

The City Academy Bristol

Russell Town Avenue, Bristol, Avon BS5 9JH

Inspection dates

2–3 April 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The dynamic leadership of the principal and senior leaders, well supported by the trust, has ensured that The City Academy Bristol now provides a good education for its pupils.
- Leaders communicate their high aspirations to pupils, parents, carers and staff.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They know what to do to make the school even better and have introduced effective improvement plans.
- Teaching is good. The most effective teachers use questions well to encourage pupils to explain their thinking. However, there are some inconsistencies in teaching, and not all pupils are supported or challenged well enough to do their best.
- Pupils make good progress in all year groups. This is especially the case in English and mathematics. Leaders track pupils' progress carefully and act swiftly to address any underperformance.
- Leaders ensure that courses and qualifications are very well matched to pupils' strengths and aspirations.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils has improved significantly as a result of good teaching and the effective deployment of additional resources.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective personalised support and most are making improved progress. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well.
- Pupils make slower progress in science and the expressive arts.
- There is a well-organised, thorough approach to safeguarding pupils across the school. Pupils feel safe and they trust staff to take care of them. Pupils are alert to contemporary risks because of the guidance they receive.
- Rates of attendance are increasing but are still below the national average. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is falling but is still too high. Leaders are working hard to ensure that attendance improves more rapidly.
- The use of fixed-term exclusion has decreased significantly as behaviour has improved.
- Governance is highly effective. Rigorous accountability measures are in place to support and challenge the principal and his senior team.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching, particularly in science and the expressive arts, so that it is consistently good across the school by:
 - ensuring that teachers plan challenging activities that meet the needs of all pupils
 - developing teachers' skills in checking pupils' understanding and reshaping lessons to ensure that every pupil is challenged and supported to make good progress
 - ensuring that pupils respond more effectively to teachers' questioning.
- Build on the successful measures the school has already taken to improve attendance to make sure that all groups of pupils attend school regularly and that persistent absence is significantly reduced.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal provides strong leadership. He demands the best of both pupils and staff, and this has led to rapid improvement over the past three years. He is well supported by an effective leadership team that shares his vision for improving the school. Accurate self-evaluation has led to sustained improvement.
- Trust and school leaders at all levels share an accurate understanding of the strengths of the school, as well as those aspects of the school which could be even better. They hold subject leaders and teachers firmly to account for pupils' progress. Any weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning are picked up quickly through rigorous checks on pupils' progress, and precise training is provided. Leaders' capacity for further improvement is evident. The school benefits from extensive, high-quality support from the Cabot Learning Federation (CLF) and external partners.
- The City Academy Bristol is at the heart of a complex, yet vibrant community and leaders have a good understanding of the local context of the school. As a result, staff are trained to recognise and support pupils in overcoming any barriers and challenges they face. The most vulnerable pupils, including those with education, health and care plans (EHC plans), are known, cared for and supported well.
- The school constantly strives to improve communications with parents and to involve them in their children's education. Frequent evening meetings are arranged to support parents whose first language is not English, and the school arranges events and festivals to celebrate the various ethnic groups and cultures within the community. This means that pupils are well supported in their learning.
- Staff morale is high, and teachers say they feel valued.
- School leaders at all levels are involved in an effective programme of self-evaluation and quality assurance. Middle leaders are competent in measuring the effectiveness of the quality of teaching and learning across their departments.
- The curriculum is evolving to cater for the changing needs of the school's pupils. Leaders have ensured that good teaching in English and mathematics enables pupils of all abilities to access other subjects more effectively. A new head of science is helping to ensure that provision in science is improving and the range of options available at key stage 4 is under review. The support for pupils who enter the school unable to speak English is outstanding.
- Pupils have access to a range of extra-curricular opportunities, many of which take place during the school day to enable all pupils to access them. At the time of the inspection, a group of pupils were improving their language skills in Spain and others were preparing for a production of 'Beauty and the Beast'. A number of Year 10 pupils were involved in 'Sharp Shotz', an innovative video competition run in conjunction with Watershed and other local arts organisations.
- Teaching overall is good and enhanced by subject-specialist teachers, although there is some variation in the quality of teaching across and within subjects. Subject leaders show a determination to improve the quality of teaching and learning further by

implementing a range of responses to address aspects which could be even better.

- The leadership of provision for pupils with SEND is strong. Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND receive effective support and challenge. Accurate identification of pupils' individual needs means that pupils are well supported in their academic learning and personal development. Pupils from the specialist resource base are catered for very well and make good progress against their individual targets.
- Leaders have created a safe and inclusive school community. Leaders promote equality and are quick to stamp out any derogatory language and behaviour. Pupils say they feel safe in the school.
- The school receives additional funding to enhance provision for a variety of groups of pupils. These include pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and those Year 7 pupils who need to catch up. In all cases, leaders manage these funds effectively to improve the learning, personal development and well-being of these pupils.

Governance of the school

- Academy councillors and members of the board of directors know the school very well. They have a clear view of its strengths and the areas where further improvement is needed. They are dedicated to the school and bring a range of relevant experiences and expertise to their roles.
- Members of the academy council have high expectations of the school's performance and provide an effective balance of support and challenge to the school's leadership team. They use information gathered through visits to school, as well as from reports provided by leaders, to ask challenging questions in order to bring about further improvements.
- Governors discharge their statutory duties with diligence. They monitor the school's budget carefully. They check that safeguarding arrangements are robust and ensure that systems to manage teachers' performance focus on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils' safety and welfare are paramount in this school. The inclusive and caring ethos ensures that staff are vigilant and knowledgeable about pupils and the risks they may face. Leaders have created an ethos which celebrates cultural difference and emphasises values such as tolerance and understanding.
- Staff receive regular, appropriate training on the various aspects of child protection, including the government's 'Prevent' duty, child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation. Leaders and designated safeguarding staff have very strong, effective relationships with external agencies, such as counselling services, with regard to these issues.
- Pupils feel safe in the school. They know who to turn to if they are worried about themselves or their friends. They learn about managing risk, including how to use the

internet and social media responsibly.

- Systems for keeping pupils safe in school are effective. Leaders maintain comprehensive records. Staff are vigilant and know the warning signs that may suggest a pupil is at risk from harm. Staff are clear about what to do if they are concerned about a pupil and they refer concerns quickly and appropriately. Leaders are tenacious in following these up.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is strong in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to help them to plan and to provide clear explanations and activities. They develop skilfully pupils' understanding of key concepts. As a result, pupils make good progress. Work in English and mathematics books is extensive and well presented.
- Pupils and staff show respect for each other, resulting in the vast majority of pupils having positive attitudes to learning. Teaching proceeds unhindered by disruption, and this underpins the good progress pupils make.
- Teachers know their pupils as individuals. Where learning is strongest, teachers provide pupils with appropriately challenging work and they make good progress as a result. In many GCSE subjects, including English and mathematics, teachers' accurate assessment of pupils' understanding is used well to plan further work. This is less consistent in some areas, for example GCSE science.
- Senior leaders ensure that all teachers have timely and accurate information about pupils' individual needs. As a result, teachers are aware of the particular barriers to learning faced by pupils with SEND and English as an additional language (EAL). Teachers are able to adjust their teaching to suit pupils' individual needs and so these groups of pupils are supported well, and they make good progress from their starting points.
- Most teachers use questions effectively to address misconceptions and promote good-quality learning and progress. In religious education (RE) and business studies lessons, teachers' questioning was very strong. In some subjects, however, teachers did not allow enough time for pupils to think about their answers before responding and opportunities to deepen their learning were therefore sometimes missed.
- Teachers help the weakest readers in the school to improve their reading through extra support and by listening to them read.
- Provision for 'community languages' is a strength of the school. Pupils are encouraged to enter for GCSEs in their first language and they are provided with strong support to enable them to do so.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The City Academy Bristol provides a very safe and nurturing environment. The school works well with local schools and agencies to support the most vulnerable pupils so that they are able to go on to successful further education and worthwhile careers.
- The pastoral support provided by the school is a clear strength. Leaders have created a truly inclusive school where every pupil is valued and cared for. Pupils and staff are unanimous in their praise for the help, support and guidance they receive when they need it.
- A wide range of support is in place to help pupils with different needs. Pupils who have very little or no English when they enter the school receive intensive support to improve their reading and writing. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties benefit from the student support base, which helps them to develop self-esteem and integrate into the wider school. Pupils who require a curriculum that is more personalised to their needs attend alternative provision, such as CLF Engage.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare, and that staff deal with it effectively. Checks of bullying records made by inspectors showed that incidents of bullying are followed up and resolved effectively.
- There is a comprehensive programme of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. Pupils value the wide range of topics teachers cover because they are interesting and relevant. All pupils take GCSE RE where there is a strong focus on moral and spiritual education which contributes to the ethos of tolerance and understanding in the school.
- Careers education forms an integral part of pupils' learning from Year 7 through to Year 11. Pupils experience an increasing range of opportunities to find out more about their own strengths and skills, and leaders are tenacious in seeking out opportunities for them to learn about further and higher education, and the world of work.
- Leaders regularly seek pupils' views about school life. This information is then used to further develop what the school does to support its pupils. As a result, pupils say that they feel listened to and that their points of view matter.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In lessons and around school, pupils conduct themselves well, and the school is an orderly, well-organised environment for learning. Pupils are polite and show consideration for others. They are punctual to lessons and ready to start learning as soon as they arrive. Occasionally, a few pupils are inattentive when work is not well matched to their needs. At breaktimes and lunchtimes, there is a vibrant and energetic atmosphere in the school, but behaviour is still good.
- The improved behaviour of pupils, including those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, has led to rates of exclusion falling. Staff commented upon the effectiveness and clarity of the new behaviour policy.

- Leaders maintain close contact with the alternative provision organised for a few pupils. Positive and regular communications demonstrate that school staff are committed to providing pupils with the best arrangements to improve their behaviour, welfare and progress.
- Attendance is improving but is below national averages. Persistent absence has reduced in this academic year, but it is still far too high. Leaders are aware of the challenges they face in a school with such a complex mix of cultures and ethnicities, and a large, mobile population, but they have made improving attendance a key area for development.
- A strong package of measures to improve attendance has been in place since September 2018 and the impact of this is already apparent. For example, the attendance of pupils with SEND is now above the national average.
- A new attendance officer has been appointed and robust systems are in place to monitor and track pupils on a daily basis. Pupils at risk have individual improvement plans and contact with parents is made as soon as absences are recorded. Leaders work closely with external agencies to ensure the safety of pupils who are persistently absent. Parents who do not speak English are supported by interpreters, translated materials and visual prompts.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes improved significantly in 2018 and are now good. On entry to the school, pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics are significantly below average. As the quality of teaching has improved, so has the progress made by pupils.
- Pupils made above average progress in 2018. Progress in mathematics was above average and among the top 20% of all scores nationally.
- Disadvantaged pupils made as much progress as other pupils from similar starting points nationally and achieved an overall progress score among the top fifth of scores for all disadvantaged cohorts across England.
- Leaders are knowledgeable about the needs of individual pupils with SEND. They identify the support pupils need and they communicate this to subject specialists. As a result, these pupils receive effective support to meet their targets and most are now making good progress.
- The progress of current pupils in English and mathematics is particularly good. Pupils' progress in subjects which were previously identified as weaker, such as science and history, is now much better and attainment is rising. Nevertheless, the school is not complacent and knows that progress can still be better in some subjects, including science and the expressive arts.
- Attainment of five GCSE passes at grades 9 to 5, including English and mathematics, has been well below the national average in the recent past but is now improving. The school's tracking system is both rigorous and reliable and shows that most pupils are now making good progress. This is confirmed by scrutiny of the work in pupils' books.
- The outcomes achieved by pupils allow them to progress to the next stage of their lives successfully, whether that is in sustained education, employment or training.

- The small number of pupils that attend alternative provision make effective progress.
- Pupils' reading skills are typically low when they join the school in Year 7. Leaders plan effective additional support to ensure that pupils improve these skills rapidly.

School details

Unique reference number	144509
Local authority	Bristol City
Inspection number	10088284

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 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	740
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Jane Harrington
Principal	Jon Angell
Telephone number	0117 941 3800
Website	www.cityacademy.bristol.sch.uk/
Email address	info@cityacademy.bristol.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The City Academy Bristol is a smaller than average secondary school.
- The school opened as an academy in 2003. In 2016 the Cabot Learning Federation, a multi-academy trust, took over as the operator of the school. It provides a range of support.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Over half the pupils in the school are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. This is much higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The school has a specialist resource base for pupils with moderate learning difficulties.
- The school has a lower than average proportion of higher attaining pupils, although this proportion is increasing year-on-year in key stage 3.

- Some pupils attend alternative provision at CLF Engage and Bristol Futures Academy, which are both part of the Cabot Learning Federation. Other pupils attend alternative provision at Learning Partnership West, Include, and some pupils attend hospital education because they are too unwell to attend school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 35 lessons, jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the principal and other senior leaders, middle leaders, groups of pupils, the chair of the academy council and the chief executive of the Cabot Learning Federation.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including information on pupils' outcomes, the school's self-evaluation, minutes of meetings of the academy council, records relating to the monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment, behaviour, attendance, exclusion and the safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of 18 responses to the Parent View survey.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and observed their conduct at breaktimes and lunchtimes.

Inspection team

Richard Steward, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ann Cox	Ofsted Inspector
Stuart Wilson	Ofsted Inspector
Katherine Powell	Ofsted Inspector

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