

Brooke Weston Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135317
Local Authority	Not Applicable
Inspection number	364403
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Rashida Sharif HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11-19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1240
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	313
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Trevor Kerry
Headteacher	Patricia Stringer
Date of previous school inspection	Not Applicable
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Age group	11-19
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Most of the time was spent looking at learning, including observations of 52 lessons taught by 56 teachers. Meetings were held with a range of staff, groups of students and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the academy's work and looked at documentation, including information about students' progress, improvement plans, policies and procedures, teaching records, health and safety information and an analysis of 470 parental questionnaires, together with 125 questionnaires from students in Years 7 to 13 and 68 from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the academy's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas including the following:

- How effective is teaching and learning in ensuring students including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who have been identified as gifted and talented, make good progress in lessons and over time?
- How well are the needs of a small but growing number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds being met?
- How well does the curriculum meet the needs of all students and in particular those who are less academic?
- How effectively do leaders at all levels, including the sixth form, ensure greater rigour in monitoring and evaluation to sustain and bring about continuous improvements, for example in mathematics?

Information about the school

Brooke Weston Academy is a larger than average-sized 11-19 secondary school. It changed from Brooke Weston City Technology College to Brooke Weston Academy in 2008. Student numbers have increased significantly in the last two years and the academy is currently oversubscribed. Over 24 new staff, including nine newly qualified teachers, have joined since the academy was opened. In recent years, there has been an increase in the numbers of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with statements of educational needs. There has also been an increase in the number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds. Despite these increases, the percentages of both remain below the national average.

The academy has a number of specialisms including applied learning, which embraces a range of courses delivered within a work-based context, for example, technology, engineering and production and performing arts. The academy holds a number of awards, for example, Investor in People, Sportsmark and Healthy Schools Gold.

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: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Brooke Weston Academy provides students with an outstanding education. This is because the outstanding leadership of the academy knows precisely what needs to be done to ensure students get the best possible start. The staff work incredibly hard to meet the needs of every individual student regardless of their background. The academy is harmonious and cares exceptionally well for all its students and particularly those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. There is a culture of continuous improvement driven by the principal, the academy's senior leadership team and the governing body. The proportion of students obtaining higher grades in their GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, has increased significantly since becoming an academy and is well above national averages. Students make outstanding progress as a result of mostly outstanding teaching and excellent monitoring and intervention strategies. Students are exceptionally well behaved and highly motivated. Classrooms are stimulating places to learn; lessons have a buzz of activity that reflect students' excellent attitudes and teachers' high level of commitment. In discussions, students were overwhelmingly positive about 'their' academy and how well the staff know students and care for them. As one girl commented, 'Teachers make me feel that I am special and that I can do anything and be anything. I want to be a doctor'. The highly inclusive nature of the academy owes much to the contributions students make. Some of the many examples include the high quality peer mentoring and the students' responses to a wide range of programmes. Behaviour is outstanding, both in classrooms and around the academy.

Students make outstanding progress because of consistently high-quality teaching, teachers' exemplary use of assessment, rigorous tracking, sharply focused interventions, and excellent support and guidance. Technology is used exceptionally well by both staff and students to enhance the learning and well being of all concerned. Because teachers consistently have high expectations of what students should achieve, lessons proceed at a brisk pace using activities that constantly engage and challenge them.

Excellent workplace and other skills that contribute to the students' future economic well-being are delivered through the academy's outstanding curriculum which puts innovation and enterprise into the heart of the provision. The curriculum is well organised, and thoroughly mapped, providing students with a wealth of highly memorable opportunities within and beyond the academy. This innovative approach to the curriculum ensures that the quality of students' learning and the progress they make is all inclusive. This is because students know how safe they feel. Their

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understanding of healthy lifestyles, the extent to which they contribute to the school community and develop their work place skills are all outstanding. Students' spiritual, moral social and cultural development are good and promoted well through planned opportunities in the curriculum. There are high expectations for empathy between different cultures in and beyond the school. The academy has not fully responded to the rapidly changing nature of its intake, in particular the need for outstanding provision for groups of students whose circumstances make them vulnerable, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds.

The leadership and management overall, including governance, are outstanding. The principal, with her highly committed senior leadership team, has galvanised the staff and empowered them to realise a vision of an academy where students fulfil their aspirations. They work exceptionally well with parents and carers and also with an impressive range of external partners. They do much to support community cohesion at local, national and international level to achieve the outstanding outcomes for their students. Rigorous self-evaluation and ambitious target setting have been at the heart of the development planning, and staff at all levels have been inextricably engaged in the process through self-scrutiny, collaborative planning and peer review. This critical self-evaluation and continuous improvement demonstrates exceptional value for money and the academy's outstanding capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop a greater awareness of the challenges faced by the changing nature of the intake, with particular regard to provision for groups of students whose circumstances make them vulnerable, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Attainment is high, and there is a strong upward trend of improvement across all year groups, including in the sixth form. All groups of students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from minority ethnic backgrounds, make outstanding progress. In 2010, 100% of the students achieved 5 or more A* to C GCSE results with 86% achieving this including English and mathematics. Evidence from lesson observations confirms the exceptional progress that students make particularly in English.

Students immensely enjoy attending the academy and this is reflected in their outstanding attendance. They rise to the challenge of high expectations. They behave exceptionally well and work very hard. Whilst students have adjusted to there being no sanctions, no bells, no areas out of bounds, no staff room and no sixth form common room, some students shared some concerns with the inspectors. Some of them and their parents and carers, despite being very happy with the

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academy, felt that they could do with an opportunity to go out into the fresh air during break.

In lessons, students are active participants and their positive attitudes contribute to their outstanding progress and achievement. They are attentive and collaborate extremely well when working together in pairs and in small groups. What particularly shines through during lessons and around the academy is that students’ take responsibility for their behaviour. They make excellent use of technology to support their studies. It is rare to see the many computers available around the academy not in use. Students have a strong voice in decisions relating to their learning and well-being. Their interaction with the wider community is also highly influential and valued. The level of funds raised by the students, particularly by those in the sixth form for a range of charities both locally and abroad, are impressive. Students value and respect each other and are aware of the range of religious and cultural beliefs within the academy and in the community. The academy is a harmonious community where students from all backgrounds get on very well together and feel completely safe. They are well aware of how to stay healthy as evident in the academy achieving Healthy school Gold and sport quality mark. Students respond impressively when given responsibility for their and others’ well being, be it in the classroom, around the academy or in the community. An impressive number of students take full advantage of the academy being open 51 weeks of the year, by attending a wealth of extra-curricular activities that are on offer.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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Teaching and learning overall are outstanding. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and their very good relationships with students ensures that they learn in an extremely well-ordered and stimulating environment, which inspires and contributes to students’ enjoyment and achievement. In all the lessons seen by inspectors, it was clear how carefully teachers ensure that their lessons are well planned, sharply focused, skilfully managed, well-paced and free from any form of disruption. The use of technology is exceptional, and the use of assessment is an outstanding feature of teaching and learning. Assessment, particularly in informing students on how well they are doing and what they need to do to further improve, is used by teachers to set suitably ambitious targets that are well matched to students’ different needs. The students respond to the challenge because of the ‘can do’ culture that permeates the academy. Teachers use an excellent range of strategies, including skilful questioning, to assess how well students have understood their learning, particularly if it is new. Students are also routinely involved in peer assessment and self review. Marking in books, though not always consistent, is rigorous and helps students to improve their work.

The excellent, broad and balanced curriculum meets the wide range of students’ needs and aspirations, notably through the development of pathways at Key Stage 4. To accommodate the changing needs of new entrants, the academy has developed a highly imaginative and effective literacy programme in Year 7. Enrichment activities offered every day through the extended day programmes are varied and have a high take-up. In addition to sports, students enjoy a wide range of creative activities, many of which are linked with the academy’s numerous specialisms.

Exemplary care, guidance and support pervade all aspects of the academy’s provision. The staff know students very well and the close attention to their pastoral and academic needs is maintained from the start of induction through to the sixth form. The academy works outstandingly well with parents and carers and also with an impressive range of external partners to achieve the outstanding outcomes for its students. Students, in turn, appreciate the very high quality support, which they say is based on their teachers knowing them and their specific needs and which guides them to prioritise their work and well being.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

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The principal’s excellent leadership, drive and strategic vision has, in the past two years, successfully gained the trust of staff, parents and carers and students. She is ably supported by a senior and middle leadership team, who share her vision. Her drive to make the academy the prime agent of social and economic improvement for its local community has begun to pay off, in raising academic standards and increasing ownership of the academy by both students and the community. This is achieved in part through extended hours and being open for over 51 weeks of the year. Students are not only achieving well above the national average, they are going on to further and higher education, employment or training. This inclusive commitment to equality of opportunity for all local young people is demonstrated by the outstanding progress of all students, including the most vulnerable. The academy is aware however, that staff need to continue to develop a greater awareness of the challenges faced by the changing nature of the intake, with particular regards to those from minority ethnic backgrounds.

One of the many strengths of the academy lies in the cohesive community which leads to all staff, students, and governors working together as a team. There is comprehensive auditing of the academy’s work locally, nationally and internationally in all that it does, including contributing to community cohesion. This evaluation is rigorous and builds on the identified strengths.

The governing body is astute and very well informed. Members of the governing body, including the executive principal, challenge the academy’s work through visits to heads of departments, lessons, regular monitoring, analysis of data, and direct reporting from leaders and managers at all level. The academy explores every avenue in order to communicate with parents and carers and to enable them to be involved in their children’s education and well-being. The academy has excellent procedures for safeguarding students which are implemented and reviewed with exceptional rigour so that staff at all levels and members of the governing body are aware of their responsibilities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money

1

Sixth form

Students make outstanding progress. This is achieved because there is consistently outstanding teaching from experienced post-16 teachers. Leadership and management of the sixth form are outstanding. Staff at all levels are specialists in their subjects, committed and responsive. There is a strong focus on improving outcomes with extensive intervention strategies and self-evaluation.

The curriculum is impressively broad and responsive to the range of needs of students. Additionally, extensive extra-curricular provision benefits many students academically, socially and physically. Care, guidance and support are a truly outstanding feature of the provision in the sixth form. Students say that, 'teachers encourage us to aspire for the very best' and as one student put it, 'reach for the stars'. Students are given an impressive breadth of experience through work experience programmes. This further helps students with their impressive levels of self-confidence, personal development, and exemplary behaviour. This, coupled with the guidance they receive, prepares them exceptionally well for future challenges. All students go on either to other courses, university or employment. Although some students miss not having a sixth form common room, they make a strong contribution to the vibrant academy and the wider community. Effective engagement between the academy, students and their parents and carers make an excellent contribution to outstanding outcomes.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	1
Taking into account:	1
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

Over a third of the parents and carers responded to the Ofsted questionnaire. The vast majority were overwhelmingly supportive of the academy's work, praising the care, guidance and support offered to them and their children. All those who responded stated that their children were very happy at the academy, well cared for and enjoyed attending. As one parent wrote, 'I think that this is an excellent place, and my children have really developed well in their years at Brooke Weston.' These findings matched those of the inspection. A few concerns that were raised relate to individual matters rather than whole-school issues. Her Majesty's Inspector discussed some of these with the senior leadership. These included, for example, their children not having a break to enable them to get fresh air, particularly as the days at the academy are long. The academy intends to respond to these and other issues raised

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by some parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brooke Weston Academy to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 470 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1240 students registered at the academy.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	188	40	251	53	21	4	6	1
The school keeps my child safe	279	59	182	39	9	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	202	43	230	49	28	6	9	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	217	46	228	49	19	4	3	1
The teaching is good at this school	215	46	234	50	15	3	1	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	143	30	247	53	65	14	3	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	108	23	298	63	53	11	5	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	199	42	220	47	32	7	3	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	185	39	259	55	18	4	3	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	182	39	228	49	41	9	9	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	104	22	267	57	61	13	4	1
The school is led and managed effectively	239	51	206	44	15	3	4	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	254	54	190	40	19	4	1	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100.

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	59	36	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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

28 January 2011

Dear Students



Inspection of Brooke Weston Academy, Great Oakley, NN18 8LA

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to thank you all very much for welcoming us to your academy. We very much enjoyed the opportunities we had to meet some of you in lessons, small groups and around the building. The discussions and responses to the questionnaire helped the inspection team to come to some important judgments about the academy's provision for your education.

Brooke Weston Academy is outstanding in all areas of its provision. This is an amazingly good feat, achieved over two years as an academy, building on the success of Brooke Weston City Technology College. Brooke Weston provides you with a first class education, and helps you to exceed all expectations. The excellent leadership of the principal and her senior team resulted in the academy achieving its best ever results in 2010. These results were very high because your teachers are determined that all of you, regardless of ability, gender or race achieve your best. This is possible because, as you say, 'Teachers encourage us to reach for the stars'. The curriculum is imaginative and broad so that it meets your different needs, interests and aspirations. In this, the academy builds upon your skills and many talents through a range of specialisms. For example, you fast track through personalised studies to enable you to take GCSE in Year 10 and study AS-Levels in Year 11. Your outstanding personal development, the high quality support, guidance and recreational activities help you to build further your skills and confidence. This, as some of you told us, makes up for missing your break times.

Despite being judged as outstanding and consistently helping you to achieve high results, the academy is convinced that it can do even better. We agree with the leaders, including the governing body, that more of you could gain the highest grades. The academy knows its strengths well and plans to provide you with even more challenging work to optimise your performance.

The profile of your academy has been changing recently, with more students whose circumstances make them vulnerable. We have therefore asked your principal and the governors to develop a greater awareness of this with particular regard to outstanding provision for groups including those from minority ethnic backgrounds.

You can help by making the most of all the opportunities that the academy offers. We wish you all every future success.

Yours sincerely
Rashida Sharif
Her Majesty's Inspector

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