

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: The City Academy Bristol

Russell Town Avenue, Bristol, Avon BS5 9JH

Inspection dates:

26 and 27 November 2024

Outcome

The City Academy Bristol has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The principal of this school is Ben Tucker. This school is part of Cabot Learning Federation, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Steve Taylor, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Yvonne Beach.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this vibrant and inclusive school. They are proud to be part of a community where cultural diversity is celebrated. Pupils learn in a safe and tolerant environment. They know they can access 'safe spaces' if they need a calm and quiet area or support from a trusted adult. Pupils who attend the specially resourced provision for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) enjoy school. They are well supported and are becoming more confident learners.

The school has high expectations of the pupils that attend City Academy. Typically, pupils live up to these by working hard, behaving and achieving well. If any pupils fall short of meeting these expectations, a clear behaviour policy is followed, and appropriate sanctions are put in place. Pupils appreciate these boundaries and say that they are fair. There are warm, mutually respectful relationships between staff and pupils.

Many pupils volunteer to be a member of the school council. Pupils with SEND are well represented and have a strong voice in the school. Governors consider pupils' views when making decisions about the school. Pupils can access a range of extra-curricular activities such as sports clubs, drama and chess club. However, only a minority of pupils take up these opportunities regularly.

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

Pupils learn a broad and ambitious curriculum. Published outcomes show that they make

good progress in their learning. The school recognise that more pupils need to attain the higher grades to be well prepared for their next steps. Results in some subjects, such as mathematics, show that this is improving. The number of pupils who follow the English Baccalaureate pathway is below the government's ambition. However, this is rising quickly, with more pupils now choosing and succeeding in this suite of qualifications.

The school has a high proportion of pupils with SEND. Systems for the identification of pupils' needs are clear and work effectively. Staff are provided with helpful information as well as strategies that will support pupils in the classroom. Consequently, pupils with SEND have their needs met well.

Many pupils join the school with reading ages significantly below their chronological age. They are identified quickly and receive specific support to improve the part of reading that they find most difficult. For example, some pupils follow a phonics curriculum while others work on developing their comprehension. This supports them in accessing the curriculum and being successful in their learning.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They deliver the content of the shared curriculum well. Teachers provide clear explanations and model useful examples for pupils. In relevant subjects, pupils engage in thoughtful debate about topical issues. However, at times, teaching does not carefully check pupils' understanding of what they have learned. Lessons sometimes move on without pupils' gaps in knowledge or any misunderstandings addressed.

The school is a calm and orderly place. Pupils make use of opportunities to be active at social times. Many enjoy the communal experience of eating a hot meal together. Most pupils are consistently polite and respectful to each other and to adults. In lessons, low-level disruption can occur, but this is managed quickly and effectively by staff. Poor behaviour is not allowed to persist.

The school ensures that the personal development offer includes helping pupils to feel safe in the community. They learn about different types of relationships and keeping physically and mentally healthy. Pupils experience a well-considered careers programme from when they join in Year 7. They are supported in considering their plans for the future. For example, the school hosts visitors from colleges, universities and local employers. However, some pupils do not complete a work experience placement successfully during their time at school.

Staff value the training opportunities provided by the school and trust. For example, they collaborate regularly with colleagues across other trust schools who undertake similar roles. Staff appreciate the time they have in subject areas to refine the curriculum. They say that this helps to reduce their workload. Leaders, including governors, are approachable and considerate of staff well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers' use of assessment does not always check pupils' understanding of the curriculum carefully enough. As a result, some pupils develop misconceptions, which means they do not build their knowledge successfully over time. The trust should ensure that assessment is used effectively in all subjects so pupils are supported to know and remember more.
- Some pupils do not participate in the school's planned work experience or regularly engage in extra-curricular activities. Therefore, their breadth of experience beyond the academic curriculum is more limited. The trust should ensure that more pupils participate in these opportunities so they are well prepared for their next steps.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in April 2019.

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

Unique reference number	144509
Local authority	Bristol City of
Inspection number	10344802
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	992
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Yvonne Beach
CEO of the trust	Steve Taylor
Principal	Ben Tucker
Website	www.cityacademybristol.clf.uk
Dates of previous inspection	2 and 3 April 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed.
- The school is part of Cabot Learning Federation.
- The school has specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND who have speech, language and communication needs. Currently, 20 pupils attend this provision.
- The school uses two registered and six unregistered alternative provisions.
- 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

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have

taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors held discussions with the principal, other members of the senior leadership team, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, the chair and vice-chairs of the local academy council, a trustee, the secondary executive principal and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to curriculum leaders, 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.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Kelly Olive, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Simon Tong

Ofsted Inspector

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