

City Academy Norwich

299 Bluebell Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR4 7LP

Inspection dates

26–27 April 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' progress varies across subjects and key stages because the quality of teaching is inconsistent.
- Examination results were low in 2016.
- Planning does not ensure that the different needs of pupils are fully met, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders do not analyse information about the progress of disadvantaged pupils thoroughly enough to make clear plans in order to improve the progress of these pupils.
- Attendance, while improving, is still below average. The number of fixed-term and permanent exclusions in the past was high.
- The school's procedures for managing pupil behaviour are not consistently applied. A small number of pupils sometimes disrupt the learning of others.
- Some leaders are not clear about setting appropriate targets for pupils. Sometimes these are too high, so demotivating some pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- The principal and other senior leaders have led effective improvement to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leaders and teachers have improved the outcomes and behaviour of pupils. Nevertheless, they are not yet good enough.
- Governors have become more effective in holding leaders to account and improving the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, by:
 - leaders being more detailed in analysing progress and understanding the difficulties that disadvantaged pupils experience
 - planning learning that meets the different needs of all groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - setting appropriate targets for pupils which are both ambitious and realistic.
- Improve behaviour by:
 - ensuring that the school's agreed procedures for managing behaviour are applied consistently by all staff
 - developing strategies to reduce overall and persistent absence.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Inconsistency in the quality of teaching and the management of behaviour remain because of the large number of new staff and middle leaders who are establishing themselves within the school.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and enables pupils to pursue their interests and ensure that they attain the GCSE and vocational qualifications they need for the next stage of their lives. However, the school has entered pupils for examinations at the end of Year 10 in design and technology subjects. The results from these early entries have been disappointing. Some teachers believe that this is due to insufficient time to develop skills. It is not clear if this practice will continue, leading to confusion about the design and technology curriculum provision. The science and design and technology curriculum does not meet the needs of all pupils.
- Middle leaders support the ethos of the school. They support the actions of the principal and her team regarding developing systems and procedures and are beginning to take more responsibility for school improvement. However, some of the targets used with pupils in classes appear to be too challenging and inaccurate.
- The principal and her senior team are passionate about improving all aspects of the school so that all pupils receive the best education. They have been successful in securing more stable staffing and have made improvements to teaching, outcomes and pupil behaviour. As a result, the current pupils are making better progress across a range of subjects and the school is calmer and more orderly than in the past.
- Senior leaders' expectations of staff are high. All staff receive good support to enable them to develop their practice, and improve the welfare and progress made by pupils in their charge. Most staff value the support provided by senior leaders to help them improve.
- The trust provided the school with seconded staffing to support science and this is having a positive impact on the teaching in this area.
- The leadership and management of alternative provision is sound. For the small number of pupils involved, safeguarding is effective and the management of attendance is good.
- The newly appointed special educational needs coordinator is inexperienced but effective and organised. She shares senior leaders' vision for the development of this provision. She has made a good start, but leaders appreciate that more needs doing to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and that the additional funding for these pupils is used as effectively as possible.
- Funds for disadvantaged pupils are not used effectively enough because the difficulties they face need improved targeted intervention to respond to variations in pupil progress. A recent review of the use of the pupil premium has provided valuable advice and there are improvements being made in provision for these pupils.
- The school uses its funding for literacy catch-up effectively. It has introduced a literacy

scheme that has resulted in significant gains in pupils' reading and spelling ages. The school's use of funding to develop numeracy is less apparent.

- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision has improved since the previous inspection. It is managed more effectively and is more evident in school life.
- Fundamental British values permeate the everyday life of the school. The learning in the curriculum is supported by a wide range of additional activities in assemblies and form time.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a much-improved and more accurate view of the school, including how well pupils achieve, attend and behave. Until recently, the governors have had an over-generous view of how the school performs. Governors now provide effective leadership to the school. They are beginning to hold school leaders to account in a more accurate way.
- Governors receive reports and are kept informed of safeguarding procedures and understand their role in safeguarding.
- Governors ensure that arrangements to manage the performance of staff, and reward the most effective practitioners, are carried out effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The work of the designated lead for safeguarding is thorough, precise and professional. Staff training is up to date and appropriate. Most pupils say they feel safe and are taught how to stay safe through assemblies, listening to external speakers and through form time.
- The school's procedures for safer staff recruitment are strong.
- Leaders have taken effective steps to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism, including providing suitable training for staff.
- School leaders, working alongside the safer schools police officer, work well with parents, carers and other stakeholders to make sure that all pupils are supported and safe. Most parents report that they feel their child is well looked after in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning across the school varies in quality with teaching in some subjects that is better than in others. One major reason for this is that in the last year approximately half the staff are new to the school.
- The relatively large number of new teachers are still establishing relationships with pupils as well as learning the school's policies and procedures. As a result, at times pupils' learning had slowed. For example, when questioned about weaker performance in one subject, school leaders stated that new staff were not yet confident in making accurate assessments of pupils' performance.

- Pupils' views of recent teaching improvements are positive. They feel they are catching up and have improved confidence in teachers and their own learning. However, many pupils are not yet resilient and independent learners.
- Teachers' planning does not ensure that the different needs of pupils are fully met, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding are not consistently good across all subjects.
- The teaching of disadvantaged pupils is inconsistent because not all teachers plan effectively for this group of pupils, meaning that their needs are not fully met.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are most effective in mathematics. Pupils are taught how to use strategies to work things out for themselves and check their work. Pupils are provided with the mathematical tools they need to develop mastery of the subject. For example, in a Year 9 class working on proportions, a starter activity on recipes captured the attention of pupils well. While pupils worked independently, the teacher was able to check pupils' understanding, extend their learning and intervene where support was needed.
- The teaching in English is improving. In a Year 10 English lesson, the teacher was effective in analysing a war poem and linking this to the demands of GCSE English examinations.
- In some science lessons instructions are clear and pupils' engagement and progress through learning are clearly evident. However, in other science lessons pupils' misconceptions are not clarified by teachers, the work lacks rigour and low-level disruption affects pupils' progress.
- Pupils' books usually contain a good quantity of written work and the care and standard of presentation are consistently high. They show that over this academic year pupils are making better progress than in the past in a number of subjects.
- Pupils generally read confidently and fluently. Reading in weekly form-time lessons and a scheme to accelerate pupils' reading develop their reading skills well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Although some pupils are polite and courteous towards visitors and each other, not all pupils show these qualities. Some pupils lack confidence and are not self-assured.
- In lessons, pupils' attitudes towards their learning are mixed. Some are keen and eager to learn. At times, when teaching fails to capture their interest, pupils do not continue to work as hard as they should.
- The school promotes pupils' welfare very well. Most pupils report feeling safe and recognise what staff do to keep them safe. They are taught about staying safe. For example, they are shown the risks attached to using social media, and know what to do if they have any concerns. Incidents of bullying are rare and pupils work well with

staff to resolve them when they do occur.

- Most pupils are proud to attend the school. The majority wear their uniform with pride.
- Most staff promote equality of opportunity and diversity in the school by challenging stereotypical views and unacceptable language.
- The attendance, behaviour and safeguarding of the small number of key stage 4 pupils using alternative provision is well managed.
- Pastoral staff reported that personal development, behaviour and welfare arrangements were being developed and they were well supported and challenged by senior leaders.
- Pupils feel they receive appropriate information, advice and guidance as they move through school and choose examination courses and when preparing to leave and considering post-16 options.
- Extra-curricular provision is extensive and covers sports, the arts, trips and visits. Uptake is good and is appreciated by pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Although most pupils are polite and courteous, a small number of pupils disrupt the learning of others and behave poorly at break and lunchtimes. A minority of parents surveyed felt that the school does not make sure its pupils are well behaved. All of the pupils who met with inspectors said that, while the management of behaviour is much improved, some of their lessons are disrupted by others. They understand the procedures staff use to manage behaviour but feel that not all of them do this consistently well.
- Last year, school leaders and governors took a decisive approach to improving behaviour that was poor. Consequently, the number of exclusions was high. The rate of permanent exclusions in the first part of this academic year mirrored last year's numbers but the picture over the last term has been more positive, with hardly any exclusions.
- Most pupils, staff and visitors see behaviour as being much improved over the last year as a result of heightened and consistent action taken by leaders and supported by most staff. A police officer based on site has helped to improve behaviour.
- There has been a rise in the attendance rate this year because leaders have used a number of different strategies, such as using a welfare officer and offering rewards. Nevertheless, overall pupil absence remains too high. Persistent absence shows a similar pattern. School leaders agree that there is more they need to do to reduce the rates of absence.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes in 2016 were below average for most groups of pupils in a number of subjects. This is because the progress they made was too slow and too few gained

sufficiently good exam results.

- This year, the progress of most pupils in English, mathematics, science, art and design and in modern foreign languages is improving and pupils are on course to do better than in the past.
- The school's data for current key stage 3 pupils is much more positive than previously.
- In the 2016 examinations, the progress made by the most able pupils was close to the national average and therefore relatively strong in the school. The most able pupils sitting examinations in 2017 are on course to progress in a similar way.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not making sufficiently good progress. School data indicates that the progress made by pupils is improving, but not fast enough because teachers do not plan lessons carefully enough to ensure that these pupils' needs are fully met.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making better progress this year because of a general improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. However, leaders do not analyse information about the progress of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, thoroughly enough. This means they do not use the pupil premium as effectively as they should to respond to variations in pupils' progress.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment by access to and performance in relevant qualifications. The information, advice and guidance they receive is good.

School details

Unique reference number	135904
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10031392

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	664
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Louise Bohn
Principal	Mrs Mary Sparrow
Telephone number	01603 452628
Website	http://cityacademynorwich.org
Email address	office@cityacademynorwich.org
Date of previous inspection	24–25 March 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of key stage 4.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 4 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.
- City Academy Norwich opened on 1 September 2009.
- The school is smaller than average.
- The school used to have a sixth form but there are currently no students in the sixth

form to report upon.

- The majority of pupils are White British. The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is just above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average.
- The school uses the educational facilities provided by the Action Community Enterprise (ACE) as alternative provision for a small number of pupils in key stage 4.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons. They conducted three learning walks and listened to two small groups of pupils read aloud.
- They held meetings with senior and middle leaders, a group of recently qualified teachers, a governor, the chief executive officer of the trust, the school improvement partner, the school police officer and the deputy regional schools commissioner.
- Inspectors observed the school's work. They looked at the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures, self-evaluation and improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings, records of pupils' behaviour and attendance, and other information provided by senior leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in lessons. They considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 27 free-text responses sent by parents and carers. They also considered 29 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff and 68 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils.

Inspection team

John Wilson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Pete Sewell	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Lawrence	Ofsted Inspector
Georgina Atkinson	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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