

Inspection of a good school: Civitas Academy

90a Great Knollys Street, Reading, Berkshire RG1 7HL

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 February 2024

Outcome

Civitas Academy continues to be a good school.

The executive headteacher of this school is Salima Ducker. This school is part of REACh2 Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Cathie Paine, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gavin Robert.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at this school. Civitas means community and this is core to the wholly inclusive ethos. Pupils say, 'no matter what happens or where you come from, you will still be part of this community'.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Leaders' expectations for the 'Civitas Child' are well known by all and demonstrated through pupils' excellent conduct. From their first days in the early years, children learn important routines and how to work successfully with their friends. In lessons, pupils sit attentively and engage actively with their learning. They value education, recognising the opportunities it provides them, with pupils aspiring to be scientists and pilots.

The school's extra-curricular club offer is extensive. Attendance at these clubs is high. Pupils relish exploring their interests in a range of clubs including dodgeball, debate and Warhammer. Inspirational speakers such as Olympians and Paralympians regularly visit and promote active, healthy lifestyles. Trips and experiences such as the recent Year 6 residential to the Isle of Wight are carefully planned to ensure maximum participation.

Parents are overall very happy with the provision, with one summing up the views of many stating that this is a 'great school that promotes diversity and respect'.

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

The provision for pupils' personal development is excellent. Central to this are the global citizenship themes which are embedded across the curriculum. These themes give pupils a sense of who they are, how they fit into this world and how they can contribute to their

community. The accompanying comprehensive personal, social and health education curriculum helps pupils to understand how to keep healthy, be a good friend and discuss their feelings. Pupils benefit from the planned '11B411' experiences, such as working with The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, which enrich their learning. Pupils take an active role in their school and are proud of the many leadership roles they undertake. They value the voice these give them to bring about improvements. Elected school councillors and members of the trust's 'Pupils' Parliament' are honoured to represent their peers. These opportunities develop within pupils a deep sense of belonging and respect for others' views and beliefs.

Leaders have created an ambitious curriculum. They have identified and carefully sequenced the key knowledge pupils are to learn. The high proportion of pupils for which English is an additional language are supported well. The school's highly effective approach to vocabulary, oracy and reading allows pupils to access the rich curriculum. Leaders have clear oversight of all subjects. They provide teachers, some of whom are new to the school or to teaching, with effective support and guidance. In turn, staff feel well supported by leaders and value the training and opportunities provided by the trust.

During learning, teachers' checks on pupils' understanding are used well to provide additional guidance or to add further challenge. Teachers break down complex ideas into manageable blocks for pupils. They ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are provided with the support outlined in their plans. Subject-specific vocabulary is also revisited at the beginning of all lessons to ensure pupils know and can correctly use technical terms, which aids their understanding. In the core curriculum, activities are planned well to ensure pupils can practise important skills to ensure rapid recall. For example, in mathematics, pupils have daily opportunities to revisit key number facts and reasoning skills to keep them fresh. As a result, pupils gain the knowledge and understanding that will prepare them well for future learning.

Pupils develop a thirst for reading from early on. Leaders have prioritised early phonics teaching. Children from their first days in school quickly learn the sounds that letters make. Their delight is evident when reading their first words. Expert staff deliver the phonics curriculum very well. They ensure pupils get the support they need to begin to read with fluency and comprehension. Books are enjoyed throughout the school, with libraries and class book corners full of exciting texts that build on pupils' interests. Older pupils describe books read to them by adults as 'captivating'. As a result, pupils read a range of authors and are keen to recommend their favourite books to others.

Assessment is well established in English and mathematics and is used to identify those pupils requiring additional help, including the accurate identification of pupils with SEND. However, assessment is not as fully in place for some other subjects. Work is already underway to ensure teachers have the information they need when planning new topics and to adapt activities to address gaps in pupils' understanding.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessment within subjects other than English and mathematics is not yet consistently in place. Teachers are therefore unable to identify and quickly remedy any gaps in pupils' prior understanding before introducing new learning. The school needs to put in place an effective assessment process across foundation subjects.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2018.

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	140379
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	10296395
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	401
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gavin Robert
CEO of the trust	Cathie Paine
Headteacher	Salima Ducker (executive headteacher)
Website	www.civitasacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	18 and 19 September 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school's before- and after-school childcare provision is managed by an external provider.
- The school does not currently use alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. She also met with a member of the governing body and representatives of the trust.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography.

- For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to them informally during social times.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector scrutinised a wide range of information, including a selection of the school's records. The inspector spoke to staff and pupils about safeguarding and looked at how pupils learn to keep themselves safe. The inspector spoke to the safeguarding leader about the recording and reporting of safeguarding incidents.
- The inspector met some parents to gain their views of the school. She reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. The inspector also took account of staff responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Laura James, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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