

# The Petchey Academy

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	131062
Local Authority	NA
Inspection number	331404
Inspection dates	21-22 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Michael Lynes (HMI)

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

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Type of Academy	Academy
Academy category	Community
Age range of pupils	11-19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	540
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Billington
Principal	Mr David Daniels
Date of previous academy inspection	
School address	Shackelwell Lane Hackney London E8 2EY
Telephone number	020 7275 1500
Fax number	020 7275 1600

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Age group	11-19
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

## Description of the academy

The Petchey Academy opened to Year 7 students in September 2006. It specialises in health, care and medical science. The academy moved into its new premises in September 2007. There are currently 540 students in Years 7, 8 and 9 and plans to expand to 900 by 2010. The students reflect the wide ethnic mix in Hackney; about half are of Black African or Caribbean heritage and a significant proportion come from homes where English is not the first language, but few are in the early stages of learning English. The local area is one of considerable disadvantage. About a quarter of students have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which is higher than that typically found. The academy is significantly over-subscribed and draws its students from about 40 primary schools. The recruitment and retention of suitable staff is a challenge for the academy.

Before admission, students sit a test to determine their ability and are divided into five bands according to the results. The academy then ensures that an equal proportion of students from each of the five bands are admitted. This means that, overall, attainment on entry is broadly average. As the students have yet to take any national examinations, there is no nationally validated data against which to judge their achievement and standards. The assessment of their achievement in this report is based on data provided by the academy, progress observed in lessons and discussions with students.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the academy

Grade: 2

The Petchey Academy is a good school, with some outstanding qualities, and is unique in some respects. Key to its rapid development over the past three years is the exceptional capacity of students, teachers and senior leaders to reflect on both their successes and areas for development. This high degree of emotional intelligence is supported by rigorous monitoring of academic progress, an innovative approach to the curriculum and a profound desire to remove any barriers impeding students' success.

The principal is insightful and leads with a quiet authority. His calm but purposeful manner is reflected in the atmosphere of the academy. Students regard him as approachable and somebody who will help to solve their problems. The principal is exceptionally well supported by the two vice-principals. Their intelligent, thoughtful approach to the academy's development is visible in every aspect of its work. This outstanding quality of leadership is present in other aspects of the academy. Both the food manager, who also teaches, and the facilities manager share a deep commitment to ensuring high-quality education. This provides students with an almost seamless experience. This continuity ensures that students have a deep sense of security and safety inside the academy that is extremely important to them.

The academy is not yet outstanding, as the quality of teaching, although good, is variable. This leads to behaviour in some classrooms which impedes learning. The academy's systems for dealing with poor behaviour are exemplary and sensitive to the specific needs of individual students. The low-level disruption that takes place is mainly attributable to the quality of teaching, and in particular students' response to their perception of the relevance of the lesson. The academy has some outstanding teachers and the systems for improving teaching are thorough and based on highly accurate judgements.

One of the unique aspects of the academy is its lunchtime arrangements. This 'family service' is a very clear embodiment of the academy's values and is an important facet of the school's specialism. Students and staff eat and talk together. This communal event helps to forge bonds between members of the academy community and is an enjoyable, relaxed experience for all. It engenders in most students a keen sense of social responsibility and mutual respect that is exceptional. This is a clear example of the high-level social skills that will stand students in very good stead once they leave the academy.

The academy's specialisms are well embedded at the heart of many of its activities. They were very well chosen to reflect both the needs of students and the local labour market. Even the youngest students are able to appreciate the purpose and relevance of the specialisms.

## What the academy should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that a greater proportion of lessons are relevant to students' needs and aspirations, and engage them more actively in their learning.

## Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Students enter the academy with skills, knowledge and understanding slightly below that typically found nationally. Students in all year groups are attaining standards that are generally above national expectations. This is good progress. Evidence provided by the academy demonstrates that most groups of students are meeting, or exceeding, the challenging targets set for them. The very careful analysis undertaken by senior leaders shows that all groups of students achieve equally well. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers.

Many of the most vulnerable students make very good progress because of the tailored intervention packages. Evidence from lesson observations confirms this good picture, with progress ranging from satisfactory to outstanding.

## Personal development and well-being

**Grade: 1**

The academy's focus on developing self-aware learners is evident in the confidence with which students describe how they learn. They are taught to be reflective in a variety of ways. The regular meetings with their lifestyle consultants are particularly effective. Opportunities for students to contribute to their community are exemplary. They range from representing their academy in sporting events to clearly defined roles in the family lunch service. Students value the student council and feel able to contribute to decision making in the academy. A particularly good example of the way the academy develops young leaders is through the work of students in improving teaching and learning.

Relationships between students are very good and they feel safe. Their behaviour around the academy and during lunchtimes is exemplary. In most lessons, behaviour is good. However, when teaching is not engaging or challenging, students' concentration dips and they engage in low-level disruption that can hinder the learning of others. Attendance is above the national average and good arrangements are in place to improve it.

In line with the academy's specialisms, the emphasis on leading healthy lifestyles is very strong. All students study for a first-aid qualification. Preparation for students' economic well-being is excellent. In addition to good achievement in English, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT), students have many opportunities to develop skills such as team working and problem solving. Links with universities, including students' engagement with real research programmes, raise aspirations, particularly for those who are the first to pursue higher education in their families.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

**Grade: 2**

Outstanding lessons were observed in science and food technology during the inspection. Lessons of this quality were characterised by exceptional subject knowledge, mutual respect between teachers and students, and materials that were relevant and stimulating. Students were engaged by the expertise of the teacher and were drawn into these lessons. They were able to work independently, ask cogent questions and make exceptional progress. Particularly striking in these lessons were activities that were highly topical or that involved developing skills that could be applied outside the classroom. This is teaching of the highest quality and makes a very important contribution to developing the skills needed for lifelong learning. Lessons that were not as successful were characterised by tasks that were more mundane and that were conducted at a slower pace. This led to some students losing interest and engaging in low-level disruption which prevented some from making as much progress as they could. Students have an exceptionally good understanding of the quality of teaching because of the way the academy involves them in evaluating it. They agreed with inspectors that teaching is good, but that there is still some variability in its quality across the academy.

### Curriculum and other activities

**Grade: 1**

The academy's innovative and flexible approach to the curriculum ensures that it has breadth and coherence, and helps students to see how subjects relate to one another. The curriculum embodies the academy's high ambitions for all students, both the more able and those who require additional support. There is a strong emphasis on academic

progress, supported by an equally sharp focus on helping students develop the skills they need to succeed as learners. The academy's specialisms permeate the curriculum. The academy is forward looking and is developing strong links with universities as it sets out pathways for those who wish to study medical, caring, health and related courses after the age of 18. The organisation of the curriculum is regularly reviewed to make sure that students' needs and aspirations are met, and to enable them to gain qualifications as and when they are ready. Students speak highly of the steps the academy takes to make the curriculum interesting and stimulating. They particularly enjoyed the Victorian days when they investigated the streets of the City of London looking for signs of Jack the Ripper. Every student participates in a wide range of enhancement activities. These very successfully combine opportunities for sport and physical activity, contribution to the community, personal development and, importantly, to have fun. Students and parents are very complimentary about these sessions.

## Care, guidance and support

**Grade: 1**

Staff combine their high expectations of students with a clear understanding of the potential difficulties they face. Rigorous monitoring ensures that vulnerable students are identified early and receive highly effective support. As a result, a wide range of high-quality programmes, some in partnership with external organisations, are in place to support the diverse needs of students. Both staff and students carefully evaluate all provision. The regular reflection on practice clearly improves outcomes for students. For example, the review of the behaviour policy has reduced both external and internal exclusions. The 'Yang' programme supports vulnerable students through provision that is similar to the one they experienced in primary schools. When students are ready to re-join mainstream classes, careful transition arrangements help to ensure they flourish.

Senior leaders have precise knowledge of individual students' progress and whether they are on track to meet their targets. This personalised approach is apparent in the regular meetings line managers have with teachers about the progress of individuals in their classes. Students know their targets and some are able to explain what it is they need to do to improve; however, this is not consistent across all areas of learning. Data on students' learning and attitude is available for parents to view on the e-portal, but parents' use of this is not high.

## Leadership and management

**Grade: 1**

The principal and vice-principals are a formidable team. Their passion and determination to provide the best for students are infectious. The vision for the academy is clear and shared by staff and governors. It informs ambitious, but realistic, plans for the future as the academy's intake grows. The quality of self-evaluation is exemplary. Every aspect of the academy's work is kept under review; there is a high degree of positive self-criticism that is used to fine-tune the next steps. The approach to evaluating and improving the quality of teaching is particularly rigorous and effectively supports teachers in improving their performance. The academy sets ambitious targets for students' attainment that contributes to their improving progress and good achievement. The governing body also forms a highly effective part of the driving force behind the academy. Governors have a very secure appreciation of the academy's strengths and areas for development and understand their strategic role. They are unafraid to challenge senior leaders but do so in a constructive, helpful manner. Their ability to question the quality of academic performance is developing.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	Academy Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the academy work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interest of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

<sup>2</sup> IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

## Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the academy's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the academy contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this academy require special measures?	No
Does this academy require a notice to improve?	No

## Annex B

## Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

03 February 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of The Petchey Academy, London, E8 2EY

Thank you for talking to inspectors so enthusiastically and thoughtfully about the academy. We agree with all the positive things that you told us, and you are right to be very proud of the academy. We have decided that the academy is a good school with some outstanding qualities. We think that the way you develop into confident young people is excellent. We have also judged the leaders and managers of the academy, which includes the principal and the vice-principals, to be outstanding. You are very appreciative of all that your teachers do for you; as a student in Year 7 told me: 'Teachers will do anything in their power to help.' If you want to read the whole report, you can download it from [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

Inspectors were impressed by your behaviour around the corridors and at lunchtime. You are very sensible and respectful towards both each other and adults. The calm way you reacted to the fire alarm was a very good example of this. However, you know that you do not always behave as brilliantly as this in some of your lessons. I know that you will want to think about how you can improve on this so you can learn even more than you already do.

Even in such a good school, there is always more to do and we have asked the academy to improve in one area:

- Teach a greater number of lessons that are more interesting for you, and that allow you to work more actively and independently.

You can do your part by improving your behaviour in some lessons and letting the teachers know what you find interesting.

I wish you all the very best for your future.

Yours faithfully

Michael Lynes  
Her Majesty's Inspector

