesses. These factors demonstrate the academy's good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, to bring it above national averages.
- Improve teaching and assessment quality to be consistently at least good, so that it

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

more closely meets the learning needs of each student through

- planning that tailors lessons more effectively to students' needs
- assessing learning better during lessons and adapting teaching accordingly
- providing students with clearer feedback on how to improve.
- In the sixth form:
 - raise attainment and achievement, increasing consistency between courses
 - broaden the range of courses at each level in the curriculum to better match the students' needs.
- Improve the attendance of primary students.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Primary age students learn consistently well or better in lessons, where work meets their needs closely. Secondary age students learn well or better in the majority of lessons but, on occasions, they do not. The academy has successfully developed a culture in which students work hard in class and for homework, and are eager to do well. They keenly take up a wide range of opportunities provided for support and extension. Together with the thorough tracking, mentoring and intervention programme that effectively supports individuals at risk of underachieving, these features lead to students making outstanding progress overall.

Children make good progress in Nursery and Reception to reach broadly average standards, although their skills remain below average in linking sounds and letters. Children continue to make strong progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. The improving attainment is spreading through the academy. At Key Stage 2, attainment is average in English and science, but has risen to above average in mathematics. Since the last inspection, when all measures of attainment at Key Stage 4 were significantly below average, students' overall scores have gone up to well above average and the proportion attaining five GCSE grades A*-C has risen markedly. Nevertheless, overall attainment is still low because it has remained well below average in English, mathematics and science, which are key subjects. Between Key Stages 2 and 4, students have made excellent overall progress in the last two years and well above average progress in English and mathematics. Those who join the academy without any Key Stage 2 result soon have targets set and make progress similar to their peers. In the sixth form, many of the large number of students on the sports vocational courses make outstanding progress, although progress is satisfactory in AS level courses.

All groups of students make at least good progress through the teaching and support provided. Across key stages, students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress that is at least as good as their peers. Amongst this group, the students who receive assistance that goes beyond action by the school make the greatest progress because the high quality of support gives them outstanding access to learning. High attainers make at least good progress where teaching is good, and where they have been taught in special classes for early entry for GCSE, but there are occasions

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

when teaching does not challenge them well enough. The school's data shows that they are making better progress this year than last year. Students for whom English is not their first language are well provided for and make similar progress to their peers.

Students have good relationships with each other, with staff and with students from the special school on the same site. They recognise the commitment of staff and the value of the education they are receiving. They develop confidence and self-esteem well in a happy, harmonious environment that they enjoy. Behaviour is good overall and exclusions are low. Primary students behave exceptionally well; they set themselves particularly high standards of behaviour, and some of them are concerned that on occasions they are not met. Students make a substantial contribution to the academy's community, for example through the learning leader scheme where they act as academic mentors for others in their year group. They develop enterprise skills well through projects which, despite their low levels in English and mathematics and below average attendance, prepare them satisfactorily for the future. Students undertake more hours of physical activity than is common and understand well how to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

How effective is the provision?

The good teaching builds well on previous work, includes interesting activities that involve discussion with others, and provides well-matched support for those with special educational needs or who are at early stages of learning English. Teachers set high expectations and students respond by trying hard. However, marking does not consistently show students how to improve and teachers do not always check carefully how each student is getting on, and then adapt the lesson accordingly. Occasionally, students spend too long listening so do not have enough time to develop their own understanding and independence.

The good primary curriculum is adapted well to meet students' needs and respond to the views of students and parents when selecting topics. Creativity, thinking and teamwork skills are well embedded. French and Spanish have been introduced. The secondary curriculum is also good. It includes a range of academic and vocational courses, and initiatives, such as the Prince's Trust, that meet the needs of vulnerable students. The good range of clubs, including some which help parents to assist their children's learning, is popular. Vulnerable children are encouraged and supported to attend. Celebration of cultural diversity and elimination of discrimination are embedded in the curriculum across key stages, as recognised by the award of the Cultural Diversity Quality Standard. Equal respect is encouraged for each student's ethnic and linguistic heritage, and many are supported to gain GCSE and AS level certificates in their home language.

Care, guidance and support are very well targeted for each student through form tutors and Student and Family Education Workers (SaFE Workers), who are often a student's first point of contact if an issue arises. SaFE Workers successfully involve parents, including those who have previously made little contact with academy staff. All students are helped to overcome barriers to their learning, and to develop their self-esteem through a motivating system of praise and awards that is well managed. They are confident that issues they raise will be dealt with effectively. For students with behavioural needs, the extremely sensitive support in the access and inclusion centre enables them to reflect on and improve their behaviour. Students and their parents have access to weekly electronic records of their attitude, progress to targets, completion of class work and homework, behaviour and concentration in subject areas.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders convey high expectations for improvement. Staff are very committed to the students and work tirelessly to raise their attainment and progress. They also contribute to the academy's electronic improvement plan. Regular monitoring of teaching and support in identified areas for development have led to improvement. Senior leaders evaluated accurately the lessons they observed jointly with inspectors. Tracking of each student's attainment and progress towards targets informs intervention well and underpins the outstanding progress. The academy exceeded its challenging targets for two levels of progress during Key Stage 2, but just missed its challenging targets for attainment. It is on track to meet its 2010 targets. Governors bring a wide range of expertise to their role, which they apply effectively in evaluating the school and challenging low attainment. They are assiduous in ensuring students' safety. The newly appointed chair of governors has recognised the opportunity for some fresh approaches to seeking views from staff. The excellent impact of safeguarding procedures is exemplified by the meticulous approach to taking action, providing training, simplifying guidance for students and parents, and updating policies.

The academy demonstrates its commitment to partnership working through its regular multi-agency meetings to support students' well-being, being a hub site for the School Sports Partnership and its many partners. These partnerships make a real difference, for example by giving behaviour support staff direct access to the help their vulnerable students need, which has improved their behaviour and achievement. The academy's good work with parents has cut the proportion of students who are persistently absent to well below national average. The academy's drive to improve participation is effective in promoting equal opportunity, which is reflected in the award of the Inclusion Quality Mark. Links are actively sought with parents whose circumstances make partnership with the school harder, such as those with little English, some of whom have been successfully encouraged to attend language classes and communicate with staff about their children's progress and well-being. Thirty parents regularly volunteer to help out in the academy. The excellent engagement with parents is recognised through the Investors in Families award. Students' high regard for each other's heritage is testimony to the academy's good promotion of community cohesion. There are many strong links with the local community, and rigorous evaluation of their impact, but few at national or international level.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children now join the Early Years Foundation Stage with a wide spread of attainment that is broadly in line with that expected for their age, except in communication, language and literacy, where it is below expectations. Those who joined in previous years had attainment that was below expectations. By the end of Reception, children make good progress and reach average standards, exceeding many of the goals expected but with low attainment in linking sounds and letters. The welcoming and interesting learning environment and carefully planned activities challenge children and enable them to learn well. However, there are inconsistencies in how frequently observations are made and assessments are used to inform planning. Staff have good knowledge of the learning and welfare requirements of young children. They work closely as a team, integrating some of the activities in Nursery and Reception. Children are happy, very well behaved and safe. There are excellent links with the wrap-around childcare, parents and partners. Good leadership and management have raised children's attainment and progress since the last inspection, identified strengths and weaknesses accurately and set out appropriate priorities for improvement.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Sixth form

In the sixth form, students' progress differs widely across courses and is satisfactory overall. The academy's data shows that students are on track to make satisfactory progress in the AS-level courses in which there was underachievement in the last two

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate
 Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

years. Improvements to advice and entry requirements have ensured that students taking these courses are better prepared for them, so have a greater chance of success. Students make progress that is at least good in BTEC vocational courses, and outstanding in sports National Certificate courses. Attendance is broadly average. Students contribute to the whole academy through volunteering as leaders to help out others. Provision is satisfactory and improving. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection, when it was judged to be inadequate, but the range of courses is limited. It has broadened to offer a sound range of BTEC courses and, this year, the International Baccalaureate. A-level provision remains narrow. While resits of GCSE English and mathematics are offered, there are no other courses at this level. Access to ICT is good, but there are limited opportunities for research and the development of study skills outside the BTEC courses. Teaching is good in some subjects but not consistent enough to ensure good progress across courses. The quality of written feedback on how to improve is variable. Mentoring and advice for higher education are good. Senior leaders have made improvements in the leadership and management of the sixth form since the last inspection, and now track students' progress more thoroughly. Provision is better and outcomes are on course to improve. Leaders are clear about what more needs doing.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

A small percentage of parents responded to the questionnaire. They agree with most of the statements. A few think that the academy does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors find that behaviour has improved greatly since the last inspection and is now good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at West London Academy to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspector received 123 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1415 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	59	48	63	51	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	45	37	72	59	4	3	2	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	60	50	56	46	5	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	35	73	60	6	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	45	37	72	60	4	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	43	36	68	57	8	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	31	80	65	5	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	34	29	77	66	6	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	26	79	66	8	7	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	30	70	59	11	9	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	16	90	76	6	5	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	31	26	82	69	4	3	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	52	43	64	52	5	4	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



15 January 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of West London Academy, Northolt, UB5 5LQ

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your academy and for telling us about it.

We found that it is a good academy. You make outstanding progress and get on with each other well. Most teaching is good, but in some lessons the work is not different enough to challenge all of you to think hard. Sometimes the teacher's comments in your books do not help you know how to improve. The excellent support if you fall behind, and your own hard work, help you to do well. However, by the end of Year 11, too many of you do not reach GCSE grade C in English, mathematics and science.

You told us that you felt very safe and thought the staff were really committed to helping you do well. We found that they look after you exceptionally well. They help you to build your self-esteem and to deal with difficulties. We think you develop a very good understanding of and respect for each other's cultures. Your behaviour has improved and is now good. But some of you in the primary years miss too many days in school, sometimes because you are on holiday.

In the sixth form, you do well in some courses, especially sport, but not in others. You have a wider choice of courses this year but it is still a limited range.

We have asked the teachers to:

- help more of you attain GCSE grade C in English, mathematics and science
- improve teaching so that is right for everyone in the class and you have clearer guidance on how to improve
- increase attendance for primary students
- broaden the range of courses in the sixth form and improve achievement in them.

You can help by making sure you come to school and think hard in lessons.

Yours sincerely

Gill Close

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.