

Walworth Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135315
Local Authority	N/A
Inspection number	348697
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Emma Ing 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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	852
Appropriate authority	The governing body
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Headteacher	Devon Hanson
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Meetings were held with parents, groups of students, governors and staff and 33 lessons were observed, taught by 32 teachers. Inspectors considered the academy's work, and looked at the academy development plan, the minutes of the local governing body meetings, policies and at data produced by the academy. They also considered the responses to questionnaires made by 36 parents, 82 staff and 134 students.

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

- the impact of the academy's work to overcome the barriers to progress and attainment experienced by different groups of students
- the quality of learning and teaching and the manner in which these have been led
- the extent to which the curriculum meets the needs of students whose prior attainment is low or who are disaffected
- the impact of the academy's work to improve attendance.

Information about the school

Walworth Academy opened in 2007 with a new Principal and just two new members of staff, the rest having been retained from the predecessor school. Mathematics and health are its two specialisms. From 2007 to 2010, the academy was housed on two sites, but in the spring of this year moved into a brand new building. At this time, the academy reorganised and is now run as three small schools, two catering for Key Stage 3 students and one for Key Stage 4 students. It will open a sixth form in September 2010.

The academy serves an area where crime levels are high and there have been issues with gang culture. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The academy is ethnically diverse. The largest ethnic groups are White British, and Black and Black British African; other students are from a wide range of backgrounds, many with a Black or Asian heritage. The proportion of students whose first language is not English is well above average. There are many more boys than girls attending the academy. A higher-than-average proportion of the students have special educational needs. Many of these needs relate to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties but there are also students with moderate learning difficulties and other needs.

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

1

Main findings

Walworth Academy is in the business of transformation. It has transformed itself and is now a good and rapidly improving school whose students make good progress academically and great leaps in their personal development. Most importantly it is transforming the lives of the students who attend the academy. These students share a sense of self-worth, of responsibility, of pride in their achievements and of determination. One student explained, 'It is hard to believe the improvements that have been made in our progress and our behaviour.' Another commented, 'We are all role models here.' A third student said that the most important thing she had learned at the academy was, 'Nothing is impossible - it doesn't matter about your background.' Students across the academy stress their commitment to the academy's motto: 'Be the best that you can be.'

This ethos and these attitudes, carefully nurtured by the Principal and his team, underpin the significant successes that have been achieved in rapidly increasing the rate of progress made by students; significantly improving the attendance rates; widening horizons; reducing teenage pregnancies; improving behaviour; raising aspirations; and preparing students for the next phase of their education. Central to the academy's success is a rigorous use of data to ensure that the progress of each different group of students is scrutinised and strategies are put in place to get the best outcome for each student. As a result, although in the past some groups such as those who had behaviour difficulties were doing less well than other groups, this is no longer the case. The quality of care, guidance and support offered to students is outstanding.

The academy Principal must take much of the credit for this. He has built teams that share a vision and work hard and effectively to deliver this vision. He has been extremely well supported in this by the local governing body and by the sponsors. While the academy's own self-evaluation tends to confuse the huge progress the institution has made with the current quality of education offered and is a little over-generous, the academy improvement plan is sharp, tightly focused and entirely appropriate. Progress against this is carefully monitored and evaluated. The overall trajectory is one of fast improvement and leaders have thus demonstrated that the academy's capacity to improve is outstanding.

Senior leaders recognise that there is still more to be done. Teaching has improved. There is good and some outstanding teaching at the academy, but there is too much that is satisfactory. Not enough teaching promotes good learning by supporting students to think things through for themselves and to take responsibility. Middle leaders have worked on developing their leadership but are not yet driving improvements in teaching with the necessary rigour and analytical evaluation. Similarly, academy staff have been

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dogged in their efforts to ensure higher rates of attendance from students with huge success such that attendance levels are now in line with those found nationally. Nevertheless, there remains a sizeable group of students who are absent from the academy for more than 20% of the school year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on improvements to ensure that a higher proportion of teaching promotes good learning by using imaginative, student-directed activities; open questions; and greater challenge and pace.
- Further develop the leadership of middle leaders in promoting high-quality learning through an academy-wide focus on:
 - developing a shared understanding of the features of excellent teaching
 - promoting analytical reflection about the relative merits of a range of different teaching styles
 - undertaking regular developmental monitoring of teaching and learning in lessons.
- Further reduce the number of students who are persistently absent so that the proportion of such students is at least in line with the national average by the end of 2011.

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

Students arrive at lessons on time and ready to learn. They engage readily where teaching is satisfactory or better but tend to flag and occasionally become fidgety when the pace is slow. They comment that they particularly enjoy lessons where they are asked to participate in debate and active learning. In some lessons, students are being explicitly taught to take responsibility for their learning, to assess their progress and to work collaboratively with others. When this is well structured they respond well, although their skills in these respects are not well developed. In both English and mathematics, students are making outstanding progress which is a result of very high-quality teaching and excellent intervention in these areas.

In the past, the progress of students who had additional learning needs was less than that of their peers. The academy has addressed this problem systematically and the progress of this group is now good like that of the cohort as whole. As a result of their careful analysis, the academy has identified several other groups including, for example, middle-ability girls, whose progress has been less strong and has put in place a range of strategies which are ensuring that their progress is also securely good. Children who are looked after are well supported to make good progress and have high aspirations.

Through the wide range of activities that are on offer, students' horizons are broadening and aspirations are rising. Relationships within the academy are very good. The increased and increasing confidence of students is reflected in the activities which allow them to mentor and support others and contribute to whole-school projects, such as the

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development of teaching and learning. In the last year they have also been involved in making a stand against knife crime in their community.

Students are very confident that they are safe at the academy and parents and staff agree. They feel valued, listened to and able to get counsel and help whenever they need it. They are confident that there is very little bullying and that, should such behaviour arise, it would be swiftly dealt with. In lessons they are taught about safety and respond responsibly to this.

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	3
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	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

How effective is the provision?

There are clear and high expectations of students' behaviour in lessons. Teachers plan carefully and often include some alternative activities to meet the needs of different abilities. Most lessons engage students to a degree, but teachers are not consistently offering pace, challenge and a variety of activities designed to develop independent learning to all groups in the lesson. Some teachers use assessment very effectively throughout their lessons to gauge the understanding of different students and pitch their teaching accordingly. Some encourage students to assess their own work against

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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clear criteria and give very helpful feedback in their marking. However, this good use of assessment is not consistent across the academy. Supporting adults are generally well briefed and are good at asking open questions to help individuals make progress, but the promotion of students' thinking and understanding through questioning is not sufficiently widespread amongst teachers.

The curriculum at Key Stage 3 is broad, balanced and meets students' needs well. Nurture groups provide students with the literacy and numeracy skills that they need for their studies and these are well matched to their needs. At Key Stage 4, the academy has rightly moved from a very traditional programme of study to one with more balance and a good number of vocational courses, including some bespoke provision for small numbers of students who might otherwise be disaffected by the academy's provision. An increasing number of students are being entered for GCSEs early which enables them to access higher-level courses early or retake to secure higher grades as appropriate. Booster classes are highly valued by students, as is the wide range of extra-curricular activities, visits and other enrichment activities. Mathematics is well supported across the curriculum and the academy has worked with local primary schools to support children in their numeracy development before they go to their secondary school. Some options have been developed in relation to the academy's health specialism, and a range of trips are organised to give students an understanding of career paths within this field. The academy takes excellent care of each individual student, ensuring that they are extremely well supported in order to become the best that they can be. Students' transition to and within the academy is carefully managed. Behaviour is managed effectively: students are helped to manage their behaviour and emotions, and are supported through counselling and a wide range of other services. That which cannot be offered by staff within the academy is brokered from outside. The strong focus on the progress of different groups, together with the tailoring of the curriculum and intervention to meet different needs, has played a large part in ensuring success. For example, many students at the academy speak English as an additional language. Gaps in their understanding of the English language, society and culture are carefully assessed when they arrive at the academy, and wide-ranging efforts are made to help individuals fill these. One student expressed her pride and her gratitude to the academy for helping her learn English in four years to the point where she was able to take English Literature GCSE a year early.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

<p>The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</p>	<p>1</p>

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How effective are leadership and management?

The academy Principal has offered inspirational leadership to staff, students and parents and taken nearly all with him on the journey to secure greatly improved outcomes for students. Monitoring is underpinned by a secure use of data and challenging targets are continually being set and adjusted upwards. Planning for improvement is very sharply focused on key areas for improvement. Middle leaders have begun to develop their leadership roles. Together, leaders at all levels have secured very significant improvements in all areas of the academy's work, including teaching. However, the senior leadership team recognises that a step-change is now needed to move satisfactory and good teaching to good and outstanding teaching.

The academy is very active in promoting equality of opportunity. Data are used rigorously to ensure that no group is underperforming or falling behind. The needs and wishes of different groups are met as far as possible, such as those students who recently requested the use of a space for Friday prayers. Different views and values are explored and valued. There is no room for discrimination. In consequence, the diverse community is happy and content.

Staff work hard to engage parents from all different backgrounds, including those who may not feel confident in communicating with the academy. A very high proportion attends parents' evenings. Parents value the efforts that the academy makes to keep them informed about the progress and successes of their children. There is a parents' forum which has enabled particular groups of parents to become involved in the work of the academy.

All staff have been recently trained in safeguarding and they are knowledgeable about safeguarding procedures. The academy's records are comprehensive and secure. The governing body takes its responsibilities very seriously, is highly trained and monitors carefully. Recruitment procedures are in order. Risk assessments are in place, with accidents and incidents carefully recorded.

The academy makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Leaders have a very clear understanding of the local community. There is a strong emphasis within the academy of promoting positive images and choices, and students have been encouraged to act against gun and knife crime. The academy has worked to support teenage mothers and to prevent teenage pregnancies. Drama groups have brought local issues alive to students and to bring the many communities that make up the academy together. English lessons are offered for parents and other community members. There have been many opportunities for students to participate in the wider community through educational visits. National and international links are being developed.

These are the grades for leadership and management

<p>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning</p>	<p>2</p>

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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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
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

Views of parents and carers

A relatively small proportion of parents and carers responded to our questionnaire, but of those that did most expressed great satisfaction with the academy. One wrote, 'The school is a great place for my daughter, it provides a great range of opportunities and helps to enable academic success.' These positive views were echoed by those parents who met with the inspectors. Parents were particularly keen to stress the work that the academy puts in to supporting those students who need encouragement to value education and help to manage themselves and their behaviour.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Walworth 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 36 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 852 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	42	19	53	0	0	1	3
The school keeps my child safe	18	50	17	47	0	0	1	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	47	18	50	0	0	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	39	21	58	0	0	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	13	36	22	61	0	0	1	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	44	18	50	1	3	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	25	24	67	2	6	1	3
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)	12	33	22	61	0	0	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	28	24	67	0	0	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	44	18	50	1	3	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	22	23	64	2	6	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	12	33	22	61	0	0	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	56	14	39	0	0	2	6

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



24 June 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Walworth Academy, London, SE1 5UJ

I would like to thank you for sharing your views so readily with my team and me when we visited your academy last month. We were delighted to meet such positive, courteous and determined young people and took pleasure in watching you at work and your learning. I know that you were keen to impress upon us how much the academy has improved things for you. I hope that you will read the full report, which is on our website (www.ofsted.gov.uk) where you will see that this is made clear.

We agree with you that the improvements that the academy has made in the last two years are breathtaking. We share your view that the teachers are extremely well led by the Principal and that they work tirelessly on your behalf. We can see why you feel safe and extremely well cared for and proud of the academy. We noted that you are making excellent progress in learning English and mathematics and good progress overall. Certainly, you are developing confidence and are beginning to have appropriately high aspirations. Your behaviour is good and you have been well supported with this. The Principal and his staff have worked hard to ensure that there is something for everyone at the academy and that everyone is treated fairly.

One of the reasons that you are now doing so much better than in the past is that your attendance is much improved. However, there are still some of you that simply do not come into school often enough. This will hold you back in life and is important to overcome. There is some excellent and some good teaching at the academy, but we noted that there is too much teaching that is a little bit slow, a little bit dull and not sufficiently challenging of you all. We have asked teachers to work on this and devise lessons that make you sit up and think. We have also asked that middle leaders take an important role in leading this. I know that students are already involved in working on this and I believe that your views will be helpful in determining what teaching styles work best for you.

I wish you all success and urge you to keep on working to, 'Be the best that you can be.'

Yours sincerely

Emma Ing

Her Majesty's Inspector

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