

Inspection of Cedars Academy

Cedars Avenue, Birmingham, West Midlands B27 6JL

Inspection dates:	8 and 9 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Ryan Lawrence. This school is part of Robin Hood Multi 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, Steve Taylor, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Martin Collard.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel safe and love coming to this vibrant, busy school. The school's 'PRIDE' values of purpose, respect, independence, determination and equality are understood and lived by all.

There is an impressive culture of inclusion. Every pupil is highly valued and staff go above and beyond to make sure everybody feels safe, supported and respected. Staff know pupils exceptionally well and are particularly skilled at supporting their emotional health. This results in relationships in school being highly positive.

The school has high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teachers insist that work in books is of high quality. Their work shows that pupils listen, take care and strive to do their best.

Pupils are courteous; they treat one another with respect. Pupils conduct themselves well. If pupils have any difficulties, staff resolve them quickly.

Pupils are proud of their school and are rarely absent. There is no tolerance for absence here; staff work tirelessly to ensure pupils come to school as often as possible. Pupils' absence has reduced steadily in recent years.

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

The school's curriculum is ambitious and meaningful. Across all subjects, the school has set out the key knowledge and skills pupils need to learn. Regular opportunities to revisit previous learning usually help pupils to know and remember more. In mathematics, for example, pupils can readily recall key knowledge, including their multiplication tables. They use this effectively when solving mathematical problems. In a few subjects, planned opportunities for pupils to revisit their prior learning are less effective and their recall is not as secure.

In 2023, the proportion of pupils at the end of key stage 2 who attained the expected standard in reading was below the national average. However, many of these pupils joined the school at an early stage of learning to speak English. The school, using high-quality texts to familiarise pupils with a wide range of literature, alongside developing pupils' oracy and vocabulary, helps pupils make good gains in learning English. Teachers model language in lessons with deliberate precision and accuracy. Pupils' spoken communication develops well because of this.

The school provides well for pupils at an early stage of learning to read. The school knows that reading is vital for pupils to access the rest of the curriculum. Adults who teach phonics are highly skilled because the school has ensured they are trained well. Pupils are quickly supported to become fluent readers. There is a particular strength in how well the school teaches reading to those pupils who are at an early stage of learning to speak English. Considering their starting points, these pupils achieve well and are quickly able to access the wider curriculum. Pupils mostly display very positive attitudes to learning,

although sometimes they lose focus in lessons where teachers have been less successful in helping pupils understand the purpose of their work.

Another standout feature is how effectively the school identifies and supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff are expert at providing them with targeted support, enabling pupils with SEND to achieve well.

Pupils benefit from an exceptional range of extra-curricular activities. These include visiting the Houses of Parliament, a residential trip and working alongside a local MP. The school has carefully curated a bespoke offer of one hundred cultural and personal development activities that reflect pupils' needs, aspirations and experiences. For example, in Year 5 pupils become presenters and in Year 6 they become entrepreneurs. These add to the extensive personal, social and health education curriculum. Pupils understand equality thoroughly and celebrate difference. They are extremely well prepared to become active citizens in modern Britain.

The school is an integral part of the community. It is exceptionally successful at engaging with parents and carers, who speak highly of the support it offers them. The school and trust highly value the staff in this learning community. They have created an impressive culture of continual professional learning and development. Staff become highly qualified and expert in those aspects of education that are most useful for this school. Research is a key part of a drive for continual improvement. The strategic oversight here is exceptional.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has worked hard to build retrieval practice into lessons and this is proving effective. However, in a small number of subjects, this is not done as effectively, and pupils do not retain key knowledge securely. The school should ensure that the strong retrieval practice seen in most subjects is equally effective in all subjects so that pupils know and remember more across the curriculum.
- Sometimes, pupils lose focus in lessons because teachers have not ensured that pupils are clear about the purpose of their work. This means that their learning is not maximised. The school should ensure pupils know the purpose and value of what they are learning in order to help them remain engaged and demonstrate positive attitudes in lessons.

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 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	143088
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10344090
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	322
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Martin Collard
CEO of the trust	Steve Taylor
Headteacher	Ryan Lawrence
Website	www.cedarsacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	25 and 26 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Robin Hood Multi Academy Trust.
- There has been a change of headteacher since the last inspection.
- The school provides before-school care.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth-form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator.
- 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, English, science and geography. 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.
- Inspectors visited lessons in some other subjects. They also spoke to pupils about their learning in some other subjects.
- An inspector met with the chair of trustees and those responsible for governance.
- An inspector met with the CEO, the director for school improvement and a school improvement partner.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They spoke formally with groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text responses. Inspectors also took account of responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- The lead inspector reviewed a range of documents, including school improvement plans, the school website and minutes from governors' meetings.
- An inspector spoke to parents at the school gate.

Inspection team

Gareth Morgan, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Graeme Rudland	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Orgill	Ofsted Inspector

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