

City Academy Whitehawk

Whitehawk Road, Whitehawk, Brighton, East Sussex BN2 5FL

Inspection dates

14–15 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have improved many aspects of the school since the previous inspection. As a result, attainment and progress are improving, especially in the early years and at the end of key stage 2.
- Leaders tackle any weaknesses in provision quickly and systematically. For example, school leaders have revised the approach to teaching reading because pupils were not building on their initial successes with phonics.
- Children get off to an excellent start to school in the early years. The outstanding learning environment and highly skilled staff help children to develop positive attitudes to learning, behave well, and get to grips with school life quickly.
- Safeguarding is effective. Leaders take the welfare of all their pupils very seriously. They provide high-quality care for pupils and helpful advice and support for families.
- Pupils behave well, especially in lessons. Teachers' high expectations and engaging lessons ensure that there is very little off-task behaviour.
- Strong governance from trustees and the local academy board ensures that there are rigorous systems in place to hold leaders to account for making improvements.
- Across almost all year groups the progress of current pupils in reading, writing and mathematics is improving. Disadvantaged pupils make at least the same progress as others, and in some cases more.
- Teaching is good. Leaders use training and coaching well to improve the consistency in the quality of teaching and assessment across the school. However, sometimes independent tasks do not match the needs of pupils.
- Relentless work with families is leading to positive improvements in attendance. Persistent absence is declining but is still above national levels.
- The curriculum has focused on improving pupils' core skills in speaking, listening, reading, writing and mathematics. It has also developed their physical well-being and spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well.
- More recently, leaders have broadened and deepened the curriculum to give pupils much more diverse experiences.
- New subject leaders have recently been appointed to further improve the curriculum and the progress pupils make in other subjects. However, it is too early to see the impact of their actions on pupils' outcomes.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the role of subject leaders to ensure that:
 - the curriculum in all subjects is planned to progressively develop the knowledge and skills of pupils
 - they check and help improve the quality of teaching in their subjects
 - pupils make rapid progress from their starting points in all areas of the curriculum.
- Ensure that teaching is as strong as the best in the school by adapting tasks where necessary to meet the needs of pupils, especially the most able.
- Continue the very effective work with parents to improve attendance.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the school joined the Aurora Academies Trust in September 2017, leaders have accelerated the pace of improvement in all aspects of the school. As a result, standards are continuing to rise.
- Parents speak positively about the leadership of the school and appreciate the welcoming presence of the head of school. Pupils explain how he makes sure that everyone is safe and happy.
- Working closely with other senior leaders, the head of school is incisive in his evaluation of what is working well and what needs to improve. The executive headteacher offers helpful oversight and challenge to ensure that there are rigorous systems in place to support leaders in making the improvements required. Together, they are not afraid to make difficult decisions if they are likely to improve the opportunities for pupils.
- Leaders identify quickly when things need to improve. For example, the new approach to the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) and reading builds on careful analysis and wide research to determine what will work best for the pupils of Whitehawk.
- Leaders responsible for the quality of teaching ensure that newly qualified staff receive a high-quality induction. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching in the school. The whole staff team receives appropriate training on different aspects of teaching and the curriculum. As a result of this training, the quality of teaching is continuing to improve.
- The curriculum has been planned to meet the needs of pupils and the community in which they live. Leaders recognise that the necessary focus over the last year on improving pupils' core skills in reading, writing and mathematics has meant that some subjects have not been covered in sufficient depth. Nonetheless, pupils have received a broad and balanced curriculum that develops their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well. The curriculum is further enhanced, using specialist teachers in music and physical education (PE). The sport premium is used effectively to improve participation in PE and competitive sport.
- This year, leaders responsible for the curriculum have refined planning so that a more rounded curriculum is being taught. Leaders have thought carefully about how pupils' knowledge and skills will be built as they progress through the school. Teachers who have an interest in subjects have been selected to lead them. This has brought a new enthusiasm for subjects such as science and computing. However, it is too early for these new leaders to have had an impact on improving teaching or improving outcomes for pupils.
- Parents are very positive about how homework supports learning in school and how they are included in events at the end of each topic to be part of their children's learning.

- Leaders ensure that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used well. Planned actions have been successful at helping disadvantaged pupils to make further progress.
- Leaders responsible for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) ensure that they receive the right provision to help them progress as well as others in the school. Some pupils attend a new nurture group where early signs show that positive relationships are starting to be developed. It is too early to see the impact of this on standards though.
- The whole staff team is dedicated to making a difference to the pupils that attend the academy. Many of them give up their own time to provide additional mentoring after school to Year 6 pupils to help them prepare for the next stage of their education. Staff appreciate the steps that leaders take to reduce their workload and make the school a happy place to work.

Governance of the school

- Trust board members have a very secure understanding of the performance of the school. They get this from reports from officers, leaders and by visiting themselves.
- There are very clear lines of accountability that have been determined by the trust. These are constantly reviewed to ensure that best practice is always being followed; for example, removing the chief executive officer (CEO) from a trustee role.
- Trustees are highly ambitious for the school and want to make a significant impact on improving outcomes for pupils and their families in the community.
- Members of the local academy board (LAB) have a very strong understanding of the school and the community. They receive significant information from the school that allows them to challenge leaders about all aspects of the school's work.
- LAB members use their expertise to debate issues such as the curriculum to ensure that decisions are made to provide the best outcomes for pupils and to prepare them for the next stage of their education.
- LAB members regularly visit the school to check on the progress leaders are making towards their priorities and to check that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. They ensure that additional funding, such as the pupil premium, is used appropriately to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- The CEO has a strategic overview of the school and has put in place appropriate systems to hold leaders to account. He works well with other stakeholders, including the local authority, to ensure that they are to achieve the best outcomes for pupils in the school. He is reflective and realistic about what still needs to be done to improve.
- There is currently some duplication in information that the LAB receives from the school and CEO. The new chair of the LAB plans to organise responsibilities and meeting structures to allow governors to focus on issues in depth.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders responsible for safeguarding know the community they serve extremely well. This gives them a full and accurate understanding of the risks pupils face on a day-to-day basis. The welfare manager brings a real strength to the school's work to keep pupils safe and is trusted by the whole community.
- Work with other agencies is extremely strong. School leaders work well with other professionals in the local hub to keep pupils safe and ensure that families receive the support they need. Record-keeping of this work and of concerns about pupils' welfare is of the highest quality.
- Procedures to check the suitability of staff and other people working with pupils are rigorous. Staff receive regular and relevant training to help them keep pupils safe. They understand and follow the school policy and national guidance.
- Staff and parents are confident that pupils are safe in school, and pupils told inspectors they feel safe and know there is always someone they can talk to at school if they are worried.
- Some younger pupils do not yet have a good understanding of how to stay safe online. However, overall the curriculum is very successful at teaching pupils how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Following a recent decline in standards, teaching has improved and continues to do so because of effective mentoring and coaching from leaders. Teachers have strong subject knowledge.
- Teachers have high expectations for all when it comes to what pupils can achieve during lessons. As a result, the quality of work that pupils produce is improving. For example, all adults expect pupils to speak in full sentences to enhance their ability to write in sentences.
- Leaders have refocused the teaching of phonics. It is now taught consistently well across the early years and key stage 1. As a result, pupils are now making stronger progress in their early reading. In key stage 2, a new focus on reading 'real' books, including classic texts, as a class is raising expectations and deepening pupils' knowledge.
- There are consistent structures across the school that are used to engage pupils in lessons, for example with the teaching of writing. Pupils are very clear about what they are expected to do at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of lessons.
- Mathematics teaching allows pupils to develop their fluency with number, leading to increased confidence with the four basic operations. Pupils are not consistently given opportunities to problem-solve and reason in all classes.
- Teachers are increasingly making better use of assessment information to help plan next steps in learning for pupils. This is most successful when planning teaching for the whole class. However, there is inconsistency when pupils are given independent

tasks. Sometimes they are too hard for some pupils or too easy for the most able pupils.

- Support for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND is good. These pupils are well-supported with their learning to ensure that they make the same progress as other pupils.
- Specialist teaching in PE and music leads to pupils being enthused and making good progress in these areas of the curriculum.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' welfare has the highest priority in this school. Pupils feel safe at school due to the excellent care they receive from adults. Pupils told inspectors that, 'There is always someone who will listen to you and help you.'
- Most pupils can talk about and understand the school's 'CAW qualities' of collaboration, aspiration, resilience, effort, excellence and respect. These qualities can be observed in action consistently around the school.
- Pupils enjoy the positions of responsibility that they can achieve, for example as members of the pupils' parliament or as ambassadors.
- Pupils know how to stay healthy by eating a balanced diet and taking regular exercise. They say that their teachers help them do this and they especially enjoy their PE sessions and taking part in extra-curricular activities.
- Although pupils report that bullying and the use of racist language do occasionally occur, they say that leaders deal with it quickly and effectively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Behaviour in lessons is very positive. Clearly established routines and high expectations mean that hardly any learning time is wasted. Pupils increasingly take pride in their work and present it neatly.
- Pupils normally walk sensibly along corridors and around the building and play together well outside. This is positive given the current restrictions imposed by ongoing building work. Inspectors observed some minor boisterous behaviour in the dining hall. Pupils confirmed that this does sometimes happen at unstructured times.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of how behaviour is managed in the school and know the rewards, sanctions and consequences.
- Some pupils display more challenging behaviour, but this is very well managed. Staff know these pupils well and often intervene before it happens. These incidents are carefully recorded and are reducing over time. Fixed-term exclusion is used

appropriately where there is no other option, but is reducing over time using alternative strategies such as seclusion.

- Leaders and staff have been resolute in their determination to improve attendance. They have taken every possible step to support and challenge parents to ensure that pupils attend regularly. As a result, attendance continues to improve slowly and incrementally. It is currently close to the national average. Persistent absent is reducing but is above the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Progress and attainment at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics have improved over time. Pupils who left Year 6 in 2018 made better progress than others nationally during key stage 2. In 2018, disadvantaged pupils also made better progress than other pupils nationally.
- While attainment is still low overall in all key stages, pupils have made substantial progress from their starting points in the core subjects of reading, writing and mathematics.
- The progress of current pupils is improving. Assessment information is used well to plan next steps in learning and this allows pupils to improve their knowledge and skills. Disadvantaged pupils make the same or better progress than others in their class. However, there is some inconsistency where teaching is not as strong.
- Children make strong progress from very low starting points in Reception to ensure that most are ready and well-prepared to start Year 1.
- In recent years, not all pupils who met the phonics screening standard in Year 1 progressed to meet the expected standard in reading at the end of Year 2. A more focused approach to phonics teaching in key stage 1 means that current pupils are making stronger progress than in the past.
- Pupils with SEND make broadly the same progress as others with similar starting points. Pupils who have significant additional needs have appropriate plans in place to help them make smaller steps of progress.
- In the wider curriculum, pupils make the strongest progress in practical subjects like PE and music. Pupils also develop their knowledge well in history and geography, including through the study of classical civilisations beyond the national curriculum. Some subjects have not historically been given the prominence they deserve. As a result, pupils have been less well-prepared for the next stages of their education in computing and modern foreign languages.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Children make a very strong start to school life in the Reception classes. Over two thirds of children join the school with skills and knowledge that are below those found typically. By the end of the Reception, nearly two thirds of children achieve a good level of development. This demonstrates that children have made very strong progress in all areas of learning and are well prepared for the challenges of Year 1. The

proportion of children achieving a good level of development has improved year-on-year.

- Throughout the indoor and outdoor spaces there are high levels of engagement, both through adult-led activities and children leading their own learning and play. Children can prolong activities for a sustained period because they are highly interested in what they are doing. The environment is extremely well organised and promotes learning well.
- Adults all model and promote learning well. They ask questions to encourage pupils to verbalise their learning and play. They ask children to answer in full sentences as an early stepping stone to learning to write in sentences.
- Almost constantly, adults can be heard reinforcing phonics and number skills. Not a moment of time is wasted to develop these key skills.
- Children learn and play well together. There are positive relationships throughout the setting. Firm foundations about the way children are expected to behave are laid in Reception and these are built upon as the children progress into Year 1. Strong foundations in learning are not yet built on exceptionally well in key stage 1.
- There is a very strong emphasis on developing children's cultural understanding. For example, during the inspection, there was a magnificent practical retelling of the story of Rama and Sita acted out by a large group of children working together, narrated by a teacher. Elsewhere, children made diva lamps and decorated attractive Rangoli patterns on the floor to mark the celebration of Diwali.
- Until now, very few children have exceeded the early learning goals. This year the most able pupils are making stronger progress towards this. For example, some of the most able boys are writing in sentences.
- Leaders responsible for the early years accurately evaluate the strengths in the environment and provision. Due to recent staff changes, they have provided additional training to ensure that all the welfare requirements are met. They reflect on their practice daily and look to make constant improvements.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the start to school life their children make. Communication before they start school and during the first year is strong.
- Leaders take every possible action to safeguard children in the early years from harm.

School details

Unique reference number	139677
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10053367

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	373
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Ron Packard
Executive headteacher	Paul Reilly
Head of school	Mark Church
Telephone number	01273 681377
Website	www.caw.brighton-hove.sch.uk
Email address	admin@caw.brighton-hove.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 June 2015

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has changed sponsor. It joined Aurora Academies Trust in September 2017. The school is led by the head of school on a daily basis. The executive headteacher is also the trust director of education.
- The trust board has delegated much of its authority to the local academy board whose members are responsible for standards. The trust board retains control of finance and senior staffing decisions.
- The school provides a breakfast club before school each day.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Approximately two thirds of pupils are disadvantaged.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is approximately double the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes; most observations were carried out with senior leaders. When visiting lessons, inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and looked at their workbooks. Additionally, inspectors scrutinised a range of pupils' work from across the curriculum.
- Inspectors met formally with senior leaders, subject leaders, the early years leader, the SEND coordinator and the welfare manager. They also held informal discussions with other members of staff.
- To evaluate the quality of governance, the lead inspector held a telephone conference with three trustees, met five members of the local academy board (including the chair) and met with the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors met formally with a group of key stage 2 pupils and talked informally to pupils around the school, including at lunchtime. They heard some pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read.
- A wide range of documentation relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, the quality of teaching, governance and the curriculum was scrutinised.
- Inspectors considered 10 responses to the confidential staff questionnaire.
- To gain their views of the school, inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the inspection, noted the school's own recent parent survey and considered the seven responses to the online questionnaire Parent View.

Inspection team

Lee Selby, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Emma Sanderson	Ofsted Inspector
Bill James	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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