

Castle Manor Academy

Eastern Avenue, Haverhill, Suffolk CB9 9JE

Inspection dates

26–27 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- At key stage 4, disadvantaged pupils, particularly those who join the school with average attainment, make progress which is well below the national average.
- Throughout the school, boys do not do as well as girls.
- Pupils do not make the progress they should in science and mathematics.
- In the sixth form, students taking academic subjects make progress which is below the national average.
- Teachers sometimes set work which is too easy for middle-ability pupils.
- Teachers do not routinely convert their detailed knowledge about the needs of individual pupils into practical classroom strategies for accelerating progress.
- Pupils do not get enough opportunities to undertake extended writing outside English lessons.
- Governors have not effectively held senior leaders to account for poor pupil progress.
- Subject leaders do not ensure that the school's policies on marking and homework are applied consistently by teachers in their departments.
- Attendance is too low and persistent absence is too high.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has quickly evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of the school and this has informed clear, coherent development planning focused on rapid improvement.
- Teaching is now improving, because underperformance is being addressed and professional development enhanced.
- The support of the new academy trust is having a positive impact on the school's provision.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school and develop positive and constructive attitudes to their own learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes, so that achievement is at least in line with national averages in all subjects and for all pupil groups, by:
 - accelerating the progress made by disadvantaged pupils, particularly those who enter the school with average attainment
 - ensuring that boys' achievement improves to at least match that of girls
 - improving the progress pupils make in science and mathematics
 - improving academic progress in the sixth form.
- Improve teaching in the school to good or better, by:
 - ensuring all teachers convert their thorough understanding of individual pupils' needs into practical classroom strategies which effectively accelerate progress
 - increasing the amount of stretch and challenge experienced by middle-ability pupils
 - extending the opportunities that pupils have to produce extended writing across a wide range of subjects.
- Improve leadership and management, by:
 - strengthening governance so that governors can effectively hold school leaders to account for standards in the school
 - ensuring subject leaders check that teachers in their departments are applying the school marking and homework policies consistently.
- Improve personal development, behaviour and welfare, by:
 - improving attendance and reducing persistent absence, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

External reviews of governance and the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken to assess how these aspects of leadership and management might be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Over time, governors and leaders have not reacted with sufficient urgency to address declining academic standards. While there was some improvement in 2016, the progress made by pupils overall, and that made by disadvantaged pupils, remained well below the national average.
- A new headteacher was appointed in April 2016. She and her restructured senior team have brought a more accurate understanding of what needs to be prioritised to achieve the necessary improvement in standards. This knowledge has informed clear development planning, which is appropriately focused on rapidly improving future outcomes for pupils. This vision for the future of the school is overwhelmingly supported by staff, parents and pupils alike. However, the full impact of these plans is yet to be seen across all areas of the school.
- School leaders recognise that too few pupils have been choosing to take important academic subjects such as humanities and modern foreign languages in key stage 4. School leaders have recently reviewed and adapted the curriculum to address this issue, and this has successfully increased the uptake in these subjects for next year.
- The school's leaders acknowledge that additional funding, including the pupil premium and special educational needs funding, has not yet been targeted as effectively in supporting relevant pupils who enter the school with average attainment as it has been in supporting other ability groups.
- Several new subject and year group leaders have recently been appointed. They are in the process of developing their skills in these middle-leadership roles. They are overseeing a range of initiatives designed to enhance teaching and learning. They have not yet had sufficient time to be able to evaluate the relative effectiveness of these initiatives.
- The written feedback which teachers provide for pupils, and the setting of effective homework, are not consistently in line with school's policies in these areas, because not all middle leaders have been rigorous enough in monitoring practice in their subjects.
- Improvements in the quality of teaching are now accelerating because underperformance is being tackled directly and weaker teaching removed. The professional development programme has been sharpened to enhance teachers' professional skills. Performance management systems are used effectively to challenge staff and hold them to account for pupils' progress.
- School leaders have introduced highly effective strategies for encouraging positive pupil attitudes to their learning.
- In December 2016, the school transferred to the Samuel Ward Academy Trust. Officers of the trust have been working closely with the headteacher since the beginning of this academic year, and in this way they have played an important role in supporting recent improvements even before the school formally joined the trust. School leaders also successfully utilise other external support, including from a local teaching school alliance and a national leader of education.

- Opportunities for developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural knowledge and understanding are successfully threaded throughout the curriculum, assemblies, tutorial periods and the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities pursued by pupils, especially in the arts and sports. Pupils gain a good preparation for life in modern Britain, including an understanding of democracy through participation in the school parliament.
- The successful transition of pupils to the next stage of their education or employment is well supported by effective impartial advice and guidance in each year of the school.

Governance of the school

- Governance is not effective. The local governing body, which is delegated with the responsibility of supporting and challenging senior leaders over standards, has not been quick enough to grasp the seriousness of recent poor outcomes. It has not acted urgently enough to provide a clear strategic direction for the improvement of the school.
- Some governors do not have a detailed enough understanding about key areas of the school's practice and performance, for example how it spends its pupil premium grant, to be able to hold school leaders rigorously to account.
- Members of the local governing body say they are not clear about the nature of their responsibilities and roles within the governance structure of the new academy trust.
- Governors have not ensured that the school provides clear and accessible information to parents through the school website in line with guidance provided by the Department for Education. For example, the website does not communicate sufficient evidence of the evaluation of the impact of pupil premium or catch-up funding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school ensures a thorough approach to safer recruitment, maintaining central records and risk assessments. Procedures to identify and respond to any concerns are rigorous. Communication with parents and carers in these cases is clear, and working relationships with other agencies to keep children safe are effective. The school successfully coordinates the care and welfare of looked-after children who attend the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching in the school has not been of a sufficiently high standard over time to ensure that all students make the progress they should.
- Teachers have been increasingly successful in ensuring that they provide the most able pupils with work that stretches them. However, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what middle prior-attaining pupils can achieve, and as a result, these pupils do not receive enough work that challenges them. This limits the progress they make.
- Teachers do not routinely convert their detailed knowledge about the individual needs of the pupils in their classes, for example in regard to disadvantaged pupils or those

who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, into practical strategies for accelerating their progress.

- There is a purposeful and productive atmosphere in most lessons. Teachers create overwhelmingly positive, trusting relationships. Pupils usually listen attentively to teachers' explanations and feel safe to ask and answers questions about their learning.
- The school has implemented a range of strategies to enhance the effectiveness of assessment. The introduction of designated 'fix-it' time within lessons has proved successful in giving pupils the opportunity to reflect on how they might improve their work further after they receive effective feedback.
- There are areas of highly effective practice in developing pupils' literacy. Over time, teaching in English effectively ensures that pupils develop important elements of their reading, writing and communication skills. However, in lessons outside of English, pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to undertake enough extended writing, and this hinders the development of their literacy.
- Pupils usually present their work carefully and thoughtfully. In some subjects, such as mathematics, particularly effective approaches have been deployed to ensure that pupils keep their work neat. This helps most pupils maintain clear written records of their learning which could support effective revision.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- School leaders have adopted a range of successful strategies to encourage very positive pupil attitudes to their learning. The school uses the acronym PROUD (which captures the school's espoused core values of professionalism, resilience, optimism, understanding and drive). These values underpin the school's rewards system, the personal development curriculum and a coherent programme of pupil leadership roles. These values are also successful in encouraging pupils to reflect on, and develop, their own attributes as learners.
- Pupils feel safe and are well looked after in the school. They are confident that staff will help and support them should they experience any problems, for example if there was any bullying. They know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, for example when using technology and the internet.
- The school develops the physical and emotional well-being of pupils through a range of subjects across the curriculum including drama, dance, physical education (PE) and religious education (RE). A large number of pupils benefit from the range of extra-curricular activities available, including sport, music and the arts. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education or employment through effective impartial advice and guidance.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.

- In 2016, attendance was well below, and persistent absence well above, national averages. While the school has worked successfully to improve attendance this year, and so far overall rates of attendance are approaching the national average, levels of persistent absence remain much too high. The persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils, in particular, is not declining rapidly enough.
- Pupils usually move around the school in a measured, calm and orderly fashion. Pupils look after the school site well and are almost always polite and courteous to adults and each other.
- The consistency with which teachers apply the school's behaviour policy is improving. As a result, behaviour in lessons rarely impedes learning.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions at the school is declining. Detailed records show that the number of other behaviour-related sanctions have also reduced due to the effective use of a range of strategies, including the R and R ('reflect and return') room. The school has dealt effectively with the small number of bullying incidents that have occurred. Pupils say they have confidence in the systems that are in place to deter, and respond to, bullying.
- The school effectively monitors the behaviour and attendance of pupils who are taught in off-site provision. The impact of educating some pupils in this way is positive in terms of improving their attitudes and attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2016 at key stage 4, pupils made progress overall which was well below the national average. This was largely because the progress made by disadvantaged pupils, particularly those who joined the school with average attainment, was significantly below that of other pupils nationally.
- Outcomes for boys in 2016 were considerably weaker than those achieved by girls, and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities did not make as much progress as they should.
- In 2016, the progress made by pupils in science and mathematics was well below that made in these subjects on average by similar pupils nationally. The school, supported by the academy trust, has adopted a considerable number of strategies this year to improve outcomes in these key subject areas. Information provided by the school, and supported by evidence from this inspection, suggests that these strategies are currently having more impact in mathematics than they are in science.
- Overall, these 2016 outcomes were an improvement on the previous year. The school's current performance information indicates that standards of attainment and progress will continue to improve at key stage 4 this year. This information indicates that the difference between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally is declining, and boys are starting to catch up with girls. While evidence from this inspection suggests these projected outcomes are likely to be achieved, they would still not represent good progress for all pupils.
- In 2016, the pupils who had joined the school in Year 7 needing to catch up in English and mathematics did not make as much progress as they should in their first year. This year, the school has reviewed and revised its range of interventions, supported by the

additional funding it receives for this purpose. Information provided by the school suggests such pupils are making much better progress this year. This evidence was supported by inspectors who heard lower-attaining Year 7 pupils, who are undertaking an accelerated literacy programme, read with confidence.

- From their different starting points, pupils with below-average or above-average attainment on entry make better progress than those who join the school with average attainment. The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, make progress which is in line with the national average. Inspectors listened to a group of the most able Year 7 pupils read and discuss their choices of text. They did this with fluency and expression.
- Outcomes in English, and in a range of subjects outside the English Baccalaureate were comparatively strong in 2016 and demonstrated progress which was at least in line with national averages. These subjects have continued to build on these successful outcomes this year.
- The school closely monitors the progress of the small number of pupils who are educated off-site through programmes of alternative provision. The school ensures that they attend regularly and are following appropriate courses. Consequently, these pupils make better progress than they did before they started these placements.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- School leaders have concluded that the number of students attending the sixth form is too small to make it viable. They have therefore made the decision to close this element of the school's provision this summer. The sixth form did not admit any new students into the lower sixth this year, but there is a small number of students in Year 13 who are completing their courses.
- In 2016, the progress made by students in academic subjects at the end of key stage 5 was well below the national average. The progress made by students following vocational courses was in line with the national average. The school's own performance information shows that academic outcomes for the small number of students currently in the upper sixth will improve towards the national average, and evidence from this inspection supports this projection. There is no significant discrepancy between the performance of disadvantaged and other students.
- The leadership of the sixth form is effective; senior leaders have taken great care to ensure that the quality of provision for the students who are finishing their courses is not detrimentally affected by the small size of the sixth-form cohort. Careers advice and guidance for students once they are in the sixth form is highly effective. This enables students to make informed decisions about the next steps in their education. As a result, most students move on to appropriate higher education courses.
- A small number of students joined the sixth form without GCSE passes at grade C or above in English or mathematics. The proportion of these students who improved their grade and achieved a good pass in these subjects increased, notably in 2016, and exceeded national averages.
- Teaching, learning and assessment in the sixth form are effective. Most classes for the current cohort only involve one or two students, and while this inevitably restricts the

range of learning activities that students experience, teachers maintain rigour in their teaching, provide as wide a variety of tasks as they can and assess student work carefully. This contributes to the positive progress students are making.

- The work of the sixth form to promote the personal development, behaviour and welfare of students is effective. Sixth-form students do not regret their decision to choose their courses even though numbers are so small. They believe that they are developing their skills as learners successfully. They know how to keep themselves safe. Their behaviour is constructive. Students attend well, take pride in their school and in their work and are committed to doing well. They conduct themselves in a mature and responsible way.
- The school meets the requirements for the provision of 16 to 19 study programmes. Leaders effectively monitor all elements of the study programmes, including non-qualification activities. All students, including those taking academic subjects, undertake a comprehensive programme of preparation for the world of work.

School details

Unique reference number	138162
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10023438

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	625
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	12
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Jon Ward
Headteacher	Vanessa Whitcombe
Telephone number	01440 705 501
Website	www.castlemanor.suffolk.sch.uk
Email address	vwhitcombe@castlemanor.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 June 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about the impact of pupil premium and catch-up funding.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is in line with the national average.

- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of minority ethnic pupils and pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at key stages 4 and 5.
- A very small proportion of pupils pursue full-time courses away from the school site at the Albany and Kingsfield Pupil Referral Units.
- The school joined the Samuel Ward Academy Trust in December 2016.
- The headteacher receives support from a national leader of education and a local teaching school alliance.
- The school will be closing its sixth-form provision in July 2017.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in a series of short visits to a number of lessons, as well as 22 longer observations, in order to contribute to their evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Some of these observations were conducted jointly with members of the school's leadership team. Inspectors observed tutorial periods, assemblies and listened to small groups of pupils reading.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, school leaders, teachers, governors, representatives of the sponsoring trust and various groups of pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documentation including policies, the minutes of governors' meetings, the school's self-evaluation, the school's improvement plan and information about pupils' achievement, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed in 32 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 30 questionnaires returned by school staff.

Inspection team

Paul Lawrence, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Webb	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sally Pemberton	Ofsted Inspector
Rob James	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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