

# Barnfield West Academy Luton

Leagrave High St, Luton, LU4 0NE

**Inspection dates** 24–25 September 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Students achieve well in a wide range of subjects including English and mathematics at KS3 and KS4.
- The overall progress that students make between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 is extremely strong.
- Teaching is good across all key stages.
- Students take immense pride in their academy and behave extremely well as a result. Their attitudes to learning are exceptionally constructive.
- The effective leadership of the Principal and his senior team has created a strong shared ethos which positively enhances every area of academy life.
- A relentless focus on the quality of teaching by leaders and governors has ensured that achievement is improving at every key stage.
- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The sixth form requires improvement because, although standards of achievement are improving steadily, they are not yet good.
- Some teaching does not always allow the most able students to reach the highest standards of which they are capable.
- The written feedback that students receive does not always lead to measurable improvements in students' work.
- Achievement in history and design and technology is not as good as in other departments.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 50 lessons. Nine of these were observed jointly with a member of the academy’s senior leadership team. Tutorial sessions and an assembly were also observed.
- Inspectors observed students’ behaviour at breaks, lunchtimes and before school.
- Inspectors took account of the 11 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire (Parent View), and responses to an inspection questionnaire from 13 members of staff.
- Inspectors analysed the most recent public examination results for the academy. They scrutinised the academy’s current assessment data, the academy development plan, students’ work, minutes of meetings and policies, safeguarding documentation and the academy’s self-evaluation summary.
- Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders, teachers, students from all year groups and governors from the Barnfield Academies Trust Board.

## Inspection team

Paul Lawrence, Lead inspector	Seconded Inspector
David New	Additional Inspector
Judith Long	Additional Inspector
Jennifer Griffiths	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Needham	Additional Inspector

*Paul Lawrence is appointed as an Additional Inspector, under the powers relating to additional inspectors, in paragraph 11 of Part 2 of Schedule 12 to the Education and Inspections Act 2006.*

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Barnfield West Academy Luton opened in September 2007 and moved into new, purpose-built academy buildings in September 2011. The academy is sponsored by the Barnfield Education Partnership Trust, which was created by Barnfield College. Direct governance is currently provided by the Barnfield Academies Trust, one part of the wider trust organisation.
- A proposal to separate the Barnfield Academies Trust from the Barnfield Education Partnership Trust to form a stand-alone multi-academy trust by the end of 2014 is currently under consultation.
- The academy opened a shared sixth form with Barnfield South Academy Luton in September 2011. Students remain on the roll of one of the academies, but lessons may take place on either site.
- Barnfield West Academy Luton is larger than the average-sized secondary academy.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is higher than the national average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also higher than the national average.
- The proportion of students for whom the academy receives pupil premium funding is higher than the national average. Pupil premium funding is additional funding to support students known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The academy currently uses alternative provision to educate a proportion of its students at Luton On Track Education Centre, Active Support Luton, Xers Luton and Ellern Mede Ridgway Service.
- The academy meets the current government floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement, particularly in the sixth form, by ensuring that:
  - opportunities to stretch the most-able students are always provided
  - feedback to students on their work leads to measurable improvement
  - staff who teach in subject areas where achievement is lower learn from the practice of the most effective departments.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The purposeful and caring leadership of the Principal and his senior team have created a strong academy identity and a positive ethos shared by all members of the community. Leaders successfully achieve the academy's stated aspiration of providing 'traditional values in a modern context'. The strength of leadership is recognised without exception by the academy's staff.
- Academy leaders establish explicitly clear expectations, rules and boundaries. These are implemented consistently throughout the academy which results in the students' positive behaviour and attitudes. The atmosphere created allows teachers to teach effectively and students to learn well.
- Self-evaluation at the academy is strong. Leaders have a clear picture of what the academy does well and what needs to be prioritised for further development. Clear academy and subject department development plans create a coherent approach to improving outcomes for students.
- Academy leaders know where teaching is strongest and where appropriate support needs to be put in place to strengthen it further. This support, for example, has helped raise the standard of sixth-form teaching to good. Performance management has been used appropriately as part of the process of identifying development needs but has not yet ensured that it rewards those who have performed effectively.
- The academy provides a broad and balanced range of academic and vocational learning opportunities. At Key Stage 4 it is consciously moving to a more academic curriculum in an attempt to provide students with more rigorous courses which provide appropriate pathways to higher-level qualifications. Students participate in a rich programme of extra-curricular opportunities.
- Reports provided for parents of every student are concise and clear summaries of progress and attainment. They provide information about the targets students should be working towards alongside information about current performance. In this way they effectively help parents understand how their children are progressing.
- Academy leaders have worked successfully to ensure that students are effectively prepared for life in modern Britain. Students demonstrate a fascination in learning about the world around them and clearly exhibit a respect for the diversity which is to be found there. They understand the principles of democracy and representation, and participate enthusiastically in the life of the academy, for example through the student leadership group or by organising charity appeals.
- The **governance of the school**:
  - Governors are exceedingly well informed about their responsibilities and duties. The governors fulfil these statutory duties, including those concerning the performance management of the Principal and safeguarding, effectively. They are confident about the recommendations that academy leaders make to them about pay progression following the performance management of teachers.
  - Governors ask challenging questions of the academy's leadership to establish whether targets are being met. They have been rigorous in monitoring the performance of student groups, such as those for whom the academy receives pupil premium funding and those who have special educational needs.
  - Governors achieve their thorough understanding of the strengths and development needs of the academy through a detailed analysis of reports and other information provided by the Principal and senior leadership team. Governors have articulated a desire to further develop first-hand links with important areas of the academy.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. Students are calm and orderly when moving between lessons and at breaks and lunchtimes. They are unfailingly polite and courteous to staff and each other.

- Students are hugely proud of their academy. They wear their blazers and ties smartly, do not drop litter and look after the modern, purpose-built site impeccably. They stand without instruction when any adult enters a classroom.
- The atmosphere in lessons is calm and studious but this does not stop class discussions being lively and engaging. Students almost always arrive at lessons with the right equipment. Attitudes to learning are routinely positive as students want to learn and these characteristics have a strong impact on their progress.
- Students arrive at the academy punctually and attendance is above the national average. A very large proportion of students attend enhancement and catch-up sessions before and after the end of the academy's day or at the weekend. Exclusions are well below the national average.
- There is an all-pervading sense of respect for every member of the culturally diverse community at the academy. Students have a good understanding of intolerance and prejudice, but without exception they state that this is not a feature of life at the academy in any form.
- There are occasional occurrences of low-level disruption in lessons. This happens most often when the lessons of regular subject teachers have to be covered on a short-term basis by other staff.
- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. The academy undertakes its obligations for safeguarding, for example in recruitment, with necessary rigour. The academy liaises closely with alternative providers to ensure that students who are educated off-site because of medical or other individual needs not only attend this provision and are safe, but that they also achieve to a high standard.
- The students demonstrate a good understanding of how to keep themselves and each other safe in different situations and are taught effectively about the risks associated with modern technologies. Rare incidents of bullying are well documented and thoroughly dealt with.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- Teachers use a wide variety of effective teaching strategies. Examples include clear explanations regularly interspersed with opportunities for students to apply what they have learned individually. When teachers encourage students to work on their own they are rigorous in identifying expected outcomes.
- Teachers help create positive learning environments in their classrooms. Constructive, trusting relationships have been developed throughout the academy and teachers and students share an expectation that learning will begin as soon as each lesson starts. Students are confident to engage actively in lessons and feel safe to venture answers to questions and make mistakes.
- The high expectations held by teachers are embodied in challenging targets for attainment which are set for all students. The academy has taken advantage of the opportunity offered by changes to the national curriculum to introduce a new assessment framework. This is helping students to understand the standards they should be aiming to achieve and whether they are on track to achieve them.
- The literacy policy is consistently applied throughout the academy and students' skills in reading and writing are regularly enhanced in lessons other than English. Mathematics lessons frequently focus on what the academy calls 'manglish' - the understanding and spelling of key mathematical terms.
- Teachers are committed to improving their own skills and they regularly take advantage of the high quality professional development opportunities available at the academy. This has enabled continuous improvement in the quality of teaching. However, they have fewer opportunities for staff to share each other's expertise and best practice across different subjects and departments.
- Most marking in books and folders is regular, provides encouraging feedback to students and identifies

improvements needed in spelling and presentation. However, some does not provide advice that clearly tells students how to improve, nor check for that improvement.

- Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for students to undertake extended writing. This means that often the most able do not have sufficient chance to deepen their skills and understanding or demonstrate their learning as effectively as they could.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Students join the academy in Year 7 with standards that are well below those expected of their age. Most ability groups make very strong progress and finish Key Stage 4 with standards of attainment which are above average.
- The proportion of students that attain five or more good GCSE passes including English and mathematics is higher than the national level. When compared to other schools nationally the progress made between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 at the academy overall is extremely high.
- Achievement in both English and mathematics at Key Stage 4 is good. Strong teaching in both subjects ensures that students of all abilities learn well and the proportions of students achieving and exceeding nationally expected levels of progress are above average.
- Students acquire and deepen their knowledge, skills and understanding across the range of subjects they study. Their literacy, numeracy and communication skills are constantly reinforced in different areas. As a result, almost every student moves confidently and successfully onto the next stage of their education or employment.
- The gaps between the attainment of students for whom the academy receives pupil premium funding, and the attainment of both other students in the academy and other students nationally, have narrowed. In 2013 the gap between these disadvantaged students and other students in the academy amounted to half a grade in mathematics and a third of a grade in English, and the gap between disadvantaged students at the academy and other students nationally was a third of a grade in mathematics and three quarters of a grade in English. The academy provides a menu of extra learning opportunities to ensure these gaps continue to close.
- The academy's carefully planned provision to support the learning of students with disabilities or special educational needs results in them learning well.
- The most able students do not make as much progress as other ability groups within the academy because teaching does not always stretch them as much as it could. The academy is aware that entering students early for mathematics has not led to the most able students attaining the highest grades of which they were capable and is reassessing this strategy.
- Not all subject departments achieve as well as the most effective. Focused support and challenge for subject leaders has started to improve achievement in GCSE science, but has not yet made an impact on achievement in history or design and technology.
- Although standards of achievement in the sixth form have improved, they are not yet good.

### **The sixth form provision** requires improvement

- Achievement in the sixth form has improved steadily. However, overall levels of progress and standards of attainment have not yet reached the national average.
- When the sixth form first opened in 2011 not all students were guided onto the most appropriate courses. Not all teachers were sufficiently experienced in A-level teaching to ensure students achieved as well as

they could. Academy leaders acted quickly and decisively to address these issues, leading subsequently to improved outcomes.

- Targeted recruitment and effective staff development have ensured that relevant teachers have the necessary expertise to deliver teaching effectively. The information and guidance offered to students when entering the sixth form is also now of a high quality. As a result, retention rates, as well as results, have improved and progress is accelerating.
- Teaching in the sixth form is now good. The improvements in teaching, however, have not had time to have sufficient impact on outcomes.
- The achievement of students following vocational courses is good. They make good progress and exceed national attainment levels because they are taught well.
- Behaviour in the sixth form is strong. Students' attitudes to their learning are uniformly positive. They are focused and industrious in lessons. They listen carefully to teachers and readily contribute perceptive answers when discussions are facilitated. They make constructive use of opportunities for independent learning.
- The sixth form is well led and managed. Leaders have made sure that they have learned lessons from the experience of setting up the sixth form from scratch. They have focused relentlessly on improving outcomes for students.
- The sixth form curriculum is appropriate and effective and individual study programmes are well-planned and monitored. Students' personal and employability skills are well-developed and information about student destinations shows they are well-prepared for the next stage in their education or employment.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135337
<b>Local authority</b>	Luton
<b>Inspection number</b>	449429

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1403
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	120
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bronwyn Philpott
<b>Principal</b>	Andy Hardy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27-28 January 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01582 601221
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