

Castle View School

Foksville Road, Canvey Island, SS8 7FH

Inspection dates

2–3 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- From below-average starting points, students make good progress and achieve well, especially in English. Since the last inspection the proportion gaining five A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, has been improving steadily.
- Good arrangements for improving skills in literacy and numeracy mean that most students make at least good progress to achieve their target levels.
- Teaching is typically good and some is outstanding. Most teachers use their skills and subject knowledge well and pay careful attention to planning interesting lessons that enable students to build their learning step by step.
- The school is a happy and harmonious community where students feel safe and valued. Behaviour is usually good, and at times outstanding, in lessons and around the school.
- The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. It is enhanced by a wide range of out-of-school activities and visitors that help to widen students' horizons.
- The headteacher, supported by her leadership team and a highly effective governing body, takes a strong lead in driving improvement. As a result, teaching and achievement have improved since the last inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small minority of students are still absent from school too often, and this prevents them from making good progress.
- Marking is not yet consistently good across all subjects. Some teachers' marking does not give students enough guidance on how to improve their work.
- In some lessons teachers do not plan tasks at the right level of difficulty to match individual students' needs, and sometimes the more-able students are not being sufficiently challenged. As a result, too few students are achieving A* and B grades at GCSE.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 34 lessons, some of them jointly with members of the leadership team. In addition, the inspection team made a number of short visits around the school.
- Meetings were held with five different groups of students, governors, a representative from the local authority and the headteacher of a local partnership school. In addition, several meetings were held with school staff, including senior and other leaders.
- Inspectors took account of information published on the school website, parent and student surveys and the 27 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View, an email from a parent and 29 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- They looked closely at a range of documentation, including information on students' performance, the school's own analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, improvement plans, safeguarding and behaviour policies, and records and documents relating to the targets set for teachers to improve their work. Inspectors also reviewed examples of students' past and present work.

Inspection team

Jackie Easter, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Kate Scarlet	Additional Inspector
Derek Wiles	Additional Inspector
Edwin Powell	Additional Inspector
Simon Hughes	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Castle View School is slightly larger than the average secondary school.
- The school has undergone significant changes since the previous inspection, including a new headteacher, an amalgamation with another school and a move to a new site.
- The students are predominantly White British. A few students speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium is average. This is funding provided to schools by the government for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after by the local authority, or with a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of educational needs is slightly above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school makes arrangements for a small number of students to study on work-related courses at Select Education and Circles Farm.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attendance by continuing to work with parents to make sure that the persistent absence of some students is eradicated.
- Make more teaching outstanding in order to raise students' attainment, by making sure that:
 - teachers tackle inconsistencies across and within subjects
 - all teachers provide work that meets the needs and abilities of all of the students in their class, especially the more able, and moves learning forward as soon as they are ready for the next challenge
 - teachers' marking gives students clear guidance, so they know what they have to do to improve their work
 - students are given opportunities to act upon the advice they receive.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students typically join the school with skills in reading, writing and mathematics which are well below average. By the end of Year 11, most students achieve well, particularly in English. Standards are rising and progress is improving. Good teaching is leading to steady improvements in all subjects.
- In the majority of lessons, students, including disabled students, those with special educational needs, and those eligible for the pupil premium, make good progress.
- Effective arrangements for improving literacy skills are helping students to make good progress. Good systems identify pupils who have weaknesses in literacy and the school provides carefully targeted support. In addition, a wide range of activities, resources and approaches help to encourage all students to enjoy reading and this has resulted in rapid improvements in reading skills.
- The achievements of all students are checked exceptionally carefully and examination data and teacher assessment are used well to set targets. Teachers regularly analyse pupils' progress and plan additional actions so that any pupils falling behind are supported and given the help that they need. A range of additional activities and opportunities are offered out of school hours. As a result, progress is good for most pupils, and gaps in the performance of different groups are narrowing. In 2012, GCSE results were broadly average. Current Year 11 students are on track to attain better results in a wider range of subjects.
- The school has reviewed its approach to entering students early for GCSEs in mathematics and English. The most-able mathematicians continue to work towards A* and A grades but those achieving their target grades already are entered early. As a result, a good proportion of students have already achieved good grades in these subjects and are going on to meet or exceed their targets.
- Pupil premium funding is spent well to help eligible students improve their literacy and numeracy skills in particular. The school provides focused one-to-one and small-group tuition and this has resulted in eligible students making rapid progress. In 2012 the gap between their attainment and that of other students was on average two thirds of a GCSE grade in English and one grade in mathematics. This gap is closing this year as progress accelerates, and eligible students are now about a quarter of a grade behind in both subjects.
- Year 7 catch-up funding has been used to help improve students' reading skills and a significant number are now working at a higher level.
- The school has identified that the achievement of the more-able students is not consistently good across all subjects. A drive to increase the numbers of students making four levels of progress and attaining the highest grades is beginning to tackle this.
- Students who attend work-related courses and placements with other providers are showing improvement in behaviour, attitudes and attendance.

The quality of teaching

is good

- In some subject areas, such as physical education and English, teaching is consistently at least

good and often outstanding and this leads to good progress. These lessons are characterised by purposeful pace and engaging learning activities that are well suited to the abilities of the students.

- In the best lessons, teachers' planning is detailed and well structured. Assessment information is used well to plan lessons, so objectives are carefully matched to students' abilities and allow the more able to extend their learning. In an outstanding mathematics lesson where students were learning about factors and multiples, the teacher set tasks that fully engaged students and, as a result, they made rapid progress.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers set clear targets and challenges for learning at the start of the lesson so that students know what is expected of them and are given opportunities to attain the highest standards. In an outstanding history lesson about slavery, the teacher described a range of potential outcomes at different levels for the students. Over half the students challenged themselves and reached the highest level, resulting in good progress.
- Inspectors saw very good examples of well-planned questioning by teachers to check understanding, probe thinking and develop students' thinking, step by step.
- Many students told inspectors how much they appreciate the help and support that their teachers give them. For example: 'Teachers give 100%. They really care about us. They stay behind to help us. They make learning fun.'
- Teaching for students studying work-related courses is having a positive impact on their learning and progress.
- Some particularly good examples of marking and feedback were seen in science and English, where detailed comments helped students to know what they had to do to improve and there was clear evidence of pupils engaging with the comments and acting upon their advice. The marking policy is applied well in some subject areas, but this is not consistent across all subjects and students are not always given opportunities to act upon their teachers' comments.
- There is some variation in the quality of teaching within and across subjects. In less effective lessons the pace of learning was slow. Students sometimes finished their tasks and then had to wait for others to catch up. Some learning time was wasted and progress was limited.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students behave well in most lessons and around the school. They are proud of their school and show respect for each other and for their teachers. The school behaviour policy is clear and teachers apply routines and rules consistently so pupils know what is expected of them.
- Students enjoy school and speak very positively about their experiences and the wide range of opportunities that they are given. For example, Year 7 students described their year group as being 'like one big family' and Year 11 students told inspectors that they did not want to leave school because they enjoyed it so much.
- Students feel very safe at school. They report that incidents of bullying are rare, and that if they do occur they are dealt with immediately and effectively by the staff. They have a good awareness of the various types of bullying.
- The vast majority of students have very positive attitudes to learning and work with enthusiasm. Relationships between students and teachers are good. In a small minority of lessons students

are too passive because there are not given enough opportunities to work collaboratively or share their ideas with others.

- The school has taken positive steps to improve overall attendance figures and they are now average. The daily target meetings and the work of form tutors in focusing on attendance are having a significant impact. However, there is still a small minority of students who do not attend school regularly and this affects their learning and progress.

The leadership and management

are good

- The headteacher and governors have clearly communicated their ambitious vision for the school to staff, students and parents, and their determined focus on improvement is having a positive impact on students' achievement.
 - The school has an accurate view of its strengths and has identified the right areas where it can improve further. Leaders use external partners in their teaching-school alliance to supplement the school's own evaluations of teaching and learning. School improvement plans are specific about actions to improve students' attainment.
 - Rigorous assessment and tracking systems mean that all teachers have a clear understanding of students' progress and where additional support is necessary. Variations in the progress of different groups of students are analysed and a wide range of measures have been taken to close gaps, leading to improved achievement and progress.
 - The leadership team has a clear focus on improving teaching and learning. Rigorous management of staff performance has been central in improving the quality of teaching over time. Virtually all inadequate teaching has been eradicated.
 - Well-chosen staff training and sharing of good practice support the drive for improvement. The school works collaboratively with other schools to learn from the best, but also to share its effective approaches and successes. Staff speak favourably about the support they have received to develop their teaching. Responses to the staff questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive.
 - The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Students benefit from a wide range of clubs and after-school activities, visits and trips. During the inspection, the school was hosting a 'Bollywood' event where students in Years 7 to 9 were learning about Indian culture, music and art. As a result of the rich and diverse opportunities, the students develop strong social skills and an understanding of other cultures.
 - The local authority provides good support. The adviser linked to the school visits regularly and has worked with the school leadership team to support their self-evaluation and development planning.
 - The school actively challenges discrimination and promotes equal opportunities. Staff promote a collaborative ethos that welcomes and includes students from all backgrounds, both through the curriculum and around the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The governing body has been restructured since the previous inspection. Governors are highly committed to the school and share the aspirations of the headteacher. They know the school well and have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and performance data. This

supports them in holding the school to account and checking progress. They have undergone a wide range of training courses to support them in their roles. Governors are well informed about how teachers' pay is linked to their performance in the classroom. They know what the school is doing to tackle underperformance. They make sure that safeguarding and safe recruitment policies meet national requirements to keep students safe. They see that financial management is efficient, including being very clear about how the pupil premium is spent and monitoring its impact.

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

Unique reference number	115335
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	400243

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1140
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vicki Denmark
Headteacher	Gill Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2009
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