

# Inspection of Brighton Aldridge Community Academy

Lewes Road, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 9PW

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Inspection dates: 21 and 22 March 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Sixth-form provision

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils learn in a largely calm and orderly environment. Teachers expect pupils to reach ambitious goals. Pupils have positive aspirations for the future and receive effective guidance to fulfil them. They enjoy a wide range of enrichment opportunities, including through a set of experiences known as the 'BACA 100' and a variety of clubs that they can attend. Links with external organisations, such as Brighton & Hove Albion football club and Sussex Cricket through the Aldridge Cricket Academy, help nourish pupils' talents. Equally, school productions and musical and arts events are popular and successful.

Bullying is not tolerated. Leaders take appropriate action when there are issues. Pupils confidently raise any worries they have, especially with their designated 'trusted adult'. All Year 7 pupils have mentors who support them to make a positive start to school life. Pupils respond well to the rewards they receive for good attendance and behaviour.

Pupils feel much safer at school. Adults provide high levels of supervision at social times. Although most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, a minority do not. This worries other pupils and sometimes disrupts their learning. Not all pupils achieve what they should, partly because too many miss school too often.

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

This is an improving school. Dynamic leadership in the school has raised expectations of pupils' education and behaviour since the last full inspection. Leaders know what the key issues are and take the right actions to address them. Those responsible for governance monitor progress very carefully and challenge leaders robustly. Leaders provide staff with carefully considered training and coaching. Teachers in the early stages of their careers receive effective support. The majority of staff are very positive about working at the school. Leaders engage with parents and carers constructively and regularly, meaning that a growing majority of parents are supportive of the school.

Leaders' high expectations are not yet fully realised in practice. Although they have established an ambitious curriculum in Years 7 to 11, pupils' achievement varies. Some pupils learn in depth, but for others this is more superficial. In some subjects, teachers check pupils' learning very carefully, identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge and then address them effectively. However, this is inconsistent across the school, meaning that pupils do not make the progress through the curriculum that they should.

Importantly, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not routinely get the specific support that they need to achieve well. Teachers in mainstream lessons know what these pupils' specific needs are but are not using this information to adapt lessons precisely enough. This contrasts with effective provision in the Swan Centre for pupils with education, health and care plans.

Additionally, while pupils who are weaker readers get valuable additional help outside of lessons, the tasks that they are set in lessons do not take their needs into account consistently well.

Leaders set clear rules about pupils' conduct and attendance. Consequently, rates of behaviour incidents and suspensions have fallen since the inspection in March 2022. Despite this, not all pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Staff work hard to manage pupils' behaviour, but some do not follow the processes leaders have put in place to maintain high expectations. A small proportion of staff do not feel that they get the support they need to deal with behaviour issues effectively.

Absence rates remain high, especially for older pupils and some vulnerable pupils. This often means that pupils' achievement is affected, including in Year 11, as well as their involvement in the provision the school makes for their personal development. Leaders have tackled low levels of attendance for some individual pupils successfully.

Students' achievement in the sixth form is strong. Here, the curriculum is carefully designed to meet students' different needs and ambitions. Teachers' strong subject knowledge contributes to students' successful learning, whether in vocational or academic subjects. Students value the feedback teachers give them and act on it. They also appreciate the advice and guidance that they get that supports them to secure future education, employment or training when they leave school.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils view their learning about a range of relevant topics in personal, social and health education lessons positively. They value respect and diversity, aspects which are explored extensively during tutor periods and in assemblies. Effective careers education fuels pupils' ambitions for the future. Along with the considerable investment in enrichment activities and extra-curricular opportunities, this reflects leaders' fervent commitment to establishing an aspirational culture.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make the necessary employment checks on staff. They make sure that staff have up-to-date knowledge and expertise to identify any potential concerns and report them swiftly. When any issues arise, leaders act promptly to make sure the right support is in place for pupils, including by liaising with external agencies. Leaders check on the welfare of pupils who are absent and those who attend alternative provision. Pupils learn about how to keep safe and are confident that if they raise any worries, adults will deal with them effectively. Trust officers monitor safeguarding arrangements regularly.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils' achievement is variable. Teachers' checks on pupils' learning are not fully effective across all subjects in addressing gaps in pupils' knowledge. Leaders should ensure that the strongest practice in the school becomes the norm so that pupils' outcomes improve further.
- The curriculum for pupils with SEND is not adapted consistently well in mainstream lessons. While teachers have more information about pupils' specific needs, this does not translate into the right support in lessons often enough. Leaders should improve provision for pupils with SEND further so that they achieve the best possible outcomes.
- Although many pupils behave well around the school and engage purposefully with their work in lessons, some do not. This affects both their own learning and school life for other pupils. Leaders should ensure that their high expectations for pupils' behaviour are implemented fully and that they provide all staff with the support that they need to do this.
- Too many pupils miss too much school, including some more vulnerable pupils. This has a negative impact on their achievement and their personal development. Although leaders have improved the attendance of some pupils, their efforts need to intensify to reduce levels of absence more.

## 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 and carers 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.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136164
<b>Local authority</b>	Brighton and Hove
<b>Inspection number</b>	10269435
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	847
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	112
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Rob Wye
<b>Principal</b>	Jack Davies
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.baca-uk.org.uk">www.baca-uk.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	6 and 7 December 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Brighton Aldridge Community Academy is part of Aldridge Education multi-academy trust.
- The school currently uses five alternative providers.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND called the Swan Centre. This provision is managed by the local authority. All pupils who attend this provision have an education, health and care plan. The two main areas of pupils' need are speech and language disorder and autism spectrum disorder.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

- There have been significant staff changes since the previous graded inspection in March 2022. This includes the principal, who took up his substantive post in September 2022 after starting at the school in an interim capacity in June 2022.

## **Information about this inspection**

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

- Inspectors took account of evidence gathered during the first monitoring inspection of the school in December 2022.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, senior leaders and a number of subject and pastoral leaders.
- Inspectors visited a wide range of lessons. They also looked at a large number of examples of work that pupils have produced over time. Inspectors examined curriculum planning.
- Pupils spoke to inspectors throughout the inspection in lessons, in specific groups and around the school in order to give their views.
- Parents' views were taken into account through their responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. The lead inspector met with a group of community stakeholders and with a number of parents.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record of recruitment checks, talked to leaders responsible for safeguarding and looked at the school's safeguarding records and documents. Inspectors also talked to a range of staff and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school at social times.
- A range of the school's documentation was scrutinised, including leaders' evaluations of the effectiveness of the school, information about pupils' behaviour and attendance, and minutes of meetings of those responsible for governance.
- The lead inspector met with trust officers and the chief executive officer of Aldridge Education.
- Inspectors met with a wide range of staff during the inspection and considered their views through the staff survey.

## **Inspection team**

Matthew Haynes, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Ally Aldridge-Gibbons

His Majesty's Inspector

Mark Enser

His Majesty's Inspector

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