

Bristol Futures Academy

Beam Street, Barton Hill, Bristol BS5 9QR

Inspection dates

8–9 May 2019

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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- There has been significant turbulence in the leadership of the school since its opening. While the Cabot Learning Federation (CLF) is working quickly to appoint a new principal, the leadership of the school is not yet secured.
- Priorities for improvement are not checked well enough by leaders and governors to determine what is, or is not, working well and why.
- Although improving, the attendance and punctuality of pupils are not good. Too many pupils are persistently absent or late.
- Although significantly improved, pupils' behaviour is not yet good.
- Teaching is not yet good. Teaching requires improvement because there remain inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school.
- Outcomes for pupils are not good enough. Pupils, especially the most able, do not make the progress of which they are capable. This is because teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high.
- The current curriculum is not suitable for all pupils as it does not meet their needs well enough. This is especially the case for the most able pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- The inspiring and determined leadership of the interim headteacher has been instrumental to the recent improvements of this school.
- Staff are passionate and determined to ensure that the recent momentum of improvement is continued in order to equip pupils with the knowledge and skills they need for the future.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are impressive. Strong relationships enable pupils to build trust with adults. This trust helps pupils feel safe and secure.
- Parents and carers are highly appreciative of the work of leaders and staff in the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, by ensuring that:
 - the leadership, including governance, of the school is secured
 - the attendance and punctuality of pupils improve
 - priorities for improvement are checked frequently and evaluated for impact, including by governors
 - senior leaders further develop the quality of teaching and learning so that pupils' outcomes improve
 - newly appointed leaders with areas of responsibility have increased opportunity to monitor and evaluate the quality of the areas in which they lead
 - the curriculum meets the learning needs of pupils while they attend the school, so leading to strong outcomes, especially for the most able.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, and raise achievement, by ensuring that all teachers consistently:
 - check regularly what pupils know and can do so that pupils have work that precisely meets their needs
 - provide the highest level of challenge to enable pupils to make strong progress, especially the most able
 - have high expectations of the quality of work that is acceptable.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The interim headteacher leads with a determination and absolute belief that every pupil can be successful, irrespective of their starting points. She knows precisely what needs to improve. She has quickly gained the respect and trust of pupils, staff and parents. Consequently, the culture and ethos of this school are changing at pace. There is an increasing climate of learning that permeates the school.
- School leaders describe The Cabot Learning Federation (CLF) as being like a 'breath of fresh air'. Following a period of significant turbulence in the leadership and staffing of the school, the CLF is providing increasing stability. However, the leadership of the school is not yet secured and there is no substantive headteacher.
- Leaders now have an accurate, honest and well-informed understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have a willingness to confront what is not good enough, which is reflected in the academy improvement plan. However, the plan does not demonstrate effectively how the identified priorities are going to be checked and evaluated for impact by leaders.
- Newly appointed leaders with areas of responsibility share the vision and aspirations of the interim headteacher. For example, there are now better systems in place to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. However, it is too early to see the impact of their work on pupils' outcomes and leaders are aware that pupils, especially the most able, are not making the best possible progress.
- The curriculum is evolving. Pupils have access to the core subjects of mathematics and English, along with a range of vocational subjects such as hairdressing, catering and sports. However, the current curriculum is narrow and does not meet pupils' needs. Pupils do not have the opportunity to study subjects such as humanities and science. The interim headteacher is working closely with leaders from CLF on the 'Snowdon Village' curriculum, which will tackle the lack of breadth. Nonetheless, the changes to the curriculum are yet to be implemented. Pupils shared their frustration with inspectors that they are not able to continue with the GCSE courses they have started in their mainstream school, such as history and geography.
- Pupils appreciate the enrichment opportunities they receive. For example, pupils describe how they enjoy attending their boxing sessions as it helps to reduce their anxiety and improve their behaviour.

Governance of the school

- CLF has quickly put in place an interim advisory board. The members of this board have significant experience of education. They have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They recognise the urgency to stabilise the leadership of the school and secure a substantive principal. They have secure and robust plans in place to restructure the school in preparation for the new academic year. However, at the time of the inspection, these plans had not been completed.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school makes sure that all statutory requirements for protecting pupils are met. Relevant policies are in line with government guidance and published on the website. Leaders ensure that the required checks are made on staff recruited to work in the school.
- Staff receive training in all aspects of safeguarding, including child sexual exploitation and the 'Prevent' duty. This training, coupled with daily briefings, means that staff have the confidence to take the action required should they spot any concerns regards the safeguarding of a pupil. This minimises risk and keeps pupils safe.
- All pupils who attend the school are highly vulnerable. Pupils are well known to staff, who are not only vigilant, but knowledgeable about pupils' often complex circumstances and the issues that might affect them. Morning briefings are used effectively to ensure that staff have the information they need before pupils arrive on site. This aids staff in supporting pupils and reduces pupils' anxieties.
- While staff have a good understanding of the need to protect pupils from all possible risk, record keeping lacks rigour. It is only since the arrival of new leaders and the involvement of CLF that records are becoming more detailed. Nonetheless, leaders recognise that there is more work to be done to ensure that records are sufficiently robust to withstand scrutiny and demonstrate how they keep pupils safe.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors reported unanimously that they feel safe in the school. Parents who responded to the Ofsted survey agreed that their children are safe, well cared for and looked after.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning is not yet consistently good. While pupils are catching up, the pace of improvement is not sufficient to remove successfully the significant gaps in pupils' learning. Consequently, pupils do not make consistently good progress.
- Teachers do not check well enough what pupils already know, understand and can do. Therefore, the activities they plan do not match pupils' needs. Where teachers plan tasks which specifically meet pupils' needs, pupils achieve well and advance in their learning. However, when tasks do not precisely meet pupils' needs, they become bored and learning stalls. As a result, pupils, especially the most able, are not making the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils' work shows there remains too much variability in teachers' expectations. Teachers do not have consistently high expectations of the quality of pupils' work. This hinders the progress pupils make.
- When teachers check pupils' work, they do not pick up on mistakes made. For example, spelling and grammatical errors in writing often go unchecked. As a result, some pupils continue to make the same mistakes in their work.
- Increased monitoring, training and coaching by the interim headteacher and newly

appointed senior leaders are having a positive impact on raising the quality of teaching and learning. There is evidence of some strong practice. For example, teachers' questioning to check pupils' understanding and to challenge their thinking is securing better progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. While policies and procedures are in place, these are not yet monitored sufficiently to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. For example, leaders recognise more work needs to be undertaken to ensure that, following significant trauma, pupils receive the appropriate therapies to enable them to lead purposeful lives.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. They talked about 'the triangle', where there are three members of staff to whom pupils can turn to share their worries or concerns. This approach is helping to reduce pupils' anxious behaviours.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe through carefully planned personal, social and health education lessons. They are aware of the importance of internet safety. However, there is more work to be done for a small proportion of pupils to enable them to be careful when using mobile phones and to consider more carefully what messages are and are not appropriate to send.
- Pupils receive guidance on the fundamental British values, including respect and tolerance. For example, during the inspection pupils participated in a workshop, an initiative supported by the police on 'create against hate', looking at hate crimes such as homophobia. This is preparing pupils well for their future.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are impressive. These positive relationships are built on trust and mutual respect. Pupils are appreciative of what staff do for them. They welcome the guidance they receive from staff, for example interview preparation for their future destinations.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Where teaching is not well matched to pupils' needs, pupils struggle to sustain their concentration and do not apply themselves well enough to the work set. Consequently, learning time is lost and progress stalls.
- Teachers do not have consistently high expectations of the quality of pupils' work. There remain too many occasions where pupils' work does not reflect what they are capable of; work is poorly presented with careless errors.
- The 'personal best' system is in place to drive improvements in pupils' behaviour. Pupils are awarded points which are collated and lead to a reward. Early indications show significant improvements in pupils' behaviour, for example less damage to property and a reduction in pupil disputes. However, leaders acknowledge greater analysis is required to demonstrate fully the impact of this initiative.

- While the overall attendance of pupils has improved, their attendance is not good enough. In addition, the punctuality of pupils is not good. Too often, pupils arrive late. This results in them missing valuable learning time and hampers the progress they make.
- The interim headteacher, with the support of staff, have made significant strides in the conduct of pupils since starting in post. Pupils have a clear understanding of behaviours that are not tolerated. For example, pupils are no longer able to smoke during the school day. Pupils told inspectors that they accept this and abide by the rule. Additionally, some pupils commented that their smoking habit has reduced since this measure was put in place.
- All pupils have behaviour support plans which set out the interventions they need to promote positive behaviour. These plans are written and agreed in consultation with pupils and parents and are having a positive impact on improving pupils' behaviour.
- Pupils' conduct during the inspection was typically good. They were respectful, polite and courteous. Pupils told inspectors that behaviour is improving and that the observations made by inspectors are now 'more typical'. Pupils made many favourable comments about the school. 'Staff understand us and there is mutual respect', 'We treat each other as a family so we no longer fight' and 'Staff believe in us' were typical of the many positive comments made by pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils who attend this school have significant and often complex needs. Frequently, pupils have been out of school for significant periods of time. Consequently, when they arrive at the school they have significant gaps in their knowledge and understanding.
- There is no discernible difference in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers. Nonetheless, outcomes for pupils, and especially the most able, are not yet good.
- New leaders and staff are working hard to improve pupils' outcomes. While there is evidence of improvement, for example in English, there remains work to be done to ensure that pupils make the best possible progress.
- The subjects that pupils have been studying in their mainstream schools are not always accessible in the school. Pupils who spoke to inspectors shared their frustration at not being able to continue their GCSE subjects, for example, history and geography. CLF is acutely aware of this and is actively seeking to tackle the breadth of the curriculum to enable pupils to pursue their chosen subjects and achieve good outcomes.
- Pupils are encouraged to read widely. The school has strong links with Bristol library, giving pupils access to a wider range of books, both fiction and non-fiction. Also, the recent introduction of a local newspaper being available for pupils in the school is paying dividends as it encourages pupils to read and increase their knowledge of current news in the local area.
- Leaders make effective use of independent careers guidance to support and guide pupils in their interests. Pupils appreciate the wide range of work experience afforded to them, such as hair and beauty, construction and retail. As a result, all pupils who left the school in 2018 successfully transferred to further education, training or

employment. Nonetheless, pupils' preparation for their next steps requires further improvement as they do not make as much progress in their academic work as they are capable of achieving.

- The small number of parents who responded to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire were delighted with the quality of education their children receive. 'I feel my son has progressed 10-fold at this school' and 'If it wasn't for this school, my child wouldn't have half the things he does now, I don't know where he would have ended up' are just two of the positive comments read by inspectors.

School details

Unique reference number	142569
Local authority	City of Bristol
Inspection number	10088272

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

Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	14 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	39
Appropriate authority	Cabot Learning Federation Board
Chair	Jane Harrington
Interim Headteacher	Alex Davies
Telephone number	0117 9551447
Website	www.bristolfuturesacademy.co.uk
Email address	info@bristolfuturesacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Bristol Futures Academy (BFA) is an alternative provision that opened in September 2016. The provision supports 14- to 16-year-olds who have struggled in mainstream school.
- Places at BFA are commissioned through Bristol City Council and the Bristol Inclusion Panel. Fixed-term places are requested directly by schools.
- BFA was originally one of five provisions within the Inspirational Future's Trust (IFT) sponsored by Weston College. During the 2018/19 academic year, the IFT closed the trust.
- BFA joined the Cabot Learning Federation (CLF) on 1 March 2019. CLF has quickly put in place an interim advisory board while it restructures the school.
- Since BFA opened in 2016 there have been four headteachers. The interim headteacher started in post in October 2018. The CLF is working to secure the leadership of the school for September 2019.

- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is well above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors viewed learning across the school, accompanied by the interim headteacher or a senior leader. The quality of pupils' work was scrutinised.
- Meetings were held with the interim headteacher, senior leaders and leaders from CLF, including the Chief Executive Officer. Inspectors also met with members of the interim advisory board. Inspectors took account of the eight responses from staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors talked with a group of pupils to listen to their views about the school. The views of other pupils were gathered during lessons and around the school.
- A wide range of documentation was examined, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, the academy improvement plan, reports written by external providers and information relating to pupils' achievement and progress. Records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were also scrutinised.
- Inspectors considered the five responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and two text messages were also taken into account. The views of other parents were considered from the school's own recent survey.

Inspection team

Jen Southall, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jen Edwards

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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