

Bradford Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135367
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	345464
Inspection dates	3–4 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Jane Austin HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1090
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Albert Price
Principal	Mr Gareth Dawkins
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Academy address	Teasdale Street Bradford West Yorkshire BD4 7QJ
Telephone number	01274 256789
Fax number	01274 256790
Email address	info@bradfordacademy.co.uk

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

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Approximately 19 hours were spent looking at learning. The inspectors visited 39 lessons and saw 38 teachers. They held meetings with the principal, staff, governors, and groups of students. They observed the academy's work and looked at documentation including the development plan, current data on students' progress, reports by the academy's Improvement Partner, the academy's monitoring records and minutes of governing body meetings. Inspectors analysed 183 inspection questionnaires completed by parents, 152 from students and 28 returned by staff.

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

- the quality of teaching and assessment and how well these enable students to learn and make progress, particularly in mathematics
- the progress of post-16 students
- the effectiveness of the academy's strategies to raise attendance and reduce persistent absence
- how well students contribute to the community within the academy and beyond
- how well partnerships contribute to students' learning and well-being
- the effectiveness of the leadership and management of teaching and learning
- how well the academy promotes community cohesion.

Information about the school

Bradford Academy opened in September 2007 in a new building. It is sponsored by the Diocese of Bradford and has a specialism in citizenship with enterprise. Students and almost all staff transferred from the predecessor school. The academy is an average-sized secondary school with a rapidly growing sixth form. It serves an area of very considerable social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well above average. About two thirds of the students are White British with one third from a range of minority ethnic groups, the largest of which is Pakistani. A small number of students are refugees or asylum seekers. About a quarter of the students speak English as an additional language with two at an early stage of learning the language. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The academy makes special provision for 25 physically disabled learners some of whom are profoundly disabled. As a consequence, the percentage of students with statements of special educational needs is more than twice the national average. There is a higher than usual number of looked after children on roll. The academy has recently been accredited as an Investor in People and gained the Healthy School award.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Bradford Academy is satisfactory. It is improving rapidly so many aspects of its work are good and some are outstanding. The dynamic, resolute leadership of the principal ensures that the academy's vision and high aspirations for improving the lives of students are translated into action, the success of which is increasingly evident. In a comparatively short period the academy has forged a community in which students, staff and governors have pride and to which they are committed. The rights of learners are at the heart of the academy's work and fundamental to its inclusive character. Its commitment to the community in which it is situated is central to the academy's ethos and supported by its specialism.

Governors' outstanding promotion of community cohesion is reflected in the outstanding contribution that students make within and beyond the academy. The house and home-team system fosters a strong sense of belonging for all year groups, including the sixth form, and provides a context in which students willingly take on responsibilities. These include peer mentoring, reading support, charitable fund-raising and organising events such as talent shows. Students make the most of the many opportunities to express their views about academy life and to play a part in decision making. As 'learning scene investigators', they observe lessons and feed back to teachers. More wide-ranging participation includes the United Nations Youth Conference and European visits on topics such as Black History month.

Overall, attainment is low but it is rising. This is because the quality of teaching and learning are improving and the curriculum meets students' needs well. In the main, students are now making good progress because teaching is good, they feel safe, behave well, and the climate for learning is positive. However, consistent performance at this level is a relatively recent gain and in some lessons work is not matched sharply enough to all students' learning needs. In addition, where feedback through marking is limited, students are not always clear about what they need to do to improve. However, the academy does have some exemplary practice in this area on which to build. For many students there is still some way to go before their legacy of underachievement is eradicated: hence, standards remain low. This is the reason why the academy's overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory and why it provides satisfactory value for money.

Overall, attendance is low and for sizeable groups of students in Years 10 and 11 this is a hindrance to improving their attainment and achievement. Attendance is broadly average for younger students. The academy has had considerable success in raising levels of attendance and substantially reducing the number of persistent absentees. This is in no small part due to the relentless application of a broad and coherent range of

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appropriate strategies. It is also because these are backed up by good integrated care and support tailored to students' individual needs. One student described this as 'like a friend'. The care, guidance and support for all students are good and safeguarding procedures are outstanding. They frequently go well beyond statutory requirements. The leadership and management of the academy are good. The very clear strategic overview and strong teamwork of senior leaders ensure that the academy moves forward on its agreed path at pace and in a way that exemplifies its values. Leaders are very well supported in this by outstanding governance. The sixth form has been successfully established and grown very rapidly. It is well led and managed so that provision meets students' needs well. In this, and in the many advances made, the academy has demonstrated good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment overall and especially in mathematics by:
 - tailoring work more sharply to meet the needs of individuals and groups of students
 - building on existing best practice in the academy to improve the quality of feedback through marking.
- Raise levels of attendance particularly at Key Stage 4 by:
 - challenging the entrenched attitudes to attendance of some students
 - providing appropriate support for students and their families, and personalised courses to help students re-engage with learning.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Students start at the academy with exceptionally low standards. Since the academy opened, standards at the end of Year 11 have been low. However, in 2009, the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C rose markedly. Similarly, the percentage of students gaining five or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics improved but remained below the national floor target. When measured against every benchmark, standards improved in 2009 and the academy's challenging targets were met or exceeded. Students' achievement was satisfactory. The academy's current data indicate that this upward trend is continuing. Students' progress and their attitudes to learning have improved as a result of better teaching. The progress they make overall is good because they enjoy being at the academy and in most lessons they engage well with the activities set for them. Relationships between staff and students are very positive. This contributes to students' interest in their work and their generally good behaviour so that learning proceeds unimpeded almost all of the time. In the better lessons students enjoy making

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contributions and collaborate well with their peers. They value the opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) in their learning. Teachers' use of this stimulates their imaginations and challenges their thinking. Progress is slower in lessons where activities are dull and teachers' assessment of students' learning is less effective in matching work closely to their abilities and interests. In these situations students tend to comply with what is required rather than show the interest and enthusiasm they do in better lessons.

Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities thrive and make good progress because the academy provides an inclusive educational environment. They recognise and value the support they receive and that they are very much at the heart of the academy. They enjoy school because they are shown respect by their peers and receive good care and support from staff.

The school's own records show that the rate of progress of students who speak English as an additional language is improving and is generally good overall. Effective induction programmes for students new to the country help them begin learning swiftly.

Students' preparation for the world of work is satisfactory. The many activities through which they make an outstanding contribution to the community help them develop a range of skills and personal qualities necessary for the next stage of their lives.

Students' ICT skills are well developed and many gain an understanding of business practices. Their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well by curriculum projects such as that linked to Holocaust Memorial Day.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1

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

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The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good. Planning is consistent and invariably follows the academy's agreed template. However, not all planning matches work closely to the needs of individuals and groups of students and this is a hindrance to a more rapid rate of progress. Teachers have received training on how to use assessment to improve learning and in the better lessons they are applying this well in terms of good questioning to ascertain what students have learned. Feedback given to students through marking varies considerably between teachers and subjects: it is weakest in mathematics. This inconsistency limits students' understanding of how well they have done and what they need to do as an immediate next step to improve their work. There is evidence to show that the quality of teaching overall is rising in mathematics as a result of the academy's drive for improvement in this subject.

Barriers to physical and curriculum access for students with physical and medical difficulties are removed so that they are put in a good position to capitalise on the teaching they receive. Assessment of the progress made by students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving and is helpfully capturing the small steps in progress many of these students make. Information is shared effectively so that staff are well aware of the needs of these students and high expectations are maintained.

The good curriculum is well matched to students' needs and ambitions. The Year 7 foundation programme provides a smooth transition for students, both in terms of learning and social development. The need to boost the literacy skills of a significant proportion of students is recognised in a variety of enhanced provision. Citizenship, the academy's specialism, plays a significant role in the curriculum and in fostering student's personal development. The pathways available from Year 9 upwards are very flexible and responsive to students' interests, providing a broad range of vocational options and staged opportunities to gain qualifications. Helpfully, these are extended through a number of partnerships with other providers. Through the elective sessions students have both a wide range of extra-curricular activities to choose from and considerable opportunities for study support which they say they value.

Off-site provision for a small number of disaffected students has improved and is good. It has re-engaged some very disengaged learners who were previously close to exclusion and who are now working towards external qualifications. The academy recognises that there is scope to extend the curriculum further to capitalise on some of the interests and aspirations of these students; indeed some have asked if they can have the equivalent of an off-site sixth form.

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The care, guidance and support for students are strengths of the academy. Staff know students and their particular needs well. Coherent systems are well organised and make an effective contribution to learning so that vulnerable groups make progress in line with their peers. In part, this is a consequence of closely targeted support provided by the multi-professional team. Transition arrangements for Year 6 pupils are very effective because staff work hard to get to know them and their families before they join the academy. Advice and guidance for students, including those in the sixth form, as they move through the academy and make choices for their futures are good. All but a very small number moved on to education, training or employment last year.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The principal, very ably supported by senior colleagues, leads from the front articulating with absolute clarity the ambition of the academy for its students. The senior team strive tirelessly to realise this and have put in place coherent and cohesive systems to achieve this aim. The academy's self-evaluation and strategic planning are very well informed by thorough and comprehensive monitoring of provision, as well as regular tracking of outcomes for students. Detailed analyses enable leaders to target training and support accurately and this has borne fruit, for example, in the improvements to teaching and students' progress. Lines of accountability are clear and middle leaders discharge their responsibilities effectively.

The management of provision for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good because there is good communication between staff, systematic recording of students' needs and effective training for teachers and support staff. This is one of the areas in which it is evident that the academy promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination well. It is also clear in the good partnership with parents, for instance, in the arrangements made to facilitate communications with those who are recent international arrivals.

Governors bring a wealth of pertinent experience to bear on the robust challenge they present to leaders. They have carefully matched their roles to the academy's priorities and progress on these is tracked rigorously. Governors' commitment to the academy's place in the local community is instrumental in the very beneficial partnerships the academy has forged with a broad range of providers.

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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	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Outcomes for sixth form students are satisfactory: they are improving. Examination results in 2009 show a mixed picture. The small cohort who took A levels all gained passes, as did the majority who followed vocational courses. However, performance at AS level was very variable and not good enough in a number of subjects. Good leadership and management of the sixth form mean that the academy has moved swiftly to deal with this. The curriculum on offer has improved. It stretches from level 1 to level 3 encompassing a good range of courses and learning styles well matched to students' prior attainment and aspirations. A core element focuses well on preparing students for the next stage of their lives. Advice and guidance have improved considerably resulting, along with appropriate entry thresholds, in good retention rates. Students say they value highly the dedication with which staff support them, both in making choices about their futures and in achieving their challenging academic targets. Teaching and learning have improved and are now good. The academy's data show the impact of this with the majority of students at all levels currently making good progress. Students' personal development is enhanced by the good range of opportunities they have to contribute to decision making and to take on leadership roles, for instance as mentors for Year 11 students.

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These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents or carers who returned the inspection questionnaire are positive about the work of the academy. A few indicated that the academy could do more to help their child lead a healthy lifestyle. Inspectors found that there are good opportunities for students to develop their understanding of safe and healthy choices. The academy provides two hours of physical education a week for students and a broad selection of healthy foods are available at break times. A small number of parents or carers noted concerns about the way unacceptable behaviour is dealt with. Inspectors found that the academy has effective systems for managing behaviour and that overall the behaviour of students is good. A very small minority of parents do not feel that their concerns are followed up speedily enough. Inspectors found that the academy makes arrangements for the appropriate member of staff to contact parents regarding issues raised. The academy regularly seeks and acts on the views of parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bradford 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 inspection team received 183 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,090 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	74	40	96	52	10	5	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	80	44	95	52	5	3	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	88	48	82	45	10	5	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	69	38	96	52	14	8	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	75	41	97	53	8	4	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	64	35	91	50	18	10	4	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	46	25	100	55	23	13	3	2
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)	83	45	80	44	9	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	62	34	99	54	14	8	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	66	36	88	48	21	11	4	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	52	28	98	54	21	11	6	3
The school is led and managed effectively	69	38	92	50	17	9	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	87	48	82	45	8	4	2	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.



5 February 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Bradford Academy, Bradford, BD4 7QJ

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to let you know the outcome of the recent inspection. First though, I would like to thank those of you who gave up some time to tell us about life at the academy. What you had to say helped us form our views. Your pride in the academy was very clear. We have judged that the academy is satisfactory overall. This is because the standards you reach are low compared with national averages. However, we found that the academy is improving and many aspects of its work are good: some are outstanding.

Some of the strongest aspects of academy life are:

- the outstanding contributions you make both within the academy and in the local community
- the way in which staff know you as individuals, ensure that you are safe and support you to do your best
- good teaching that helps you make good progress
- the choice of courses, including those offered in the sixth form, that enable you to follow your individual interests and help you gain valuable qualifications
- the wide choice of activities and considerable support for learning available during electives
- the provision made for those of you with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- your good behaviour
- the relentless commitment of the principal and senior staff to improving the academy.

There are two key areas that require improvement. We have asked the principal and staff to raise standards so that you gain good qualifications and are well placed for the next stage of your lives. One of the major hindrances to this is the low attendance of too many students, particularly in Years 10 and 11, so this, too, needs to improve. You have an important part to play by attending regularly and working as hard as possible.

I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Jane Austin

Her Majesty's Inspector

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