

Castle Donington College

Mount Pleasant, Castle Donington, Derby, DE74 2LN

Inspection dates 24–25 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The achievement of pupils is improving rapidly. In 2014, the Key Stage 2 results in reading, writing and mathematics represented a significant improvement on the academy's results the previous year. The gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers is narrowing.
- There are overwhelmingly positive relationships between staff and pupils, and pupils with each other. Teachers know their pupils well and plan good lessons accordingly.
- Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge. They convey enthusiasm that stimulates the interest and keenness of the pupils to learn. Teachers use skilled questioning to support and extend learning so that pupils make rapid progress.
- The behaviour of pupils is impressive. They are a credit to the Principal and his staff who set a fine example of ambition, diligence and consideration for others.
- The Principal, his senior team and the governing body have created an ethos in the academy based on high expectations for the achievement and safety of all pupils. Staff morale is high, with a collective drive for improvement.
- The Principal has made strong links with parents and local primary schools. The academy is held in high regard by the local community.
- The attendance of pupils has improved to better than national levels. Pupils enjoy coming to the academy every day because they appreciate the good teaching and support they receive.
- Leaders' work to keep pupils safe is outstanding. Pupils feel safe, valued and respected, and are proud to belong to a caring community.
- Pupils are encouraged to have respect for one another, for their teachers and for others. Such teaching prepares them well for life in modern Britain

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The teaching of mathematics does not always provide opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning skills, especially for the most able. There is no purposeful promotion of numeracy across the curriculum.
- Not all teachers ensure that pupils, especially the most able, know what to do to achieve higher grades.
- Teachers do not regularly set homework that is stimulating and challenging for all pupils.
- Not all subject leaders hold members of their departments effectively to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in parts of 34 lessons in all year groups and subjects. One inspector visited an assembly for Year 6.
- They held meetings with: members of the senior leadership team; heads of year and subject leaders; the Chair of the Governing Body and two other members of the governing body; the special educational needs co-ordinator and the members of staff responsible for liaison with primary schools, attendance and maintaining the single central record.
- Inspectors held telephone conversations with: the academy's external adviser; a National Leader of Education who supports the Principal; and a member of staff at the alternative provision used by the academy.
- Each inspector met formally with pupils from different year groups. They also held informal conversations with pupils and observed behaviour around the academy between lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation including: the academy's self-evaluation; the academy's analysis of data for the current academic year; the academy's development plan; minutes of meetings of the governing body; behaviour and attendance logs and safeguarding policies and records.
- The inspectors evaluated 57 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's on-line questionnaire, as well as the academy's own surveys of the views of parents and pupils. They also evaluated the responses to a questionnaire completed by 42 members of staff.

Inspection team

Amanda Carter-Fraser, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Deirdre Duignan

Her Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Phillips

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Castle Donington College is a smaller than average, middle-deemed secondary school. Pupils attend the academy in Year 6 to Year 9. It is located in Castle Donington, a small town in North West Leicestershire.
- The Principal took up his post in January 2014.
- The college converted to academy status in 2012.
- Slightly more boys than girls attend the academy.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is much lower than the national average. This is additional funding provided to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are looked after
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is less than the national average.
- A very small number of pupils attend alternative provision at Maplewell Hall School on a part-time basis.
- An external adviser and a National Leader for Education support the Principal. The academy is part of the Thomas Estley Teaching Alliance. The academy also works closely with the Oaks Trust, a group of local schools.
- The academy is pursuing the opportunity to extend its age range to accommodate pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 in 2017 onwards.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 2.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by ensuring that:
 - all teachers use information about pupils' progress consistently well to inform their planning so that all pupils, especially the most able, make the progress of which they are capable
 - all teachers give pupils, especially the most able, clear information on how to achieve higher levels, and move these pupils on to more challenging tasks when they are ready
 - all teachers set homework that supports learning, and is interesting and challenging.
- Improve leadership by:
 - developing the skills of subject leaders so that they hold members of their department to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Improve achievement by:
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills across the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal has successfully created an ethos of high expectations and commitment to improvement. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the changes brought about by the current leadership team and the support they have received to improve their teaching.
- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection because leaders have created a culture of openness and a willingness to learn from each other. For example, they have put together a 'Directory of Good Practice' that teachers can turn to for advice and to share ideas of how to improve their teaching. Teachers have benefited greatly through their work with the teaching and learning coach, so that the quality of their teaching has improved rapidly.
- Leaders have put in place rigorous systems to monitor the quality of teaching across the academy. As a result, their evaluation of the quality of teaching is accurate and is used well to make improvements. They closely monitor the progress, attendance and behaviour of pupils attending the alternative provision.
- The Principal has boosted links with local primary schools. Leaders gather detailed information about each pupil before they start, so that they are able to provide the necessary support to boost pupils' achievement when they arrive at the academy. Pupils report that this prepares them well for life at the academy and that they settle quickly and successfully.
- Pupils benefit from a rich and varied curriculum that prepares them well for the next stage of their education. Teachers in most subjects use links with external groups to enhance the work pupils complete in class. This boosts their knowledge, understanding and motivation. The academy provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities that caters for all interests and abilities. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills in different subjects.
- Leaders enable pupils in Year 9 to be well-informed to make decisions about the subjects they will study at Key Stage 4 and the school they will move on to in Year 10. Pupils report that they receive clear and helpful guidance from their tutors, subject teachers and visitors from other schools. The good progress they make and the personal skills they develop at the academy make them well-placed to settle successfully into their new schools.
- Physical education and sport premium funding is used well to support the links with local primary schools through joint events such as the primary sports festival. The physical education department has introduced more sports to the already extensive list of extra-curricular activities at the academy, including boxing, dance and table tennis. Pupils say how much they enjoy their lessons in physical education and can describe ways in which they have made progress.
- Effective actions taken by leaders to improve teaching has had a positive impact on behaviour. There are very few instances of poor behaviour. Those that do occur are dealt with promptly and successfully by staff so that repeated instances are very rare.
- Leaders have ensured that pupil premium funding has been well used to support the attendance and achievement of eligible pupils. These pupils now attend school more often because leaders monitor their attendance rigorously, and have put in place steps to provide additional support to their families where it is needed.
- The actions of leaders to improve attendance have had a significant impact so that overall attendance has improved. Targeted actions to improve the attendance of boys, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and disadvantaged pupils have had a marked impact on the attendance of these pupils.
- Leaders ensure that the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils is rooted in the respect and consideration pupils and staff show each other. The good relations between pupils and with their teachers are a strength of the academy. The pupils' demeanour upholds British values which are nurtured

further through the programme of assemblies and personal, social, health and economic education. Teachers give clear guidance to pupils on how to tackle discrimination and promote equality of opportunities. As a result, pupils demonstrate a strong sense of fairness and are confident about ways to protect themselves and others from risk.

- Staff have responded enthusiastically to opportunities for leadership development. Heads of year and subject leaders are gaining confidence in their roles. They uphold the high expectations of behaviour and safety across the academy. With the good support of the Principal and the leadership team, subject leaders are clear what they need to improve in the areas for which they are responsible. They are in the early stages of developing the skills they need to hold members of their teams directly to account for the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils. Subject leaders do not always respond immediately to inconsistencies in their departments, for example in the quality of marking. This means that the rate of improvement in the quality of teaching varies within and between departments.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding is of utmost priority for the whole school community. Safeguarding procedures are robust, reflect statutory requirements and are extremely effective in keeping pupils safe. The site is safe and secure, with appropriate levels of supervision. Leaders promote a culture in which safeguarding is always top of the agenda. In addition to annual safeguarding training, leaders provide weekly briefings and professional development through the year. This means that staff are updated regularly so that they are confident in how to address any safeguarding concerns appropriately and effectively
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors responded positively to the findings of the external review of governance recommended at the last inspection. They have demonstrated their commitment to boosting their knowledge by reviewing the skills and experience they bring to the academy, and attending training. They have recruited several new members.
 - Governors understand how best to fulfil their roles and responsibilities so that they carry these out effectively. They have a sound knowledge of the use of data when reviewing the achievement of pupils and have an accurate view on the priorities for further improvement. They have a structured programme of visits to the academy and play an active role in monitoring progress against the academy's development plan.
 - Governors are effective in holding school leaders to account. They have ensured that decisions about pay are firmly linked to teachers' performance and the achievement of pupils. Subject leaders and heads of year regularly report to the governing body on the quality of teaching and achievement in their areas. They have ensured that pupil premium funding is used effectively to support the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
 - Governors have undergone safeguarding training and named governors have specific responsibilities in this area. Governors regularly check safeguarding arrangements to make sure that they are effective and meet statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. There is a strong desire to learn, achieve and improve. There is high mutual respect between pupils and their peers and with adults. These positive relationships motivate pupils to achieve well.
- Pupils are punctual and well-prepared for lessons, with a very positive attitude to learning. They respond promptly to the high expectations of their teachers. This means that no time is wasted, there are extremely few interruptions to learning and pupils make rapid progress in lessons.
- The conduct of the pupils around the academy and towards each other is impressive. Pupils are polite and respectful, keen to talk about their work, their achievements and to share their experience of life at the academy. Pupils told inspectors that this is characteristic of the academy on a daily basis, resulting from the widespread acceptance that being kind and considerate is the right way to behave.

- The academy's Phoenix award for being a good citizen is regarded highly by pupils. Pupils are very much aware of being part of the wider community. Year 9 pupils enjoy supporting sports events in local primary schools. Pupils are very well-received in their local town when they distribute the academy newsletter. Year 6 pupils tour the town as part of their induction and this is a welcome and popular activity in the local community. They were keen to tell inspectors about the recent initiative to carry out 'random acts of kindness' in school and in the local community.
- Pupils have a strong awareness and empathy for those less fortunate than themselves. They raise considerable sums of money for charitable causes and often initiate this fundraising themselves.
- Pupils in different year groups mix very well at breaktimes and in other times when they are learning together, such as when pupils in Year 9 support younger pupils with their numeracy. The development of communication, reading and numeracy skills is enhanced by the good relations between the pupils. This is a valuable experience for all involved.
- There have been no permanent exclusions in the past two years and there are very few fixed-term exclusions. This reflects leaders' firm commitment to keep pupils within the academy community and to make sure that any barriers to learning are removed effectively.
- Attendance is improving and levels of persistent absence are declining rapidly for all groups due to the measures put in place by senior leaders and their teams to address this. Leaders make certain that attendance patterns are routinely analysed and appropriate action is taken to support individual pupils as needed.
- The academy's work to ensure outstanding behaviour is highly effective. This has a positive impact on the attendance of those who are at risk of disengagement from their education and promotes the enjoyment of their time in the academy. The behaviour of those pupils who attend alternative provision is good and their attendance is monitored by the academy on a daily basis.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils feel very safe in the academy. They very much feel part of a caring school and appreciate the efforts that leaders, teachers and support staff go to in order to make them feel safe and secure. As one pupil told inspectors, 'Our teachers always look out for us.' All staff and the overwhelming majority of parents confirmed this in their responses to questionnaires given out during the inspection.
- Pupils report there are very few instances of bullying, and any that do occur are dealt with promptly and effectively. This is evident in behaviour logs. When talking about different types of bullying, pupils demonstrate consideration for each other's feelings. Newcomers to the school are quickly made to feel part of the community; as a Year 6 pupil told inspectors, 'We are a very friendly school.'
- All staff receive regular, up-to-date training and are clearly aware of the correct procedures to follow if they have any concerns about safeguarding.
- Pupils are highly respectful of health and safety considerations in lessons. They rise to the high standards expected of them by their teachers so that they carry out practical work safely and successfully. Pupils are fully aware of potential hazards and how to avoid them.
- Tutors sensitively and effectively provide a tutor group base for pupils that is characterised by mutual trust and feeling secure. For example, in a Year 8 lesson on propaganda, the considered guidance of their tutors meant that pupils could reflect maturely on the consequences of taking risks and how they might react as individuals to the influence of others.

The quality of teaching is good

- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching are rigorous. As a result, teaching has improved and is now good. Notably, because of the improved teaching in English and mathematics, the proportion of pupils making good progress in these subjects has risen markedly.
- There is a positive rapport between pupils and teachers. Teachers and support staff provide a safe environment in which pupils are comfortable to share their thoughts and opinions. As a result, they are able to discuss topics from different perspectives, work collaboratively in groups and pairs, and express themselves well.
- Pupils respond positively to the high expectations of their teachers; they complete tasks promptly and make very good progress. For example, in a Year 9 history lesson, the teacher's meticulous planning and the engagement of the pupils meant that, in a very short period, pupils progressed from knowing very little about The Wall Street Crash to being able to analyse the basis to it and debate with their peers the relative impact on different sectors.
- Additional support, such as one-to-one tuition, is provided for those pupils identified by teachers as needing more help. These sessions are highly effective in helping pupils to make rapid progress, especially in reading.
- Teaching assistants provide valuable support for pupils in lessons because teachers give them clear guidance on which pupils to help, and the type of support that is needed. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- Pupils regularly read aloud in lessons. This boosts their confidence and their reading skills.
- Teachers provide valuable written and verbal feedback to help pupils to improve their work. Pupils respond regularly to this, extending their learning to higher grades. However, not all of the most-able pupils receive the same detailed guidance on the requirements of the higher grades of which they are capable.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers use the results of pupils' assessments in their planning to ensure that individual pupils receive the help they need. Not all teachers do this consistently well.
- Pupils have frequent opportunities to practise extended writing. This boosts their literacy skills and has helped to improve grammar, punctuation and spelling across the academy, as seen in pupils' books. Teachers do not routinely enable pupils to practise numeracy skills in different subjects.
- Teachers in some subjects set stimulating homework that extends pupils' knowledge and skills. However, there is not a routine of setting homework across the academy.
- There are a few instances in lessons when some pupils are ready to move on more quickly than others or find the work too easy. In some lessons, teachers do not sufficiently challenge the most-able pupils to encourage their deeper thinking. This means that in some subjects the most-able pupils do not make the rapid progress of which they are capable.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils join the academy in Year 6 with levels of achievement that are below average. They make good progress because of good teaching over time, a curriculum that is well matched to their needs, and careful monitoring of their achievement by teachers and leaders.
- In 2014, the proportions of pupils making expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 rose considerably on the previous year, although it remained below the national

average. Pupils in the current Year 6 are on track to gain results at the end of Key Stage 2 that will be close to or exceed national levels.

- The most-able pupils make good progress because of teaching that is challenging and stimulating. However, they do not always receive clear information on how to achieve higher levels in their work. This slows the progress that some of them make. The most-able pupils in Key Stage 2 do not make the same rate of progress in mathematics as they do in English, for example, because there is not enough opportunity for pupils to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics. At Key Stage 3, the most-able pupils are making better progress than previously. More pupils are now working at Level 7 and above in most subjects.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils is improving at a similar, and sometimes faster, rate than their peers, so that the gap between them in reading, writing and mathematics is steadily decreasing. Over the past three years, the gap between these pupils and their peers in the academy has narrowed from five terms to one and a half terms in mathematics; the gap between these pupils and their peers nationally has narrowed to three and a half terms. In reading, the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers in the academy has narrowed from two years to three and a half terms but they remained four terms behind their peers nationally. In writing, the gap between these pupils and their peers in the academy narrowed from four terms to one and a half terms and narrowed to four terms nationally. Disadvantaged pupils in the current Year 6 are set to make the same or faster rates of progress than their peers. The proportion of them making expected and better than expected progress is set to increase substantially.
- The academy's own data, which has been internally moderated and externally verified, show that students in Key Stage 3 continue to make good progress in their different subjects. This is because teachers carefully monitor their progress so that any students in danger of falling behind are quickly helped to catch up.
- Pupils who start Year 6 with lower levels of reading are quickly helped to catch up with their peers. This is as a result of well-focused intervention and effective use of catch-up funding.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well, with increasing numbers making more than expected progress in all subjects. This is because of the well-planned support they receive in and out of lessons.
- The alternative provision used by the academy supports very well the personal and academic development of those pupils attending.

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	138820
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	455275

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	10–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	422
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kate Henry
Principal	Mark Mitchley
Date of previous school inspection	17 April 2013
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