# Teachers and students unite to resist loss of A-levels at BSix College amid strike action



Teachers and students at BSix College in Hackney are rallying together in a strenuous fight against proposed changes that threaten to remove A-level courses from the institution, which has built a reputation for supporting disadvantaged learners, many of whom have faced significant academic challenges. The college serves a predominantly minority ethnic student body, with an entry requirement of just one GCSE pass, facilitating access for individuals who have previously struggled in traditional educational settings. Some of these students have managed to achieve remarkable success, including places at prestigious universities like Oxford and Cambridge.

Recently, BSix was taken over by New City College, which has since announced plans to restructure its educational offerings. The proposed changes include a shift away from A-levels towards vocational courses and call for significant redundancies within the teaching staff. Critics have been quick to label these proposals as "educational vandalism," with David Davies, a Hackney National Education Union officer, expressing profound concern over the potential impact on students.

Amidst these developments, current students have voiced their commitment to resist these changes. A 17-year-old, active in the protests, reflected on the transformative environment at BSix, stating, “I have been at other places but felt very boxed in. BSix is the first place that has really seen me as a person.” This sentiment is echoed by former students who have benefitted from the college’s supportive atmosphere, which not only aids academic success but fosters personal growth.

Support from prominent figures has further galvanised this movement. Local MP Diane Abbott and rapper Akala have openly backed the fight to retain A-level offerings at BSix. Akala, who has participated in educational initiatives at the college, celebrated its ethos, expressing that the institution embodies the principles of universal education. Former student Leanne Gayle credits BSix for her academic turnaround, stating, “BSix gave me a second chance.” She noted the enriching opportunities encouraged by the college, which enabled her and her peers to achieve outstanding results.

However, there is mounting pressure on the college's administration to make financial revisions, particularly in light of a recent 'notice to improve' issued by the government due to underlying financial challenges. In response to these challenges, the college had to curtail planned expansions, focusing instead on stabilising its current offerings.

The situation has escalated to the point of industrial action, with staff members participating in a strike to highlight deteriorating pay, excessive workloads, and concerns about the proposed changes to the curriculum. It has become evident that the pressures faced by BSix are reflective of wider systemic issues within the sector, as many sixth form colleges across the UK grapple with insufficient funding and increasing operational challenges.

A spokesperson for New City College stated that it is common for institutions to review their curriculum and staffing structures in an effort to adapt to evolving educational landscapes. They insisted that while no final decisions regarding A-level provision have been reached, the intention remains focused on optimizing student outcomes. The community, however, remains skeptical, fearing that key enrichment programmes, such as the impactful Knowledge is Power course—which empowers students by teaching them about their history—may be under threat.

As the situation unfolds, the fate of A-levels at BSix will serve as a crucial test of a college that has thrived on its support for disadvantaged learners. The outcome could significantly impact not just the students presently attending, but the wider landscape of educational opportunities for young people in Hackney and beyond.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2025/jun/10/staff-and-students-fight-loss-of-a-levels-at-bsix-london-college-for-disadvantaged-learners), [[4]](https://www.hackneygazette.co.uk/news/22941698.hackney-sixth-form-teachers-strike-governments-unnecessary-attacks-colleges/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2025/jun/10/staff-and-students-fight-loss-of-a-levels-at-bsix-london-college-for-disadvantaged-learners), [[2]](https://www.hackneygazette.co.uk/news/education/22938143.claptons-cash-strapped-bsix-college-scraps-unwise-expansion-government-says-runs-many-courses/), [[5]](https://www.hackneygazette.co.uk/news/22936345.kevin-watson-replaces-ken-warman-principal-hackneys-bsix-with-immediate-effect-two-weeks-dire-ofsted-report/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.hackneygazette.co.uk/news/22932806.weve-enough-bsix-staff-strike-intolerable-workloads-job-losses-pay-funding/), [[6]](https://morningstaronline.co.uk/article/community-rallies-around-striking-neu-staff-trailblazing-sixth-form)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2025/jun/10/staff-and-students-fight-loss-of-a-levels-at-bsix-london-college-for-disadvantaged-learners> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.hackneygazette.co.uk/news/education/22938143.claptons-cash-strapped-bsix-college-scraps-unwise-expansion-government-says-runs-many-courses/> - BSix Sixth Form College in Hackney has been forced to abandon an expansion plan after the government deemed it financially unwise. The college received a 'notice to improve' in March due to financial difficulties, leading to a reorganisation to reduce costs. The principal stated that the college would remain the same size over the next three years to ensure financial stability. ([hackneygazette.co.uk](https://www.hackneygazette.co.uk/news/education/22938143.claptons-cash-strapped-bsix-college-scraps-unwise-expansion-government-says-runs-many-courses/?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.hackneygazette.co.uk/news/22932806.weve-enough-bsix-staff-strike-intolerable-workloads-job-losses-pay-funding/> - Teachers at BSix College in Hackney went on strike over pay, funding, and working conditions. The strike was part of a nationwide action by sixth form colleges facing budget cuts and increased workloads. The principal acknowledged the financial pressures leading to job losses and cuts to the curriculum. ([hackneygazette.co.uk](https://www.hackneygazette.co.uk/news/22932806.weve-enough-bsix-staff-strike-intolerable-workloads-job-losses-pay-funding/?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.hackneygazette.co.uk/news/22941698.hackney-sixth-form-teachers-strike-governments-unnecessary-attacks-colleges/> - Nearly a hundred sixth form teachers in Hackney, including those from BSix College, went on strike over government cuts to pay, conditions, and employment. The strike was organised by the National Union of Teachers, with teachers protesting against a lack of investment in post-16 education. The Department for Education expressed disappointment over the strike decision. ([hackneygazette.co.uk](https://www.hackneygazette.co.uk/news/22941698.hackney-sixth-form-teachers-strike-governments-unnecessary-attacks-colleges/?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.hackneygazette.co.uk/news/22936345.kevin-watson-replaces-ken-warman-principal-hackneys-bsix-with-immediate-effect-two-weeks-dire-ofsted-report/> - Kevin Watson replaced Ken Warman as principal of BSix College in Hackney following a critical Ofsted report. The report found that the college required improvement in all areas, including teaching quality and student behaviour. Watson, with 20 years of experience, aims to improve standards and consolidate BSix as the destination of choice for 16- to 19-year-olds. ([hackneygazette.co.uk](https://www.hackneygazette.co.uk/news/22936345.kevin-watson-replaces-ken-warman-principal-hackneys-bsix-with-immediate-effect-two-weeks-dire-ofsted-report/?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://morningstaronline.co.uk/article/community-rallies-around-striking-neu-staff-trailblazing-sixth-form> - Community members, including MP Diane Abbott, supported striking teachers at BSix College in Hackney. The teachers were protesting against increased workloads and pay disparities following the college's merger with New City College. The National Education Union district officer expressed concerns over the lack of consultation and the impact on the community. ([morningstaronline.co.uk](https://morningstaronline.co.uk/article/community-rallies-around-striking-neu-staff-trailblazing-sixth-form?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.hackneycitizen.co.uk/2024/11/13/hackney-teachers-strike-pay-working-conditions-college-merger/> - Teachers at BSix College in Hackney went on strike over pay and working conditions following a merger with New City College. Staff cited dramatic changes to their working conditions and pay increases that did not match those of teachers in other establishments. Local MP Diane Abbott joined the striking teachers, stating they had been treated 'terribly'. ([hackneycitizen.co.uk](https://www.hackneycitizen.co.uk/2024/11/13/hackney-teachers-strike-pay-working-conditions-college-merger/?utm_source=openai))