

Acle Academy

South Walsham Road, Acle, Norwich, Norfolk NR13 3ER

Inspection dates

1–2 May 2018

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have made sufficient improvements for the school to no longer require special measures. They have the capacity to sustain these improvements and to continue to improve the school. However, the quality of education is not yet good.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved, but remains inconsistent.
- Pupils in the school now generally make more progress than pupils in the past. However, their rates of progress vary depending on which teacher they have.
- Some teachers do not set work which interests pupils. When this happens, some pupils become bored and easily distracted.
- While diminishing, differences remain between the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally.
- Strategies to support pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities have some positive impact but are not consistently applied across the school.
- Most-able pupils continue to make less progress than they are capable of.
- The teaching of literacy is not well developed across the school.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' personal development and welfare are good. Leaders have ensured that pupils respect each other's differences. Bullying is rare and, when it does happen, pupils have confidence that it will be dealt with well.
- Leaders have successfully improved pupils' attendance. Levels of attendance are now above average.
- Leaders have successfully secured the support of most parents and carers, pupils and staff for the improvements they are making. One parent, for example, commented that the 'tide has turned'.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - closely monitoring the impact of strategies used to improve the quality of education
 - consistently holding other leaders and teachers to account for using them effectively.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - making sure teachers consistently set work based on a secure understanding of what pupils already know and can do
 - raising some teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve so that teachers across the school routinely challenge pupils to do as well as they can
 - improving the way in which pupils are supported to develop their literacy skills.
- Improve the progress pupils make by:
 - ensuring that teachers across the school understand, and provide support to overcome, the difficulties faced by disadvantaged pupils
 - developing teachers' understanding of how to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, and ensuring that these pupils' needs are consistently met
 - ensuring that the needs and capabilities of the most able pupils are understood and catered for across the school.
- Improve pupils' attitudes to learning by ensuring that teachers across the school inspire pupils to concentrate fully and work as hard as they can.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and managers are ambitious for the school. They recognise the deficiencies in provision and are diligently addressing them. This is having a positive impact on pupils' education. However, because leaders do not always monitor the application of their strategies for improvement closely, they are not consistently applied by teachers.
- Where leaders do seek to evaluate improvements, they often focus more on what has been done rather than on the impact it has had. This means that leaders are not always aware of what is not working well.
- Support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is beginning to improve the progress that they make. This is because some teachers are meeting these pupils' needs well in lessons. In addition, leaders are providing extra support out of lessons when pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities fall behind.
- However, leaders' monitoring of support in lessons for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities does not evaluate its impact. Because of this, leaders do not have a good understanding of which support is effective in which lessons. Some teachers do not support pupils' special educational needs well. The quality of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is improving but is not yet good.
- Leaders' use of Year 7 catch-up funding benefits pupils. Pupils in Year 7 who receive support in reading from Year 10 'buddy readers', for example, report that they now read for pleasure which they previously did not do. They say that their stronger reading skills help them to access work in other subjects. However, while these pupils are making progress because of the support they receive, they are not yet making enough progress to catch up. They are still working below the reading level expected of their age.
- When teaching is not effective, leaders hold teachers to account and provide them with training and support. This means that a significant proportion of teaching now meets the needs of pupils well. However, leaders have not secured consistently high standards across the school. The quality of teaching pupils receive still depends on which teacher they have.
- Leaders have improved the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils. Bullying, for example, is rare, and pupils now report that they have confidence in adults to tackle it when it does occur. Pupils understand and respect others' differences. Attendance has improved markedly because leaders have taken decisive and focused steps to ensure that it does.
- A well-developed range of extra-curricular activities, including theatre trips, concerts and sports, support pupils' social and cultural development. These opportunities enhance what pupils learn in life skills lessons and assemblies. They help pupils prepare for life in modern Britain.
- Using their free-text option in response to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, many parents commented positively on the quality of education provided at the school. They recognise and support the improvements leaders are making. Most staff who completed Ofsted's survey echoed this view. Pupils, too, appreciate the positive

changes made by leaders. Those who spoke to inspectors value the improved behaviour and clearer focus in lessons. Pupils, parents and staff are committed to leaders' plans for improvement.

Governance of the school

- The school is part of a multi-academy trust. Leaders are held to account by a local governing body and by the trust.
- Governors now have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have a realistic understanding of what has been achieved so far and what still needs to be done. Governors are keen to improve the school and are knowledgeable and involved.
- Governors ask questions about appropriate topics. They seek to check that improvements are on track. Governors agree that there is more they could do to challenge leaders more rigorously to prove the impact of their work.
- The multi-academy trust provides support in a range of ways. Some has a direct impact on classroom practice, such as in checking the accuracy of assessment. Other help enhances the capacity of school leaders. For example, the trust has provided financial assistance to appoint additional senior leaders. These actions are helping the school to improve. The trust recognises that there is more to do to ensure that school leaders evaluate the impact of their work more effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders undertake appropriate checks on adults who work in the school. They maintain an effective single central record of these checks. This is regularly reviewed by the principal and by the multi-academy trust to ensure that it is well kept.
- Leaders ensure that staff have up-to-date training in safeguarding including, for example, extra training for key staff to support pupils' mental health. Leaders have a good understanding of the specific issues individuals in the school face. They keep clear records of safeguarding concerns and act in a timely and effective fashion to resolve them.
- Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe. Assemblies cover topics such as bullying and 'sexting', and pupils receive weekly life skills lessons. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement because it is inconsistent. While many teachers employ effective strategies to support pupils, some still do not.
- The teaching of literacy is not well developed across the curriculum. While leaders have begun to implement new strategies, these are not part of typical practice. Leaders have

not evaluated their impact.

- In some lessons, teachers do not consider what pupils already know and can do in the lessons they plan and teach. Consequently, the work is too easy for some pupils and too hard for others. When this is the case, it hinders the progress some pupils make.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils. They are too ready to accept simplistic answers and do not challenge pupils to think and to learn more deeply. With these teachers, some pupils lower their own expectations of what they should achieve. They are not encouraged to do their best. The lack of challenge for pupils is most acute for the most able pupils.
- The understanding teachers have of the specific needs of groups of learners is developing. Teachers now recognise which pupils in their classes are disadvantaged. They apply broad strategies to support these pupils. The strategies have some effect and do help many disadvantaged pupils to make progress. However, the strategies themselves are not tailored specifically enough to the challenges faced by individual pupils and are not consistently applied by teachers across the school. This means that teaching for these pupils is not as effective as it could be.
- Strategies for teaching pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are not closely measured by leaders for impact. They are used more effectively by some teachers than others. They are having some positive impact but are not working as well as leaders intend.
- A significant proportion of teaching now meets the needs of most pupils well. Many teachers use their understanding of pupils' prior learning effectively. They provide work which supports those who are struggling and challenges the most able. Pupils in classes with these teachers make strong progress over time.
- Much teaching features high-quality questioning which draws answers and insight from pupils. These teachers do not accept simple answers. They insist on pupils considering what they say and applying their knowledge and understanding to the solution of problems. Pupils respond well to these opportunities and make good use of their time to learn.
- Where pupils are well taught, they respond with enthusiasm. They are interested and keen to learn. The contributions they make to lessons, and the quality of work in their books, demonstrates how keen they are to do well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils report that bullying is rare. When it does happen, they have confidence in leaders to deal with it.
- Pupils and teachers typically get on well. Pupils trust teachers and are confident to ask questions and volunteer answers. They are not afraid to make mistakes.
- A well-developed programme teaches pupils about life in modern Britain. They learn about environmental issues and empathy in assemblies, for example. Pupils

demonstrate a good understanding of the need to treat others well. They routinely show respect for others and told inspectors that it is okay to be different.

- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. When meeting with an inspector, pupils were positive about how effectively they are taught about topics such as internet safety, social media and drugs.
- Pupils are well supported by effective advice and guidance on their education and career options. They feel the information and support they receive to help them choose which key stage 4 subjects to study, for example, is helpful, and they understand the range of choices available to them after Year 11.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- When teachers do not provide pupils with work which is matched well to their abilities, some pupils quickly become bored. They do not concentrate or put in as much effort as they should. This hinders the progress they make. Although this is not common, some pupils also disrupt the learning of others.
- Pupils around the school are calm and orderly. They are polite and welcoming to visitors, and they take pride in their appearance.
- Leaders have been effective in improving attendance. Over an extended period, too many pupils have missed too much time in school. This is no longer the case. Leaders monitor attendance closely. They celebrate good attendance. They intervene with support such as attendance panels and back to school interviews when pupils' attendance becomes a cause for concern. Attendance is now better, including for key groups such as disadvantaged pupils. Attendance rates are now above average.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2017, the progress pupils made to the end of key stage 4 was in line with the national average overall. However, pupils did not make enough progress in some key areas, including mathematics, modern foreign languages and science.
- Some key groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, made less progress than other pupils nationally across a range of subjects in 2017.
- Leaders know that outcomes for the most able pupils need to improve. They recognise that they have not raised all teachers' expectations of most-able pupils enough to ensure that these pupils make good progress. As a result, most-able pupils still typically make less progress than their peers.
- As a result of better teaching, many disadvantaged pupils make more progress now than in the past. Some make good progress. However, because the quality of teaching is inconsistent, so is the progress made by disadvantaged pupils. They do not consistently make as much progress as other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities now make more progress than they did in the past because of better teaching and additional help outside lessons. However, because

the quality of teaching they receive varies, and because strategies to support them are not well monitored, these pupils do not typically make as much progress as their peers.

- In mathematics and modern foreign languages, pupils now benefit from more consistent teaching. As a result, they are now typically making sufficient progress. Many are making good progress. However, because some of these pupils have not been well taught in these subjects in the past, there is still some way to go to help them to catch up.
- The progress pupils make in other subjects varies. In English, pupils typically make good progress. In science, the progress pupils make continues to depend on which teacher they have. This is true in a range of subjects.
- As a result of the improvements leaders have made, pupils now make more progress than in the past. However, pupils do not yet consistently make good progress across all year groups and all subjects.

School details

Unique reference number	138758
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10046568

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

Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	444
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	John Smith
Principal	Helen Watts
Telephone number	01493 750431
Website	www.acleacademy.co.uk
Email address	info@acle.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 December 2015

Information about this school

- Since being judged inadequate in 2015, Acle Academy has joined the Wensum Trust, a multi-academy trust. Leaders are accountable to the trust and to a local governing body.
- The Wensum Trust provides centralised services, financial support and leadership support.
- The academy makes use of alternative education provision at the St Edmunds Society charity in Norwich for some pupils.
- Acle Academy meets the current government floor standards for the minimum standards and progress pupils should achieve at key stage 4.
- It is a smaller than average sized secondary school, with a broadly average proportion of boys and girls.
- The proportion of pupils who have been eligible for free school meals at any time in the

last six years is broadly average.

- The school has a lower proportion of pupils eligible for special educational needs support than the national average, but a greater proportion with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- A smaller than average proportion of pupils are believed to have a first language other than English.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with senior and other leaders, members of the governing body, and the chair and chief executive officer of Wensum Trust. They also spoke with a representative of the St Edmunds Society.
- Inspectors observed parts of 34 lessons, sometimes accompanied by leaders, and reviewed the work of pupils in their books. They also visited registration groups.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation including the school's single central record of recruitment checks and safeguarding files. They considered leaders' evaluation of the school and their improvement plans, their analysis of the use of funding and external reviews of the work of the school. Inspectors reviewed documents demonstrating the work of governors and the school's information on pupils' progress, attendance, behaviour and exclusions.
- Inspectors considered phone calls with, and emails from, parents during the inspection. They considered the 86 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the 42 responses by parents to the free-text option. Inspectors met with groups of pupils from all year groups. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. Inspectors also reviewed the 42 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Andrew Hemmings, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lesley Daniel	Ofsted Inspector
John Wilson	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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