

City United Academy (CUA)

10 Edward Street, Birmingham, West Midlands B1 2RX

Inspection dates

20 June 2019

Overall outcome

The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(2) and 2(2)(a)

- At the time of the previous inspection in March 2018, the curriculum on offer was too narrow. Schemes of work in English and mathematics lacked detail and did not enable teachers to plan effectively.
- A written curriculum policy is in place. Its stated intention is to provide a broad curriculum, but this has not yet been implemented. Pupils in key stage 3 are not receiving their full curriculum entitlement. Options for pupils in key stage 4 remain very limited. Leaders agree that the curriculum on offer is too restrictive. Their plans to address this are in the early stages of development.
- Pupils currently study English, mathematics, biology, religious education (RE) and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Humanities and technological subjects are not taught. Very few lessons relate to aesthetic or creative subjects.
- Physical education (PE) is not taught in a structured way. Pupils can access regular physical activity, but they have too few opportunities to develop new skills across a range of sports.
- Schemes of work are available for the subjects taught. These are based on the requirements of the national curriculum or examination board specifications. All staff can access these schemes of work. However, teachers do not use them consistently well to plan effective lessons to meet the different needs and abilities of the pupils.
- Pupils' needs are assessed on entry to the school, using information from the referring agency, parents, carers and the pupils themselves. This helps to inform the individual pupil's timetable and class grouping. Some lessons are well matched to pupils' needs and abilities, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, this is not consistently the case and some pupils, including those who are most-able, are not routinely challenged to make the progress of which they are capable.
- These standards remain unmet.

Paragraph 2(2), 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii) and 2(2)(e)(iii)

- Impartial careers guidance is available to pupils in Year 11. Younger pupils have

opportunities to complete application forms and attend mock interviews. However, advice is not sufficient or timely enough to help pupils to make informed choices. For example, pupils are not fully aware of the potential career options open to them.

- In some cases, pupils do have a clear ambition, but they are not aware of the qualifications that they require to help them achieve it. The narrow curriculum on offer also restricts pupils' opportunities to fulfil their potential.
- Leaders do not have accurate information relating to pupils' destinations after they leave school. Most pupils go on to college, but leaders do not know what courses they are following or how many of these places are sustained until the course is completed.
- These standards are unmet.

Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(d) and 3(g)

- At the time of the previous inspection, work set for pupils was not matched closely enough to their needs. Pupils did not make consistently strong progress in English and mathematics. Assessment systems were not effective in providing a reliable measure of progress for pupils.
- Where teaching is effective, such as in biology, teachers use a range of methods to engage pupils' interests effectively and time is used well. Lessons have clear objectives, which help the pupils to make sense of what they are learning. Adults are deployed appropriately to support pupils' learning. In these lessons, pupils make secure progress. However, the quality of teaching is inconsistent. Some lesson content is not sequenced well enough and, as a result, pupils make limited progress.
- Leaders are continuing to develop an assessment system to meet the school's needs. This is still in its infancy. Baseline assessment information is shared with staff and pupils' needs are regularly reviewed at staff briefing sessions. Pupils' progress is tracked but it is not clear exactly what is being assessed or how reliable these assessments are. There is little evidence that teachers use this information to inform their future planning.
- In English lessons, pupils are encouraged to read out loud. This is done well, and many pupils read fluently. Adults support pupils effectively by encouraging them to ask questions and discuss the text. This helps the pupils to understand the vocabulary used within the text. However, writing expectations are more variable. For example, younger pupils have lessons focusing on spelling, grammar and punctuation, but the impact of these on their writing is not clear and there is less evidence of progress over time.
- In mathematics, when pupils repeat topics there is limited evidence of them developing their skills or making progress. Pupils have too few opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in a range of contexts or to solve mathematical problems.
- These standards remain unmet.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Paragraph 2(2), 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(i), 5, 5(b), 5(b)(iv), 5(b)(v) and 5(b)(vi)

- At the time of the previous inspection, the curriculum did not support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. The PSHE curriculum did not show how pupils would be taught about protected characteristics and the school was not

effective in preparing pupils for life in modern Britain.

- The school has a detailed, relevant and up-to-date PSHE curriculum in place. The policy is in line with the school's aim to 'nourish young people in our city'.
- The PSHE and RE curriculums are closely linked and help to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are taught about a range of cultures and world faiths. For example, during the inspection, pupils were encouraged to identify some similarities and differences between Christianity and Islam. Pupils have also recently visited local churches and a synagogue as part of their RE curriculum.
- Discrete lessons on the protected characteristics and fundamental British values are included within the PSHE scheme of work. These are also built into wider aspects of the curriculum. Displays include examples of pupils' written work about cultural differences, the rule of law and 'What is Great Britain?'.
- Considerable work is undertaken to help pupils to keep safe. This includes working closely with external agencies such as the police. Pupils are encouraged to think about the consequences of their actions and to focus on making positive choices, for example in connection with drug abuse or carrying weapons.
- Trips, which are open to all pupils, take place termly. Recent examples include visits to local museums and places of worship. Where practical, trips are linked to the curriculum. In some cases, the main purpose of a trip is to widen pupils' life experiences, develop their self-confidence and to give them a 'sense of occasion'.
- The school helps to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- These standards are now met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7a and 7b

- At the time of the previous inspection, safeguarding policies and practices did not meet statutory requirements. Record-keeping was not robust and staff training was not up to date.
- The designated safeguarding lead and two further members of staff have completed appropriate safeguarding training to support them in their roles. All staff have completed relevant training based on the school's safeguarding policy and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. Staff are clear on their roles and responsibilities in relation to keeping pupils safe from harm.
- The school's safeguarding policy is up to date and takes into account current government requirements.
- The school works effectively with external agencies, as and when necessary, including the local authority designated safeguarding officer and the police. Referrals to outside agencies are conducted in a timely manner and followed up. However, record-keeping remains weak and leaders' actions to keep pupils safe are not always recorded. During the inspection, inspectors reviewed five pupils' files and found gaps in record-keeping in four of them. All referral information is kept confidential and is stored in a secure manner.
- An up-to-date exclusion policy is in place. Incidents of poor behaviour are recorded in line with requirements. There has been a small number of fixed-term exclusions this

academic year. In each case, leaders followed the exclusions policy correctly.

- Attendance remains too low. Figures for the current academic year show attendance to be 68%. On the day of the inspection, attendance was 33%. Lessons begin at 8.30am, but very few pupils are in school at that time. Many pupils do not arrive in school until after 9.30am. As a result, pupils are regularly missing lessons. Leaders are taking action to try to improve attendance. For example, the school minibus is used to collect pupils from their homes and leaders offer a range of rewards and incentives to try to boost attendance. These approaches had some success earlier in the year, but leaders recognise a fresh approach is needed. Leaders take steps to assure themselves that pupils who are not in school are accounted for and safe. There are no pupils on part-time timetables.
- Pupils spoken to feel happy and safe in school. They trust staff and have good relationships with them. During the inspection pupils were respectful and behaved well.
- These standards remain unmet.

Paragraph 11 and 14

- The school has a written health and safety policy. Leaders take appropriate steps to ensure that the policy is implemented effectively to keep staff and pupils safe.
- Pupils are well supervised throughout the day. Arrival and dismissal arrangements are thorough. These include daily security checks on arrival.
- Pupils cannot leave the premises without the knowledge of staff.
- Trustees are kept informed of any incidents involving health and safety. They review procedures to mitigate the risk of any similar incident reoccurring.
- These standards remain met.

Paragraph 12

- At the time of the previous inspection, the school had not completed all the recommendations made in a fire risk assessment.
- School records show that they now comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Appropriate checks are completed regularly.
- Staff have completed fire-awareness training.
- This standard is now met.

Paragraph 16, 16 (a) and 16 (b)

- At the time of the previous inspection, the school did not have a written risk assessment policy.
- A risk assessment policy is now in place. Sample risk assessments show that staff are taking appropriate action to reduce any risks to pupils. Staff take into consideration the specific needs and vulnerabilities of pupils when taking them off-site.
- These standards are now met.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Paragraph 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(iii)

- The single central record was reviewed to ensure that the appropriate pre-employment checks had been made for new members of staff and newly appointed trustees. All the required information was available. However, the results of Section 128 checks were not recorded on the single central record for members of staff.
- These standards are therefore not met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 23(1), 23(1)(c), 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(2), 29(1), 29(1)(a) and 29(1)(b)

- At the time of the previous inspection, the premises were not fit for purpose because there was no medical room or shower facilities for use after PE lessons. There was no access to outdoor space for pupils to use for recreation or physical exercise.
- The school has identified a room with toilet and washing facilities to use as a dedicated medical room. This includes a bed so that pupils who are feeling unwell can lie down. Should an ambulance or medical treatment be required, there is easy access to this room from the car park at the rear of the building.
- The school does not have any outdoor space suitable for recreational use. However, pupils make daily use of a nearby park. If pupils do not wish to do this, they are encouraged to go for a short walk accompanied by staff.
- Currently PE lessons take place off-site, using private sports facilities. These include access to changing rooms and showers. From September 2019, the school will have access to its own playing field with changing and shower facilities.
- These standards are now met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1) and 32(1)(c)

- The school does not have a website, so the safeguarding policy is not available online. However, it is available to parents and carers on request, in line with requirements.
- These standards remain met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)

- At the time of the previous inspection, leaders and trustees had not ensured that the school met the independent school standards. Several standards were unmet, highlighting weaknesses in safeguarding, health and safety and the quality of education provided.
- Progress has been made in some areas and some standards previously unmet are now met. However, several standards, including those linked to safeguarding and the quality of teaching and learning, remain unmet. Additionally, some standards met at the time of the previous inspection are no longer met.
- The school's action plan, rejected by Department for Education (DfE) in October 2018, has not been re-written. Leaders have created a self-evaluation document and a development plan but neither of these documents are fit for purpose. The self-evaluation document does not consider the quality of teaching, leadership or pupils' outcomes. The actions in the development plan are too general and the plan lacks any detail as to how

the improvements will be achieved.

- Leaders do have a system in place to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. This includes formal and informal observations of teaching and reviews of pupils' work. However, the process is relatively new, and it is not clear what the impact of this is on pupils' outcomes.
- The headteacher has recently reviewed the appraisal system for staff. It is too soon to see the impact of this on the quality of teaching. Staff can access relevant training to support their needs. This includes the opportunity to work with some of the schools that commission places for pupils.
- Trustees are not currently effective in holding leaders to account. They have an overview of the school's strengths and areas that require improvement, but they do not provide sufficient strategic leadership or direction. Meetings are infrequent, and minutes do not reflect discussions or decisions made. However, leaders and trustees are aware of the need to strengthen governance, and they have recently recruited two new directors to the board of trustees.
- These standards remain unmet.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection, as set out in the annex of this report. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	137819
DfE registration number	330/6010
Inspection number	10100493

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School status	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	34
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	City United Limited
Chair	Janette Plummer
Headteacher	Sandra Jones
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,500 to £40,000
Telephone number	07753 196 453
Website	n/a
Email address	sandra.jones@cityunited.org
Date of previous standard inspection	20 to 22 March 2018

Information about this school

- City United Academy is run by City United Limited, which is the proprietor of the school. A number of directors have changed since the previous inspection in March 2018.
- The school provides education for pupils between the ages of 11 and 16. It is registered by the DfE to accommodate up to 35 pupils. The school moved to its current site in January 2018. The school does not use any other premises.
- Pupils are referred to the school either by a local authority or a local secondary school. At the time of the previous inspection, some pupils were educated off-site. This is no longer

the case. Some pupils are dual registered with their home school.

- Pupils attending City United Academy typically have a range of social and emotional difficulties and many have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion from their previous setting. Around one third of pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school aims to address the individual social, emotional and learning needs of its young people by developing their self-esteem and helping them to make appropriate choices. This is to enable them to reintegrate into school or continue into further education and employment. The school's aim is to 'nurture young people of our city'.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school was first registered by the DfE in January 2012. The school's most recent inspection was a standard inspection, which took place in March 2018.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the DfE as the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged not to comply with at its previous inspection.
- This was the first progress monitoring inspection since the previous standard inspection in March 2018.
- The inspection was carried out without notice.
- Following the inspection in March 2018, the DfE required the school to prepare a statutory action plan. The action plan was evaluated by Ofsted in October 2018. It was not acceptable. The plan was subsequently rejected by the DfE.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and the chair of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors observed teaching, looked at samples of pupils' work and spoke informally to pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including: safeguarding policies and related information; the school's single central record; documents relating to health and safety, fire safety and risk assessments; curriculum plans and schemes of work; governance; and the school's development plan.

Inspection team

Catherine Crooks, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Susan Hickerton	Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain un-met at this inspection

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work–
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are–
 - 2(2)(a) full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school—
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

Standards that were met at the previous inspection, but are now judged to not be met at this inspection

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are—
 - 2(2)(e) for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that—
 - 2(2)(e)(i) is presented in an impartial manner;
 - 2(2)(e)(ii) enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and
 - 2(2)(e)(iii) helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 21(3) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is—
 - 21(3)(a) in relation to each member of staff ("S") appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether—
 - 21(3)(a)(iii) a check was made to establish whether S is subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction.

The school now meets the following requirements of the independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are—
 - 2(2)(d) personal, social, health and economic education which—
 - 2(2)(d)(i) reflects the school's aim and ethos; and
 - 2(2)(d)(ii) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the

protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act

- 2(2)(i) effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 5 The standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school is met if the proprietor–
 - 5(b) ensures that principles are actively promoted which–
 - 5(b)(iv) enable pupils to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England;
 - 5(b)(v) further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures;
 - 5(b)(vi) encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 14 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that pupils are properly supervised through the appropriate deployment of school staff.
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 23(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 23(1)(c) suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged 11 years or over at the start of the school year who receive physical education.
- 24(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including–
 - 24(1)(a) accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils;
 - 24(1)(b) accommodation for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils, which

includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility; and

- 24(2) The accommodation provided under sub-paragraphs (1)(a) and (b) may be used for other purposes (apart from teaching) provided it is always readily available to be used for the purposes set out in sub-paragraphs (1)(a) and (b).
- 29(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable outdoor space is provided in order to enable–
 - 29(1)(a) physical education to be provided to pupils in accordance with the school curriculum; and
 - 29(1)(b) pupils to play outside.

Part 6. Provision of information

- 32(1) The standard about the provision of information by the school is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 32(1)(c) particulars of the arrangements for meeting the standard contained in paragraph 7 are published on the school's internet website or, where no such website exists, are provided to parents on request.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Parent View

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2019