

Ashcroft Technology Academy

100 West Hill, London, SW15 2UT

Inspection dates

04–05 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Sixth form provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Leadership and management are outstanding. The Principal, competently supported by senior and middle leaders, has a clear and uncompromising vision for the success of the academy and the achievement of students. The Principal receives strong support from ambitious, dedicated and loyal staff who are committed to maintaining the highest levels of achievement.
- Students' safety is a high priority for all staff. Students say that they feel very safe in the academy. Staff are as concerned for students' personal well-being as they are about their academic success.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and carefully matched to students' interests and aspirations. The range of subjects supports students' academic achievement and prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- The academy provides students with a wide range of opportunities to engage in high quality extra-curricular activities, trips and visits. This quality provision is highly effective in broadening their knowledge and raising their aspirations to succeed.
- There is a strong focus on promoting literacy and encouraging students to read. Numeracy skills are supported well across science and geography.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well. Students' development of personal qualities and self-confidence is well supported.
- Governors have an accurate view of the progress which students make and of the quality of teaching. They are knowledgeable about performance management and increasingly aware of the impact of pupil premium funding.
- Students' behaviour in lessons and around the academy is faultless. They work hard and concentrate well in their lessons. Attendance rates are high and punctuality exemplary. Disruptions in lessons are very rare.
- Teaching is typically outstanding. Teachers have very high expectations. They enjoy positive and productive relationships with their students. All teachers have a secure grasp of their subject and a very good awareness of examination requirements.
- Students make rapid progress from their various starting points and achieve outstandingly well. Attainment is exceptionally high across a range of subjects including English, mathematics, science and religious education.
- Disadvantaged students, disabled students and those with special educational needs achieve highly because they are well known to staff and strongly supported in class. Targeted funding is used effectively to provide additional support for these students.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Sixth form students achieve well and make excellent progress in their chosen subjects. They are ambitious, determined and highly confident young adults. The leadership of the sixth form is a particular strength.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors undertook 38 lesson observations and learning walks, including 12 joint observations with senior members of staff.
- They looked carefully at a range of students’ work in English, mathematics and science, focusing on students’ progress as well as assessment and marking.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, senior leaders, middle leaders and newly qualified teachers. The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with the Chair of the Governing Body and spoke with a small group of parents.
- Inspectors met with groups of students from Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. Further discussions took place with students informally in lessons and during break times.
- Inspectors analysed documents, including academy policies, safeguarding documentation, minutes of governing body meetings, lesson observations and anonymised records on staff performance. They also looked at the academy’s strategic plan.
- The views of 36 parents from the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account along with the academy’s own survey of parents. Inspectors also received 83 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Paul Metcalf, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
John Cavill	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Cornish	Additional Inspector
Fatiha Maitland	Additional Inspector
Gill Walley	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ashcroft Technology Academy is a larger than average sized, mixed 11 to 18 academy situated in the London Borough of Wandsworth.
- The majority of students are White British, African and Pakistani with smaller numbers of Other White, Black, Asian and mixed backgrounds. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is well above national averages.
- The academy has an Autistic Resource Centre (ARC) on site with 17 students on roll. The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, and children who are looked after) is well above average. The proportion of students eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium is below the national average.
- There are no students who are educated elsewhere.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all academy policies are regularly reviewed and evaluated so that they adequately reflect the academy's procedures and practices.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The Principal, senior leaders and middle managers have established a culture of commitment and determination which is shared throughout the academy. They provide strong leadership and have an astute awareness of the academy's strengths and what needs to be done to improve. Leaders are passionate about improving outcomes for all students in the academy.
- Systematic monitoring of the quality of teaching, supported by well-targeted and highly personalised professional development, has led to improvements in teaching and learning. Teachers who are new to the profession feel very well supported and benefit from motivational mentoring and the comprehensive induction programme. During joint lesson observations, senior leaders were accurate in their judgements and clear about what teachers needed to do to improve.
- The tracking of students' progress is extremely thorough. Any underachievement is quickly and effectively addressed. Regular reporting to parents ensures that they are kept informed of their children's progress and concerns are shared and addressed rapidly.
- The academy's strategic plan is comprehensive, thorough and regularly updated. A small number of the policy documents are outdated and would benefit from revisiting and reviewing. Legal requirements for the content of the academy's website were met during the time of the inspection.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, and ensures that all students achieve well. Regular monitoring of the curriculum ensures that all courses are effective and that content is very well matched to students' interests, abilities and aspirations. The quality of support, advice and guidance, including career guidance, is a strong feature and ensures that students maintain the highest aspirations for their future.
- The academy works very effectively to promote equality of opportunity. It makes very good provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students from a variety of different backgrounds demonstrate tolerance of, and respect for, students of other faiths, cultures and lifestyles. Diversity is recognised and celebrated, and there is no discrimination.
- Students' understanding of fundamental British values of tolerance and respect are very strong because these values are reinforced through assemblies, tutorials and the curriculum. Staff have received suitable training, so that they feel equipped to recognise and address extremist behaviour.
- Students' literacy skills are suitably encouraged across the academy. Numeracy skills are supported well in science and geography. For example in a sixth form geography lesson, the teacher organised students into groups so that each group contained at least one student studying mathematics.
- There is exceptional provision for students who are most in need. The highly successful autistic unit actively encourages students to access mainstream education while being suitably supported where necessary. Parents and students commented very favourably on the support which the unit provides.
- Leaders make sure that pupil premium funding is used well. A wide range of strategies are used to improve students' performance, such as mentoring and counselling as well as financing school trips and residential visits. Disadvantaged students perform above national averages and gaps between the performance of disadvantaged students and their peers are beginning to close.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet current statutory requirements. All staff follow the academy's safeguarding procedures diligently and have had the relevant training which is regularly updated. The academy is a very safe environment. Any student at risk of harm is quickly identified and supported.
- A very large majority of parents who responded to the online survey said they would recommend the academy and most agreed that the academy was safe and well led. A very small minority of parents felt that communication with the academy might be improved.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good understanding of the achievement and quality of teaching in the academy. Although governors do not routinely visit the academy, they gain information through presentations and reports from the Principal and other senior leaders.
 - They understand how to use published data to compare the performance of the academy against others nationally.
 - Governors manage the finances of the academy very well. They are rigorous in making sure that the academy achieves best value for money when purchasing goods and services.
 - They have a detailed knowledge of the quality of teaching. They know what is being done to improve teaching and how teachers' pay progression is linked to the progress made by those they teach.
 - Governors are increasingly aware of how additional pupil premium and 'catch-up' funding are used to support disadvantaged students.

- Governors ask challenging questions to make sure that the Principal and other leaders remain focused on raising standards.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. Students respond extremely positively to their teachers and concentrate well in their lessons. They are active in their learning and often take the initiative by asking the teacher to expand or explain something further. Disruption to learning is extremely rare.
- Outside lessons, students also conduct themselves in an exemplary way. They are unreservedly proud of their school and point out that it is 'the norm to conform'. Students confirm that the behaviour seen during the inspection was typical of behaviour over time.
- Incidents of bullying and racism are rare. Students fully understand the consequences of their behaviour. Students confirm that they are well supported by the academy. As a result, rates of exclusion are well below the national average and falling.
- Attendance is above average, but the academy is keen to make it even better. There are rigorous systems in place to monitor attendance and quickly respond to any individual issues. Students arrive promptly to lessons and continue working to the very end of the lesson.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Students say that they feel extremely safe and the very large majority of parents responding to the online survey agreed. The academy is very active in ensuring that students know what to do if they have concerns.
- Students understand about different types of bullying and how to keep safe, including when using social media. They said that incidents of bullying were extremely rare and that they would know who to talk to if they ever felt unsafe.
- The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) programme, as well as assemblies and tutorials, ensures that students have many structured opportunities to be very well prepared for life in modern Britain. This is undertaken in an effective and active way which ensures that students take these issues seriously.
- All adults working in the academy have had appropriate safeguarding training. Safeguarding procedures are clear and documented. Child protection procedures are understood and supported through regular training.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- All teachers have consistently high expectations of their students and this leads to exceptional levels of achievement especially for disadvantaged and disabled students as well as those who have special educational needs.
- Teachers know their students very well and this ensures that all students are encouraged to aim high and achieve well. Teachers use this knowledge well to support, adjust and challenge the learning of individual students in the class. Teaching across the academy prepares students very well for the next stage in their education.
- Teachers manage students' behaviour extremely well. All teachers enjoy strong relationships with their students and this inspires high levels of trust, confidence and commitment. Teachers' excellent subject knowledge actively encourages learning so that students are always engaged and absorbed in their learning.
- Teachers are supported and challenged by leaders to explore innovative practices resulting in high quality learning for students. For example, in a Year 10 art class, students achieved exceptionally well in response to the teacher's structured challenge and focused coaching.
- There is a strong emphasis on developing literacy skills across the academy. Students, across the range of different ethnic groups, read frequently and enthusiastically in a wide range of contexts. Numeracy skills are developed well, especially in science and geography.
- Teachers routinely give careful consideration and commitment to the needs of higher attaining students. The provision of challenging work was a feature of many lessons observed. As a result, higher attaining students thrive and achieve particularly well.
- Teaching assistants play an effective part in students' learning. They are deployed well across the academy and contribute significantly to supporting disabled students and those with special educational

needs, students from the autistic unit and those who speak English as an additional language.

- Quality homework is set regularly in line with the academy policy. Feedback from teachers' marking and assessment is very good. Marking is regular and, in the majority of lessons, used to very good effect in planning lessons, identifying next steps and providing appropriate intervention. The very best assessment seen encouraged students to respond to the feedback offered.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students enter the academy with levels of attainment significantly below national averages. The proportion attaining five or more GCSEs at grade A* to C, including English and mathematics, is significantly higher than that found nationally. The academy does not enter students early for examinations.
- Attainment in many subjects, especially English, mathematics, science and religious education, is significantly above national averages. Underperformance in art, drama and music has been rigorously addressed and results are now on track to exceed national averages.
- On the basis of their attainment on entry to the academy, progress is outstanding. The proportion of students making and exceeding expected progress in English and mathematics between the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 is well above that for students with similar starting points.
- Disadvantaged students achieve well. In 2014, 55% gained at least five A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, against a national average of 36%. The English and mathematics GCSE results of disadvantaged students were similar to other students nationally. Within the academy, the gap between disadvantaged students and their peers in English and mathematics was approximately half a grade. Gaps in performance are reducing.
- Higher attaining students achieve exceptionally well as a result of the support and challenge which they receive in class. The proportion of students achieving the higher A* to A grade was similar to national averages in English but significantly above in mathematics.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs achieve exceptionally well. Individual needs are supported very well. Their progress is significantly above the national average for all pupils.
- Similarly, autistic students achieve exceptionally well because staff understand and cater for their specific needs. As a result their progress matches that of other disabled students and those with special educational needs in the rest of the school.
- There is no difference in the performance of students from the different ethnic groups. They make outstanding progress similar to that of their peers.
- The academy uses Year 7 catch-up funding very effectively to help students develop their skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Students are carefully tracked and performance reviews confirm that they are quickly catching up with their peers.
- Evidence gathered during the inspection (including that from lesson observations, book sampling and reviews of school data) confirms that attainment remains high and that students make outstanding progress from their respective starting points.

The sixth form provision

is outstanding

- The leadership and management of the sixth form is characterised by the exceptional and passionate leadership of the head of sixth form. There is a clear focus on improvement and data is used well to track students and rapidly address any underperformance.
- Sixth form students are provided with a broad range of subjects covering AS and A2 levels and the BTEC National in Music and Performing Arts. The academy has recently introduced an International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma programme offering an alternative route to higher education. All students in the sixth form have a GCSE grade A* to C in English and mathematics.
- Students greatly value the support and guidance they receive from the academy. They particularly appreciate the advice and encouragement they receive from their tutors and the head of sixth form. Recruitment and retention rates in the sixth form are very high.
- Students receive very good impartial careers advice and all students progress on to university, employment or training. The academy carefully tracks the destination of leavers with most students proceeding to university and one third of students gaining entry to a Russell Group university.
- There is a strong focus on exploring contemporary issues such as British values and moral issues including homophobia. A wide range of extra activities enhance students' experience and enable them to develop

personal and leadership skills.

- The behaviour and safety of students is outstanding. Sixth form students make a significant contribution to academy life as mathematics mentors and paired readers. They set a very good example to younger students and behave with maturity and consideration.
- The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teachers plan learning that challenges students' thinking, knowledge and skills. High expectations were evident in all lessons. Marking is highly supportive and students value the advice offered by teachers and other staff.
- Attainment and progress are above average and continue to improve year on year. In 2014, students' performance in AS and A2 examinations was well above national averages representing excellent progress on the basis of their starting points. Achievement in the IB diploma is above the global average.
- The sixth form fully meets the current standards for 16 to 19 study programmes.

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	135316
Local authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	453321

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy
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	1230
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	243
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Whitcutt
Principal	Marcus Barker
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 February 2010
Telephone number	02088770357
Fax number	02088770617
Email address	enquiries@ashcroftacademy.org.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

