

City United Academy (CUA)

10 Edward Street, Aston, Birmingham, Birmingham, B1 2RX

Inspection dates

10 March 2021

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(2), 2(2)(a), 2(2)(h), 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e) and 3(g)

- The chair of the proprietorial body and school leaders clearly set out their vision for the school. They have high aspirations for their pupils. Since the previous inspection, leaders have successfully led a curriculum review. As a result, the school now has a curriculum that enables pupils to gain knowledge, understanding and skills in a wide range of subjects.
- The curriculum in key stage 3 and 4 is broad and balanced. The addition of subjects such as art, music, business studies, Spanish, citizenship and cooking, means that pupils have experiences in human, social, aesthetic, technological and creative education. In addition to this core curriculum pupils' well-being is effectively supported through nurture sessions and enrichment activities at a local allotment. A range of accredited courses are offered that are matched to the pupils' ability. These qualifications include functional skills and GCSEs.
- Leaders have thought carefully about which subjects to add to the curriculum. Their decisions were based on things such as staff's subject knowledge, pupils' interests and abilities and making sure that pupils are well prepared for their next steps. Because of these changes, pupils say they enjoy coming to school and want to do well.
- The proprietorial body has rightly supported staff's requests for further training. This includes training to acquire qualifications at masters level and qualified teacher status. Support networks are also being developed with mainstream schools to share good practice. This includes in assessment, moderation, and the sharing of resources. As a result, staff demonstrate good subject knowledge.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well. Leaders insist that the pupils' mainstream schools provide the school with information about their needs on admission. School leaders with responsibility for SEND ensure that this information is shared with staff. The lead teacher for SEND has also attended a number of online training sessions on teaching and learning strategies to support pupils

with SEND. Additional resources, for example in mathematics, have also been bought to help support pupils' needs.

- Leaders have sharpened their assessment system. Information, collected from baseline, formative and summative assessments, enables leaders to identify precisely where pupils are at in their learning. Pupils who are falling behind are supported through one-to-one lessons or, if appropriate, the teacher will recap work with the whole class to correct any misconceptions. Consequently, last year all pupils achieved a qualification in mathematics and almost all in English. For most pupils this was at GCSE level.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are now met.

Paragraphs 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii) and 2(2)(e)(iii)

- Pupils are well supported in making informed choices about their future plans. Leaders have developed effective links with post-16 providers. This includes local colleges and training providers. Virtual visitors have shared their experiences of their jobs. This has included an electrician and a hairdresser. As a result, pupils in Year 11 have appropriate post-16 plans. Last year the school did not have any pupils who were not in education, employment or training.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are now met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b) and 32(1)(c) [Part 6. Provision of information]

- There is a safeguarding policy in place that adheres to current government guidance. The school does not have a website. The policy is available to parents in a number of ways. This includes the policy being available at parents' evenings, being sent to parents electronically and it is also included in the pupil's induction pack on admission.
- Safeguarding procedures are robust. Effective communication with mainstream schools means that pupils and their families get extra help when they need it.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards continue to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a) and 34(1)(b)

- Leaders have taken decisive action to address the findings of the previous inspection. They are reflective leaders who continually evaluate the impact of their actions. As a result, the school now has a broad and balanced curriculum which is likely to support pupils' academic and wider outcomes well.
- Leaders are not complacent, and they are continually looking at ways to improve the school's provision. For example, the school recently had training from a representative of the local authority to improve the robustness of the school's annual review process for pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan. As a result, the school's practice was shared with schools across the local authority as an example of good practice.
- Leaders have ensured that these standards are now met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

The school now meets the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

■ 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if–

- 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
- 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work–
- 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.

2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are–

- 2(2)(a) full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education;
- 2(2)(e) for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that–
- 2(2)(e)(i) is presented in an impartial manner;
- 2(2)(e)(ii) enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and
- 2(2)(e)(iii) helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential;
- 2(2)(h) that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress.

■ 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–

- 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
- 3(b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
- 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
- 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
- 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;

– 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

School details

Unique reference number	137819
DfE registration number	330/6010
Inspection number	10146139

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	28
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	City United Limited
Chair	Janette Plummer
Headteacher	Sandra Jones
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,500 to £40,000
Telephone number	0121 328 0547
Website	None
Email address	sandra.jones@cityunited.org
Date of previous standard inspection	5–8 November 2019

Information about this school

- City United Academy is run by City United Limited, which is the proprietor of the school.
- The school provides education for pupils between the ages of 11 and 16. Most pupils attending the school are likely to have a range of social and emotional difficulties and have had a negative experience of education in the past. A small number of pupils have an EHC plan and are placed at the school by a local authority.
- The school aims to address the individual social, emotional and mental health needs of its pupils by providing a nurturing environment. Pupils referred to the school by their mainstream school may benefit from this support for a limited time and then successfully

reintegrate back into their mainstream schools. Others remain at the school until they continue into further education, employment or training.

- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school does not have a religious character.
- The last independent school standard inspection of City United Academy took place in November 2019 when its overall effectiveness was judged to be inadequate.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection. This was the first progress monitoring inspection.
- Progress monitoring inspections are normally completed without notice. However, in line with the interim phase guidance, the lead inspector telephoned the school to announce the inspection 30 minutes before she arrived at the school.
- The Department for Education required the school to prepare an action plan following the standard inspection in November 2019. Ofsted evaluated the plan on 20 January 2020. The plan was judged to be acceptable.
- During the inspection the lead inspector met with the chair of trustees, the headteacher, other senior leaders, staff, pupils and a representative of a mainstream school. She also spoke on the telephone with a representative of the local authority.
- The lead inspector looked at school policies, including the school's safeguarding policy. She also scrutinised the single central register of employment checks on staff.

Inspection team

Lesley Yates, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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