

Isaac Newton Academy

1 Cricklefield Place, Ilford, Essex, IG1 1FY

Inspection dates

5–6 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Outstanding 1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- High standards have been achieved by the inspirational leadership of the principal, members of the leadership team and governing body. The academy has established very high quality teaching where every student succeeds.
- The achievement of students is outstanding. Many are making very quick and sustained progress over a large range of subjects in Years 7 and 8.
- The quality of students' work across many subjects demonstrates very high levels of achievement, commitment and determination.
- Teaching is consistently strong and there is a large proportion of outstanding teaching across many subjects.
- The assessment of students' work by almost all teachers is of excellent quality. Many students make quality responses to their feedback. However, very occasionally, the calibre of student practice is not always of the highest standard possible.
- There are many examples of very high quality of displays of students' work which celebrate their achievements.
- Students are very proud to be part of the academy. One student summarised, 'I love coming to Isaac Newton. We have fun, work hard and we have great opportunities to learn.'
- Students' behaviour in lessons is exemplary. They have a passion for learning, actively contributing to and supporting their own and each other's learning very well.
- There is an exceptionally positive environment. Students feel very safe and the governing body ensures that all safeguarding requirements are fully met.
- The impact of the academy's unique specialisation in music and mathematics is highly evident. The students are very proud of learning a 'big band' instrument and really enjoy music making.
- The academy's unique 'BRIDGES' programme enables the students to learn, explore and develop the qualities and skills to become very well-rounded individuals, exceptionally well equipped for the future world of work.
- All teaching and support staff make a significant contribution to the running of the academy. This is well recognised by the students through their very high levels of attendance.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited 23 lessons, observing 25 teachers. Seven lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also conducted a series of further brief observations of learning and students' behaviour. They looked at students' work and observed the supervision of the students at different points during the school day.
- Members of the inspection team asked students for their views of the school both in a formal interview and informally.
- All members of the inspection team were invited to, and attended the 'Big Band' enrichment rehearsal at the end of the inspection.
- Meetings were held with groups of students, governors, the senior leadership team and staff from the school. A telephone conversation was also arranged with a representative from the sponsored academy chain.
- Inspectors took account of the 97 responses available on the online Parent View questionnaire, and considered the school's own survey of parents and carers. In addition, the inspectors took account of the 32 responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at improvement plans, records and analyses of students' behaviour, the tracking of students' progress and examples of students' work. They scrutinised the school's attendance figures and other documentation and evidence of safeguarding requirements.

Inspection team

Raymond Lau, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Penny Spencer

Additional inspector

Sue Cox

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average secondary academy. There are currently only Year 7 and Year 8 students in the school. The academy is introducing Reception classes from September 2014 and it will become an all-through academy.
- The vast majority of students are from a Black and minority ethnic heritage background, and many speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of girls in the school is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided to the school for students known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority) is average. There are very few looked-after children.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The academy does not use off-site provision for students.
- The academy is sponsored by Ark Academies. It specialises in music and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that teachers' feedback and students' responses are consistently of the highest quality, so that learners achieve even higher standards of attainment.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students start the school with attainment levels that are in line with the national average. Throughout Years 7 and 8, students make rapid and sustained progress in many subjects including in English, mathematics and science. Currently many students are achieving levels of attainment much higher than the national average. For example, in a Year 7 mathematics lesson, students expanded their understanding and application of percentages and fractions.
- The school proactively promotes students' literacy skills. In a Year 7 reading lesson, students read with confidence, fluency and ease. These students are making outstanding progress and their attainment levels in reading are rising rapidly. One boy stated, 'I now love reading. This helps me to expand my mind, and helps you get better with your writing skills. I am now reading more challenging books.'
- The Year 7 'catch-up' premium is utilised exceptionally well. In addition, other support has enabled lower-attaining students to make rapid progress. Many students have added at least 18 months' progress to their literacy and numeracy skills in a very short space of time.
- Boys and girls are making similar levels of progress. While there are some very small gaps, the impact of high quality teaching ensures that these gaps are closing. Boys and girls in a Year 8 music lesson were learning to extend their improvisation skills through singing. They performed elements of the song 'Feeling Good' with enthusiasm and control and made outstanding progress.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs generally make outstanding progress, similar to that of their peers.
- More able students are suitably challenged with increasing work and are making outstanding progress. The high quality of work seen in Year 8 for mathematics, history and religious education demonstrates that many students are reaching the highest levels of achievement.
- The achievement of students known to be eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium is outstanding. Their current achievement is similar to that of their peers. The school's current tracking shows that any gaps have closed. Students from different backgrounds make rapid progress, similar to their peers.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The majority of teaching is outstanding. The highest quality of practice exists in English, mathematics, science, drama, music, French, Spanish, history, geography, religious education and physical education. There are exceptionally high aspirations, demands and expectations made on the students to achieve well. The parents' views support that the teaching is exceptional.
- Teachers know their students very well, utilising information on them to plan learning that stretches all to reach their full potential. They ensure that all students' needs are fully met. Students are stimulated to develop their knowledge and understanding of all subjects exceptionally well. Teachers ensure that no time is lost during learning and very skilfully make students curious about a subject.
- Literacy and numeracy are very well promoted across the subject areas. Students are consistently given lots of chances to develop their reading, speaking, listening and, especially, their writing skills. In observing a Year 8 religious education lesson, students' books demonstrate that over time they studied all major religions in extensive depth. These opportunities contribute strongly to learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Teachers are highly skilled in focusing on the students' learning, ensuring that maximum progress is made. They complement this with regular checks on students' progress, making sure that students can achieve even further. For example, in a Year 8 English lesson, students were actively revising for their up-coming examination. The teacher ensured that students were fully

stretched and could demonstrate how their knowledge had been expanded.

- The marking and checking of students' work and progress is generally of the highest quality, noticeably in English. Students clearly understand their targets, and generally know what is expected of them in order to reach the next level. Through the implementation of the effective 'Strength, Target and Action' initiative, a useful communication is set up between the teacher and learner. However, occasionally, this practice is not fully consistent across the academy.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students are very proud of their academy. They wear the uniform with pride and look very smart and presentable. Students arrive very punctually to school and to lessons. The students sit at lunch time in the dining hall with staff members and this helps to develop social interaction skills. The new facilities are kept free of litter and the students treat the grounds with great care.
- The behaviour of students in lessons is typically outstanding. The school has successfully created a very positive climate for learning. There are excellent mutual levels of respect between teachers, support staff and students. Students' behaviour is consistently well managed across the school. In most lessons, students demonstrate a consistent eagerness and a hunger for learning. For example, in a Year 8 drama lesson, students worked exceptionally well. They demonstrated exceptionally high levels of concentration. These students were eager to experiment and explore different ways of presenting a character, which resulted in a first-class performance.
- The students show exceptionally high levels of concentration and all focus on the tasks and activities, without exception.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. The school has exemplary systems to make sure that students are kept safe. Students have an excellent understanding of what constitutes safe and unsafe practices. This includes very good awareness of some of the dangers of social networking and the different types of bullying. The school is active in educating students on the dangers of homophobia. Students' social skills are very strongly developed, as a result of the personal, social and health education programme. Students report that bullying and the use of derogatory language are very rare. When this occasionally happens, teachers deal with it swiftly and act appropriately. Students generally behave exceptionally well around the school.
- The school provides a wide range of opportunities for students to take on leadership responsibilities, including being on the school council or becoming subject ambassadors. The students raise money for local and national charities. Recently, they raised £1,800 for a large health charity as a result of skipping competitions by the staff and students.
- The school has taken positive actions to strengthen attendance. As a result, students' attendance is high. The exclusions have slightly increased with the number of students on roll. However, more recently, because of well-targeted extra support, the exclusions have significantly reduced.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The principal is exceptional and provides inspirational leadership. She models high standards of excellence and she also continues to teach. The principal is very well supported by the senior leadership team, who have the knowledge, skills and talent to drive the very high aspirations of the academy. The staff have a good understanding of the school's effectiveness and actions are undertaken continuously to improve and raise the achievement of students. With very high levels of student achievement and outstanding teaching, the capacity for improvement is outstanding.
- The leadership of the teaching is excellent and much teaching is outstanding. The process begins from the recruitment of high-calibre staff. There are very well-structured systems for teaching, which enable teachers to plan individually and co-plan with each other. The systems for managing staff performance are robust. The training opportunities given to staff are fit for

purpose and support their personal needs as well as the school's key priorities.

- Subject leaders are talented and committed individuals who work both in developing their teams and developing excellent practice across the school. These leaders have very high standards and the monitoring, as the monitoring and tracking of students' achievement is exceptional. Individual staff are required to plan lessons in detail and are monitored on a regular basis. This includes accountability for undertaking specific actions for any students who are not on track to reach the academy's high standards.
- The subjects that students study are broad and balanced. The academy has utilised its specialism in music to enable all students to study a big band instrument. In a Year 8 band music lesson, students produced a piece that demonstrated a population explosion of creativity and improvisation. There was very good team work with great musical skills. The unique 'BRIDGES' programme and lessons develop students' knowledge, skills and qualities to support them in becoming effective learners, well prepared for the future. The extensive uptake by students of the diverse and very large enrichment programme strongly contributes to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is very high quality art work proudly displayed across the school.
- The school proactively works with the parents and carers. While the overwhelming majority of parents are very supportive of the school, there remains a very small minority that are not satisfied with the academy's work. The academy is vigorously working to further improve relations with these families. Some parents feel that the academy is 'too strict', yet the very high aspirations of the academy are successfully raising the academic achievements of students.
- The academy is sponsored by Ark Academies, which provides excellent support for the school. They conduct regular monitoring visits to assess the quality of teaching and students' achievement and provide opportunities for both students and teachers to attend regular activities.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has an excellent range of expertise in meeting the needs of the academy. They ensure that the school is safe and that all statutory national requirements are met regarding the safeguarding of students.
- They have very high aspirations and continually strive for standards of the highest quality of students' achievement. They know about the standards of teaching. The governors strongly hold the school to account by analysing information on students' performance. They are fully aware of how well their academy performs both nationally and within the network of Ark Academies.
- Governors are very proactive in the academy's work. For example, they suggested and implemented a Saturday school to bring in university students to help raise students' aspirations.
- The governing body monitors the pay of teachers and leaders, and bases this on the individual's performance.
- They are fully aware of how the students who receive additional funding are performing, and make sure that no students are disadvantaged in any way. All these students learn to play a musical instrument.
- The governing body ensures that members attend regular and suitable training.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	138518
Local authority	Not applicable
Inspection number	440049

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	360
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gerard Griffin
Principal	Rachel Macfarlane
Date of previous school inspection	Not applicable
Telephone number	020 8911 6666
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