

Barnfield South Academy Luton

Rotheram Avenue, Luton, LU1 5PP

Inspection dates 7–8 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The Principal and Associate Principal along with the senior leadership team and governing body have successfully raised the quality of teaching, and improved students' achievement in most subjects, including English and mathematics.
- The quality of teachers' professional development is good. The academy ensures that teachers and leaders are suitably equipped for their subjects or their other responsibilities.
- Teaching is good in most areas. Teachers consistently plan well to cater for the needs of most learners.
- Students are proud ambassadors for the academy. They make good contributions to the academy and to the local community.
- The academy's provision for safety is outstanding. Leaders go to great lengths to ensure that students are safe in and around the academy.
- Students' achievement in English and mathematics has sharply improved, since the previous inspection. This is particularly the case in Years 7 to 10. Students' achievements in science for Years 7 to 10 are now good.
- Students studying vocational subjects in the sixth form make good and often better progress.
- The leaders of the sixth form and the science department are making concerted improvements in their areas of responsibility.
- Support for students' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The achievement of students studying academic subjects in the sixth form requires improvement, as students make steady progress, particularly at AS level.
- The progress of students in GCSE additional science, is not fast enough.
- There is not enough outstanding teaching. The marking of students' work is variable across the academy. Students do not always act on the advice they receive and improve their work.
- A few of the most-able students are not always suitably challenged in some lessons.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited 39 lessons, observing 35 teachers. Nine lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also conducted several further brief observations of students' learning and achievement, especially in science. In addition, some students were interviewed about their learning in a range of different subjects. Inspectors spoke to students from a range of different subjects about their work and assessment grades.
- Inspectors looked at students' work and observed the supervision of the behaviour of students before the start of the day, between lessons, at breaks, at lunchtime and at the end of the academy day.
- A number of meetings were held with groups of students, governors, the Chief Executive Officer of the Barnfield Academy Trust, the senior leadership team and academy staff.
- Inspectors took account of the 27 responses available on the online Parent View questionnaire. In addition, they also considered the 385 parents and carers' responses to the academy's own survey, together with the responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors observed the work being done in the academy and considered its improvement plans, and its records and analyses of student behaviour. The inspectors also considered assessment information showing students' progress and a range of student work. They scrutinised attendance figures, as well as documentation, including the academy's self-evaluation and evidence of safeguarding measures. Information for parents and carers was also reviewed on the academy website.

Inspection team

Raymond Lau, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sally Evans	Additional Inspector
James Fuller	Additional Inspector
Keith Whittlestone	Additional Inspector
Carol Worthington	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average secondary academy. The majority of students are from an ethnic minority heritage.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium funding is well above average. This is extra government funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority.
- Twenty students are educated through alternative provision at Active Support, 'Xers', 'ACE' (Avenue Centre), Leaf Education, Evolve Centre, Seeds of Change, Eden Therapeutic, Ameina Centre. These students study a wide of subjects including animal care and motor cycle maintenance.
- The academy meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' achievement and progress at the end of Year 11.
- The academy is part of the Barnfield Academy Multi-Academy Trust, which has recently separated from its sponsor.
- Barnfield South Academy Luton works in part in a sixth form consortium with the Barnfield Academy Trust.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure the achievement of students is outstanding by checking that teachers:
 - mark students' work consistently in-line with the academy's policy, to enable them to improve their work by suitably responding to the feedback given
 - make sure that the most-able students are given challenges that push them to achieve more in all their subjects
 - provide work, especially in GCSE Additional Science, that is challenging and interesting, so that students make faster progress
- Improve the quality of teaching in academic subjects in the sixth form, so that students' achievement is consistently good.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The leadership team are working effectively under the direction of the Principal and Associate Principal. Since the previous inspection, they have united and tackled issues relating to the quality of teaching and students' achievement, which are both now good. They are innovative in ensuring outstanding safe working activities that protect students.
- The previous inspection identified the need for improvement in achievement at Key Stage 3. Better focus on the quality of teaching is improving achievement within the core subjects, especially in science. In addressing this, the academy has effectively promoted equality of opportunity and tackled and prevented discrimination across different groups of students.
- The leadership of teaching is good. Systematic monitoring systems are in place. The management of teacher's performances is robust and pay increases are not automatic. There is a good range of effective professional development opportunities for staff, which are based within the academy. Leaders have successfully created a good culture for staff development.
- Most subject leaders are effective at monitoring the quality of teaching and driving achievement. They frequently participate in activities and help support colleagues to improve.
- Leaders have effectively focused on sustaining the improvements they have secured in students' behaviour. They also maintain a close check on students' attendance, behaviour and achievements at the various centres for alternative provision.
- The multi-academy trust has supported the academy well through providing a partnership with a lead school with responsibility for the quality of teaching. Members of the leadership team work across a number of academies within the federation, bringing back and utilising expertise to improve the quality of leadership and teaching, with striking impact.
- The academy has good reporting procedures for safeguarding and meeting statutory requirements. In particular, extensive training in educating students and staff about radicalisation is given by 'Prevent'.
- There is effective information, advice, and careers guidance given to students from an external source. Members of the sixth form spoke highly of the invaluable support and preparation for university entrance they were given.
- The additional funding the academy receives for disadvantaged pupils (pupil premium) is spent on a wide range of strategies including creating smaller group sizes and targeted intervention. As a result, the achievement of this group of students is good.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Through well-programmed, themed assemblies and a specific focus on promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development within lessons, students are well prepared for life in modern Britain, they learn successfully about British values. The extra-curricular programme is particularly strong in the performing arts and in sports, where there are noticeable successes at local, regional, and national level.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is effective in holding the senior leaders to account. They know about the quality of the teaching and utilise this information to help inform the management of teachers' performance and recommend whether staff should progress or not up the salary scale. They know what is being done to improve weaker teaching. The governors are aware of how well students' achievement compares to that of other schools nationally and within the multi-academy trust. They ensure that all statutory requirements for safeguarding are met.

The behaviour and safety of students are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of the students is good. Students are proud to be at the academy. They wear their uniform with pride. Students make good contributions to their learning and most complete their work with care and attention to how it is presented.
- Many students contribute to raising money for charities. They take part in a range of opportunities to play a leading role in the academy, for example by being elected to the school council.
- Students behave well in lessons. In a Year 10 dance lesson, for example, students were highly focused while creating their own sequences of movements in response to the teacher's direction. In this lesson, they contributed significantly to each other's learning.
- Students enjoy coming to academy and their attendance matches the national average. The number of students deemed to be persistently absent has fallen, as has the level of exclusions in recent years. The academy works very hard to ensure that students whose behaviour is challenging are given good support. One student said, 'The academy has really helped me to improve.'
- The behaviour and safety of students in the alternative provisions are closely monitored to ensure they are safe whilst away from the academy site.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because, while there are examples of outstanding levels of behaviour, the academy rightly agrees that this is inconsistent. Very occasionally, a few students do not always demonstrate the high expectations of the academy.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. There is a highly dedicated and committed team that sharply focuses on the systems of work, training, support, and guidance within the academy and local communities with excellent effect. Training is provided extensively to staff on a diverse range of issues that could affect students.
- Procedures for safeguarding and managing risk are very methodical and systematically in place. All speakers for assemblies are vetted and suitable risk assessments and actions are well embedded.
- Students are completely safe in the academy. Students demonstrate an excellent understanding of the different types of bullying and report that bullying occasionally occurs, but that this is swiftly dealt with. While, the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) responses show some parents feel that the academy's action of dealing with bullying is not always sufficient, responses to their own questionnaire were more positive.
- Students have excellent awareness of unsafe and safe practices, including protecting themselves on-line and when using social media networks. The students interviewed were able to debate and express their views with great confidence with regard to radicalisation and living in multi-cultural, democratic, Britain. The academy's very well-targeted assemblies allow it to cover a range of safety topics very well. Recently, for example, Key Stage 4 and 5 students learnt about the issues related to forced marriage and other topics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Since the last inspection, the academy has successfully improved teaching. In most areas, including English and mathematics, there is evidence of good teaching. The quality of teaching in science is now beginning to improve and this is raising students' achievement. Nevertheless, the academy is aware of the need to focus its efforts to improve the quality in Key Stage 4 Additional Science.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge, a good understanding of how students learn, and high

expectations. In a Year 7 drama lesson, for example, students rose to the challenge when they were learning about and exploring relationships in 'Romeo and Juliet' and, as a result, they made good progress.

- Planning is consistent and effective, and, in the main, careful assessment enables the teachers to know the students well. The work caters for most abilities. In a Year 11 mathematics lesson, students were revising in preparation for their examinations. The teacher ensured that the activities were very well prepared and delivered. Time was not wasted, which resulted in students having excellent levels of concentration and focus.
- The teaching of literacy and reading is well developed across the academy, which is raising standards of attainment. Students enjoy reading.
- The most-able students are not always challenged sufficiently in all lessons, because the work set is often pitched at the same level as that for other students. Some teachers' level of questioning does not sufficiently probe or deepen students' knowledge and understanding of what they are learning.
- Whilst there are examples of good practice, the quality of marking is not consistently high across the academy. The use of new strategies is evolving; students do not always respond in a way that helps them to reach the next levels.
- There is not enough outstanding teaching consistently across the academy. Through well-crafted professional development programmes, the academy is addressing the need to develop more teachers to this level.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students enter the academy with knowledge and skills that are typically below average for their age and abilities. They make good progress in English, mathematics, humanities, and most other subjects. The proportion of students making expected or better progress in English is above average. However, the proportion of students making this progress in mathematics is average.
- In 2014, 58% of Year 11 students achieved five good grades, including English and mathematics, when taking into account their best entries. This represents average levels of attainment. Students at alternative provision made good progress in their courses.
- Girls achieve better than boys. However, the gaps are closing across the academy, as a result of better teaching and the academy's focus on improving the achievement of students in Key Stage 3 across most subjects.
- As a result of effective targeted support from learning support assistants and well-targeted intervention, disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress.
- Students eligible for the pupil premium make good progress in English and mathematics. The gap between them and their peers continues to close across the academy.
- The difference between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other students in the academy in 2014 was half a grade in English and one sixth of a grade in mathematics. When compared with students nationally, disadvantaged students were half of a grade behind of their peers in English and almost one grade behind in mathematics. The gaps in performance are closing from better teaching.
- The most-able students achieve well. The proportion of students making better than expected levels of progress, given their starting points, are good in both English and mathematics. Some most-able students are not fully challenged within lessons to achieve more, which limits their progress and prevents it being outstanding.

- The academy previously entered students early for their GCSEs in both English and mathematics, but has now reduced this practice significantly.
- Over time, the achievement of students in science, in particular GCSE Additional Science, has not been quite as good as it has been in other subjects. There are signs of improvement because leaders are addressing the quality of students' achievement by improving the quality of teaching. Achievement in science in Years 7 to 10 is good. Students studying triple sciences are making good progress. The gaps between the attainment of different groups of learners in science and in English and mathematics, is closing.

The sixth form provision

requires improvement

- The sixth form requires improvement because students' progress is no better than steady in many academic subjects. The proportion of students gaining a good pass at AS Level is below average.
- The retention rate of students from Year 12 to 13 is below average. The academy has now addressed this by raising the entry requirements for academic courses and it is in-line with the national average. The current assessment information and sampling of students' achievement indicates that Year 12 students are also making steady progress.
- The quality of teaching requires improvement. Students are not always challenged sufficiently within some lessons, and teachers do not always use well-targeted questioning to deepen the learners' knowledge and understanding. The marking of students' work is variable and students do not always fully act on their teachers' feedback.
- Students on the vocational courses, including BTEC Forensic Science, make good and often rapid progress. The quality of teaching is good and often better. Students enjoy learning on this course.
- Good leadership of the sixth form is securing improvements. It promotes good personal development for all students; much of the teaching is now good and achievement at A Level is improving. In addition to the main range of academic and vocational subjects, leaders have suitably planned and executed a range of enrichment activities. Leaders are now tackling the quality of teaching well. Students are well prepared for university or employment. As a result, the great majority of students have secured a place at university, which is a particular achievement given their often lower starting points.
- The behaviour and safety of students is good. The students make valuable contributions to the main academy, often acting as mentors. They demonstrate good attitudes to learning. In a Year 12 Biology lesson, students were working collaboratively to prepare a presentation to be given to their fellow peers.

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	135338
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	462078

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
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	1319
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bronwen Philpott
Principal	Catherine Barr
Date of previous school inspection	08 May 2013
Telephone number	01582 722333
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