

# Inspection of City Academy Norwich

299 Bluebell Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR4 7LP

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Inspection dates: 18 and 19 June 2024

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

The principal of this school is Jo Franklin. This school is part of Sapientia Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Jonathan Taylor, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Peter Rout.

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

Pupils have noticed the positive changes in the school since the previous inspection. They see that these will benefit their education. Staff have higher expectations, and, for some pupils, this has been challenging to adjust to. Staff are rightly asking more of pupils.

Curriculum expectations are higher, and pupils have access to a wider range of subject options at key stage 3 and key stage 4. However, pupils' experiences in lessons do not always help them to learn and remember more. Some pupils did not perform well in public examinations.

The school allotment and forest school provide opportunities for pupils to build their confidence and social skills. Wider benefits of these resources include positive changes in the behaviour and confidence of individual pupils.

It is not common for pupils to experience unkind language. They know and trust the pastoral team to support them if they report an issue. School leaders do not tolerate prejudicial language.

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

Leaders at all levels are striving to ensure that pupils receive a high-quality education. They are shifting an established culture. While this is not yet reflected in examination outcomes for some pupils, leaders have worked tirelessly since the last inspection to improve the school. They have done so in the face of significant challenges. This determination is reflected in the overwhelmingly positive staff feedback, a culture of higher standards for all pupils and the significant change in parental perception of the school. The school is committed to regaining its positive reputation in the local area, and to continue to win back the hearts and minds of the community.

The quality of education is not yet good because the newly implemented curriculum has not yet had time to be delivered consistently and effectively. The transition to a new curriculum in most subjects has meant that systems for checking pupils' understanding and ensuring they produce work of a high standard are not yet established fully across the school. This means that, too frequently, there are gaps in pupils' knowledge. Common misconceptions in pupils' work are not always addressed. This leads to such errors being repeated without correction.

The school's approach to supporting the weakest readers is developing at pace, although still at an early stage of development. Pupils' reading ability is identified early on and leaders have prioritised staff training to support the reading programme now used by the school.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is improving substantially and demonstrably. It is a strength of the school. Pupils with

SEND have access to a range of school support, for example the social, emotional and mental health base, where they can receive additional help. Parents value the way the school supports their children to become more independent.

Pupils' behaviour has improved since the last inspection. Classroom disruption is rare. However, levels of suspension remain high because pupils are still adjusting to the school's high expectations of conduct. Generally, pupils are punctual to lessons and respond respectfully to instructions from staff. Too many children do not attend school often enough. As a result, these pupils do not make the progress they are capable of. They also miss out on opportunities to learn the school's new routines and expectations. The school is working closely with parents and external agencies to improve attendance. This work is starting to have a positive impact.

The school provides an appropriate programme of personal, social, health and economic education. This includes the delivery of effective careers education. Pupils typically gain a lot from this. However, wider opportunities for character development are more limited. Extra-curricular activities are not as popular as leaders would like. This is because pupils do not always know these activities are available. The role of pupil voice is emerging but is not yet established. Most pupils are respectful towards one another and adults. However, some pupils do not always understand appropriate social boundaries.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- The number of pupils currently being suspended is high. As a result, these pupils miss out not only on opportunities to learn but also the structure provided by the school. The school must ensure that new rules being implemented to reduce unwanted behaviours are implemented robustly and consistently by all staff.
- Pupils do not attend school as often as they should. This has an impact on their ability to keep up with their peers. When they return to school, these pupils do not always catch up with their learning. This leaves gaps in their work and knowledge. The school's systems and structures for improving attendance must be sufficiently rigorous to improve attendance rapidly.
- The curriculum in some subject areas is not yet fully established. As a result, it does not yet enable pupils to complete work of a consistently high quality as they do not always have an appropriate level of understanding to do so. The school's ongoing curriculum implementation must ensure that pupils acquire the knowledge and skills they need to make sufficient progress towards their next steps.

## 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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135904
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10318597
<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>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	699
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>CEO</b>	Jonathan Taylor
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Peter Rout
<b>Principal</b>	Jo Franklin
<b>Website</b>	canorwich.org
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	22 and 23 November 2022

## Information about this school

- The school joined Sapientia Education Trust in September 2022.
- The principal has been in post since September 2022.
- The previous inspection took place two months after the school transferred to the new trust.
- The school makes use of six unregistered providers of alternative education.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the school's senior leaders, senior trust staff, trustees and the CEO.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in English, history, modern foreign languages, science and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspection team considered the views of parents through responses to Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors gathered the views of pupils and staff through Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys, as well as interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.

### **Inspection team**

Jonathan Rockey, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Clare Gammons	Ofsted Inspector
Victoria Hearn	Ofsted Inspector
Catherine Wilson	Ofsted Inspector

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