

The Quest Academy-Coloma Trust

Farnborough Avenue, South Croydon, CR2 8HD

Inspection dates 3–4 June 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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders and the governing body have ensured that the academy has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is now good in all areas.
- The Principal provides strong leadership to the academy. He and other senior leaders have created a culture where success is expected from students of all abilities. Plans for further improvement are clear and sharply focused.
- Teaching is strong across the curriculum and is much improved. High-quality marking makes a strong contribution to students' accelerating progress.
- Students behave well both in lessons and around the new academy site. They are proud of their accommodation and treat the environment with respect. Students' enjoyment of academy life is reflected in the rising level of attendance, which is now above average.
- Students confirm that they feel safe in the academy. They know about the risks which young people may encounter.
- Students achieve consistently well. From below average starting points, they make at least good progress in a range of subjects.
- With only minor variations, all groups, including disadvantaged students, achieve as well as others. Achievement in English is especially strong. Teachers also ensure that students' basic literacy and numeracy skills are well promoted across the curriculum.
- The well-led sixth form provides students with a good education. Students are increasingly successful in their studies and benefit from effective teaching and good quality support from teachers and tutors. In almost all cases, students move on to higher education or suitable work-related alternatives.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- In a small minority of lessons, students are not given the right level of challenge. This limits the ability of the most able, especially, to attain the highest grades in some subjects.
- Students' skills in speaking and listening are not as well developed as they are in reading and writing.
- Not all leaders responsible for subjects are able to contribute as well to rapid school improvement as others with greater experience.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, 37 part-lessons were observed, several of which were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. Since the inspection took place during the final examination period, inspectors were unable to observe students in Years 11, 12 and 13 in lessons, although examples of their work were seen. Inspectors also visited assemblies and tutorial time.
- Meetings were held with: senior leaders, including the Executive Principal and the Principal of the Quest Academy-Coloma Trust; middle leaders; the Vice Chair of the Governing Body, the Chair of the Coloma Trust, and five groups of students. An inspector also spoke with a small group of parents and carers who act as a parental focus group. In addition, the lead inspector spoke with a senior local authority officer responsible for school improvement to gain an external perspective on the academy's performance.
- Inspectors looked at: planning and the academy's self-evaluation documentation; information on students' progress; examples of students' work and a range of policy documents.
- Inspectors took account of the 41 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the academy's own survey of parental views. Inspectors also analysed the 34 responses to a questionnaire for members of staff.

Inspection team

Ken Bush, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jan Atkinson

Additional Inspector

Pauline Tomlin

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Quest Academy-Coloma Trust is much smaller than most secondary schools, but is growing rapidly. The academy expects the total number of students on roll to exceed 600 from September of this year. This includes a sharp rise in the total expected to be on roll in the sixth form, which is currently very small. The sixth form opened in September 2012.
- The academy became a sponsored academy as part of the Coloma Trust in September 2010. The Trust comprises three secondary schools in total. Each school retains a separate governing body but the Trust oversees governance in all three.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs in the academy is above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students for whom the academy receives the pupil premium is well above average; it represents the majority of students on roll. Pupil premium is additional government funding for those students known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after.
- Students come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. For just under one third of the students on roll, English is an additional language.
- There are no students following courses with other providers.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The academy's Executive Principal is also the headteacher of one of the other schools within the Trust, Coloma Convent Girls' School. The Principal of the Quest Academy- Coloma Trust has recently become Executive Principal of the third school within the Trust, Archbishop Lanfranc Academy-Coloma Trust.
- There have been extensive changes in leadership posts since the previous inspection, including with regard to those middle leaders responsible for subjects.
- The academy moved into new accommodation in September 2014 on a site adjacent to the previous building.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and achievement by ensuring that:
 - all students consistently receive the right level of challenge in their work to attain the highest grades of which they are capable, especially the most able
 - students' speaking and listening skills are developed more fully across a range of subjects
 - all leaders responsible for subjects make an equally strong contribution to promoting rapid school improvement.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

are good

- Leaders have acted swiftly and effectively to tackle the issues raised at the previous inspection, when the academy was judged to require improvement. As a result, achievement, the quality of teaching and behaviour and safety have all improved significantly and are now good. Leaders have, therefore, demonstrated their capacity to move the academy forward. Consequently, students at the academy now receive a good and improving education.
- The Principal and other leaders are ambitious for the academy to become outstanding. This aspiration is well promoted to students and to staff. This leads to a shared belief that all students can be successful and that good behaviour is a prerequisite for this to occur.
- Leaders have also been quick to respond where improvements were needed, such as in the low GCSE results in a small number of subjects in 2014. In every case, evidence clearly indicates that results for 2015 are likely to improve.
- Leaders have formulated effective plans for improvement, securely based on a clear and accurate understanding of how well the academy is currently performing. Systems to check on the quality of teaching and on students' progress are comprehensive and robust. The additional funding to support disadvantaged students has been well targeted and spent effectively. The school has provided useful extra individual and small-group tuition, as well as mentoring for this group of students. Consequently, disadvantaged students achieve as well as their peers.
- The leadership of teaching is strong, especially by the senior team. Strategies to improve the quality of teaching are well conceived and are closely aligned with teachers' targets for improvement. Teachers and leaders spoken to by inspectors confirm that they are held firmly to account for the quality of their work.
- Middle leaders, including those responsible for subjects, are increasingly effective, but some are relatively new to post or lack experience. This limits the extent to which subject leaders can contribute equally well to rapid school improvement.
- The curriculum is well designed to meet the needs of all groups of students, including a suitable range of options at Key Stage 4. Literacy and numeracy skills are well developed in most subjects, although speaking and listening skills less well so. Students also appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities available to them, especially in sport and the arts. On three days per week, the school day is extended to cover a range of enrichment activities. Most students spoken to by inspectors appreciate how this contributes effectively to their personal development.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted. Through lessons, assemblies and 'Academy Days' (when the normal timetable is suspended) students develop their appreciation of the importance of tolerance, respect and the rule of law. All students study citizenship as a discrete subject in Key Stage 4. As a result, students have a good appreciation of modern British values.
- Students receive clear and useful guidance from staff to help their decisions regarding options at Key Stage 4 and when completing Year 11. An increasing proportion of students are carrying on into the sixth form, but other options, such as vocational courses and careers, are well promoted to ensure students are able to make informed choices about their next steps.
- Safeguarding arrangements are securely in place and meet all current statutory requirements. The academy site is very secure. Stringent checks are made to ensure that all staff joining the academy have been suitably vetted. Risk assessments, including for off-site activities, are comprehensive and regularly reviewed. Training for all staff on child protection issues is kept up to date. As a result, students are kept safe in the academy.
- The local authority rightly has a high regard for the academy, especially for its work in helping to raise standards in local schools. As The Quest-Coloma Trust is an academy, the local authority does not supply any formal support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors from the Coloma Trust and from The Quest Academy- Coloma Trust hold the school to account well. They are clear about how well different groups of students are achieving, including when compared with schools and academies nationally. They have ensured that additional funding for disadvantaged students has been well spent. Governors are also aware of the main strengths in the quality of teaching and how it needs to further improve. They have ensured that any underperformance of individual teachers has been tackled effectively and that all increases in staff salary are wholly justified through the demonstration of good performance.
 - The governing body monitors closely information on attendance and exclusions, as well as achievement,

to ensure equality of opportunity for all. Governors have also taken active steps to ensure that diversity is celebrated within the academy and that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Governors appreciate the potential risks to students of radicalisation and have ensured the issue has been discussed with leaders.

- The Trust governing body is playing a useful and significant role in managing the expansion of the academy, including its sixth form. It is ensuring that expertise from within the Trust is being put to good effect, as well as that available from external partners.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Students, including those in the sixth form, typically have positive attitudes to learning and, increasingly, enjoy their education. In most lessons, students are attentive and cooperate well both with staff and with their classmates. If the teaching fails to fully engage them, occasionally, a small minority become distracted. Disruption to lessons does not occur frequently.
- Students who were spoken to by inspectors stated almost without exception that behaviour at the academy has improved dramatically over time, including since the previous inspection. Records show that exclusions have reduced markedly and there are far fewer serious incidents which warrant a major sanction. This improvement has contributed well to students' good achievement.
- Around the academy site, including the canteen, students conduct themselves with responsibility and maturity. They appreciate the excellent new facilities and treat the accommodation with respect. Little or no litter was seen around the site during the inspection.
- Those students who have known behavioural needs are well supported by teachers, teaching assistants and other experienced welfare staff. As a result, the great majority are able to manage their difficulties while in the academy and achieve as well as other students.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- All the groups of students spoken to by inspectors stated that they feel safe in the academy. They recognise the efforts made by staff to create a positive, welcoming and safe environment in which to learn.
- Academy records indicate that there are few incidents of bullying; students agreed that this was the case. They have confidence in staff's ability to deal with any issues which might occur. Students are knowledgeable about all forms of bullying, including that relating to the use of the internet, text messaging and derogatory language linked to various forms of discrimination. They know how to keep themselves safe.
- Students' attendance has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is now just above average. The proportion of persistent absentees is also much reduced. There are no marked differences in the attendance of different year groups or student groups. Disadvantaged students supported by additional funding attend as regularly as others.
- Staff and parents are confident that students are safe in the academy and that they behave well.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Consistently good and improving teaching across a range of subjects is enabling students to achieve well in the academy.
- Students respond well to the high expectations that staff typically have of them. Consequently, relationships in the classroom are increasingly cordial and productive.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and are able to use this effectively to motivate and engage students successfully. This includes the use of skilful questioning to deepen students' understanding and to gauge how well they have grasped the concepts being taught. This is a particularly effective feature in the teaching of mathematics.
- Teachers provide suitable classwork and homework tasks for students, including in the sixth form. This generally enables them to make clear gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills. In the small minority of cases where learning is not fully effective, teachers do not always provide the right level of challenge for students of all levels of ability. This is especially true of the most able.

- English is exceptionally well taught. Students make rapid learning gains because they are very clear on what they need to do to be successful and to make progress. Students quickly become adept writers. They are able to use their skills across the curriculum to tackle a range of different writing purposes, including those needed in examinations.
- Reading is well promoted, including for those students who join the academy with gaps. The academy's strategy, which it calls 'Stepping Stones', enables most weak readers to catch up very quickly in Year 7; it also enhances their ability to tackle more complex reading material.
- Not all students are confident in expressing themselves orally. Students' skills in speaking and listening are, on balance, not as well developed as they are in reading and writing across the range of subjects.
- Leaders have made improving the quality of marking a high priority. This has resulted in a step-change of improvement since the previous inspection. Marking seen during the inspection was typically of a high standard and provides students with ample and well-targeted guidance on how they can improve their work. This is contributing well to increasing rates of student progress.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The academy is developing a strong track record of good achievement for its students in most subjects, including in the sixth form. Students typically join in Year 7 with below average attainment. By the time that they leave in Year 11, the great majority of students attain results which are at least in line with national figures on most measures.
- Students achieve especially well in English, including those with low prior attainment. In 2014, GCSE results at A* to C level were above the national average. This represents consistently rapid progress compared with students nationally. Achievement in mathematics was not quite as strong as in English, but students, nevertheless, made securely good progress. Attainment in a very few subjects in 2014 was below national averages.
- Rates of progress are increasing throughout Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 for all groups of students, including those from different ethnic backgrounds and those for whom English is an additional language. Disabled students and those with special educational needs also achieve well. This group's needs are well catered for by staff with high levels of expertise. They ensure that students make up any lost ground quickly, especially in literacy and numeracy.
- The most able students achieve broadly in line with other students in the academy. In 2014, every student in this relatively small group attained five good GCSEs, including in English and mathematics; this exceeded the national average. In a few subjects, however, too few students gained A* and A grades, including in mathematics.
- Disadvantaged students supported by additional funding achieve increasingly well at the academy. From their different starting points, Year 11 students from this group at least match the progress made by other students nationally and, in 2014, exceeded it by some margin. Any gaps between rates of progress of disadvantaged students and others in different year groups in the academy are negligible.
- In 2014, disadvantaged students in Year 11 attained in line with other students nationally and in the academy there was no gap at all. In mathematics, the attainment gaps with other students nationally and in the academy were, in both cases, the equivalent of only one third of a GCSE grade. These gaps are much narrower than typically found.
- Students are no longer entered for examinations before the end of their courses.

The sixth form provision

is good

- Leaders have ensured that the sixth form has got off to a strong start at the academy since it opened in 2012. The first set of A-level results in 2014 indicated that the majority of students had achieved well compared with national averages, taking into account their much lower starting points. Achievement was especially strong in economics, history and sociology.
- Results at AS level improved in 2014 compared to the previous year, although there was a very small degree of variability between subjects. Inspection evidence provided by the academy gives a firm indication that most students are securely on track to achieve even better results this summer in AS and A levels.
- Students who follow vocational courses in BTEC subjects (equivalent to A levels) also achieve well. The small numbers of students who need to resit their GCSE English and/or mathematics have a high success rate. Leaders ensure that suitable teaching and support are given to those students who require them to

be able to gain at least a C grade.

- Students spoken to by inspectors affirm that teaching is improving and is providing increased opportunities for them to explore their studies in depth. They also appreciate the effective marking and feedback on their performance that they receive from teachers. Leaders ensure that all those who teach at A level and the equivalent have high levels of subject knowledge.
- Students are positive about their education and enjoy the range of courses offered, along with the other opportunities to participate in the life of the academy and the wider community. They are well presented, conduct themselves responsibly around the site and express pride in belonging to the academy. They are rightly confident that the sixth form prepares them well for the next stage of their education. The academy's track record so far in this regard is impressive with almost all students moving on to higher education or apprenticeships.
- Students confirm that the academy is a safe place to be. They have a good awareness of safety-related issues relevant to their age, including the risks posed by extremism.
- The sixth form is well led. The strongly academic curriculum has been well planned to suit the needs, interests and aspirations of the students. Leaders accept that in the first year of operation, a few students were not placed on the most suitable courses. They have learned from this experience and have now set more rigorous entry requirements for courses, where appropriate. Monitoring of students' progress is regular and robust. Almost all students continue from Year 12 into Year 13 to complete their studies.
- Making good use of the expertise within the Trust, plans for the sixth form's rapid expansion in the coming year have been well-thought through; this is seeking to ensure that group sizes remain viable but with increased choice. Applications for 2015 have increased significantly, including from students who are currently attending other schools.

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	136203
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	462180

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	575
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	68
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Burley
Principal	Andy Crofts
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 June 2013
Telephone number	020 8657 8935
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