

Chelsea Academy

Inspection report

Unique reference number	135531
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	381903
Inspection dates	23–24 May 2012
Lead inspector	Paul Scott HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
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 academy roll	590
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	The Venerable Stephan Welch
Principal	Andy Yarrow
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
School address	Lots Road Chelsea London SW10 0AB
Telephone number	0207 376 3019
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Email address	admin@chelsea-academy.org

Age group	11–18
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Introduction

Inspection team

Paul Scott

Her Majesty's Inspector

Marion Lewis

Additional Inspector

Helen Owen

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 23 lessons as well as assemblies and coaching times. Many were joint observations with leaders in the academy. Meetings were held with parents and carers, groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body and a range of staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey. They observed the academy's work, and looked at a range of academy documentation including the academy's progress tracking information, progress monitoring reports and development plans. The 168 parental questionnaires that were received were also considered along with comments, letters and telephone conversations expressing parental views. Inspectors also considered the 39 staff questionnaires and the 97 responses to the student survey.

Information about the school

Chelsea Academy admitted its first group of Year 7 students in 2009 into temporary accommodation. It moved in September 2010 to the current high-quality premises that were long-listed for the 2011 RIBA Stirling Prize. Staffing levels are increasing steadily as the academy grows each year with a new intake. It opened to sixth form students in September 2011. The academy's specialism is in science.

The proportion of students from minority ethnic heritages is high. The number of first languages spoken other than English is extensive. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is high. The academy is sponsored by the London Diocesan Board for Schools and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs on 'school action plus' is broadly average, but few students have a statement of special educational needs. Many students speak English as an additional language, but not at an early stage. The academy's performance against current floor standards (national minimum expectations for attainment and progress) will be known when the first group of Year 11 students complete their GCSE examinations in July 2014. The academy has been awarded the Investors in People Gold standard.

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	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- Chelsea Academy is an outstanding academy. It inspires students to excel. The academy is a cohesive community that successfully nurtures talent in students and staff alike.
- Students are highly motivated and achieve high standards in personal development as well as academic and intellectual pursuits. They make exceptional progress because the secure and supportive learning environment builds on individual strengths, cultivates a passion for learning and provides students with opportunities to broaden their understanding.
- Teaching is stimulating and supportive. The pursuit of consistently outstanding teaching is increasingly being met because of the commitment and dedication of the staff. Students and teachers work cooperatively in lessons to ensure that best use is made of learning time. Staff occasionally miss opportunities to stretch some students to be more creative in their learning.
- Behaviour is outstanding. The students are excellent ambassadors for their academy, with a passion for learning. They are polite, well meaning, inquisitive and fun to talk to. They appreciate the need for the academy’s high expectations and surpass them most of the time. They appreciate how their behaviour contributes to their success and how the systems in the academy support them. The atmosphere in the academy is one of tolerance, sharing and learning together.
- Leadership and management are of exceptionally high quality. Performance management is praised by staff for its highly developmental impact. The Principal has guided the academy’s growth with clear and successful planning and a drive for ensuring success for students. Leaders at all levels contribute to the inclusive ethos. They develop students’ aspirations, strong spiritual, social moral and cultural values, and high levels of achievement very successfully.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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- The sixth form is outstanding. A supportive culture and range of courses have attracted students who are making outstanding progress and achieving extremely well.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Refine some teaching to ensure that there are even greater opportunities for students to deepen and stretch their learning by being more innovative and creative in their thinking.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Students greatly enjoy attending the academy and readily engage in the opportunities available to them. Students reach levels in most subjects that are well above those expected for their age including, for example, in literacy and science. From broadly average starting points, students make outstanding progress in all year groups. One student commented that the learning in this academy is 'a big adventure'. The inspectors' observations of outstanding learning were supported by the strong evidence from the academy's tracking systems and the already impressive GCSE mathematics results of Year 8 students. During a physical education lesson students made outstanding progress as they co-constructed the learning programme. Clear and challenging targets were set and met, with a deeper understanding of transferable coaching skills emerging. The teacher made exceptional use of video to record, review and promote discussions about progress. Students took charge of their own learning and were supported and challenged by comments from their peers and from a teacher with excellent subject knowledge. This outstanding practice was common in the lessons observed. The academy has been careful to challenge and encourage students to work at a high level and meet tough targets, while ensuring that they really enjoy the process of learning, develop strong social skills and an understanding of the wider world. The science specialism helps students to develop and apply independent enquiry skills across the curriculum. Students are inspired to develop a deep curiosity beyond exam content. Staff encourage them to refine their skills in exploring and taking advantage of the wide range of opportunities that the academy is opening up for them.

The academy has developed very effective progress tracking tools that it is refining further as it grows and provision broadens. These are used at all levels to evaluate impact and plan learning so that students have a very clear idea of what they must work on next to make further progress. The academy is relentless in its pursuit of equality of access and inclusion. For instance, disabled students, those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make outstanding progress, because staff carefully identify their differing needs and match their planning and support accordingly. Students who start in the academy with lower reading ability are given excellent support to recover from prior

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underachievement. Learning coaches get to know their students really well and so support for individuals is extremely well targeted. Where the academy has identified differences in performance of any groups it is highly effective at closing these gaps. The parents and carers' questionnaires were rightly very positive about their children's achievement.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is consistently high, and many examples of outstanding teaching were observed. The strong leadership and support systems have ensured that, as the academy has increased in size, the quality of teaching has also excelled. Teachers and associate staff are highly motivated and passionate about ensuring students have a positive experience. Planning is of a consistently high standard and builds on students' previous knowledge and experience. Teachers know the students extremely well and are highly skilled in ensuring that activities and targeted support match the needs of disabled students and those with special educational needs. Students' outstanding progress is a direct result of high expectations, good use of tracking to target learning, positive attitudes to learning and a cooperative culture in the classroom. While teaching encourages students to reach high standards, it does so by instilling a deep interest and enjoyment of the learning journey. During an English literature lesson, students in the sixth form worked to develop a deeper appreciation of how they can analyse texts and refine techniques to evaluate the quality of literature. The learning was orchestrated by the teacher with precision. Highly tuned questioning developed each individual and built confidence while developing further enjoyment of the subject. Occasionally staff miss opportunities to stretch a few students and this slows their progress and potential.

Throughout the academy teaching promotes strong values and a sense of community. Teachers are rightly proud to be a part of this successful academy and contribute a great deal professionally and personally. New teachers quickly become part of the learning community. Many of the students commented on how much the teachers give, how supportive they are and how welcome they feel in the academy. Literacy is developed as an integral part of all teaching as well as personal development, speaking and listening skills and team working. This positive ethos helps to ensure that spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed exceptionally well. Many of the parents and carers commented on the commitment of the staff, ease of communication with them and the effectiveness of coaching groups in supporting their children's learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour and safety are outstanding. The students make an exceptional contribution to a safe, positive learning environment. There is a high level of respect for others, regardless of background or ability. The wide range of ethnic heritages and beliefs is embraced in a way that enhances the experience of all and broadens students' understanding of the wider world. Some students, and some parents and carers, feel that behaviour could be even better. Very high expectations are set for

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behaviour, not only by staff. Students also expect a great deal of their peers. At times some students do not meet these very high standards, but the behaviour in all lessons observed was impressive and the typically excellent behaviour around the academy demonstrated the students' positive outlook, increasing confidence and success, as well as their courteous and friendly manner.

Students show a very good understanding of what constitutes different forms of bullying, and the impact bullying may have on individuals. They are extensively involved in a range of anti-bullying initiatives. Students were able to report with confidence that bullying incidents are very rare and that they are dealt with swiftly and effectively. They also felt that, if they had a problem, their learning coach would be able to help them. Attendance is above average overall and persistent absence is low.

Leadership and management

The Principal has engendered a positive and successful ethos throughout the academy that encourages students from all faiths to contribute. The leaders at all levels show passion and ambition with no sign of complacency in their drive for even greater experiences and achievement for all students. Equality and diversity permeate the academy, reflected in the careful focus on how groups are performing and demonstrated by a climate of tolerance and respect. The staff have ensured that this is a highly cohesive community that also looks outwards, seeking partners to help in the wider community as well as broadening students' horizons.

The academy leadership team has a precise understanding of successes and areas for development. The leadership of teaching and learning is outstanding because leaders at all levels have a clear understanding of strengths and are able to provide excellent professional development opportunities to allow further skill development. Effective performance management systems recognise the strengths that teachers bring to lessons and the wider academy while supporting the refinements to teaching that can lead to even better learning. The academy contributes positively to the development of initial teacher training.

Governors bring a rigour to their role and support the academy well. They ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective. They are clear that they need to grow further to keep pace with the academy's successes, and deal with the challenges associated with its rapid growth. This has been managed in an exemplary manner over the academy's first few years, demonstrating clear capacity to further improve. The curriculum is exceptionally well planned and meets the needs of individuals extremely well. The spiritual development of students is excellent. Students gain a sense of self and the awe and wonder of success, participation and being a part of a successful community. Students develop strong moral values and social skills that are demonstrated through their behaviour. They are immersed in an impressive array of cultural experiences, not least the developing musical opportunities. The academy has opened up a whole new world for its students.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the academy, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



25 May 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Chelsea Academy, London, SW10 0AB

I would like to thank you for the very warm welcome you gave to the inspection team when we inspected your outstanding academy. It was a real privilege to see your exceptional work and the way you have worked together to build such a community. I would also like to thank those who shared their views with the team, including those of you who completed questionnaires.

Your Principal is an exceptional leader who has ensured that the academy team are passionate and skilled in bringing about success for you, whatever your starting point. The leaders in the academy at all levels work very hard to ensure that the experience you get is memorable and they are dedicated to your success. As a consequence you make excellent progress and have reached levels well above those expected for your age.

The teaching in the academy is outstanding and the teachers know you individually very well. Because of this, they are able to plan learning opportunities that are interesting and challenge you. The leaders in the academy are very clear about how teaching can become even better and will continue to work hard at refining teaching further.

Your contribution to the academy is also outstanding and your attitudes toward learning ensure that you make the most of the excellent opportunities available. I was most impressed by the community spirit you have. You appreciate how the diversity of students in the academy enhances your experience and it was good to see how you can work so well together, especially in your coaching groups.

You are the pioneers of Chelsea Academy and have used this opportunity very well. I wish you well on your continued journey and success in all that you choose to do.

Yours sincerely

Paul Scott
Her Majesty's Inspector

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