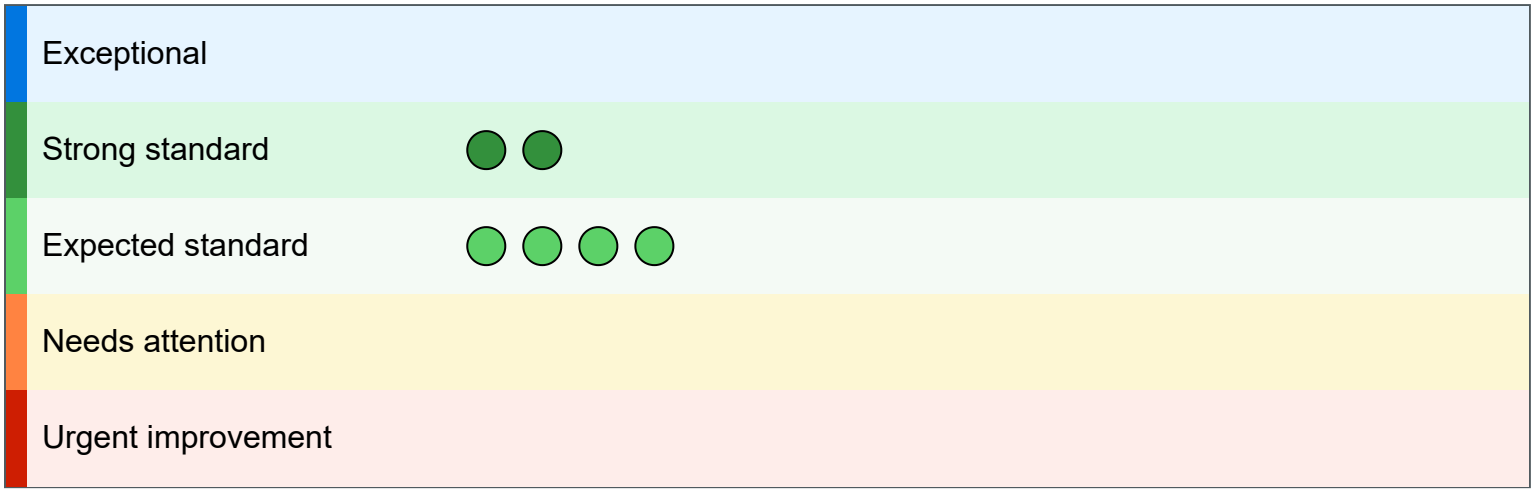
City Academy Norwich

Address: 299 Bluebell Road, Norwich, Norfolk, NR4 7LP

Unique reference number (URN): 135904

Inspection report: 13 October 2026



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

Inclusion

Strong standard

Leaders have created an inclusive culture of care. They have a profound knowledge of the school's local community and context. Leaders use this knowledge to support their pupils holistically and academically. Leaders have designed a suite of interventions to help pupils overcome barriers to learning. These interventions include forest school, nurture groups and support for their wellbeing. This means that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those from disadvantaged backgrounds flourish. This area of leaders' work ensures that pupils show a readiness to learn and are supported in doing so.

Leaders are rigorous in their monitoring of the progress that pupils make and adapt support where necessary. This monitoring includes frequent communication and meetings. Staff receive regular training and updates on how to support their pupils. As a result, interventions that they deploy are purposeful and have an impact.

Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported through detailed programmes to help them overcome this barrier to learning. This helps these pupils settle quickly and access the curriculum effectively.

Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND and those from disadvantaged backgrounds thrive alongside their peers. This is achieved through cultural celebrations, diverse curriculum texts and a comprehensive programme of inclusive personal development and wellbeing.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leaders have an exacting and insightful knowledge of the school's context and the local community. This means that the steps that they have taken to improve the school have been rapid and impactful. Leaders know their pupils well. As a result, pupils are well supported to make decisions in line with the school's ethos.

Pupils, parents and carers are appreciative of the support and stability that leaders provide. This is particularly beneficial for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Leaders are tenacious in their approach to ensuring that pupils are supported throughout all aspects of their work. Pupils and their families benefit from their open, reflective and caring leadership.

Leaders work cohesively and harmoniously with those responsible for governance. They work collaboratively to ensure that the school meets the emerging needs of its pupils. Trustees are aware of improvement priorities and visit regularly to assure themselves of progress. This is helping to secure improvements in national tests and examinations.

Leaders have designed a bespoke programme of professional learning. Consequently, staff are equipped to deliver high-quality lessons and adaptations. Staff note the improvements that the school has made. They feel supported in their workload and wellbeing.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils develop appropriate knowledge and skills through the well-designed curriculum. Leaders have created a culture of ambition through high expectations and academic aspirations. Leaders and staff are clear in their role to ensure that pupils are successful in their next steps.

Pupils produce work that demonstrates effective progress from their starting points. Leaders monitor the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from vulnerable backgrounds. This means that the progress they make is in line with that of their peers. As a result, they are well prepared and able to make the next steps in their education, employment or training.

Leaders ensure that those who join the school throughout the academic year are supported in making secure progress. This is through well-designed baseline testing. This allows them to modify their approach to ensure that they are able to benefit from the full curriculum.

Leaders continue to provide adaptations and interventions to ensure that outcomes in national tests and examinations improve further.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders continually refine their approach to attendance. They are clear about the need to constantly review approaches to ensure that they are having an impact. This, in turn, gives them a clear oversight of pupils' successes and any barriers that they may have in attending regularly. Consequently, pupils and their families place a high value on regular attendance. Leaders are outward-looking in their approach and use external agencies effectively. This means that their approach can be adjusted further. This reflective approach ensures that their work continues to have an impact.

Leaders have introduced clear systems for behaviour. They have ensured that these are well understood by staff, pupils and parents. Pupils have confidence in how teachers deal with behaviour in lessons and at social times. They can recognise the behaviour and rewards system and talk about it as part of their school life. Leaders' work around behaviour has reduced suspensions significantly. Pupils are appreciative of the consistency of staff in applying the behaviour and rewards systems in lessons and at social times.

Staff use a relationships-based approach to ensure that conversations around behaviour and attendance remain productive and have a positive impact on pupils and their families.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have remodelled the curriculum. It now includes a range of academic and vocational courses. This ensures that pupils are engaged in their learning. The courses that they follow align closely with their future aspirations. This fosters dedication from pupils

towards their outcomes and next steps. On occasion, there can be insufficient opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding or work collaboratively.

Teachers use the information available to them to make effective adaptations. Consequently, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from disadvantaged backgrounds receive the support that they need to progress through the curriculum.

Leaders have introduced mechanisms to monitor pupils' starting points and their progress through the curriculum. This ensures that any gaps in their learning are addressed. Pupils are confident in asking for help when they need it. Teachers use their specialist subject knowledge to deliver engaging lessons. They adapt their teaching to meet the emerging needs of their pupils. They use assessment to inform their planning. This ensures that any misconceptions that pupils have are addressed and overcome. Leaders have embedded clear routines. As a result, classrooms are calm and purposeful.

Leaders, alongside the trust and external support, have developed a comprehensive programme of professional learning. This allows teachers to keep up to date with the latest information to support their pupils fully.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed a coherent and well-structured programme of personal development and wellbeing. They consider the cohort and location of the school in its planning. This means that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain and for their next steps in education, employment or training. However, on occasion, some pupils have difficulty in communicating confidently when interacting with each other.

The curriculum teaches pupils about making safe decisions, healthy relationships and how to manage their emotions. Pupils are also clear around staying safe online and how to use technology appropriately. The school has built meaningful relationships with local employers, which allows pupils to benefit from a broad range of experiences. This, alongside innovative curriculum decisions, prepares pupils for life beyond school. Pupils and parents are also consulted in shaping this offer. This ensures that it remains relevant and engaging.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those from disadvantaged backgrounds benefit from the structure of the curriculum. Where appropriate, they benefit from additional support to help them develop holistically. This includes emotional literacy interventions and social stories. This helps them in developing resilience and higher aspirations.

Pastoral care is at the heart of leaders’ approach. Pupils and parents are consulted when considering next steps around behaviour and wellbeing. This helps to ensure that support is understood and effective. Leaders have developed an ‘Admin Workshop’, which supports pupils and their families to overcome barriers to learning

Pupils have many opportunities to experience the curriculum outside of the classroom. These include trips to local points of interest and visits to local employers. Pupils also benefit from a wide range of clubs. Leaders ensure that all pupils benefit fully from this offer

by ensuring that they are offered to all pupils. This means that pupils with SEND and those from disadvantaged backgrounds benefit fully.

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

Pupils are well known and valued in this vibrant and welcoming school. They speak positively about improvements that leaders have made. Pupils benefit from warm and supportive relationships with staff. Consequently, they are confident in approaching staff for support. This also helps pupils to develop a strong sense of belonging and community.

Pupils behave in a calm and purposeful way around the school. The well-considered learning environment provides spaces that support pupils' needs. This helps them overcome barriers to learning. Leaders seek pupils' views about the school and its future. This helps pupils to feel listened to and involved in school life.

Pupils value their teachers' specialist subject knowledge and approachable manner. This supports positive engagement in lessons and fosters a culture rooted in mutual respect. Pupils can articulate the school's expectations around behaviour. Pupils know the school's values of 'be kind, be curious and be courageous'. They appreciate the rewards system that praises them for demonstrating these qualities.

The programme for personal development and wellbeing is tailored to the school's context and location. Pupils can talk about topics that help them become responsible citizens in modern Britain. They value their input to the programme. This helps to ensure that it remains relevant to pupils' emerging needs and aspirations.

Pupils access an engaging curriculum that includes academic and vocational options. This means that they benefit from a range of learning opportunities that match their future aspirations.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from disadvantaged backgrounds are supported through highly effective support systems. These systems enable staff to make appropriate adaptations to help pupils access learning and participate fully in the broad and balanced curriculum.

Leaders have designed innovative methods to engage and assist pupils. Pupils enjoy tending to the on-site allotment or learning through forest school. These opportunities provide purposeful experiences beyond the classroom and help pupils to develop positive relationships with staff.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that their work continues to improve outcomes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- Leaders should ensure that teaching routinely provides opportunities for pupils to think deeply and work independently.
- Leaders should ensure that the personal development and wellbeing curriculum provides regular opportunities for pupils to develop the oracy skills to communicate confidently in a range of different situations.

About this inspection

This school is part of the Sapientia Education 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), Johnathan Taylor OBE, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Peter Rout.

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

This inspection took place on 13 and 14 October 2026.

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 the CEO, trustees, the headteacher, trust staff, senior leaders, staff and pupils during the inspection. Inspectors reviewed the findings of the parent, staff and pupil Ofsted online surveys.

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 headteacher took up their position in September 2022.

The school currently makes use of 2 unregistered alternative provisions.

Headteacher: Jo Franklin

Lead inspector:
Ross Marks, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
Susan Child, Ofsted Inspector
Louise Cooper, His Majesty's Inspector
Jane Bennett, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from different sources. More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 13 October 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

674
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: 1,063

School capacity

1,100
Close to 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)

58.16%
Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 30.4%

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

8.01%
Well above 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: 3.53%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

25.82%
Well above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 14.0%

Location deprivation

Above 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)	29.6%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	19.7%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	18.7%	45.3%	Below

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)	35.2	46.1	Below
2023/24 (final)	32.2	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	34.0	46.3	Below

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)	-0.75	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.70	-0.03	Below
2021/22 (final)	-0.64	-0.03	Below

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)	20.6%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	11.9%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	13.1%	25.2%	Below

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)	28.7	34.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	27.4	34.6	Below
2022/23 (final)	28.6	35.0	Below

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)	-1.09	-0.57	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	-1.05	-0.57	Below
2021/22 (final)	-0.63	-0.55	Close to average

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)	20.6%	53.1%	-32.6 pp
2023/24 (final)	11.9%	53.1%	-41.2 pp
2022/23 (final)	13.1%	52.4%	-39.3 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)	28.7	50.4	-21.7
2023/24 (final)	27.4	50.0	-22.6
2022/23 (final)	28.6	50.3	-21.7

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)	-1.09	0.16	-1.25
2022/23 (final)	-1.05	0.17	-1.22
2021/22 (final)	-0.63	0.15	-0.79

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)	87%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	79%	93%	Below
2021 leavers (revised)	81%	94%	Below

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
2025/26 (1 term)	10.0%	7.8%	Above
2024/25 (3 term)	11.7%	8.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	14.6%	8.9%	Above

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
2025/26 (1 term)	26.7%	21.5%	Above
2024/25 (3 term)	28.4%	23.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	39.6%	25.6%	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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