

# Inspection of The Cotswold Academy

The Avenue, Bourton-on-the-Water, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL54 2BD

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Inspection dates:	11 and 12 March 2025
The quality of education	<b>Outstanding</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is William Morgan. The school is a single-academy trust. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees chaired by Andrew Parker.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since March 2015. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The school's vision is to 'create brilliant futures' and this drives all areas of school life. Pupils and students in the sixth form leave for their future destinations with excellent qualifications and a wealth of experiences that have developed their individual characters. Pupils understand what it means to be an active citizen and are well prepared for adult life.

The 'Cotswold Way' clearly sets out the school's high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils hold themselves to these standards, enjoying their learning and showing courteous and respectful behaviour towards each other. On the rare occasions when behaviour disrupts learning, or is disrespectful, the school is swift to act. Pupils subsequently receive the help they need to understand why a behaviour was unacceptable, so incidents do not reoccur.

The 'pupil leadership groups' are fundamental to the life of the school. Six different committees bring together pupils of all ages to make a positive difference. These committees provide pupils with a voice in the school as well as with opportunities to support the wider community and local charities. Pupils are proud of their contributions. For example, pupils worked together to write 'The Cotswold Charter' because they wanted to make it clear that every pupil had the 'right to be you' at this school.

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

The school's curriculum is highly ambitious for all pupils. Within each subject, it is clear what pupils will learn as well as how their wider thirst for knowledge will be encouraged. For example, pupils' learning about practical artistic techniques is enhanced by the experience of viewing art in a gallery. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and ensure that they model and explain concepts clearly to pupils. Teachers are highly skilled at checking that pupils understand their learning, swiftly addressing any misconceptions that they identify.

Pupils confidently make links between topics and subjects. This breadth of knowledge means that pupils, including sixth-form students, can take part in sophisticated discussions about their learning. Pupils show highly positive attitudes towards their studies. Their depth of understanding leads to exceptionally high-quality work, particularly in the sixth form. Pupils are proud of their work and rightly so.

Reading is valued at this school. Pupils read regularly and enjoy sharing stories that cover a diverse range of themes. Pupils read non-fiction texts that have been carefully selected to promote discussion and debate. These opportunities help to shape pupils' understanding of the wider world. Pupils who need additional help to build their reading confidence and fluency benefit from bespoke and highly effective support. They catch up swiftly with their peers.

The school accurately identifies any special educational needs and/or disabilities that pupils may have. These pupils achieve well because of the high level of expertise staff

have in meeting their needs. 'The Link' provision helps to support pupils to engage with school, significantly improving the attendance of individuals. Pupils are keen to come to school because they enjoy their learning.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and look after their physical and mental health. For example, they show great understanding of online risks. The school is highly alert to pupils' local context and uses this information to continually enhance the personal development programme. For instance, the school works with the local police to raise pupils' awareness of the dangers of knife crime. Pupils learn about healthy and respectful relationships as well as about different religions. There is a culture of celebrating difference and individuality.

The extra-curricular opportunities at this school are impressive. Pupils develop their talents through a wealth of drama, music and sporting events. Clubs help pupils to develop new interests such as gardening, debating and chess. Visits to places of worship and robotics competitions are just some examples of how the curriculum is brought to life. Older pupils act as exemplary role models, helping to organise events and activities for younger pupils.

The school's careers programme is exceptional. Pupils have multiple opportunities to meet employers, gain work experience and visit further education providers. Sixth-form students are supported to be highly ambitious for their next steps into employment or higher education. Students value this encouragement, telling inspectors 'staff are invested in you, they care'.

The school has a relentless focus on providing the highest quality of education possible. Leaders and those responsible for governance ensure that the best interests of pupils sit at the heart of every decision. This is balanced against ensuring that the workload and well-being of staff and pupils remains a high priority. Parents and carers, pupils and staff are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They show great pride in being part of a school community that provides such an outstanding education.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136292
<b>Local authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10366170
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1506
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	314
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Andrew Parker
<b>Headteacher</b>	William Morgan
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cotswold.gloucs.sch.uk">www.cotswold.gloucs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	18 and 19 March 2015, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This school is the only school in a single-academy trust.
- 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 school uses one registered 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 discussions with school leaders at all levels. Inspectors also spoke with teaching staff, support staff and those responsible for governance.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils, including representatives from the pupil leadership groups and sixth-form students.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, art and religious education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussion 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.
- The sixth-form provision was considered through the deep dives as well as through additional activities during the inspection.
- Inspectors viewed a range of school documentation, including the minutes of governance meetings and the school's self-evaluation documents and improvement plans.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the view 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 considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, as well as responses to the staff survey and pupil survey.

## Inspection team

Sara Berry, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Mike Thomas	Ofsted Inspector
Jo Butler	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Leanne Mills	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
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