

# Castle Manor Academy

Eastern Avenue, Haverhill, Suffolk, CB9 9JE

## Inspection dates

19-20 June 2013

| 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      | Good                 | 2                        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Students' achievement is good. They come into the academy with levels of attainment that are below average, but by the time they leave from Year 11 they are broadly average.
- Students make good progress in Years 7 to 11. The progress of disabled students, those who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language is similar to that of other students.
- Students who are supported by additional government funding benefit from working in small groups and individually. This support is very effective so that they catch up with their classmates and do nearly as well as them.
- The sixth form is good. Overall, progress is typical and for those taking vocational courses it is above average.
- The Partnership with Place Farm Academy provides good opportunities for students to work with younger pupils.
- Most teaching is good or better. Teachers are experts in their subject and carefully plan lessons that capture students' interest. Students enjoy their lessons and teachers enjoy working with them.
- Students' have good attitudes to learning and are courteous to one another and to adults in the academy. Nearly all parents would recommend the academy to other parents.
- All aspects of the work of the academy are checked by senior leaders to make sure that students are progressing as well as possible.
- Governors understand the work of the academy from first hand observation. They hold the leaders to account and support the principal and head of school well.
- The leadership and management of the academy have moved quickly to embrace a doubling in the number of students over the past year.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards of literacy are not high enough. This is a barrier to learning and students are not yet achieving at the highest levels that they are capable of over a sustained period.
- Teachers write comments in students' books to help them to progress but do not always give them opportunities to respond to them.
- There are not enough opportunities for students to work independently and more able students do not always have work that is sufficiently challenging.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a total of 38 lessons, nine of which were joint observations with senior leaders. Most teachers were seen during the inspection.
- Inspectors examined information on students' progress produced by the academy and compared this with similar schools nationally.
- Inspectors looked at work in students' books and talked to them about their work during lessons.
- Inspectors held discussions with the principal, the acting head of school and senior leaders, with subject leaders and with those responsible for students' well being. They also met with a group of governors and members of the Castle Partnership Academy Trust.
- Inspectors took into account the 63 responses to Ofsted's on-line questionnaire, Parent View, and the 35 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at key documentation provided by the academy, including its self-evaluation and policies, minutes of meetings, records of attendance and behaviour, and data relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

|                             |                      |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| David Lewis, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Jane Ladner                 | Additional Inspector |
| Ian Starling                | Additional Inspector |
| Janet Harvey                | Additional Inspector |

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Castle Manor Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 June 2012. When its predecessor school, Castle Manor Business and Enterprise College, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be outstanding.
- The school is the lead school of the Castle Partnership Academy Trust, covering the education of children and young people between the ages of 4-19, which also includes Place Farm Primary Academy.
- The principal has been in post for ten years and has overall responsibility for the primary and secondary schools in the trust. An acting head of school, who has day to day responsibility for the running of the academy, has been in post for two terms.
- Castle Manor is a slightly smaller than average secondary school but has almost doubled in size in the last two years following the closure of four middle schools.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children or those with a parent or carer in the armed forces) is above the national average.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is below average.
- There are no students educated off-site.

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

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by
  - giving students more opportunities to work independently and in small groups
  - helping students to reflect upon their own work and that of others
  - matching tasks closely to students' needs, especially for the most able.
- Raise standards in literacy and communication by:
  - giving students more and better opportunities to develop a love of reading
  - improving students' writing and presentation skills.
- Help students to make the best use of the comments that teachers write in their books when they mark them.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Many students join the academy with levels of attainment that are below average.
- Progress in English and mathematics is generally good and by the end of Year 11 the number of students who have made expected progress is close to the national average. The number of students who make better than expected progress from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4 is above average in English but below in Mathematics.
- Students who take vocational courses do particularly well, exceeding the progress expected and contributing to overall good progress in Years 7 to 11. This is confirmed by a scrutiny of students' books. In four in every five lessons achievement and progress were judged to be good or better. The academy does not enter students for GCSE examinations early.
- Teaching groups in the sixth form are usually small and statistical comparisons are unreliable. However, achievement in all lessons seen was consistently good and sometimes outstanding; for example, in lessons in photography and English with Year 12. Progress data in relation to students' starting points indicates that they make better progress in vocational courses than they do in A-levels.
- Students who have disabilities or special educational needs are supported in groups, often taught by teaching assistants. With teaching clearly focused on their specific needs, they learn well and make good progress, often better than that of their classmates.
- Students who attract the pupil premium benefit greatly from lessons in small groups and make progress better than their peers. On entry to Year 7, these students were working about five or six terms behind their peers in English and mathematics but by the end of Year 7 this gap has narrowed to three terms in both subjects.
- Year 11 students, who joined the academy in Year 10, also benefit from the pupil premium. Current data shows that the gap has also narrowed in Year 11 and that these students are now working about one term behind other students in mathematics, and two terms in English.
- Current Year 7 students for whom the catch-up funding is available were about seven terms behind their peers at the start of the year. The gap has narrowed so that they are now four terms behind in English and five terms in mathematics.
- Students come to the academy with literacy and communication skills that are below those expected at their age and this is a barrier to learning for some students. The academy has a new literacy policy but it is too early to say whether it has been fully effective.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is almost always good or better, with teaching in about one in every five lessons judged to be outstanding. Lessons are well planned so that students have a variety of activities to capture and hold their interest. They become engaged in what they are doing and learn well.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and they form good relationships with their students. Teachers constantly check their students' progress and use the information they get from

discussions to help them to shape the course of the lesson. Teaching assistants support them well by working with small groups, which may include the most able students.

- In the best lessons, including those in English and mathematics, teachers use challenging tasks to help students to think for themselves. In a sixth form photography lesson, for example, the students' ideas on linking photographs to form a series led to a really high level discussion on style. In a Year 9 science lesson a similar approach using pictures of animals to trigger students' independent thinking also led to excellent understanding of how animals are adapted to their environment.
- In less good lessons students are sometimes challenged with tasks that are too easy and are able to avoid thinking for themselves. In mathematics, for example, they sometimes learn how to answer questions without really understanding the mathematical ideas behind the task and learning suffers as a result.
- In a very few lessons, lack of appropriate challenge and poor questioning technique leads to students losing interest. Such lessons are a very small proportion of those seen.
- Teachers respond to the differing needs of their students by matching the support they give to students' ability, or by providing additional, more difficult examples for those who have finished their work. However, some of the most able students are insufficiently challenged in lessons.

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

- Students have good attitudes to learning. They are normally prompt to lessons, despite the long walk between sites within the school grounds. They are polite to one another and to their teachers. In discussion they say that they are proud of their school and see good manners and positive behaviour as key to maintaining its reputation.
  - Students are proud to take on responsibility. They also take a pride in their achievement, though less so in the presentation of their work. Between lessons, when they have responsibility for their own behaviour, they behave in a calm and orderly manner.
  - Students concentrate well in lessons, generally engaging in discussion with one another and their teachers, creating a very positive learning environment. They behave responsibly when working in groups, listening to one another's ideas and building upon them.
  - There is a well-understood behaviour policy, which is consistently applied. There have been no permanent exclusions in recent years and the number of fixed term exclusions is decreasing because few students re-offend. Students agree that they are well looked after and that they are taught how to stay safe, including when using modern technology such as the internet.
  - Students are tolerant of the views of others and no instances of the use of inappropriate language were experienced during the inspection. Students have an understanding of the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and that based on prejudice. Bullying is extremely rare and dealt with promptly when it does occur.
  - Ofsted's on line questionnaire, Parent View, shows that most parents are pleased with the work that the school does with their children, though about one parent in ten feels that their child could make better progress. They say that their children are happy in the school.
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- Attendance is broadly average and there is a well attended breakfast club. The academy acts firmly when students are persistently absent but its approach to improving attendance is firmly based on the use of a positive approach.

### **The leadership and management** is good

- All staff and nearly all parents who responded to questionnaires about the academy agreed that the academy is well led and managed.
- A strong commitment to all-through education for children from 4-19 pervades the work of the academy and was designed by leaders prior to the closure of middle schools across the town. Governors and senior staff have worked enthusiastically to overcome the problems associated with these changes. They have successfully put good systems in place, but as yet not all of them have had their full impact.
- The governors, principal and other senior staff have implemented a system for checking on all aspects of the academy's work. Checking of teaching and learning is rigorous, and the principal and teachers are held to account for students' progress including that of students with disabilities or special educational needs. Staff confirm that their training needs are well catered for. Teachers are set challenging annual objectives and are held to account. They also receive good support for their professional development.
- Teachers understand the link between effective teaching and pay progression. Those on the upper pay scale willingly accept additional responsibilities.
- Lessons and the subjects taught match the needs of students well. The academy's range of vocational courses is greatly appreciated because it allows all students to learn well, irrespective of ability. This is one illustration of the academy's commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity.
- Students have good opportunities to take responsibility, including taking part in the student parliament, working with younger children in the partnership academy and looking after chickens. They enthusiastically participate in raising money for charity.
- A good range of additional activities is available and makes a valuable contribution to students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. These include opportunities to raise money for charity and to participate on visits overseas; for example, to the United States and on a music tour of Europe. Tutor groups cover the full age range and make further contribution to students' personal development by helping them to prepare for life in modern democratic Britain and the global society.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is fully committed to the vision of the Castle Partnership Academy Trust in meeting the needs and aspirations of its students. Governors and members of the Trust visit the academy often in order to gain a first hand understanding of how good and outstanding teaching meets the needs of all students. They understand their role in holding the academy to account and have received training in the use of data to support their evaluation of the work of the academy. They work closely with senior staff and other leaders and managers to ensure that they have first hand knowledge of the school's work and can evaluate accurately the team and school improvement plans. They make sure that performance of staff is

managed effectively, linked to students' progress and to teachers' pay and set challenging annual targets for the principal. The academy's finances are managed effectively, including the pupil premium funding. All statutory requirements, including those for child protection and safeguarding of students are met.

## 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> | 138162  |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Suffolk |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 409391  |

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

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Type of school</b>                         | Academy converter  |
| <b>School category</b>                        | Non-maintained   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                    | 11–19  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                       | Mixed  |
| <b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>     | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>    | 809  |
| <b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b> | 116  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                  | The board of directors, Castle Partnership Academy Trust     |
| <b>Chair</b>                                  | John Baillee   |
| <b>Principal</b>                              | Madeleine Vigar<br>Vanessa Whitcombe (Acting Head of School) |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>     | 7 October 2010   |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                       | 01440 705501   |
| <b>Fax number</b>                             | 01440 705501   |
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