

Walworth Academy

Shorncliffe Road, London, SE15UJ

Inspection dates 22–23 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The percentage of students achieving good GCSE grades in English and mathematics has been at least above average since the previous inspection.
- In 2014, the percentage of students attaining the EBacc qualification matched the national average.
- Students behave well and all of them get on well together. The vast majority are ambitious and work hard in lessons.
- Students make good progress in practically all their lessons and standards are rising rapidly.
- The sixth form is good. It has been transformed during the last couple of years. Students study carefully balanced combinations of subjects which prepare them well for their future lives. Students mature into confident young adults.
- The pastoral care and support for students are outstanding. Students value the safety and security the academy gives them. They and their parents and carers appreciate its valuable work in the community.
- Students enjoy academy life: 'I like loads of things, especially the staff' (Year 9 student).
- The Principal's dynamic leadership has generated rapid improvements in many areas of the academy's work. She is ably backed by the ARK organisation and the governing body.
- The senior leadership team, middle leaders and all other staff are fully supportive of the Principal's plans for the future; they work effectively and energetically to deliver them.
- Senior leaders organise high-quality professional development for all staff and regularly use external specialists to validate the academy's work. Both these contribute to focus on success for all.
- Teaching has moved into a higher gear in recent months. Teachers and support staff are equally focused on making students' learning enjoyable and successful.
- The range of subjects taught is innovative. Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Health and safety issues which students encounter outside school are tackled head-on and fearlessly by the academy.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Standards and progress are not strong enough in a few GCSE and sixth form subjects. Too few students attain the top examination grades.
- The quality of marking varies in a few subjects. Work given to the most able students is not always hard enough for them.
- Lessons to improve students' reading and writing are not as effective as they need to be.
- Progress of students with special educational needs is held back if, as their learning develops, adjustments are not made to the support they receive.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 50 part-lessons, several of which were jointly observed with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors observed three assemblies and tutor time in several years.
- Inspectors spoke to students informally and held meetings with groups from most year groups, including the sixth form.
- Inspectors held meetings with the Principal, other members of the senior leadership team and staff with responsibility for subjects and other aspects of the academy’s work.
- A member of the inspection team met the governor overseeing safeguarding and child protection. The lead inspector met the Chair of the Governing Body with the Director of Education for ARK academies.
- Inspectors discussed their observations with teaching staff and examined a range of documents including the school’s improvement plans and data about progress, standards, exclusions, attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors looked at a range of students’ work in lessons and outside of lessons.
- Inspectors took into account questionnaires completed by 50 members of staff. There were only three responses to Ofsted’s online Parent View questionnaire.

Inspection team

Clare Gillies, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Tim Body	Additional Inspector
Janice Williams	Additional Inspector
John Worgan	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Principal took up post in January 2013. She is a National Leader of Education and was awarded an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2014.
- The academy is slightly larger than the average-sized secondary school with a small sixth form which is increasing in size.
- The school has far more boys than girls in Years 7 to 11, with a smaller gap between them in the sixth form.
- The approximate percentages of the students attending the academy are: 30% Black African, 20% White British, 10% of other White heritages (mainly European), 10% Black Caribbean, and smaller percentages from several other minority ethnic backgrounds.
- A well above average proportion of students speak English as an additional language, of whom a small number are at an early stage of learning English.
- A well above average proportion of students receive support through the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for specific groups including children who are looked after and students known to be eligible for free school meals. The academy has several looked after children.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is well above the national average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also well above the national average. The most common needs relate to students with speech, language and communication difficulties.
- About one in five students is eligible for Year 7 catch-up funding, which is for students who did not achieve the expected Level 4 in reading or mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Five students from Years 10 and 11 attend LIFE, a small school run by a charity which supports students who find normal school challenging. A few sixth form students attend Globe Academy (also ARK) for lessons in sociology, and philosophy and ethics, not taught at the academy.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise students' achievement by:
 - improving standards in the few subjects where they do not attain good enough results
 - focusing on attaining more high examination grades in GCSE and post-16 qualifications
 - using the school-based information about the progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs to adjust the amount and style of support they receive.
- Improve teaching to the highest quality in all subjects by:
 - checking that students who find work easy, particularly the most able, move on to more challenging work quickly
 - insisting that marking is of a consistently high quality in all subjects.
- Accelerate learning for students who are weak in reading and writing or have English as an additional language by:
 - planning and delivering effective lessons which focus on providing for students' different needs.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal tackled weak teaching and inadequate subject leadership from the day she took up post. By the end of her first full year she had halted the decline in sixth form and Year 11 results. She made significant, effective changes to the structure and ethos of the sixth form. Extremely well supported by two deputies and a restructured leadership team, the Principal's leadership is generating a very secure capacity for improvement.
 - Senior and subject leaders work collaboratively in the drive for higher standards. They carefully monitor students' progress, attendance and behaviour. Staff morale is very high with all staff supportive of the Principal's approach and changes. All their responses to the inspection questionnaire were positive; the majority 'strongly agreeing' that the academy is well led and managed.
 - The Principal determined to incorporate the national changes to the subjects, qualifications and progress measures into the academy's curriculum. All students now study qualifications that will enable them to proceed to university, high-quality apprenticeships or worthwhile employment.
 - In addition to having daily English and mathematics lessons, the academy now teaches more academic courses and fewer BTECs in Years 11 to 13. To eliminate classes with only a few students, the number of sixth form subjects on offer has been slimmed down.
 - In September 2014, Year 8 students started GCSE work in their three option subjects. Different combinations of qualifications and subjects are matched to students' abilities and interests. To maintain breadth as well as depth, students will experience 'Deep Learning' weeks each term. These are already popular, providing students with intensive experience of creative subjects. The impact of this innovative curriculum cannot yet be fully assessed.
 - Teachers accept that their pay progression is directly linked to how much progress their students make. They know the stakes are high but, along with the non-teaching staff, they rate the support and professional development they receive highly.
 - High-quality training is the norm for newly qualified teachers or those with many years' experience. Teachers appreciate having time set aside when they plan work together and discuss students' progress. This contributes to an increasing number of lessons where students learn really well.
 - Senior leaders spend the additional funding thoughtfully and carefully, for example, on reading and mathematics computer programs to boost reading and numeracy skills, and residential revision courses for Year 11. External consultants were brought in to support learning in subjects which underperformed in 2013; several improved significantly in 2014.
 - Careers advice and guidance starts in Year 7 and continues until students have completed their GCSEs. It is informative and balanced, catering for students of all abilities.
 - Leadership and management overall are not yet outstanding. A few subjects still lag behind others, results have fluctuated in recent years and several new members of staff have yet to secure consistency in their teaching over time. Provision for disabled students, those with special educational needs, poor readers and those who speak English as an additional language is good. However, the analysis of their progress is not always sharp enough to rapidly accelerate their progress.
 - Parents and carers are fully involved in academy life. They receive regular letters from the Principal and information about their children's progress. They can drop in to the academy or attend sessions about how subjects are taught. A well-established parents' forum is valued by academy staff.
 - Representatives from the ARK organisation provide very good support. The Principal and the staff welcome visits from ARK consultants, other ARK leaders and subject experts when needed. Work is externally verified to be sure teachers' assessments are accurate.
 - The academy prepares students well for their future careers and life in modern Britain. The academy responds quickly to issues in the local and wider community, fostering good relationships, promoting equality and tackling discrimination. Speakers are brought in to discuss topics such as gun crime, gang culture or radicalisation. Following a Girl Summit hosted by the academy in summer 2014, the school discussed intimate issues affecting the health and well-being of girls.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The Chair of the Governing Body is knowledgeable about how the academy's results relate to national ones. The governing body has probed, debated and supported the Principal's changes.
 - Governors know how many staff received pay increases last year. They discuss increments and bonuses related to performance and only authorise them when appropriate. They receive informative reports from the Principal, particularly on the quality of teaching, and so understand and support the significant

changes to staffing over the last five terms.

- The governor overseeing safeguarding and child protection reports regularly to the full governing body. All procedures, policies and practices are fully up to date and reviewed systematically.
- Governors keep a close eye on the academy's finances. They have always checked the allocation of additional funds. However, they realise they have not probed in depth the relative effectiveness of the different ways the money has been spent.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Their behaviour when moving around the academy during lunch breaks can be strikingly sensible and considerate. They are polite and very welcoming to visitors and happy to discuss their lives at the academy. Through 'preparation for adult life' sessions, the development of students' social and moral skills has a high priority.
- Students appreciate the wonderful facilities the academy offers and respect their environment. They wear their uniform with pride and look smart. Those attending off-site provision attend regularly and behave well.
- Practically all students take their lessons seriously. Keen to do well, they are attentive and work hard. They listen attentively in French or Spanish, use equipment safely in science and physical education and reflect sensitively to poetry in English.
- It is only in a small minority of lessons, particularly double lessons, that students' behaviour slips and learning is held up for a short time while teachers refocus students. Some have yet to acquire the self-discipline to concentrate for six lessons, five days a week.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The quality of care for students' health and well-being is second to none. Academy staff do everything possible to make students feel safe everywhere, all year round. Students have a small laminated card in the holidays with a number they can contact if they need help.
- The safety of the small number of students studying off site is a top priority at the school they attend. It ensures they are well cared for.
- A fall in the number of exclusions (below average since 2011) and above average attendance reflect several actions: tighter, consistent behaviour management, high visibility of senior leaders around the academy and motivational assemblies and tutor sessions.
- All the students met by inspectors were adamant that bullying is very rare and dealt with quickly should it happen. Behaviour incident records show that cyber bullying is the most common form despite much discussion about how to be internet safe.
- Tutor sessions cover topics related to students' personal development. These range from the diversity of the United Kingdom's population and how it enriches their lives to hard-hitting presentations related to the dangers of drugs.
- The geography department has a world map showing the countries of students' family roots. This contributes significantly to students' cultural awareness as it generates discussions about their similarities and differences, family customs and beliefs. These are celebrated in assemblies, foster good relationships and reinforce that discrimination is not tolerated.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The Principal realised that the quality of teaching needed to improve to raise standards and took effective action last year. This has continued since September 2014 with several new teachers and subject leaders. Lessons are underpinned by excellent, respectful relationships between teachers and students, and between students.
- Teaching encourages students to learn in a variety of effective ways, for example, letting them tackle problems together and explain things to each other so that their understanding emerges from their work together.
- Effective learning often follows from questions which make students reflect on what they learned in the previous lesson or when teachers emphasise the relevance of work to students' lives and futures. For

example, technology students became intrigued realising how a lesson related to engineering.

- Attractive, informative displays in classrooms and stimulating presentations and activities all help students to concentrate in lessons. They are confident that they are taught well. Students observe that 'Teachers don't rest until we all understand' and that many of them are so enthusiastic about their subjects that it rubs off on them.
- Very effective marking, seen in several subjects, promotes very good understanding and progress, for example, by:
 - giving clear guidance to students on what will make their work better
 - allowing students to respond to comments so they reflect and improve work before moving on
 - checking work so that misconceptions and mistakes are sorted quickly.
- Teaching does not yet generate consistently, highly effective learning because some teachers' marking lacks one or more of the qualities described above. Also, on occasions, students, particularly the most able, do work that they find fairly easy, so their progress slows.
- Most teaching ensures students' skills in numeracy and literacy are blended into their lessons. Students draw and interpret graphs and diagrams in, for example, science and geography or, in several subjects, read out key statements from the board to improve their speaking skills and confidence.
- Students with low reading ages or poor writing, some of whom speak English as an additional language, attend three literacy lessons a week. In Year 7 most of them make good progress but for those who still need to improve, their progress slows down. The reason is a mixture of fairly large classes and the same work set for all students, despite their very different levels of competence and needs.
- Teaching generally provides well for disabled students and those with special educational needs. Staff seek advice from the special educational needs coordinator about how they should help these students. However, not all of them use information about these students' progress to adapt work for them. In class, learning support assistants mainly work with students with statements of special educational needs but help other students when they can; this input is effective.
- Teachers monitor the progress of the few students who study off site by having regular contact and feedback from the organisations.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Since the previous inspection, the A* to C grade percentages and the progress students made in GCSE English and mathematics remained well above average until 2013.
- Staffing issues, combined with national changes to examinations, had a negative impact on English and mathematics results in 2014 although they were still above average. Almost 50% of students attained A* to B grades in mathematics. Students attained good results in science. No students take GCSEs early.
- In addition, through taking fewer BTECs and more GCSEs than in the past, the percentage of students attaining the EBacc qualification in 2014 was the same as that seen nationally. This is a significant achievement, as is the fact that students' average scores were above the national average.
- National figures of students' progress in 2014 are not yet available. They are likely to show that the academy's students made good progress in English and mathematics and in several other subjects, some of which had low results in 2013. Subjects including media studies, Spanish and sports studies have not yet improved. The Principal has changed staffing where necessary to help boost improvement.
- The pattern of achievement by different groups of students fluctuates. In 2014, White British students did better than other ethnic groups and girls did better than boys. In 2013, the opposite was the case. Black African and Black Caribbean students made better progress in 2013 than in 2014.
- The academy knows that it is not just Year 7 students eligible for catch-up funding whose reading and writing are weak. Those who enter the academy late or speak English as an additional language often need intensive support as well. Students' progress in their literacy lessons is not fast enough.
- Disabled students and those with statements of special educational needs or supported at school action tend to achieve less well than those supported at school action plus. The academy has yet to use information about all these students' progress to adapt the support they need. The looked after students achieve as well as most other students.
- In 2012, disadvantaged students at the end of Key Stage 4 (eligible for additional funding) made almost the same progress as others in English and mathematics, attaining half a grade less than others in English and one grade less in mathematics. The gaps reversed in 2013 but narrowed in both subjects in 2014. For several years, the gap between Walworth students eligible for additional funding and others has been far less than that seen nationally.
- In 2014 over 40% of the most able students attained A* or A grades in the three separate sciences and

94% of them attained five good GCSE passes including English and mathematics. In several subjects however, they and other students do not attain enough high grades. The academy has identified this as a top priority for sixth form students as well.

- With several new members of staff this term, complementing those who arrived during the last academic year, achievement is now convincingly good for practically all groups of students in Years 7 to 11 and in the sixth form. Students learning off site do well.

The sixth form provision

is good

- Sixth formers are happy to be at the academy, appreciating being in an environment where they are confident they will flourish. They wear their 'smart clothes' uniform proudly and study hard in lessons and on their own. Their behaviour is outstanding.
- Attainment in academic subjects has been below average at the end of Years 12 and 13. In 2014, students who combined academic and BTEC courses did well and over 80% of those taking extended diplomas achieved triple distinction.
- Students eligible for extra funding attained a higher average points score than others in 2014. Several students attained extremely well and were awarded ARK bursaries. There is little difference in achievement between ethnic groups.
- AS students' value added improved in 2014, reflecting the early impact of the many changes to the sixth form. Work seen in lessons and books confirms that many current sixth formers are making at least good progress. Most of those who do not pass GCSE mathematics or English in Year 11 do so in Year 12.
- Subjects that did not perform well in the past are now taught either at a neighbouring ARK academy or by new staff. More subject specialists are delivering sixth form lessons and learning is always good and much is outstanding, particularly in Year 13. A Year 13 student said, 'I have made leaps in my understanding this term.'
- The Principal has ensured that the new, good, sixth form leadership and management flourish. Monitoring is very tight and well organised. The number of subjects offered has been reduced but all students now study enough subjects to ensure they can try for university if they wish.
- Careers guidance and advice are excellent. A medical society after school is popular, with input from PhD students inspiring students to aim high. Retention rates are much better than in the past; 75% of students went to university in 2014.
- Sixth formers have requested more sporting activities and their wishes are being addressed. Despite helping younger students with their work, sixth formers are not seen by them as being fully involved in academy life. Students benefit significantly from professional work experience in Year 12.

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	135315
Local authority	Southward
Inspection number	412800

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	998
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	98
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anthony Williams
Principal	Yvonne Powell
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 June 2010
Telephone number	020 7450 9570
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Email address	info@walworthacademy.org

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