

Inspection of The Crypt School

Podsmead Road, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL2 5AE

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 March 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Nicholas Dyer. This school is part of the Crypt School Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Richard James.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding 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 May 2012.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils receive an exceptional quality of education and benefit from a rich offer to develop their talents and interests. They consistently live up to the school's high expectations for their academic achievement and broader development. The school motto is, 'flourish Cryptians,' and pupils do.

Pupils are highly motivated, resilient and considerate of others. They cooperate exceptionally well and actively support each other's well-being. Pupils and staff enjoy warm, courteous relationships. As a result, the school has a highly positive and respectful atmosphere.

Pupils, of all ages, make a significant contribution to the life of the school. Younger pupils are proud to hold positions, such as 'form captains' or 'sports captains.' Sixth - form students gather and represent pupils' views through 'pupil parliaments.' These opportunities, and many more, develop pupils as leaders and highly-active citizens.

Pupils make exceptionally good use of the extensive range of extra-curricular activities on offer. For example, pupils take part in engineering challenges, enjoy crochet, or learn sign language. They attend plays, lead debates, or compete in one of the many sporting activities on offer. The school ensures that there are no barriers to prevent pupils from participating in these opportunities.

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

Pupils gain an exceptional depth of understanding in all the subjects they study. The curriculum at key stages 3 and 4 is broad and ambitious, building on pupils' high prior attainment. In the sixth form, students follow a programme of study carefully tailored to their needs and ambitions. Pupils, of all ages, achieve demanding curriculum goals and learn how to be subject experts. For instance, they learn how scientists work and gain extensive scientific knowledge and understanding.

Teachers have high levels of subject knowledge. They understand what pupils need to know and when. For example, teaching in modern foreign languages ensures that pupils gain a strong foundation in grammar in Year 7. Pupils build on these foundations over time, gaining an extensive knowledge of idiomatic expressions later. The school ensures that the curriculum makes a significant contribution to pupils' wider development, such as through residential visits, field work and hearing from visiting speakers.

Teaching ensures that pupils understand and use academic vocabulary precisely. The school further develops pupils' knowledge of language through its literacy programme. Pupils, including sixth-form students, learn about the origins of words, for example. Across the curriculum, teaching checks pupils' understanding meticulously. This prevents pupils from developing misconceptions. Assessment is used effectively to establish pupils' starting points, such as when students join the

sixth form, and to check for gaps in pupils' learning. As a result, teaching is consistently well informed about the next steps in pupils' learning.

Disadvantaged pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve highly. The school accurately identifies pupils' needs and makes suitable adaptations. Consequently, pupils learn the curriculum confidently because their needs are met well.

Pupils behave impeccably. They arrive punctually and move around the school site sensibly. They maintain their highly positive attitudes to learning throughout the school day. Pupils play an active role in fostering a tolerant and respectful environment, where commonalities and differences are celebrated.

Pupils receive high-quality pastoral care. They are comfortable sharing concerns about themselves or others with staff. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe when online and know about what makes a healthy relationship, for example. Pupils know how to take care of their mental and physical health. Students in the sixth form are well prepared to move into their adult lives.

The school's personal development curriculum is exceptionally well conceived and organised. For example, pupils work towards gaining the school's 'Edge' award. They select from a broad range of activities, such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, public speaking and take part in 'house' events. Pupils learn how to serve others. For example, sixth-form students mentor younger pupils, including in local primary schools. Pupils, of all ages, raise money for charitable causes.

Pupils receive high-quality careers information, education advice and guidance. (CIEAG). The school engages with a wide range of education and training providers. Experiences are therefore tailored to pupils' needs and interests. Pupils take part in meaningful work experience opportunities. The school evaluates its CIEAG programme, continually enhancing its offer.

Trustees, leaders and staff share an ambitious, inclusive vision for all pupils. Trustees provide intelligent support and challenge to leaders. This work ensures that the school is held to account for the quality of education it provides. Leaders use professional development successfully to enhance the quality of teaching. Staff, including those newest to teaching, are well supported.

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

Unique reference number	136578
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10297980
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,101
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	331
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Richard James
Headteacher	Nicholas Dyer
Website	www.cryptschool.org
Dates of previous inspection	16 and 17 May 2012

Information about this school

- The school is a single academy trust.
- The school has become co-educational since the last inspection.
- 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 unregistered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, modern foreign languages, geography, business studies and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team and trustees, including the chair of the board of trustees.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views 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 the responses to the questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to the online surveys for pupils and staff.

Inspection team

James Oldham, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Helen Kerr	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Thomas	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Naylor	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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