

Inspection of City of London Academy (Southwark)

240 Lynton Road, London SE1 5LA

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 November 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Sixth-form provision	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school and feel challenged by their learning. The school's atrium is decorated with the achievements of past pupils. This publicly displays the school's high expectations for all pupils and the school's values of 'ambition, resilience and duty'. Pupils are safe and happy at school.

Pupils value being taught about equality and diversity. Pupils were involved in selecting house names for the school's house system. They chose names to celebrate significant historical figures: Mandela, Parks, Seacole and Hawking. There are a number of opportunities for pupils to take on leadership responsibilities. Pupil-run societies include the green society and feminist society. These provide pupils with a safe space to discuss contemporary issues.

Leaders have created clear behaviour systems that pupils understand. They listen to pupils' views on behaviour. Pupils know what is expected of them both in and outside of lessons. Behaviour in classes is purposeful. Pupils typically described the school as 'calm'. If bullying occurs, leaders act to resolve any issues. Typically, pupils feel that they are treated equally and fairly.

The library is at the centre of school. Leaders provide daily opportunities for all pupils in Years 7 to 9 to read. Pupils enjoy reading a wide range of texts with staff.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders ensure that all pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum that matches the ambition of the national curriculum. In the sixth form, students choose from a range of courses.

Subject leaders plan their curriculum content carefully so that pupils acquire knowledge and skills over time. For instance, in English, the study of 'Macbeth' at GCSE supports and prepares pupils for the further study of other Shakespearean tragedies if they choose to study English at A level. Leaders provide time for subject teachers to reflect on and improve subject curriculum units of work. Teachers have strong knowledge of the subjects that they teach.

Teaching supports pupils to remember and build on key knowledge over time. Pupils are routinely encouraged to recall prior learning from the previous lesson or previous term. Pupils said this was helpful. For instance, in a business studies A-level class, students were encouraged to recall what they had already learned about 'gearing ratio', before applying this existing knowledge to a new case study.

Staff and pupils follow behaviour systems closely, so that pupils' behaviour and attitudes routinely support learning in class.

Teachers routinely check pupils' understanding. For example, in sociology, teachers used questions to check whether pupils had understood new learning about different family types. Teachers use assessment information to inform and adapt their teaching. For example, in English, teachers identified a pupil's misconceptions about Charles Dickens and were able to rectify them swiftly. Pupils achieve well.

Teachers present new subject material in suitable building blocks. For instance, in history, teachers encouraged pupils to recap prior knowledge on science and art before using that knowledge to help them to understand new learning about the Renaissance. In the sixth form, students take part in analytical discussion and this helps their learning. However, in Years 7 to 11, opportunities for pupils to participate in academic talk are not as routinely organised, and when they are, pupils are not typically confident about participating. This can sometimes hinder teachers from knowing what pupils have understood and remembered.

Leaders have established clear processes to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly. Teachers routinely share strategies with each other that support pupils with SEND to access the full curriculum. Pupils who need support with reading fluency receive appropriate extra help. Pupils read widely and often. In Years 7 to 9, teachers read daily with all pupils. They choose books that are appropriate to pupils' reading ages and interests.

Leaders offer a wide range of extra-curricular clubs, including baking and chess. Leaders promote pupils' uptake of clubs through communication with parents and carers. Pupils take part in democratic processes in school, for example voting in the school's elections of student president and sports ambassadors. Throughout the curriculum, pupils have opportunities to consider the lives and perspectives of people who differ from themselves. At all ages, pupils receive appropriate advice and guidance on their next steps. Pupils appreciate the support they are given.

Governors have a clear understanding of the curriculum priorities of the school. Leaders provide time for teachers to engage in external research projects. The aim of these projects is to enhance further curriculum developments. Leaders listen to the staff's views on workload. Staff recognise the strategies that leaders have introduced to support well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders know the local area well, and know the contextual safeguarding challenges they face, for example the risks associated with gang involvement. Leaders work closely with external agencies, such as the police, to educate pupils about managing these risks. Leaders use external mentoring to support pupils in making the right choices.

All staff receive appropriate training. Staff know the key messages around sexual harassment and peer-on-peer abuse that have been covered in recent training.

Teaching around issues such as consent is appropriate to the age and stage of pupils. If pupils need early help, clear systems and structures are in place to facilitate this.

Pupils know how to stay safe online and how the school helps them to be both mentally and physically healthy.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not typically encourage pupils to academically discuss the subject matter being taught, particularly in Years 7 to 11. This means that pupils do not routinely have opportunities to grapple with ideas in depth, build confidence in doing so and develop a detailed understanding of key concepts. Leaders should ensure that teachers encourage pupils to discuss academic content with purpose and build their confidence.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	134222
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	10199814
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1564
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	376
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tijs Broek
Chair of governing body	Shravan Joshi
Headteacher	Michael Baxter
Website	www.cityacademy.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	8 June 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in April 2019.
- The school uses three registered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with a number of senior staff, including the headteacher, the leader with responsibility for safeguarding, the special educational needs coordinator and other members of the senior team. Inspectors also met with the chair of governors and the trust's chief executive officer.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors visited a variety of other lessons, including art, music, sociology, business studies, science, modern foreign languages and drama.
- Inspectors looked at curriculum plans for the reading programme. Inspectors also visited lessons for the reading programme.
- Inspectors observed behaviour in lessons and at breaktime. Inspectors spoke to a range of staff about their views on behaviour, their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils who hold leadership roles.
- Through discussion with leaders, pupils and staff, inspectors considered the effectiveness of safeguarding. Inspectors looked at records relating to safeguarding, including pre-employment checks and records of work with external agencies.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents, staff and pupils who responded to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

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