

John Cabot Academy

Woodside Road, Kingswood, Bristol, BS15 8BD

Inspection dates

7–8 June 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The overall effectiveness of the school has declined since the previous inspection. Leaders, including academy councillors, have not succeeded in ensuring that pupils' behaviour, personal development and welfare are good.
- Behaviour requires improvement because school leaders have not tackled the persistent poor behaviour of a minority of pupils well enough, resulting in disruption to other pupils' learning and well-being.
- Leaders have not done enough to ensure that some groups of pupils, particularly those pupils who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs or disability, attend school regularly.
- Pupils are not well equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to make a contribution to life in modern Britain.
- The most able pupils are not making enough progress and therefore not reaching the highest grades possible.
- Leaders at all levels have not been rigorous enough in holding staff to account to ensure that school policies are followed consistently.
- Students in the sixth form are not attaining consistently well across the curriculum. The quality of the sixth form has declined since the last inspection.

The school has the following strengths

- The interim principal understands what the school needs to do to improve. Since her appointment in March 2016, she has focused on the right priorities for school improvement.
- Pupils' attainment in key stages 3 and 4 is good and has been for several years because leaders have maintained a focus on academic standards.
- Most pupils make good progress in the majority of subjects at key stages 3 and 4 because teaching and assessment are effective.
- The progress made by the great majority of disadvantaged pupils is equal to or better than that of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. The teaching and assessment of these pupils have been monitored well, especially in key stage 4.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management, including governance, by ensuring that leaders:
 - improve behaviour, and reduce persistent poor behaviour, by ensuring that pupils understand that good behaviour is expected and meet this expectation
 - improve attendance and reduce persistent absence, especially for those pupils who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs or disability, so that the attendance of these groups meets or exceeds the national average
 - hold staff to account more rigorously, so that they follow school policies consistently
 - ensure that pupils are fully equipped for life in modern Britain through effective and high-quality teaching of the personal, social and emotional aspects of their learning and development.
- Improve the rates of progress of the most able pupils in key stages 3 and 4 across all subjects, so that they achieve qualifications in Year 11 that reflect their true potential.
- Improve the quality of provision in the sixth form by ensuring that:
 - the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good across the full range of subjects
 - teachers analyse precisely what each student knows, understands and can do when they start their individual courses and use this to inform their planning, teaching and progress tracking
 - students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work as a result of high-quality feedback from their teachers
 - all students make progress in developing their wider employability skills, through activities that are well matched to the rest of their study programme and to their planned next steps after the sixth form.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- During a period of change in school leadership, the federation executive leaders and academy council did not address the decline in the quality of pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare quickly enough.
 - School leaders have not ensured that systems to improve pupils' behaviour, including an escalation of sanctions, have been effective in deterring the small minority of pupils who continue to disrupt the learning of others. Not enough work has been done to improve pupils' attitudes to learning and to establish good behaviour as habitual throughout the school.
 - Leaders, including academy councillors, have not focused rigorously on the poor attendance and persistent absence of some groups of pupils. This particularly affects disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability. Consequently, overall rates of absence and persistent absence are higher than those found nationally.
 - Staff do not comply fully with systems for managing behaviour at break- and lunchtime in the outside areas. The boisterous behaviour of a few pupils dominates the environment and unsettles other pupils in the vicinity, especially the younger ones.
 - The provision for teaching pupils about the fundamental values of British democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect does not prepare pupils fully for life in modern, democratic Britain. The school's own review shows that many pupils have concerns about how well teaching addresses the personal, social and emotional aspects of their learning and development.
 - The school's plans for improvement are not managed effectively by some subject leaders and they have not been held to account by senior leaders. For example, strategies to raise the achievement of the most able pupils have been ineffective over time because subject leaders have not been rigorous enough in tracking the progress of these pupils to ensure that they are challenged, and in intervening where necessary.
 - The new principal and federation leaders have been accurate in their evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, their plans have yet to show impact in key areas for development. The interim principal is beginning to make a difference by implementing better systems and tackling areas of weakness. Staff comment favourably on the 'change of culture' that she has established in a short time.
 - The new sixth-form leader has made many improvements to the processes for managing the welfare of students and the quality of teaching. Although the provision has declined over time, a strengthening sixth-form leadership team has now begun to make the necessary improvements.
 - The federation works effectively with school leaders in its implementation of overarching policies, such as for safeguarding pupils or managing the performance of staff. This is in contrast with the weaker implementation of local policies by the academy council, which has led to inconsistent practice or decline, for example in standards of behaviour.
 - The curriculum is broad and balanced. Careful consideration has been given to the range of subjects and options available to pupils to make sure that their academic outcomes continue to be a strength, although less so for the most able pupils. Pupils enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including recreational and sports activities and revision sessions. However, senior leaders do not check carefully enough on how well some aspects of the planned curriculum are supporting pupils' personal development.
 - The pupil premium funding has been used effectively to support the learning of the great majority of disadvantaged pupils. However, the funding has not led to improvements in the attendance and behaviour of some pupils in this group.
- **The governance of the school**
- The school is part of a large, multi-academy federation. The strategic processes at board level are secure and provide overarching policies that are statutory and applied throughout the federation.
 - Governance at school level, however, has been less effective. The academy council did not identify and tackle weaknesses in pupils' personal development, welfare and behaviour early enough, and nor did it prevent a decline in the quality of the sixth form since the previous inspection. No council member has a clear oversight of the impact of the pupil premium funding
 - The new chair of the council responsible for key stages 3 and 4 has a secure grasp of the strengths

and weaknesses of the school. He is beginning to make an impact through the more rigorous support and challenge needed to improve the school in its critical areas of development.

- The newly appointed chair of the school council that monitors the 16 to 19 study programmes across the federation has also started to have a positive impact on improving provision.
- Academy councillors have not recognised the importance of this facility for parents and other external stakeholders and members of the community. A significant proportion of parents have indicated, via the online inspection survey, that they do not believe the school to be well led and managed.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Over the last two years, the school and federation have introduced new strategies and procedures to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils. Since the appointment of the interim principal, safeguarding has held a central position within the strategic planning and operational practices of the school. New appointments of staff, such as the designated leader of safeguarding, have already started to make a positive impact on the culture and attitudes of members of the school community. Councillors and all members of staff have been trained in the 'Prevent' duty, which aims to protect young people from the threat of extremism and radicalisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The overall good progress and attainment of pupils across a wide range of subjects reflect the broadly good teaching they receive. Strengths include the quality of teachers' questioning and tackling pupils' misconceptions so that they can make more rapid progress.
- Teachers make effective use of the school's new assessment system. This provides pupils from Years 7 to 11 with a continuous understanding of how much progress they are making towards intended outcomes at the end of key stage 4. Both pupils and staff use this with confidence.
- Pupils who enter Year 7 with levels of literacy and numeracy that are below average are well supported by staff from the school, as well as by a specialist teacher from the federation. As a consequence, all of the identified pupils have made progress and are starting to catch up with their peers by the end of the year.
- Pupils who are on education, health and care plans are well supported because teachers plan learning carefully to match their specific requirements. Teaching assistants make effective use of their specific subject knowledge to offer precise support to pupils who need their help.
- The progress of the most able pupils is an identified weakness, although beginning to improve because it has been a focus for staff this year. In the best teaching, pupils are challenged and provided with activities that extend and deepen their learning, but this is not routine practice.
- Over half the parents who responded to the Ofsted Parent View survey agreed with the statement that 'my child is taught well at school'.
- Most teaching staff follow the guidelines on marking and feedback set out in the school's teaching and learning policy and this is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. For example, in English, the consistent application of the policy over time is evident and has contributed to pupils' engagement and confidence in the subject. However, where the guidelines are not being followed, pupils are left unaware of the purpose of their learning and do not know how to improve their work.
- Teaching in the sixth form has improved, leading to a rise in students' achievement, but there are still too many areas of weakness. This has meant that some students do not feel confident and secure in their knowledge and understanding by the time they take their examinations.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- The school has ensured that pupils are taught about different types of bullying and, in particular, the risks of the internet. However, leaders have not followed this through by analysing the school's incident logs to establish and tackle the root causes of bullying. This limits their ability to intervene effectively and prevent pupils reoffending.
- Despite being an area for improvement in the previous inspection, pupils still do not gain enough from

sessions dedicated to their personal, social and emotional development. At times, pupils thrive on lively discussions about recent news events and ethical topics. However, too often, the time is used by pupils simply for conversation. School leaders do not monitor rigorously enough whether teachers are delivering the planned curriculum effectively. Hence, pupils are not being equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to make a contribution to life in modern Britain.

- The majority of pupils feel safe and know whom to turn to if they have any concerns. Pupils are generally happy in school and feel well supported by teachers. Pupils from different year groups mix well, in the main. The majority of parents who responded to the Ofsted Parent View survey agreed with the statement that 'my child feels safe at this school'.
- The interim principal and the designated safeguarding lead have conducted a thorough evaluation of provision for pupils with emotional needs and have put in place more thorough and cohesive support as a result.
- The personal development and welfare of students in the sixth form are improving. All students have a personal and academic mentor with whom they have frequent and helpful guidance sessions. However, as yet, there is not enough focus on helping the students develop skills which will support them when seeking employment.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The boisterous behaviour of older pupils, especially boys, has meant that some of the younger pupils feel insecure in the outside areas of the school. There are staff allocated to breaktime duty but, too often, they do not take the necessary steps to stop poor behaviour.
- Pupils' attendance is below the national average and persistent absence is too high, particularly among some groups of pupils. It is too soon to see the impact of the school's recent initiatives to tackle these problems.
- The system of internal exclusion, introduced by school leaders, has reduced incidents of low-level disruption in lessons. However, it has not successfully tackled the problem of repeated misbehaviour on the part of the small minority of pupils. Indeed, some pupils abuse the system and use it as a way to avoid lessons. School leaders have not analysed and understood patterns of misbehaviour in order to eradicate them.
- There is some developing use of individual targets and contracts to motivate pupils to improve their behaviour. When engaged in learning, the majority of pupils are respectful to each other and to teachers and other adults.
- The school buildings are respected, with no graffiti and little evidence of litter. Noticeboards and other signs are in a good condition.
- Pupils who attend the Engagement Centre, which is alternative provision within the federation, behave well in this setting.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Over time, pupils have made good progress and reached good levels of attainment across a range of subjects. In 2015, the proportion of pupils gaining five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, was well above the national average.
- The school's assessment information and evidence of learning over time show that pupils in key stage 4 are making good progress in both English and mathematics.
- Pupils in key stage 3 are performing well against their targets in the majority of subjects. Their good progress was confirmed by evaluation of learning over time and scrutiny of work.
- The progress of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium is in line with or above that of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.
- The most able pupils are not reaching the highest grades of which they are capable. This is because, in a range of subjects, such as science, they are not being routinely challenged or, as they approach examinations, being provided with specific guidance on how to attain top grades.
- Pupils with education, health and care plans are achieving well. The needs of the other pupils who have special educational needs or disability are communicated to staff on a 'passport'. Most staff use this well to plan activities that improve pupils' progress over time.
- Around two thirds of the parents who responded to the Ofsted Parent View survey agreed with the

statement that 'my child makes good progress at this school'.

- Pupils in the humanities subjects have not been doing as well as they could over the past two years. Leaders have not been rigorous enough in the monitoring and checking of pupils' achievement and are not tackling the underlying causes effectively.
- Outcomes in the sixth form are improving in many subjects, but are still low in mathematics, science and psychology.
- Pupils who attend the Engagement Centre are progressing well.
- The majority of pupils move on to appropriate education, training and employment.

16 to 19 study programmes

require improvement

- In 2015, there was very wide variation in the achievement of students from similar starting points at AS level and A level, with too many falling below their targets or failing the course. There was wide variation in the students' outcomes between subjects and within subjects taught at different sites. The school's analysis shows that students had been allowed to study courses for which they were not suited or properly prepared, leading to poor retention and low achievement.
- The quality of current students' work and their rates of progress have improved this year, particularly for those currently in Year 12. However, the variation across subjects and within subjects taught on different sites is still too wide. Teachers do not establish well enough what students know, understand and can do early in the course, at the beginning of new topics or in lessons.
- Students' work in some subjects is of a very high quality. However, in others, it lacks the deployment of specialist terminology or the depth of evaluation expected for level 3 courses. Students do not consistently know how well they are doing or how to improve their work.
- Students in the subjects where progress is stronger use their independent study time well to prepare for lessons and to complete any follow-up work. However, in a few subjects, independent study time is not used as productively as it could be.
- The current curriculum is better matched to students' needs than in the past. Students' attendance and retention have improved, although neither is yet good enough. Current students were better advised than their predecessors about which courses to take. Further curriculum refinements are under way, based on feedback from students and a detailed evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning.
- The majority of those in the current Year 13 are on track to achieve level 3 qualifications and progress to courses in higher education. Retention on this provision is high.
- Those students who join the sixth form without at least a GCSE grade C in English and/or mathematics make good progress and improve their grades as a result of strong specialist teaching.
- Not all students have access to non-qualification activity and work experience that would prepare them well for their next steps in education, training, employment or an apprenticeship. Work-related learning and work experience are not fully integrated into the full range of courses, including some vocational courses.
- Students gave many convincing examples of the high-quality personal support they receive. The arrangements for identifying and supporting the most vulnerable students and the frequent and comprehensive monitoring of their welfare are strong.
- The current leadership of the 16 to 19 study programmes is strong. The director of 16 to 19 provision has undertaken a rapid, comprehensive and accurate evaluation of what is working and what is not. Clear plans are in place to build on strengths and tackle weaknesses. The tracking of students' progress and monitoring of the quality of teaching are now rigorous.

School details

Unique reference number	135295
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10017590

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.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	998
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	206
Appropriate authority	The academy council
Chair	Ian Webber
Principal	Lis Jolley
Telephone number	0117 976 3000
Website	www.cabot.ac.uk
Email address	info@cabot.ac.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 November 2009

Information about this school

- John Cabot Academy is an average-sized secondary school.
- The school is sponsored by the Cabot Learning Federation (CLF), a partnership of schools sponsored by Rolls Royce PLC and the University of the West of England (UWE). The school works with the CLF as the academy sponsor. This formal partnership facilitates leadership support from the executive principal, training for teaching staff, and leadership support for middle leaders.
- The interim principal was appointed in March 2016. A new sixth-form leader and a new chair of the academy council, responsible for key stages 3 and 4, were appointed in September 2015.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils with additional government funding, known as the pupil premium, is below the national average. This funding is provided for those known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above the national average.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at the Engagement Centre, which is run by the Cabot Learning Federation. The majority attend the centre on a part-time basis.
- The 16 to 19 study programmes serve students from five Cabot Learning Federation academies. Teaching takes place on four sites.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted at no notice as a result of a qualifying complaint received by Ofsted.
- Inspectors visited 33 lessons, of which 14 were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- A wide sample of pupils' work from all year groups and a range of subjects was scrutinised.
- Inspectors talked with pupils from Years 7 and 10 and students in Year 12 in formal meetings, as well as with pupils and students informally across the site.
- Meetings were held with a number of senior and middle leaders, the chair of the Cabot Learning Federation, the chief executive officer and executive principals.
- Information and other documentary evidence were scrutinised, including that relating to safeguarding, assessment, school evaluation and external reviews.
- Inspectors took account of the 78 responses to the online Parent View survey and the parental survey undertaken by the school.

Inspection team

Kathy Maddocks, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Herbert	Ofsted Inspector
James Sage	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Harris	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Watson	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for students of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2016

