

Inspection of a good school: Cambridge Academy for Science and Technology

Robinson Way, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB2 0SZ

Inspection dates:

16 and 17 May 2023

Outcome

Cambridge Academy for Science and Technology continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending Cambridge Academy for Science and Technology. They are well prepared for careers in science, technology and computing. Pupils take part in many events, visits and practical activities related to different careers and higher education.

Pupils in all year groups enjoy taking part in different projects, such as on the uses of forensic science, as part of the 'challenge' curriculum. They learn how to work in teams, and to research, plan and present information, often to academics and employers.

Pupils are ambitious to succeed, and as a result, they work hard and develop increasing independence. They behave well. Pupils treat each other, and adults, with honesty, tolerance and respect. They see the diversity of the school as a real strength. There is very little bullying, and if it happens, pupils know that leaders will make it stop. Pupils feel safe and they know what to do to reduce risks to themselves and others.

There is a range of clubs for pupils to join, particularly around science. In addition, many pupils develop their resilience and confidence by taking part in, for example, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious and effective curriculum. It develops pupils' knowledge and skills for employment, particularly in the fields of science and technology.

Leaders identify the key knowledge that pupils need in each curriculum area. They have thought carefully about how to build on that knowledge, so that pupils know and remember more. Links between topics are often clearly identified. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and often use their experience of working in science and technology to make learning relevant and exciting.

Teachers regularly check pupils' learning. They build in tasks to recall and review previous knowledge, particularly at the start of lessons. Skilful questioning and checking of what pupils know are used well to identify gaps in knowledge. Teachers adapt their teaching to meet pupils' needs. Pupils respond to feedback from teachers and use this to help them improve their work.

Leaders use the information from the checks they do to identify when pupils are struggling to learn to read. Appropriately targeted support is put in place to support pupils. This successfully helps pupils improve their comprehension and fluency to apply to other areas of the curriculum.

Staff have high expectations of all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers know the specific needs of these pupils and how they learn. They adapt their teaching to ensure that all pupils can access the curriculum. Disadvantaged pupils are given support to attend trips. As a result, all pupils progress well.

Students in the sixth form follow a range of academic and vocational courses, including T levels. Students are taught a range of study skills to enable them to work independently. They use their own time productively to build on the knowledge they acquire in lessons.

Leaders and teachers encourage and expect pupils to behave as they would as adults at work. Pupils are focused and well behaved in and out of lessons. When a minority of pupils do not meet these expectations, they are given the individual support and encouragement they need. This supports them to improve their behaviour.

Pupils, including those in the sixth form, learn about relationships and sex education and health education through the personal, social and health education curriculum. They learn about different cultures and people's differences. However, pupils in key stages 3 and 4 do not have a secure enough knowledge of the features of world religions. This is because while pupils do explore some aspects in assemblies and lessons, leaders have not provided enough curriculum time to study different faiths in sufficient depth.

The careers programme provides pupils with many opportunities to gain experience of work. They receive useful guidance that enables them to make well-informed choices about the next stages of their education, employment or training.

Staff are given much support with their well-being, such as marking days and flexible working hours. They enjoy working at Cambridge Academy for Science and Technology.

Governors and the trust regularly check the quality of the curriculum and the performance of the school. They closely monitor how the school keeps pupils safe. Leaders provide training and opportunities for staff. These successfully develop staff knowledge and skills.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are aware of the risks pupils may face. Teachers and staff are given regular and up-to-date training so that they know how to keep pupils safe.

Staff know pupils well and regularly check their well-being to identify concerns. Leaders work closely with local services to provide support for pupils and families.

Leaders carry out robust checks on adults who wish to work at this school to ensure that they are safe to do so.

Pupils know how to report any concerns and they learn how to keep themselves safe. They study topics such as healthy relationships and consent and have a secure knowledge about how to stay safe when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils in key stages 3 and 4 do not always have a secure knowledge of the features of different religious faiths. This is because leaders have not provided enough time in the curriculum for pupils to study these in sufficient depth. Leaders should check that the curriculum content is sufficient to ensure that pupils learn what they need to and provide more curriculum time for pupils to build on and develop their knowledge fully in this curriculum area.

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 May 2017.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 140265 |
| Local authority | Cambridgeshire |
| Inspection number | 10255161 |
| Type of school | Technical |
| School category | University technical college |
| Age range of pupils | 13 to 19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 430 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 141 |
| Appropriate authority | The board of trustees |
| Chair of governing body | Tim Thornton |
| Principal | Danielle Pacey |
| Website | www.cambridgeast.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 16 and 17 May 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school opened in 2014 and has been a member of United Learning Trust since 2019.
- Cambridge Academy of Science and Technology is also supported by Baker Dearing Educational Trust as a university technical college.
- The number of pupils on roll has expanded considerably since the previous inspection.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school currently does not use any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, senior leaders, curriculum leaders and the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, computing and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met 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.
- The lead inspector met with the regional director of education of the trust and members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors met with leaders and reviewed school documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- The lead inspector considered the 89 responses and 88 free-text comments received during the inspection to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. He also considered the 31 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 103 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Steve Woodley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Likhon Muhammad

Ofsted Inspector

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