

Casterton College Rutland

Ryhall Road, Great Casterton, Stamford, Lincolnshire PE9 4AT

Inspection dates

13–14 December 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal's excellent leadership inspires trust and confidence in the whole-school community. Leaders and managers have taken determined action in response to the previous inspection and successfully brought about rapid improvements.
- Attendance has improved for all groups of pupils. This is also the case for pupils who were persistently absent.
- Leaders and managers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils' behaviour is now outstanding. Pupils take a pride in their appearance and conduct themselves in a mature and sensible manner in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils are now making good progress in most subjects and across all year groups. School improvement has been rapid.
- Effective tracking systems enable leaders and teachers to check pupils' progress accurately, in order to provide good-quality support for any who fall behind.
- The governing body supports and challenges leaders well, so that the school improves. They share the principal's ambition to be the best.
- Leaders are inconsistent in monitoring how rigorously the school's assessment policy is applied at key stage 3.
- The sixth form is good. Improved systems to check on academic progress and the quality of teaching are now raising standards effectively in the sixth form.
- Excellent arrangements for pupils' health, safety and welfare mean that they are kept safe and benefit from highly effective support.
- The overall feedback that pupils are given about their work has improved well. However, its impact on helping pupils to improve their work varies because not all teachers adhere fully to the school's assessment and marking policy.
- Many teachers enthuse pupils with their passion for their subjects. They use their excellent subject knowledge to help pupils to achieve.
- Teaching is now good. Training for teachers is now improving outcomes for most pupils. Leaders have plans to share the best practice, so that more pupils achieve.
- The progress of pupils at GCSE level, in both English and mathematics, is above that seen nationally.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils have improved considerably, as a result of a collective focus by all leaders, governors and staff on this group of pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that it is outstanding, by developing more opportunities for the best teaching to be shared.
- Increase the impact of leadership and management by ensuring that all teachers use the school's assessment policy at key stage 3, in order to enable more pupils to achieve as well as they can.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal's ambition, skills and determination are important factors in the school's improvement. He has a clear vision for the school and constantly seeks to improve the quality of education. He is supported well by other senior leaders and has established a culture of high aspiration.
- The school has improved considerably since the previous inspection and changes in the leadership at all levels have increased the rate of improvement. Many of the governors and leaders are relatively new to their roles, but the principal has successfully communicated his vision and they are contributing positively to the school's transformation.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have developed a strong system to track the progress of pupils across the school.
- Opportunities for continued professional development are, justifiably, much valued by teachers. Many teachers are exceptionally positive about the support that they receive, including the Friday afternoon staff training sessions. The sessions have helped to raise expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Leaders ensure that teachers' performance is managed well. Procedures have been tightened and teachers' targets and professional development are linked effectively to the school's action plan. The school links teachers' pay progression closely to successful performance. Overall, teachers are held to account and underperformance is challenged effectively.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and personalised to meet pupils' needs well. This includes courses for individual pupils, in order to follow their desired careers paths. Courses on offer are reviewed regularly and changes are made to help pupils maximise the progress that they make. The school has introduced a literacy strategy in key stage 3 to be applied across all subjects. Information provided by the school shows that the strategy is already improving pupils' writing skills.
- The school promotes pupils' personal development effectively, for example through the array of extra-curricular activities, clubs, trips and charity work opportunities. These include the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, mathematics competitions and activities during Wednesday afternoon 'elective' sessions.
- The school has effective methods of measuring how well it is doing and identifying areas where improvements need to be made. Subject leaders are increasingly effective. However, leaders have not made sure that the school's key stage 3 assessment policy is applied consistently. Therefore, the quality of teaching and assessment varies and so does the progress that the pupils make.
- Leaders now check the use and impact of additional funding carefully. As a result of leaders' actions, outcomes are improving rapidly for disadvantaged pupils. The Year 7 catch-up funding is used effectively.
- Careers advice and guidance is strong in the school. A clear programme, starting in Year 7, includes an 'industry day' for Year 8 pupils.

- Staff morale is very good and pupils also appreciate the positive changes to their school. Responses to the inspection staff and parent questionnaires show that they recognise and support leaders' actions. For example, one parent wrote, 'My daughter feels very proud since she joined this school.'
- Leaders' actions to improve the attendance and to reduce the exclusion rates of all groups of pupils have been very effective.
- The curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, Year 7 visit places of worship in the East Midlands. There are many opportunities for pupils to take on roles of responsibility, such as house captains.
- The school's personal, social and health education programme underpins pupils' good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and emotional and mental well-being.

Governance of the school

- The governance of the school has undergone significant changes since the previous inspection, including the appointments of a new chair and vice-chair of the governing board. The board now provides rigorous challenge to school leaders and provides effective support.
- Governors now analyse closely information provided by the school and they are much more focused on and able to hold leaders to account for any underperformance of pupils as a result.
- Members of the governing board have attended a range of training courses. Governors visit the school regularly, holding discussions with leaders with whom they are linked, and challenge the school on a regular basis. This has led to a higher degree of understanding about how the school works and to the greater accountability of leaders.
- The governing body oversees the use of additional funding effectively and monitors the impact on groups of pupils' outcomes rigorously.

Safeguarding

- The systems to ensure safeguarding are effective and staff implement them consistently. Policies are up to date and reviewed regularly. Staff receive regular training, which ensures that they understand roles with regard to safeguarding pupils, including protecting them from the risk of extremism and sexual exploitation. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and are told about topics such as sexual exploitation. Governors have received safeguarding training and are fully aware of their responsibilities.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment across a range of subjects has improved since the last inspection. Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent, as are pupils' attitudes to learning. Teachers create an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust in the classroom, which enables pupils to thrive and to make good progress.
- Most teachers' strong subject knowledge underpins their good planning. Pupils are stimulated to learn by the teachers' imaginative use of resources. Often, effective

questioning establishes whether pupils have understood new work, or if they need further help.

- The accurate and comprehensive tracking system clearly shows the progress that individuals, or groups of pupils, are making. Staff identify quickly those who are not making enough progress and trigger extra support to enable these pupils to catch up. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in particular benefit from this.
- The overall quality of teaching is now good throughout the school. In some subjects, for example in mathematics, science, and religious education, strong teaching enables pupils to achieve GCSE results that are well above average.
- There is a strong culture of reading in the school. Leaders have been effective in supporting weaker readers who are new to the school. Younger pupils spoke about how much they had improved their reading since they started at the school.
- Teachers, well trained by leaders, support the development of pupils' literacy skills effectively. These skills are developed across a wide range of subjects, such as history and physical education, through a programme to enhance pupils' writing skills.
- Teachers have high expectations of the quality of the work that they wish to see. For example, effective questioning from pupils about atomic structure led to good progress being made.
- As required by the school's marking and assessment policy, most teachers give pupils time to check on and improve their work. Currently, however, leaders do not ensure that all teachers use it consistently to help to improve pupils' progress in key stage 3.
- School leaders identified the need to ensure that training for teachers spreads the very best practice. Inspectors also found this to be the case when visiting lessons and looking at pupils' work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Staff are very effective at spotting and supporting any pupil who is at risk, or potentially vulnerable, and when appropriate obtaining the help of outside agencies. Pupils know that there is a large team to support them, if they need help.
- The student services team is exemplary and well led.
- Pupils' very positive views of the school are reflected in their comments to inspectors. Pupils confirmed that the school teaches them about things such as e-safety and potential dangers from drugs, alcohol and radicalisation. Pupils report that they feel very safe.
- Pupils are very polite, cheerful and positive. Many stopped to talk to inspectors and held doors open for them.
- Pupils are very aware of different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. Pupils say that bullying is rare and they believe that if any occurs it is dealt with quickly and effectively.

- Pupils are very proud of their school and wear uniforms smartly. They value the new rewards systems introduced by the principal, such as the 'Casterton Coins', and the opportunity to be served a meal by achieving a platinum award in the 'Progress Ladders' competition.
- Pupils talk confidently about their experience of joining the school. They say that the week-long transition programme helped them to get to know their new school. Inspectors found that staff also valued this opportunity.
- A comprehensive careers education programme throughout the school is preparing all pupils effectively, including those at risk of disengagement, for the next stage of their education, employment or training. The school's records show that almost all pupils went on to education, employment or training on leaving the school in 2016.
- Pupils talk very positively about the range of opportunities in the curriculum and extra-curricular activities that develop their skills and interest. They speak passionately about the writing programme and the Duke of Edinburgh award and about how these activities help to develop their confidence.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. It is much better than at the time of the previous inspection because pupils have responded very positively to the introduction of a clear system of rewards and sanctions.
- The principal has been energetic in ensuring that his high expectations are supporting learning. Pupils say, for example, 'The school is now so much better because everyone gets along and the principal has helped GCSE results to go up.'
- Around the school and in lessons, pupils' conduct is exemplary. They move around the site in a mature and orderly fashion. The school is well maintained. Even at the end of a busy lunchtime, there is no litter.
- Lessons start punctually and pupils are polite and respectful to each other and to staff. During lessons, pupils listen carefully to each other's views and opinions and want to achieve.
- Leadership to ensure the best behaviour and regular attendance is outstanding, with clear and consistently used systems that pupils understand well. Discussions with pupils and teachers indicate that this is a particularly successful feature of the school.
- Attendance has improved overall and now is above the national average.
- Attendance has improved for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff use systems consistently to get to know these pupils and their families. This has contributed to the improvements in the progress made by these groups of pupils. This is also the case for pupils who were persistently absent and who now attend more regularly.
- Relationships between pupils and adults in the school are outstanding. Learning takes place with little or no disruption because there is a strong sense of working together.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Achievement in all year groups across the school has improved rapidly because of good teaching. Leaders have made this a priority and, as a result, current pupils are making good progress. Work seen in pupils' books supports this judgement.
- The overall progress that pupils made in eight of their GCSEs in 2016 was above average. The proportion of pupils who achieve grades A* to C in both English and mathematics at key stage 4 is good.
- In 2016, the progress of disadvantaged pupils in Year 11 improved significantly compared to 2015. The proportion of these pupils who achieved a GCSE in both English and mathematics increased greatly. Leaders and teachers have a clear focus, and the improvement in these pupils' attendance has helped to accelerate the progress they make.
- Pupils who enter Year 7 with below-average standards in both English and mathematics are given high-quality support from staff, in well-planned nurture groups supported using the catch-up funding. The support is helping these pupils to catch up quickly.
- Effective support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities enables them to make progress that is in line with their peers.
- The progress of the most able is good. Teaching has improved and the 2016 GCSE results showed that the most able achieved higher than the national average.
- The school promotes reading very well for all pupils. There is a strong focus for improving all pupils' literacy skills lower down the school. Staff value the impact this is having on the quality of pupils' learning.
- Pupils work hard and told inspectors that they want to do well.
- Inspection evidence shows that some teachers do not use the school's assessment policy consistently in key stage 3. Therefore, the progress of some pupils is not as high as it could be because they are not challenged sufficiently.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leadership and management of the sixth form are good because leaders have a clear vision for the sixth form. Improvements have been made to the quality of teaching and the range of courses offered.
- Outcomes in the sixth form are good overall. A-level grades have improved rapidly and are above national averages. In 2015, students studying academic programmes make good progress and the latest school information confirms that this has improved in 2016. A-level results were well above the national average.
- Students show very good attitudes to learning and speak positively about the support and guidance that they receive. Students value the opportunities that exist through the Wednesday afternoon 'elective' enrichment sessions. They are positive about an industry-linked science research project and sessions with the local police.
- Teaching is good. Leaders have provided staff with regular, productive training since the previous inspection. Students say that they value these new approaches to teaching because they are helping them become more-independent learners.

- The curriculum prepares students well for the next steps in their lives. A range of non-qualification activities contributes well to students' personal development and well-being. The enrichment programme has been improved to meet the needs of students fully, so that they know how to stay safe and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The small number of students entering the sixth form without good GCSE passes in mathematics and English are supported well and achieve well in resit examinations.
- The school meets the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programme. Students are well informed about the world of work, including participating in work experience. They are also guided effectively through the process of choosing and applying to university.
- Higher expectations for attendance, punctuality, behaviour and dress code have resulted in good attendance. Students told inspectors that they value the changes to the culture of the sixth form.
- Safeguarding is effective in the sixth form because teachers are vigilant and appropriate systems are followed consistently.

School details

Unique reference number	137340
Local authority	Rutland
Inspection number	10019565

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converted
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	907
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy Tindall
Principal	Carl Smith
Telephone number	01780 762168
Website	http://castertoncollege.com
Email address	cs@castertoncollege.com
Date of previous inspection	18–19 November 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish on their websites.
- The school is an average-sized, mixed comprehensive school, with a sixth form.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average.
- Most pupils are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average.

- There are no pupils attending off-site alternative provision.
- In 2015 and 2016, the school met the government's floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of key stage 4 and interim standards for 16 to 19 study programmes.
- The school sixth form site is currently 10 miles away from the main school. The school has plans for it to return to the main school site in time for September 2017.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made visits to 38 lessons. Some of these were observed jointly with the principal and other senior leaders.
- During the inspection, meetings were held with the principal, senior leaders, subject leaders, the coordinator for the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the leader of the 16 to 19 provision and governors.
- Inspectors met formally with four groups of pupils. They spoke with pupils about their learning in lessons and their experiences in school. Inspectors listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school’s review of its performance, plans for improvement, safeguarding procedures, and incident logs. The lead inspector looked at records of meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors reviewed the school’s information about pupils’ progress and the standards achieved. In addition, inspectors looked at pupils’ work during visits to lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed 56 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 56 responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire, including 78 free text responses.

Inspection team

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