

# Castle Rock High School

Meadow Lane, Coalville, LE67 4BR

## Inspection dates

1–2 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b> <b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Students achieve well. Standards have risen over the past three years, particularly in mathematics and science and are above those expected nationally.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the care and support they receive.
- The quality of the teaching is good. Some of the teaching is outstanding. Teachers plan lessons well. They give students tasks at the right level of difficulty. They use questioning skilfully, ensuring students think hard and give good reasons for their answers.
- Students' behaviour is good and often exemplary. Their positive attitudes and the warm relationships that are evident throughout the school make a significant contribution to their learning.
- Students say that they feel extremely safe, well known and cared for, that bullying is rare and that adults support them very well.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. The inspirational headteacher is very well supported by her senior team and by the governing body. They have been rigorous in ensuring the good quality of teaching and students' well-being. They have established excellent teamwork, enabling good practice to be shared and teachers to support each other.
- Students' experiences in different subjects are enhanced by the sports specialism. They enjoy the frequent opportunities to work as part of a team and express pride in their school and the inspirational learning environment.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The teaching in a very small minority of lessons requires improvement because the pace of learning is too slow.
- Although students have a clear understanding of their targets and what they need to do to achieve them, teachers miss opportunities to develop students' independence because they do not link the marking of their work to these targets.
- Subject leaders do not have a firm enough grasp of data that show how well students are doing. As a result, they are not as effective as they could be in holding teachers to account for the progress students make in their subjects.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 29 lessons, seven of which were joint observations with the senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with students, representatives of the governing body, a representative of the Ashby and Coalville Education partnership (ACE) and with staff, including middle managers.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at: policies, development planning, monitoring records, data related to the tracking of students’ progress, minutes of meetings of the governing body, safeguarding documents and samples of students’ work.
- The views of 34 parents and carers who responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account, as were letters of appreciation of the school’s care, guidance and support.
- Forty staff responded to the staff questionnaire, and their views were also taken into account.

## Inspection team

Mary Davis, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Kevin Harrison	Additional Inspector
John Hucker	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized middle school.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- There are very few students from minority ethnic heritages and almost none who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is 18%, which is above the national average.
- Castle Rock High School is a specialist sports college and converted to become an academy on 1 August 2012. When its predecessor school, under the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory overall.
- The school shares a campus with King Edward VII Community College and Warren Hills Primary school and Forest Way special school. It is a member of the ACE (Ashby and Coalville Education) partnership and The Forest Way Teaching school Alliance. A coordinator has been appointed by headteachers of the ACE partnership to provide support but, having taken on this role in October, has not yet met with the school's leaders.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement for all groups of students by ensuring that all teaching is consistently good or outstanding, and that learning always progresses at a pace which is fast enough to provide sufficient challenge for students.
- Promote students' independent learning by:
  - providing clear written feedback through the marking of their work and relating this more closely to their targets
  - providing opportunities for students to respond to written comments, enabling them to take more responsibility for their own learning.
- Fine-tune middle leaders' use of performance data to enable them to analyse more effectively the progress students make in their subjects and to better hold teachers to account for the progress their students make.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students enter the school with levels of attainment in English and mathematics that are typically below those found nationally. They make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress. Over the past three years, attainment in English and mathematics has been above that expected nationally and attainment in both these subjects is steadily rising. Attainment in science rose significantly in 2012 as a result of leaders' quick actions to address the previous under-achievement of girls in this subject. Students eligible for the pupil premium did not perform as well as their peers in English in 2012 and the school is now rigorously addressing this.
- Robust systems are helping to accelerate the development of students' reading skills across the school. Daily mentor time includes reading sessions, either enabling students to read their own choice of book or to read a class text to each other. The lowest-attaining readers are supported through extra catch-up classes. Students show a great enjoyment of reading, many joining reading clubs where they can read e-books or taking part in parent and student reading sessions. By the end of Year 9, most students attain the expected level in reading and the lowest-attaining students read fluently and with expression.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs, those eligible for the pupil premium and the very few who speak English as an additional language make at least equal progress to their peers, and sometimes even better, as a result of the high-quality individual support, care and encouragement provided for them and the strong focus that the school places on raising self-esteem and promoting self-confidence.
- Students display positive attitudes towards their learning and are keen to contribute their opinions and ideas. For example, in a French lesson in Year 9, boys were quick to volunteer to demonstrate their ability to question each other using new vocabulary in front of the rest of the class and, in a dance lesson in Year 7, all groups of students were fully engrossed in working in teams to devise and improve their performances. This teamwork ethos is strong across the school in all subjects, building self-confidence and social skills. Students cooperate well and support each other, and they told inspectors how much they value these opportunities.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Leaders' rigorous checks show that the teaching is typically good and some of it is outstanding. Lesson observations during the inspection confirmed this view. Extensive programmes of support and training are in place to ensure that newly qualified teachers develop their practice quickly, to ensure that all groups of students are challenged effectively to enable them to progress at a fast pace.
- In the best lessons teachers use questioning skilfully to probe students' understanding fully and to justify the answers that they provide. They use their good subject knowledge to plan lessons where learning can build progressively. For example, in an English lesson in Year 9, tasks were broken up into small, achievable components that enabled the lower-attaining students to build and practise skills a little at a time and to be successful, raising their self-esteem so that they felt able to attempt the next challenge.
- Students know their targets and are confident in explaining what they need to focus on in order to achieve them. They say that teachers provide good verbal feedback on how to improve. However, written feedback on students' work does not always provide detailed information as to the next steps for them to achieve their targets, or provide the opportunity to respond to the advice given, by practising skills or trying another challenge.

- Tasks are generally well planned and resources are well prepared to ensure that all students are appropriately challenged or supported. Teaching assistants are used very well in lessons, providing expert support for disabled students and those with special educational needs. Extension tasks are set to provide further challenge and to encourage all students to 'stretch' themselves. Many opportunities are provided for students to learn actively, for example by using drama to show what they have discovered about a topic. This again promotes teamwork and develops self-confidence.
- In a very small minority of lessons, the pace of learning slows because teachers do not plan tasks that sufficiently challenge all groups of students.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Staff, parents and carers are positive about the standards of behaviour in lessons and around the school. Students are polite and courteous, both to one another and to visitors, and are excellent ambassadors for the school. They have high expectations of the standards of behaviour they should expect and are indignant when anyone falls short of these.
- The school is light, airy and inspiring. It is kept spotlessly clean and in good repair as a result of students' high level of respect for, and their pride in, their environment. The outdoor areas have been carefully planned to provide areas for quiet reflection and the opportunity to grow produce and look after chickens and other pets.
- Students' positive attitudes and often outstanding behaviour in lessons have a significant impact on their learning. Relationships are warm and supportive, and students generally concentrate well and are keen to contribute.
- Most students have a good understanding of the different forms bullying can take, including cyber-bullying, but say it is rare. The very few instances of racial and other name-calling are treated extremely seriously by adults, who provide quick and effective support. Students told inspectors how much they value the school's care that enables them to feel very safe and well known.
- Parents and carers of students with behavioural difficulties or who face challenging circumstances spoke of their extreme gratitude for the support provided by the school that has enabled their children to gain success.
- Students are able to express their views via the school council, and this has resulted in improved dining facilities and menus and the development of the successful rewards system, which is well understood and systematically applied.
- Attendance rates have gradually improved over recent years and are now above average. Persistent absence has dramatically reduced over the past year.

### **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The headteacher, very well supported by her strong senior team and outstanding governing body, is passionate about enabling students to achieve their full potential, both academically and socially. Leaders work tirelessly to promote students' self-esteem and to provide experiences that will inspire and stimulate. The headteacher has been relentless in eradicating inadequate teaching and ensuring that the quality of teaching continues to improve.
- Staff express their delight in working at the school and their confidence in the leadership's vision to take the school forward. Their comments included, 'This school is something quite special',

and, 'All staff are proud to be part of this team.'

- The effective subject leaders in English, mathematics and science have ensured that achievement continues to rise and that the quality of teaching continues to improve. Members of their departments share good practice and work as a cohesive team. They rigorously monitor the work of their departments, and are currently working to further develop their use of performance data to enable a closer analysis of progress in different classes, to better hold teachers to account for the progress their students make.
- Exemplary performance management procedures are well established, targets are set and reviewed and lead appropriately to salary progression. The headteacher has a very clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development of each teacher and closely tailors support and training according to individual need. Particularly impressive is the pairing of teachers of different subjects and with differing experience to act as buddies. The pairing of teachers new to the profession, for example, with senior leaders has been of mutual benefit, enabling the exchanging of new ideas and the skills that come with experience. Staff speak very highly of professional development opportunities that are provided and the high priority placed on this by the senior leadership. All teachers take part in lesson observations and have a clear understanding of what constitutes outstanding teaching.
- The very well-planned curriculum includes courses that are flexible enough to meet students' individual needs and interests, and is continually reviewed in order to promote achievement. Students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable follow a special curriculum as 'Academy' students, enabling them to develop the skills they need to join mainstream classes. The sports college specialism has a significant impact across the school in promoting motivation, teamwork and competition. The strong focus on the performing arts enables the development of creativity, and promotes self-confidence and communication skills.
- The pupil premium funding is used to ensure that all students are fully included in all activities. Alternative provision projects, such as the opportunity to work with professional sportsmen and performing artists, are also funded to raise self-esteem. The funding has enabled the training of staff to deliver catch-up lessons in literacy and in numeracy to close the gap between this group of students and their peers that was identified in 2012.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is integral to the school's provision, including enabling students to work closely with the local community to their mutual benefit. This includes gardening with the elderly and students teaching them computer skills. The school has links with international schools and promotes diversity by linking with organisations of other cultures and faiths.
- Parents and carers express very positive views of the school's work and its leadership and management. The school provides a wide variety of activities to support parents and carers and to involve them closely in their children's education.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body works very closely with the senior leadership team, is fully involved in the work of the school and is pro-active in promoting community links. It provides excellent support, particularly in the drive to improve teaching. Governors ask challenging questions about all aspects of the school's work and check this information very closely. They undergo training and have an excellent understanding of performance data, enabling them to compare the school's performance with other similar schools, working closely with other governing bodies within the 'ACE' partnership. They have ensured that pupil premium funding is spent appropriately and carefully monitor the impact of this funding on achievement. Governors ensure that safeguarding procedures meet requirements and the safety and wellbeing of all staff and students are their priority.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138478
<b>Local authority</b>	N/A
<b>Inspection number</b>	408774

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–14
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	509
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Andrew Pritchard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julia Patrick
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	N/A
<b>Telephone number</b>	01530 834368
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