

The Langley Academy

Langley Road, Langley, Slough, SL3 7EF

Inspection dates

27–28 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The majority of students learn well and make good progress in most subjects, particularly mathematics.
- Students who find reading difficult are very well supported so that they make good and sometimes rapid progress.
- The main reason why achievement is good is because the majority of teaching is typically good and sometimes outstanding, and it is well matched to the needs of most students.
- Students have outstanding attitudes to learning. Behaviour is excellent. Relationships throughout the academy are extremely positive and this ensures that the academy is a calm, purposeful environment in which to learn.
- The sponsors' vision permeates all aspects of academy life and the Principal, leadership team and those who lead subjects and house groups are relentless in driving improvement.
- Leaders and managers are well placed to secure further improvement as they have successfully improved achievement, behaviour, attendance and teaching in recent years.
- Governors have a strong understanding of the academy's strengths and further areas for development and they provide appropriately high levels of support and challenge.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always ensure that students act on the advice given through marking.
- Some teachers do not always ensure that students' work is regularly marked.
- More-able students do not always achieve their full potential because teaching is not always matched to their needs.
- Teaching does not consistently help students to develop their English and mathematical skills in all subjects.
- The targets which are set for teachers do not always relate to improving teaching.
- The sixth form requires improvement because students studying A-level subjects have not made good progress in recent years, although this is improving.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 40 lessons, of which nine were joint observations with senior leaders. The inspection team also made short visits to lessons with senior leaders as part of themed learning walks.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students and discussions were held with students throughout the inspection. Other meetings were held with members of the governing body and school staff, including those responsible for subjects and senior leaders. The lead inspector met with a representative of the academy sponsor.
- Inspectors analysed the 52 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) during the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including those relating to the monitoring of teaching and the targets set for teachers to improve their work. They also looked at records relating to attendance, behaviour, bullying and safeguarding, the school improvement plan, data on students' progress and samples of students' work.
- One inspector listened to students read.

Inspection team

Richard Sutton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jalil Shaikh	Additional Inspector
Lesley Leak	Additional Inspector
Carol Worthington	Additional Inspector
Terence Cook	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- Three-quarters of students are from minority ethnic heritages and a quarter are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is higher than average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- A higher than average proportion of students are supported through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The academy provides specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs which supports five students who have hearing impairment and two students with visual impairment.
- The academy works in partnership with Haybrook and East Berkshire College and some students are able to study vocational courses at the college.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching in the main school and the sixth form so that it is always good and better in all subjects by:
 - making sure that the marking of students' work is appropriately frequent and includes the setting of targets which are always followed up by teachers and students
 - ensuring that all lessons are consistently well matched to the needs of all students, particularly more-able students.
- Improve achievement by ensuring that all students have opportunities to develop their reading, writing, communication and mathematical skills in all subjects.
- Improve leadership and management by making sure that targets which are set for teachers are specifically related to improving teaching and that they are measurable.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most students typically join the academy with levels of achievement well below average. Most students make good progress, even though the proportion attaining five or more A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, was below average in 2012.
- Students who speak English as an additional language, those from ethnic minority heritages and disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress in all year groups across most subjects. Students from White British backgrounds have not consistently made the same good progress in recent years. However, teaching is beginning to better meet the needs of these students and their achievement is now improving.
- The gap between the progress that students known to be eligible for free school meals make and the progress made by other students in English and mathematics is closing. The progress that this group of students make in mathematics is above average. The gap in the proportion of students achieving five or more A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, widened in 2012 when compared to the national average but it narrowed when compared to the results of other students in the school.
- The vocational courses studied by some students at Haybrook and East Berkshire College meet the needs of the students well and this has led to improved achievement and attendance for these students.
- Mathematics is a strength of the academy and an above-average proportion of students are making better progress than usually expected.
- Students who are supported through the specially resourced unit make good progress as a result of very effective teaching and support which fully meets their needs.
- Students who join the academy with high levels of achievement have not always achieved their full potential. However, this is now improving, particularly in mathematics and these students are increasingly having work more closely matched to their needs. However, it remains inconsistent across year groups and subjects, particularly English and in the sixth form.
- Students who study vocational courses in the sixth form make good progress. However, in the past few years, the progress made by students who study A-level courses has required improvement as not enough students made good progress. In addition, too many students have left during their first year of study. However, improvements are now resulting in better achievement for students studying A-level courses because the subjects available are more suited to the needs of students. It is, however, too early to see the full impact of this.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Most teaching is typically good. Some is outstanding. This high-quality teaching is characterised by activities which are well matched to the needs of students and where teachers have appropriately high expectations.
- The teaching of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is good, both in lessons and when students work individually or in small groups outside of normal lessons. This is

because teachers and teaching assistants make sure work is always pitched at the right level.

- The teaching of students who are supported by the pupil premium is good and this extends beyond the classroom for these and other students. For example, the academy uses part of its pupil premium funding to facilitate a wide range of support, including Saturday morning classes and educational trips and visits. The academy has also used its funding to appoint an English teacher to support these and other students.
- The teaching of reading for students who find this difficult is good because teachers and teaching assistants use student progress information very well to set challenging but realistic targets.
- Students have good skills in mathematics and English but teaching does not always take every opportunity to help students to develop and apply these important skills in all subjects.
- Teachers in the main school and sixth form do not always provide high-quality marking and feedback. This means that students do not always know precisely what they need to do to improve their work further. When students are set targets for improvement, teachers do not regularly provide opportunities for students to act on this advice. Some teachers do not mark work frequently enough.
- The teaching of more-able students in the main school and the sixth form is not always as good as it should be across all subjects and year groups because activities are not sufficiently challenging.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students have outstanding attitudes to learning, which is primarily as a result of good teaching and very positive relationships across the whole academy. Students behave very well, show high levels of cooperation, respect and courtesy and work highly effectively with each other and their teachers. This creates a very positive learning environment.
- Behaviour is outstanding, both in lessons and at break times. Students told inspectors that behaviour has improved considerably in recent years and they also say that behaviour is outstanding. Students have welcomed the new behaviour policy and they are clear that it is one of the reasons why behaviour has improved.
- Students attend school regularly and overall their attendance is above average. This has improved substantially in recent years.
- Students say they feel safe in the academy and they have a good understanding of safety matters. They also have a good understanding of the various types of bullying and say that it is rare. Academy records confirm this. Students are confident that if a bullying incident does occur that their teachers will deal with matters quickly and effectively.
- Students are actively involved in supporting each other if a bullying incident does occur. For example, some students provide online support for others who may be experiencing bullying.
- Students have many opportunities to engage in positions of responsibility. For example, older students act as prefects. As well as empowering students to make decisions and take responsibility, this also allows students to model positive behaviour for each other.

- On the rare occasions when behaviour falls below the high standard expected, teachers manage this very well and consistently. This is one reason why exclusions have decreased, and there are very few exclusions.

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal, well supported by senior leaders, is leading a relentless drive to ensure that teaching is consistently good and better through the rigorous monitoring of teaching and student achievement. This approach to continuously improving teaching and achievement is mirrored in the work of subject and house leaders.
- The academy improvement plan is appropriately focused on the main priorities to improve achievement further and it is based on accurate self-evaluation. This plan ensures that staff who are responsible for leading on areas of improvement are held accountable at key points throughout the year. This means that leaders and managers are able to promptly tackle any underachievement.
- The setting of targets for teachers to improve their teaching over the past three years has been appropriately linked to teachers' pay rises. However, targets do not focus sufficiently on supporting teachers to improve their teaching as they are not specific enough and are not always linked to measurable success criteria.
- Leaders have good plans to effectively spend the Year 7 catch-up premium, which is new additional funding to support students who have not made the expected attainment in English and mathematics in Year 6.
- The subjects that students study in the main school are well matched to their needs and this has improved recently in the sixth form. Subjects are enriched by a variety of enrichment activities every Wednesday afternoon and trips, visits and partnerships with independent schools which students enjoy and which enable them to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding very well. For example, a group of students told an inspector how they valued opportunities to work with students from different backgrounds and from different parts of the country.
- Students take their GCSE mathematics examinations at various points in Years 10 and 11. This results in most students achieving the highest grade that they are capable of and so it is an effective strategy.
- The sponsor provides good support to the academy by funding a range of developments and initiatives which support governance and leadership, as well as staff training and development. The sponsor provides an appropriate level of challenge through membership of the governing body.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have an accurate understanding of the academy's strengths and areas for development. They have appropriate skills which enable them to support and challenge the Principal with respect to the quality of teaching and student achievement. Governors are fully aware of how the pupil premium is spent and the impact that this has on achievement. The governing body receives appropriate information with respect to the management of teacher performance and so they are able to monitor the extent to which teachers are rewarded and underperformance is tackled. Governors ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities regarding safeguarding; all staff have been checked as required and are

trained appropriately to keep students safe and free from harm.

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	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. 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.

School details

Unique reference number	135631
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	406614

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

Type of school	Academy sponsor-led
School category	Community
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	1110
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Valerie Bragg
Headteacher	Rhodri Bryant
Date of previous school inspection	22 June 2011
Telephone number	01753 214440
Fax number	01753 596323
Email address	info@langleyacademy.org

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