

Lambeth Academy

Elms Road, Clapham, London, SW4 9ET

Inspection dates 13–14 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- This is a vibrant and rapidly improving academy. The drive, passion and determination of the principal and senior team have made a visible impact on all aspects of the academy's work.
- Dedicated teachers work extremely hard to ensure that students make good progress, behave well and participate actively in lessons.
- Students who join the academy with low starting points make particularly good progress. Students supported with additional funding do well compared with other students.
- Teaching is improving rapidly. Carefully planned programmes of extra help for students contribute to their good results.
- The sixth form is good. Results are improving, academy leaders are showing more ambition and more students are achieving the highest grades.
- The academy is a welcoming, lively and friendly place. Students work together in harmony and support each other well.
- Behaviour and attendance are improving all the time and relationships between staff and students are warm and mutually respectful.
- Students show a genuine thirst for learning. They are optimistic and positive about their education and the opportunities they are given to excel in extra-curricular activities.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The most-able students do not achieve such good results as other groups. In some lessons teachers do not push students hard enough and they are not given time to think deeply and explore ideas at a high level.
- Middle leaders are not entirely consistent when they check the quality of teaching or the management of students' behaviour in their areas.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 36 lessons, including three jointly observed with senior leaders.
- They also observed tutor time, assembly, breaktimes and lunchtimes. They looked at students' work and listened to students reading.
- Inspectors met with groups of students across the age and ability range to discuss achievement, teaching, behaviour, safety and improvements in the academy.
- Inspectors met with the principal, senior and middle leaders, groups of teachers and an external partner working with the academy.
- They met with the Chair of the Governing Body and the managing director of the academy board.
- Inspectors took into account 14 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and 58 responses to the paper-based staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors checked the academy's records of students' attainment and progress, previous and current figures for attendance and exclusion, safeguarding and child protection records, behaviour records and the minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- They also evaluated the ways in which the academy checks the quality of teaching and its plans for improvement.

Inspection team

Janet Pearce, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Deborah Myers

Additional Inspector

Pamela Fearnley

Additional Inspector

Jalil Shaikh

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Lambeth Academy is a mixed 11 to 18 secondary school. It is slightly larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The academy opened in 2004 and is sponsored by the United Learning. Its specialisms are English with business and enterprise.
- The majority of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest group being of Black Caribbean and Black African heritage. Nearly half the students speak English as an additional language and this proportion is increasing.
- Over half of the students are supported by the pupil premium (extra government funding for particular groups of students including those known to be eligible for free school meals). This is well above the national average for secondary schools.
- The number of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above that in other schools. The proportion supported through school action plus or with statements of special educational needs is also above average.
- A very small number of students attend courses away from the academy site at Park Campus or the Fairbridge Education Centre.
- The academy meets the current government floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure consistently good or better teaching by:
 - planning stretching and challenging work for more-able students
 - allowing more time in lessons for students to think deeply and explore ideas
 - ensuring that there is a consistent approach to marking and that students follow their teachers' advice about how to improve their work.
- Strengthen leadership at all levels by:
 - ensuring that all leaders of subjects and specific areas in the academy consistently apply the same high standards when checking on the quality of teaching and the management of behaviour.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the academy with starting points that are generally below the national average. GCSE results are below the national average, but are improving and catching up because students make significantly better progress from their starting points than students in other schools. This is particularly the case in English and mathematics.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to support students who are entitled to additional help. These students make particularly good progress. There is only a very small difference between their achievement and those of other students. Their results are better than in many other schools nationally.
- Results in the sixth form are improving, particularly in Year 13, and more students are achieving higher grades and seeking places at top universities.
- The academy has rightly recognised that good examination results depend on good attendance and has worked hard to improve attendance for all students. This is having a significantly positive impact on students' achievement.
- In previous years the academy entered some groups of students early for English and mathematics examinations. This meant that some students did not achieve the highest grades. The academy has now changed this policy and is focused on pushing students to aim higher and achieve better grades.
- In some subjects more-able students, disabled students and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action plus do not make as much progress as other students. Academy leaders have identified this as a top priority and are taking steps to improve progress for these groups.
- The very few students who attend courses off-site make good progress.
- Students are articulate and are all able to express themselves and give extended answers when required. They enjoy reading for pleasure and read accurately and fluently.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most teaching is good or better and is improving quickly as a result of frequent and regular checks from academy leaders.
- Positive relationships between students and their teachers are key features of the most successful lessons. Teachers establish orderly routines that help students to feel secure. They are skilled in making sure that all students are interested and involved in lessons in a very active way.
- In the best lessons students clearly show a delight in learning and appreciate the expertise of their teachers. In these lessons students ask challenging questions and push themselves to achieve more. Students are encouraged to take the initiative and are trained to take the lead in managing class discussions so that everyone can participate. In a small number of lessons teachers do not encourage students to aim for the highest grades and they are not given

enough opportunities to think deeply and explore different ideas.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and a clear understanding of how students make progress through different levels and grades. In the most effective lessons students are able to talk about their targets and exactly what they need to do to make gains in their learning. In less successful lessons teachers limit the progress students can make by sticking too rigidly to a plan. The use of a 'ladder' of examination criteria is not always accessible to students.
- The academy provides a large amount of support and effective teaching to improve students' ability in reading and writing. Strong English teaching and a regular literacy programme in tutor periods have ensured that students are confident speakers, readers and writers. For example, students in an outstanding English lesson rehearsed sentences out loud before writing. This challenging activity focused on including sophisticated vocabulary. The students spontaneously applauded each other's contributions while listening carefully and taking notes.
- Students who need additional help with reading and spelling attend regular paired reading sessions in the library and are also supported with a programme to enable them to learn letters and sounds (phonics). Teaching assistants work extremely effectively in and out of the classroom, supporting students and ensuring that they made good progress.
- The quality of written marking varies too much. Some very effective practice helps students to know what to do to improve their work, but some is not marked helpfully. Some students do not take enough pride in the organisation and presentation of their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The academy prides itself on the care and support given to students. Students told inspectors that they felt safe and they know where to get advice and help. Bullying is rare and staff act promptly to resolve any reported incidents quickly and effectively. Students value the guidance given by staff.
- Students treat each other with respect; they get on well together and they enjoy the variety and diversity in the academy. They usually behave very well in lessons. Students demonstrate a good attitude to learning and they appreciate all the individual support their teachers provide.
- Attendance is improving and now compares favourably with the national figures. Staff deal firmly with lateness and, as a result, students are improving their punctuality.
- The academy has strengthened its behaviour policy and behaviour is now good and improving rapidly, as shown in the significant reduction in fixed-term exclusions.
- When teaching is less than good some students become bored or frustrated, and do not always behave as well. Some students need clearer boundaries and refinements to their behaviour to be outstanding learners. A very few teachers do not use the behaviour policy consistently to manage students' behaviour.

The leadership and management are good

- The principal and the senior team share a common goal to drive up standards and sustain improvement. They are energetic and visible around the academy. All staff have complete faith in their values and approach.

- Students are adamant that the academy has improved under the leadership of the current principal. They are positive about their education and loyal. Students told the inspectors that it is 'a privilege to see how much the academy has changed' and 'my grades have gone up'.
- Senior leaders have established good systems for checking on the progress of all students, regularly and frequently during the year. Leaders of subject areas and year groups are expected to check on progress in the same way. This is having an impact on results in some subjects, but is not yet consistent across the academy.
- Senior leaders have very effective and thorough processes to improve the quality of teaching, ranging from daily walks around the academy to regular formal observations of lessons. Teaching has improved as a result of this careful monitoring and the wide range of training and coaching opportunities available in the academy.
- The academy benefits from strong support from external advisors and the academy sponsor, United Learning.
- The principal and senior team expect nothing less than consistently good teaching. Teachers only move through the pay scales and earn financial rewards if their students do well.
- Over 20 new teachers were appointed to the academy in the last year. There is a highly effective induction programme for new staff that has enabled them to feel supported and learn new systems quickly. The addition of so many new teachers has further enhanced the positive outlook of the academy.
- Senior leaders have made good decisions about the range of subjects and types of courses offered in the academy. Students are able to study relevant academic and vocational courses that will prepare them well for working life.
- The academy's specialisms in English and business and enterprise make a strong contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students participate in music, drama and sporting events, in addition to the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and the activities offered by the Prince's Trust. Students are encouraged to take on leadership roles in the academy, including a successful scheme in which older students act as mentors for younger students.
- Students who study alternative off-site courses attend well and make good progress. Arrangements for the health and safety of these students meet all statutory requirements.
- The academy receives a substantial amount of funding through the pupil premium to support students entitled to free school meals or who are in the care of the local authority. This funding is fully accounted for and the specific groups of students who benefit from the additional financial support make more than expected progress. For example, the academy purchased laptop computers to help a group of students with written work, resulting in all of them achieving their target grades.
- The academy is rightly proud of its wide range of intervention programmes, including music therapy, which has helped students at risk of exclusion or underperformance to gain improved self-esteem and good GCSE grades.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet all statutory requirements. Staff and the governing body are

completely committed to keeping students safe.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is ambitious for the academy and governors have a good knowledge of its rate of improvement and priorities. The principal provides regular and detailed reports about the work of the academy, outlining strengths and weaknesses. Governors ask challenging questions of the principal and set demanding targets. The governors are fully involved in decisions about teachers' pay progression. The academy sponsor provides effective professional expertise, guidance and challenge. Governors visit the academy often and have a thorough understanding of the measures used to check the performance and progress of students. The governing body ensures that resources are used to help students to make progress, including the use of additional funding through the pupil premium.

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	134815
Local authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	402640

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

Type of school	Academy sponsor-led
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	1027
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fiona Twycross
Headteacher	Jan Shadick
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2010
Telephone number	020 7819 4700
Fax number	020 7819 4701
Email address	admin@lambeth-academy.org

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