

# Inspection of a good school: BRIT School for Performing Arts and Technology

60 The Crescent, Selhurst, Croydon, Surrey CR0 2HN

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Inspection date: 14 and 15 June 2023

## **Outcome**

BRIT School for Performing Arts and Technology continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

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

Pupils and students join the BRIT school having had very different experiences of education. While some have been successful, others have found school challenging. In a short length of time, everyone comes together. Although unconventional and diverse in many ways, this school is a harmonious community. Mature, respectful behaviour allows everyone to flourish by being themselves. Pupils and teachers share common values and high expectations. Pupils are happy here. They are proud to be 'BRIT'.

There is no reported bullying. Pupils know who to turn and report to if any situation makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe. They are also confident that immediate action and support would happen if there were a problem.

Participation in performing and creative subjects plays an important part in pupils' personal development. This is supported by a strong programme of guidance that considers the specific opportunities, challenges and risks around working in the arts. Teaching includes coaching around handling and intimacy in performance, based on an understanding of consent and respect. Exceptional opportunities are provided to work with professional practitioners and organisations. Staff plan these carefully with due diligence and regard for pupils' well-being and safety.

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

Every pupil follows a specialist curriculum built around a visual, digital or performing arts vocational qualification. In Years 10 and 11, this is supported by studies in English, mathematics and science, together with three other GCSE options. In the sixth form, the chosen arts strand is supplemented by additional qualifications including A levels. Pupils, leaders and trustees all value this broad, well-sequenced education as essential preparation for future work and learning.

Teaching throughout the school is characterised by expert modelling. It is based firmly around securing pupils' subject-specific knowledge, which they then apply in creative situations. This includes accurate and effective assessment. Teachers listen carefully and respond through constant praise, correction or suggestion to embed and secure improvements or develop ideas. The routine of instruction, rehearsal, repetition and performance is central to the school's learning culture.

In the arts subjects, this all leads to extraordinarily high standards of work. These standards are underpinned by secure practical, technical and theoretical knowledge that, in turn, leads to controlled, expressive meaning.

In other curriculum subjects, examination courses are well organised and ensure that syllabus content is both covered and understood. The confidence and discipline that pupils develop through the arts help them in other subjects, for example when discussing ideas and asking for clarifications when needed. Their sense of company and ensemble serves them well when working collaboratively and when testing each other's understanding. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully considered in every aspect of school life. Their needs are well known to staff. Careful adaptations are made. This ensures not only that everyone participates equally but also that everyone can meet the same expectations, including in performance. Language development is a key part of every pupil's curriculum. Sixth-form students who have previously struggled with English and mathematics are supported to help them catch up.

Leaders monitor the effectiveness of all curriculum areas. Effective action has been taken to make improvements, for example, in mathematics and science. Pupils who follow dance, musical theatre or theatre strands benefit from extremely exacting physical training as part of their courses. For others, while the school provides a range of extra-curricular opportunities, more could be done to ensure that they pursue regular physical activity as part of their programme. Leaders are aware of this and have a clear strategy in place to improve physical education for all.

With rare exceptions, pupils' behaviour is excellent. They show exceptional levels of self-discipline in their studies. Working relationships with staff are close and collaborative, but boundaries are clearly understood. Much of this is down to the way in which the school promotes pupil and student personal and professional development (PPD). The PPD programme comprehensively covers issues such as online safety, and relationships, sex and health education. It also specifically prepares pupils for their future lives in the arts and, indeed, in the possibility of careers outside the arts. While different faiths are celebrated frequently throughout the year, formal religious education in Years 10 and 11 is less well developed and is a priority for leaders.

Staff are happy working here. They benefit from highly focused professional development that has a direct benefit on the standards achieved by students. Their work programmes take account of the unusual working patterns in this school. They particularly enjoy opportunities to collaborate with each other. Leaders and trustees take every opportunity to explore partnerships that widen opportunities and provide additional resources for the school.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All necessary recruitment checks on staff are undertaken and recorded. Some administrative errors were found during the inspection, but these were rectified quickly.

All staff training is up to date, including for designated safeguarding leads. Staff have sound knowledge about what to do if or when they have concerns. The school takes students from across and beyond London, which presents some challenges for partnership working. Nevertheless, prompt action is taken to report concerns to the appropriate agencies and provide support when needed. Detailed records of any incidents or concerns are kept. The school has detailed strategies for educating pupils about potential dangers, including drugs and extremism.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour, or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2014.

## 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>	101849
<b>Local authority</b>	Croydon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268930
<b>Type of school</b>	Technical
<b>School category</b>	City Technical College
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	14 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>	1,419
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	1,000
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Josh Berger
<b>Principal</b>	Stuart Worden
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.brit.croydon.sch.uk">www.brit.croydon.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	24 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The BRIT School is a specialist City Technology College. Pupils and students join the school in Year 10 or in Year 12 having previously been to maintained schools, independent schools or home educated. The school is state funded, augmented by the BRIT Trust and other commercial sponsors. Pupils are selected based on their capacity to acquire and improve knowledge and skills in the arts.
- The school does not currently make use of alternative education provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, senior leaders, other leaders, staff, pupils and students.
- As part of evaluating the quality of leadership, the lead inspector met with the chair of the trust and four other trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects or arts strands: English, science, theatre, visual arts and musical theatre. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and considered samples of pupils' work. Inspectors explored other curriculum subjects including through curriculum plans, discussions with leaders, visits to lessons and sampling pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors checked the school's single central record of recruitment checks, considered its safeguarding policy and procedures, and spoke to leaders, staff, pupils and students.
- Inspectors considered the 195 responses made by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses submitted during the inspection. There were no responses made to the staff survey or to the pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Mark Phillips, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Yvonne Chisholm	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Raeside	Ofsted Inspector

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