

Westminster City School

Address: 55 Palace Street, London, SW1E 5HJ

Unique reference number (URN): 138312

Inspection report: 19 May 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- Not met: The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils achieve highly across the school. They build strong knowledge across the breadth of subjects. The curriculum is well organised and teaching helps pupils to remember important ideas. Pupils, and students in the sixth form, produce work of a high standard. This is reflected in above average attainment in national examinations which has been sustained over time. Pupils can talk confidently about what they have learned and how their teachers help them improve.

Disadvantaged pupils achieve well, particularly in GCSE English and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged make suitable progress through the curriculum from their starting points. Pupils gain relevant qualifications which enable them to move on to destinations that are well suited to their interests and aspirations. This is tracked carefully by the school. Pupils are extremely well prepared for their next steps because they gain the knowledge, skills and confidence that they need.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Pupils attend school regularly. The attendance of pupils who face significant barriers, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, is above the national average. Many pupils travel long distances to attend the school. Leaders track pupils' attendance closely and act early when patterns change. Pupils who are at risk of being absent for longer periods receive tailored help. The support that pupils receive for their social and emotional needs is consistent and makes a tangible difference. Leaders check the impact of this work and adjust their approach when needed. As a result, pupils attend well and understand why attendance matters.

Behaviour is calm and respectful across the school. Pupils move around the site sensibly. Lessons start promptly and classrooms are orderly and focused on learning. Staff apply routines consistently. Pupils feel that behaviour has improved over time and that adults deal with issues fairly. Pupils feel safe and know who to speak to if they have concerns. Leaders use detailed information to identify behaviour patterns. Staff make reasonable adjustments so that pupils can regulate their behaviour and stay in lessons. The rate of suspension has reduced over time. Incidents of discriminatory language have also fallen because leaders teach pupils why such behaviour is harmful. Bullying is rare but, when it happens, staff act quickly to ensure that it stops.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders provide clear direction for the school. They have a clear, shared understanding of the school's strengths and areas that they intend to improve further. Some key areas of the school's work have been improved since the last inspection, including approaches to behaviour and inclusion. Leaders at all levels want the very best for pupils at the school. Leaders check the quality of education provided closely. They have a deep understanding of the barriers many pupils face. They use this knowledge and partnership engagement to

shape their decisions. Their work to improve support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is making a clear difference. Systems for identifying needs are more precise.

A comprehensive professional learning programme for staff is carefully tailored to the needs of pupils and the aspirations of staff. Teachers receive regular training that helps them to deliver the curriculum well and to understand pupils' needs. Leaders check the impact of this training and adapt it when needed. Staff feel that their workload is manageable. They are confident that leaders listen to their concerns. Early career teachers and support staff appreciate the guidance and support that they receive.

Governors and trustees know the school's context and priorities well. They ask the right questions and check that leaders' actions are improving pupils' experiences. Trustees understand their statutory duties and fulfil them. They check safeguarding arrangements to make sure pupils are well supported and safe. Governors keep a close eye on the school's improvement work and hold leaders to account with clarity and care.

Post 16 provision

Strong standard 

Students in the sixth form achieve highly and benefit from a curriculum that is consistently well taught. They work with specialist staff who are experts in the delivery of their subjects. Teachers identify students who may be falling behind and identify strategies to help them to get back on track. This support helps students stay motivated and make steady progress through the curriculum. Students respond well to teachers' questions and produce work that meets the demands of their courses. Leaders check assessment information regularly and use it to shape timely intervention, where appropriate. Students with additional needs receive tailored support from well-qualified staff. Leaders and teachers work together to remove barriers so that all students take part fully in lessons and wider activities.

Students are extremely well prepared for their next steps. They receive helpful guidance about university, apprenticeships and employment. Staff know students' aspirations and provide them with the right advice at the right time. Students value this support and talk confidently about their plans for the future. The sixth form offers a wide range of wider opportunities. Students benefit from ambitious programmes linked to areas such as medicine, law, engineering and finance. They act as reading mentors for younger pupils and take part in enrichment activities across music, sport and the arts. These experiences help them to develop their confidence and leadership skills.

Expected standard

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum that supports pupils to build a secure body of knowledge over time. The curriculum is typically taught well. Where the school's agreed approaches to teaching are applied consistently, learning is most effective. There is an extensive programme of professional learning that supports teachers to build

their expertise. Leaders carefully monitor the quality of the curriculum and how it is delivered. They take effective action to act on any areas for improvement.

Teachers check how well pupils have learned the curriculum. They use these checks to identify and address any misconceptions. In most cases the curriculum is appropriately adapted to ensure that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, can successfully access their learning. Leaders are working with staff to ensure greater consistency in these approaches.

Pupils who have not yet secured the foundational knowledge in reading are well supported to catch up with their peers. A phonics-based programme is in place to further support pupils who need it. Regular reading sessions in tutor time and use of the school library helps pupils to develop their reading fluency and comprehension. Leaders make use of regular checks to identify pupils who may need additional support and to monitor the impact of this work.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have strengthened how they identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils with additional needs are identified quickly and accurately. Leaders have ensured that this is completed in a systematic way. They use this information to reduce pupils' barriers to learning. Working closely with specialists when needed, leaders provide helpful information to staff about how they can support individual pupils. Staff and leaders check that the support that is provided is helping pupils to learn and thrive.

Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils benefit from the provision offered by the school. For example, through access to a wide range of academic, social and emotional support. This helps pupils to achieve well, academically and personally, and to attend school regularly. Leaders review the impact of support that the school provides, including for disadvantaged pupils and those who are known to social care. They know what is working well and what needs to improve further. They take prompt action to bring about improvement. Leaders think carefully about when to make use of alternative provision. They ensure that it is only used when it is in the pupils' best interests.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils take part in a well considered personal development programme. The school's values shape daily life. Pupils learn about compassion, integrity and respect. They develop their confidence and character through assemblies, tutor time and wider experiences. Pupils have many opportunities to give back to the community, for example through fundraising for homeless charities.

Pupils learn about important topics in age-appropriate ways through personal, social, health and citizenship education lessons. This includes developing an understanding of healthy relationships, mental wellbeing and how to stay safe online and in the local community. These lessons help pupils to understand risks and how to make sensible choices. Pupils are taught to be reflective about their own beliefs and to be respectful of difference.

Careers education is effective. Pupils receive one-to-one guidance to help them to think through their next steps. They are taught about different routes into work, including

apprenticeships. Pupils that do not join the school's sixth form provision are provided with information about other academic, technical and vocational post-16 providers. The school has developed many links with businesses that offer valuable work experience opportunities and visit the school to speak with pupils. This helps to prepare pupils for life beyond school.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities beyond the academic. They talk with pride about clubs they attend and some trips and residential experiences. The extra-curricular offer has been recently enhanced. It includes activities related to the performing arts, sports, coding and career pathways. These are designed to nurture and enhance their talents and develop their interests. Leaders track participation so they can monitor take-up. Leaders know they now need to evaluate the impact of the programme more systematically so they can be sure it benefits all pupils. There are aspects of the provision that are carefully tailored to the needs of more vulnerable pupils.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils enjoy attending Westminster City School. Most pupils attend regularly. Leaders have set out a clear strategic vision for the school, rooted in the school's values of wisdom, integrity, compassion and excellence. These are embodied by pupils and students in the sixth form. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and positive. Staff know pupils well and have high expectations of them. Around the school, pupils behave calmly and show a high degree of respect for one another. In lessons, pupils are focused and ready to learn. Pupils understand the school's routines and behaviour systems and consistently follow them.

Pupils study a broad and ambitious curriculum. Teachers explain new learning clearly and help pupils to build their knowledge over time. Pupils achieve well in examinations, including in the sixth form. Leaders have developed a range of partnerships with international companies that provide significant additional resources and bursary opportunities for pupils. Sixth form students act as positive role models for younger pupils, including through reading support and mentoring.

Pupils are kept safe in school. They know who to speak to if they are worried and feel confident in raising concerns, for example through the school's online reporting system. Staff listen to pupils and support them well. Leaders have made significant improvements in support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Typically pupils' needs are well met.

The school provides a wide range of opportunities beyond lessons. Pupils value the opportunities that they have to participate in performing arts, sport and curriculum-based clubs. The school's location is fully utilised, for example by enabling pupils in the choir to perform at Westminster Abbey.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue their work to further develop the expertise of staff in making sure that the teaching of the curriculum is appropriately adapted to the needs of all pupils.
 - Leaders should further develop a coherently designed range of wider opportunities and track the uptake of these carefully to ensure that these consistently benefit all groups of pupils.
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About this inspection

The school is a single academy within the United Westminster and the Grey Coat Foundation, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Peter Broughton, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by William Wells.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with school leaders, staff and pupils during the inspection. They also held discussions with representatives of the governing body and the local authority.

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.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school has a non denominational Christian ethos.

The school makes use of one registered alternative provision.

Headteacher: Peter Broughton

Lead inspector:

Robert Grice, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Vikram Gukhool, Ofsted Inspector

Daniel Burton, Ofsted Inspector

Katharine Vincent, His Majesty's Inspector

James Waite, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 19 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

800

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

890

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

45.45%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

0.75%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

10.00%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	50.0%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50.9%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	58.8%	45.3%	Above

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	52.1	46.1	Above
2023/24 (final)	50.7	45.9	Above
2022/23 (final)	52.7	46.3	Above

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.09	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	0.37	-0.03	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	31.6%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	36.2%	25.8%	Above
2022/23 (final)	44.7%	25.2%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	45.3	34.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	45.8	34.6	Above
2022/23 (final)	45.5	35.0	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.12	-0.57	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.04	-0.57	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	31.6%	53.1%	-21.6 pp
2023/24 (final)	36.2%	53.1%	-17.0 pp
2022/23 (final)	44.7%	52.4%	-7.7 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	45.3	50.4	-5.1
2023/24 (final)	45.8	50.0	-4.2
2022/23 (final)	45.5	50.3	-4.8

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.12	0.16	-0.29
2022/23 (final)	0.04	0.17	-0.12

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (revised)	94%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	95%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	96%	94%	Average

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	38.12	35.00	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	36.10	34.38	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	34.49	34.16	Close to average

A-level value added

A score showing students' progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	0.1	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	0.0	0.0	Close to average

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	8.0%	8.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	7.6%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	9.3%	9.0%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	22.7%	23.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	25.2%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	33.7%	26.5%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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