Inspection of Brighton Aldridge Community Academy

Lewes Road, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 9PW

Inspection dates:	23 and 24 April 2025
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Sixth-form provision	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The principal of this school is Jack Davies. This school is part of the Aldridge Education 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 (CEO), Jane Fletcher, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Rupert Nichols.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school provides a welcoming environment for pupils. It is ambitious for all, setting challenging expectations. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Most work hard to meet those expectations and to be ready for the next step in their lives and learning.

Pupils have access to a wide range of subjects to build important skills and develop their interests. They like the broad sporting opportunities in the main school and the sixth form. This includes links to Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club, Sussex Cricket and the Russell Martin Academy, which feed into the school's sporting academies. The school offers many extra-curricular options. Pupils value the 'BACA 100' list of things to do at the school. Very strong links with the local community extend well beyond sport, for example giving pupils opportunities to work with employers in the city.

Close support for pupils' welfare is an important feature of school life. Pupils feel safe. The school goes to great lengths to ensure pupils have a trusted adult. Pupils say they are confident to talk with staff if they have any concerns. Effective guidance for those who require help to behave well means they usually get back on track. Parents are very positive about the improvements in their children's experiences at the school.

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

The school has continued its effective improvement drive since the last inspection, focusing its efforts on the most important weaknesses. The school has provided the right training and development for staff. This has led to clear improvements in key areas of the school's work. The quality of education has improved so that pupils' learning builds securely on what they know. As a result, they are now achieving well in subjects across the curriculum. Leaders and staff are ambitious to do more. They are taking the right action to ensure that pupils' current levels of achievement are fully reflected in their GCSE results. Staff feel well supported, including those new to teaching. The school works hard to engage with groups such as parents and carers, local authority services and other education providers. Those with governance oversight provide a strong balance of challenge and support for leaders.

The school offers an ambitious curriculum. It has a strong focus on key areas such as reading, alongside a wide range of options in key stage 4 and the sixth form. These include vocational subjects, which are popular with pupils. The school is encouraging more pupils to study the GCSE subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate. It offers a wide range of modern foreign language options, where past numbers have been lower.

Staff design pupils' subject learning well, ensuring it takes place in a logical sequence. They usually select appropriate tasks to support pupils' learning. The school has worked hard to sharpen how new learning is explained to pupils and the effectiveness of teachers' checks on how well pupils have understood it. This is much improved so that staff typically correct any misunderstandings. However, a few occasions remain where staff do not identify when pupils' understanding is less secure and tackle it.

The school identifies effectively any pupils who need support to read well. This includes through close work with primary schools when pupils join. The right support is provided so that pupils catch up. The school has improved how reading is supported in day-to-day lessons, so this now helps build pupils' confidence.

Effective training for staff has honed their support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). On most occasions, staff make good use of information about these pupils to adapt activities and support their achievement. While this is much more consistent than in the past, there remain occasional instances when activities are not suitably tailored to match pupils' needs. The school ensures that support for pupils with education and health care plans, including those who attend the Swan Centre, continues to be a strength. It is precisely focused on what they need.

The school has refined its approach to managing pupils' behaviour. Staff are well supported to apply the school's high expectations consistently. Pupils respond well to the system of consequences and rewards. This has sharply reduced the number of behavioural incidents and suspensions. Disruptions to learning are rare. Staff usually manage low-level disruption well. Sixth-form students behave very well and provide a positive model to others.

The school has a clear focus on pupils' attendance, especially among more vulnerable pupils. Although figures remain below the national average, the school has reduced overall absence effectively and the numbers of pupils who regularly miss school. Staff support pupils with poor attendance tenaciously so that these pupils' attendance improves. However, the school is not always effective in identifying any pupils whose attendance is becoming a concern early enough. This means action to avoid poor attendance could be even more effective.

A well-planned programme supports pupils' personal development. The school has worked hard to build an aspirational culture. Pupils learn to respect each other and to maintain healthy relationships with others. They value the school's diversity, enjoying events such as celebrating the food of different cultures. The school's major focus on sport means it is a significant element of the school's character. Pupils like this. The school offers good leadership opportunities for pupils, for example as prefects or leaders on climate awareness.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, teachers do not check that pupils have fully understood new learning effectively. This means uncertainties are not always remedied for pupils and their achievement is not as strong as it could be. The school should make sure that

assessment processes are fully effective in identifying gaps in pupils' knowledge so that teachers can address them.

- On occasions, teachers do not reflect the best practice in the school by adapting activities to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. As a result, when this happens, pupils do not learn as effectively as they could. Leaders should ensure the strong practice evident in the school in making adaptations is the norm across the school.
- Although the school has taken a range of effective actions to improve pupils' attendance, it does not consistently identify pupils at risk of poor attendance early enough. Preventative work, therefore, is not consistently targeted to head off the problem before attendance becomes a concern. The school should focus more sharply on early identification of issues with pupils' attendance to trigger support even more swiftly.

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	136164
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10379848
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	813
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	123
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Rupert Nichols
CEO of the trust	Jane Fletcher
Principal	Jack Davies
Website	www.baca-uk.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 March 2023

Information about this school

- Brighton Aldridge Community Academy is part of the Aldridge Education multi-academy trust.
- The school currently makes use of eight providers of alternative provision. Of these, one is registered and seven are unregistered.
- The school houses a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND called the Swan Centre. This is managed by the local authority. It has 22 places. All its pupils have an education, health and care plan. The two main areas of need are speech and language disorder and autism disorder.
- 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 qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the principal, senior staff, representatives of the multi-academy trust, the chair and members of the local governing committee and the CEO. Discussions were held with groups of staff and with a group of stakeholders, which included representatives from alternative education, the local community, parents and local authority services.
- Inspectors took account of responses to the Ofsted Parent View Survey and of surveys of staff and pupil opinions.
- To evaluate the quality of education, inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, English, physical education and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met groups of pupils and sixth-form students and observed breaktimes.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record of checks on adults; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has established an open and positive culture that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Stephen Long, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Vicky Matthews	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Baker	Ofsted Inspector
Michelle Smith	Ofsted Inspector

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