



Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd

Date 12th May 2016

Mr Paul Halcro
Principal
The Bulwell Academy
Squires Avenue
Bulwell
Nottingham
NG6 8HG

Assessment Date: 11th & 12th May 2016

Summary

The Bulwell Academy currently caters for 950 11-16 year olds with a further 70 places for post-16 students. The Academy has a Business and Enterprise specialism and has strong local business partnerships equipping students with the business skills to succeed in the world of work.

Prior attainment on entry is significantly below the national average for all year groups. The percentage of students in the low attainment band is approximately 10% higher than the national average for all year groups.

The Academy serves a community where there is a significant social and economic disadvantage. It is a mixed gender school with 950 students on roll most of whom are experiencing significant levels of deprivation.

- The vast majority of students are of White British heritage whose first language is English. (85%)
- 42.5% (almost 3 times the national average) of students attending the Academy are currently eligible for free Academy meals and 62.5% of students meet the Ever Six criteria.
- The index of deprivation affecting children (IDACI) places the Academy amongst the top 20% of schools nationally.
- North Nottingham has the second highest rates of child deprivation in the country.

The inspirational headteacher sets the inclusive framework and, along with his senior team, ensures that staff focus on the needs of all students. The Academy's motto, "Everyone Achieves" is put into practice throughout the Academy. In all classrooms students are happily engaged in learning and the Academy applies its inclusive principles to every aspect of its work. As a result, the Academy is an energetic, happy and harmonious place in which to learn.

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Students are expected to make excellent progress during their time at the Academy and staff go to great lengths to help them to achieve the best possible results. Students are encouraged to try hard in order to build their self-confidence and, as a consequence of this consistent, hard work students' progress, often from low starting points, is excellent. The Academy is warm and welcoming with a very calm, positive, focused atmosphere. Inclusion is at the heart of the Academy's purpose and there is a consistent drive to ensure that every thing that can be done will be done to meet the diverse needs of students.

Students are very happy and extremely positive about their Academy. Behaviour is consistently good around the Academy and in lessons. Students spoken to, explained confidently and eloquently the many ways in which they are provided with opportunities to develop themselves and given support whatever their needs.

Teaching and support staff are valued and their hard work is recognized within the Academy. As a result, they work together very well and team work is strong. There is a clear teaching and learning policy which is in large part applied consistently and consequently affording a clear structure which enables students to make progress. Middle leaders play a crucial role in ensuring that the high expectations filter through into classroom teaching and that whole Academy strategies are implemented consistently in all areas. A robust performance management system ensures that standards of teaching and learning are high and that teachers receive support to improve their skills where necessary.

Detailed tracking of student progress helps to ensure that issues regarding individual students are picked up very quickly. There is a very thorough system of data analysis, which is well understood and consistently applied by all staff. Targets are set for students and an ongoing tracking system ensures that students who are falling behind are targeted for a range of different interventions according to need. These include many afterhours booster and revision sessions to enable students to catch up on, or improve, their work. The Academy's dedicated staff work extremely hard well beyond the Academy day for their students. As a result of this systematic approach and excellent teamwork by staff, students achieve well at the Academy. Teachers plan very carefully to identify and meet the needs of all students utilising the skills of the support staff who are highly skilled and work as key professionals alongside teachers.

Support for students with SEND additional needs is excellent and is an exemplary model of practice. There is a wide range of support mechanisms in place for students with SEND, led by the Senior Vice Principal in charge of Inclusion. The pastoral system and safeguarding procedures are also very strong providing excellent support for students. The Academy works with a number of specialist agencies to further enhance support for students.

Parents spoken to were overwhelmingly positive about the Academy's leadership, quality of teaching and above all, the care and attention given to each individual. There is regular and informative communication with parents.

The governing body is also fully committed to the Academy's vision and plays a very positive, active and supportive role in the Academy. They are aware of all aspects of the inclusion agenda and are active participants in the Academy's efforts to include and to care for all students.

I am of the opinion that The Bulwell Academy fully meets the standard required by the Inclusion Quality Mark. There are only minor areas requiring development and the Academy is aware of these. I recommend that the Academy be awarded the Mark and is reassessed in 3 years' time.

Assessor: Barry Carney

Findings confirmed by Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd:



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Joe McCann MBA NPQH
Director of Inclusion Quality Mark (UK) Ltd

Element 1 – The Inclusion Values and Practices of the school

Strengths:-

- Inclusion is at the heart of the Academy's ethos and purpose. This is led by the inspirational Principal who sets the tone from which all the inclusive practices flow. He is ably supported by his Senior Vice Principal responsible for Inclusion. The Academy motto of "Everyone Achieves" is combined with a tangible belief in inclusion and equality. Expectations are very high of everyone in the Academy community combined with clear boundaries and a high level of nurturing care.
- Policies on inclusion, teaching and learning and behaviour are all very clear and ensure all staff know what is expected of them.
- There is a strong sense of common purpose and commitment among all staff, who have students' best interests at heart and are prepared to work very hard to meet their needs.
- The Academy has put extensive interventions and support mechanisms in place to meet the diverse and individual needs of its students. These include mentoring, catch up groups, revision groups, EAL withdrawal groups, one-to-one support and in class support, nurture groups and small groups of pupils.
- Primary liaison and transition to secondary school is well managed ensuring the early identification of a range of educational, social and emotional needs.
- Staff are very positive role models for students and relations between staff and students are mutually respectful and caring. It is clear to students that that staff want the very best outcomes for them and consequently they work very well for them.
- Pupil premium is a significant budget in this Academy due to the large percentage of pupils who qualify for it. Its use is planned thoughtfully and is monitored carefully to ensure most effective use of the funding.
- The Academy has an impressive attitude toward young people at risk of permanent exclusion from other schools and has worked very hard to accommodate young people successfully.

Areas for development: -

- With the significant leadership changes happening at the end of the year, the Academy needs to maintain the essence of its vision for inclusion.

Element 2 – The Learning Environment, Resources and ICT

Strengths: -

- The Academy's learning environment is very well thought out with excellent subject specialist learning spaces for students.
- There are specialist rooms for SEND, including a multi-sensory room, which enable effective mentoring, one-to-one and small group work to take place.
- All classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards and there is a dedicated ICT in each faculty area. There are also laptops available for students to use.
- The Academy's website is clear and very informative including all the required policies and information. The ethos of inclusivity is reflected through the content.
- There is a well-resourced library which is very well maintained and managed as an excellent resource for the Academy.
- Outdoor space including a MUGA are well maintained and offer excellent opportunities for learning as well as for sport.
- The Academy's very welcoming reception area and receptionist provide very positive first contact for all visitors.
- There are positive displays around the Academy reflecting the its mission and ethos as well as displays of students' work promoting and celebrating students' achievements.
- The Academy is in very good condition and is free of graffiti and litter on the whole. It is clear that students respect their excellent environment and the systems in place to maintain the site are effective.
- Good use of Teaching Assistants as "Keeper of the Classroom" is instrumental in maintaining a vibrant environment highly conducive to learning.

Areas for development:-

- Implement plans to improve facilities, such as a fitness suite, through the release of an endowment.

Element 3 - Learning Attitudes, Values and Personal Development

Strengths: -

- In all lessons observed, attitudes to learning were very positive. Students are very clear about what is expected of them and they feel very well supported by it. There is a very positive, happy atmosphere in the Academy and there is mutual respect between staff and students.
- Policies on behaviour and anti-bullying are very clear and provide a very effective framework for students. These are supported by assemblies and the pastoral system. PSHCE takes place weekly and through assemblies, drop down days and the constant reinforcement of values by staff, ensure that the Academy's vision for inclusion are promoted and understood by all.
- Students have high aspirations and they are supported in this through a wide range of curricular and extracurricular activities to enhance their learning. Students are also very clear on how to improve their learning as there is a rigorous monitoring and target setting system. Feed back to students is also of a very high standard and the consistent use of feedback marking is crucial in this.
- Pastoral support and safeguarding arrangements are extremely thorough and ensure that all children's needs are catered for and that children are supported through any difficulties they may face.
- Students' behaviour is very good and they are respectful and supportive of each other. Expectations of them are clear and the ethos of the Academy provides a secure framework within which students can flourish. Rewards are linked to this and these are wide ranging including achievement points, positive letters and post cards, and trips.
- Attendance and punctuality are good and improving and there is a clear focus upon improving both still further.
- There are a number of opportunities for students to take on roles of responsibility within the Academy. These include the classroom ambassadors, head boy and head girl and the Student council. Students are proud to take up these roles and undertake their roles seriously and effectively. Students know they are listened to and that their views are respected and taken into account within the Academy. Students spoken to were very articulate and positive about their Academy.
- Careers advice and guidance for students is well thought through and links with outside organisations such as Stonebridge City Farm and Nottingham City Homes provide valuable work experience for students.
- The Employment Intelligence Programme for Year 10 is an impressive provision as are the Social Enterprises that offer students valuable experiences.

Areas for development: -

- Continue the drive to improve attendance and punctuality and in particular at KS4.

Element 4 - Learner Progress and the Impact on Learning

Strengths: -

- There is a thorough data analysis and tracking system, which is understood and consistently applied across the Academy. Data is provided regularly for all subjects, so that teachers are able to take appropriate action on students causing concern.
- From very low starting points, well below the national average, students make rapid progress at the Academy. The progress of disadvantaged students is in line or exceed that of their peers and almost all students progress to further education or training.
- A number of successful after hours' lessons and clubs enable students to extend or catch up on their work in a range of subjects. There are also longer-term interventions to support targeted students.
- All teachers have class folders containing seating plans, data and the impressive Inclusion Planning Sheet all of which are available for monitoring and visitors to lessons. These are very useful documents, which outline the make-up of each class with data that informs their planning and a range of strategies that enable effective differentiation.
- Teaching Assistants show expertise and pedagogical skill in working with intervention groups. They adhere to Academy policy on behaviour management and reward systems so that there is consistency of approach throughout the Academy. They are actively involved in lesson planning and preparation.
- The interventions, which are put in place for any students who are found to be performing below targets, are carefully monitored to ensure effectiveness. All students on such interventions are monitored closely to ensure good progress is made.
- The Academy has a strong focus on providing feedback to students through the marking of their work and students are encouraged to respond to their teachers' comments. This is happening consistently across the Academy and students find it a very useful tool in helping them to improve their work and meet their targets.
- A range of support is in place for students on pupil premium and others according to need. This includes funded trips and visits, intervention classes, extracurricular clubs, breakfast club and the use of this funding is monitored carefully to ensure effectiveness.

Areas for development: -

- Following the dip in performance in 2015, ensure that the trend from the previous three years is picked up and further improvements are made.
- Make more explicit the policy on More Able and Talented.

Element 5 - Learning and Teaching (Monitoring)

Strengths: -

- The Academy is thorough in monitoring all aspects of learning and teaching, to ensure a high degree of consistency of standards and approaches across the Academy. Targets are very challenging for students and they are supported and enabled to meet these in a variety of ways.
- Senior leaders have a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the staff team. Performance Management is supportive but also sets clear targets. NQTs and RQTs are well supported and they look confident and well-prepared in class. The overview of teaching and judgements about teaching show a majority of good teaching and none that is inadequate. Senior leaders know what to do to move every member of the team forward.
- The role of middle leaders, who lead learning areas, is very strong in the Academy and subject area planning and monitoring is an exceptional feature of work here. Teachers are very accustomed to having their lessons visited and their work checked and there is a collegiate approach to this, which makes it very productive and supportive for teachers and leads to important discussions about teaching and learning strategies.
- Book checks are undertaken to ensure that feedback to pupils via the marking of their work is appropriate and is acted upon by pupils. This is an integral part of the monitoring of teaching and learning in the Academy.
- A range of differentiated approaches is used in lessons and learning is differentiated to meet all needs. Lessons are challenging and engaging with students collaborating very well and planning ensures the provision of motivating tasks for all.
- Formal lesson observations, learning walks and planning checks take place regularly and targets are set for teachers, with support provided where necessary.
- All lessons have Session Plans visible so that students are always aware of what they are aiming to achieve in their learning.
- Support staff are deployed effectively to best support students' needs and they also receive relevant CPD to enable them to develop their skills.

Areas for development:-

- Review the teaching and learning policy ensuring that strategies that are promoted are evident in teachers' planning and practice e.g. Kagan Structures.

Element 6 – Parents, Carers and Guardians

Strengths: -

- Parents spoken to were very positive about the Academy’s supportive and caring ethos. They value the attention the Academy gives to the individual needs of their children.
- Parents are also happy with the rewards their children receive for their efforts and with the progress they make at Academy. All parents agree the Academy has very high expectations of their children and they help them to develop their self-confidence.
- The Academy is very open to parents who know that they will listen to them and will provide advice and support for them. When problems do arise any parental concerns are listened to and acted upon very swiftly and effectively by the Academy staff.
- One parent commented; “The staff go above and beyond for their pupils...on a day to day basis”
- The Academy communicates very effectively with parents in many ways, including the Academy newsletter, website, letters home and via texting.
- Parents find communication with the Academy is excellent and the staff are very approachable, enabling them to see a teacher when they need to. They are extremely happy with the 1 to 1 support provided for their children with SEND and the transition arrangements for them.

Areas for development: -

- Review the accessibility of the Parent Action Group.
- Look to develop a more extensive and sustainable programme of Family Learning.

Element 7 - Governing Body and Management

Strengths: -

- The governing body is very involved in, and supportive of, the work of the Academy. It is rigorous in holding leaders to account and is ambitious for its future development. The governors are fully committed to the Academy's inclusive ethos and are very proud of its work.
- There are linked governors for SEND and safeguarding and all governors are members of one of the committees. Governors monitor finances closely and are fully involved, for example, in monitoring the effectiveness of the pupil premium fund. They also conduct learning walks to inform their monitoring of Academy effectiveness.
- The governors visit the Academy regularly and they appreciate the enthusiasm and hard work of the staff and are impressed by the high expectations of students and the attention to the needs of every individual student.
- Governors challenge Academy leaders and ensure that all aspects of the Academy's work are rigorously quality assured.
- The Academy receives support from the Thomas Telford family of Schools.

Areas for development: -

- There are no areas of development for this element

Element 8 - The School in the Community

Strengths: -

- The Academy works closely with a range of agencies, including local authority educational psychology services, dyslexia service, sensory impairment and many more. There is also a careers service member of staff who works in the Academy on a weekly basis.
- The Academy welcomes members of the business community into the Academy to give talks to students and students are able to access work placements in a range of local businesses.
- The Academy provides a good range of extracurricular enrichment opportunities.
- Outreach for vulnerable families is excellent, and the school uses its knowledge of the community very well.
- The Academy's profile in the local community has become very positive over the past few years during the journey from Special Measures to 'good' at its last inspection in June 2015
- The Academy effectively outsources the management of its leisure facilities for community use which is a popular and well used community facility.
- Events such as the Bulwell Arts Festival, Community Film nights and the very popular Christmas and summer fairs help to strengthen the Academy's position within the local community.

Areas for development:-

- There are no areas of development for this element