

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



20 September 2021

Paul Collin  
Headteacher  
City Academy Norwich  
299 Bluebell Road  
Norwich  
Norfolk  
NR4 7LP

Dear Mr Collin

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to City Academy Norwich**

Following my visit to your school on 8 July 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the monitoring inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received three successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. I discussed the impact of the pandemic with you and have taken that into account in my evaluation.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

### **Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school.**

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that the weakest readers are supported effectively to improve and become fluent readers
- improve the attendance of the most persistent low attenders.

## **Context**

Since the previous Section 5 inspection of the school, you have appointed an acting deputy headteacher.

The school is in the process of joining Bohunt Education Trust (BET). BET is already working closely with the school. The trust has been supporting leaders since 2017.

## **Main findings**

You and your leaders are ambitious for all pupils to gain the knowledge they need to be successful. The quality of education is getting better for all pupils, including the most disadvantaged and those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

You have been quick to implement a new curriculum. Subject leaders have had training to support them to put the new curriculum in place. As a result of this, teachers are more confident about how to help pupils know more over time. This has contributed towards improving the quality of education since the previous inspection.

Leaders are checking the quality of education more effectively. Leaders have identified the knowledge that pupils must know in all subjects. Teachers check regularly that pupils have remembered what they have learned before. Where pupils have gaps in what they know, teachers change their lesson plans to address these. When teachers deliver new content, they correct pupils' misunderstandings. Consequently, pupils are improving in what they know, can do and remember.

Teachers in all subjects highlight the most important vocabulary pupils need to learn. Teachers model how to use this and encourage pupils to use this in their own work. Teachers regularly check that pupils understand and remember the vocabulary pupils need to know. As a result, pupils are growing more confident in their vocabulary use in both their spoken and written learning.

Leaders do not support the weakest readers well enough. A small number of pupils get focused phonics teaching from well-trained staff. This is helping them to become more confident readers. However, a significant proportion of pupils who join the school in Year 7 struggle to read. Leaders know that their current actions to support these pupils are not having the desired impact. While leaders have plans to address this, too many of the weakest readers are not able to read fluently.

You have high expectations of behaviour. Consequently, behaviour in class and around the school has improved. Leaders have communicated the behaviour policy clearly. Staff understand and consistently apply the policy. This helps pupils know and understand what the expectations are and how to behave well. While there

remains some low-level disruption you are dealing with, both pupils and teachers agree that behaviour has improved.

Exclusions have reduced over time. On the less frequent occasions that pupils are excluded or are removed from lessons as a last resort, leaders make sure that these pupils keep up with, and understand their work. This ensures that pupils do not lose valuable learning opportunities and are more confident when they return. This has resulted in behaviour of these pupils being more positive on their return to class.

Attendance remains low. The pandemic has affected this. Leaders have put in place actions to address it. However, these actions have not had the desired result. Some pupils continue to miss too much of their education.

Governors know their school well. Since the previous inspection, they have kept a close eye on the improvements made. Governors have a clear vision of what will help the school improve and are challenging and supporting leaders appropriately.

### **Additional support**

You appreciate and value BET's support. The trust has provided training for subject leaders and targeted support in the areas to improve identified at the previous inspection. For example, BET has supported leaders' work in areas such as behaviour, subject leadership and helping pupils with SEND. The result of this is that you and other leaders are more confident in your work to improve the school.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I met with you, other senior leaders, staff, representatives of those responsible for governance and the chief executive officer of BET to discuss the actions taken since the previous inspection.

I visited lessons, observed staff listening to pupils read, checked the school's single central record and spoke to pupils at break and lunchtime. I scrutinised the academy's improvement plan and other documents. I took into account 52 responses to Ofsted's staff survey, 18 parent and carer responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and 12 parent free-text responses.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Norfolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Charlie Fordham  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**