

Great Yarmouth Charter Academy

Salisbury Road, Great Yarmouth NR30 4LS

Inspection dates

2–3 July 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, governors and the trust have successfully established a culture where there are high expectations of behaviour. As a result, there is a calm, purposeful learning environment. Pupils feel safe and achievement is improving.
- Leaders' determined actions and support from the trust have improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school, so that it is consistently effective.
- The Inspiration Trust (the trust) and governors have provided challenge and support to leaders. They regularly check to see that leaders' actions are making a positive difference to pupils' experience of school.
- Most current pupils make strong progress in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Teachers ensure that the learning needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified accurately. As a result, these pupils typically make good progress.
- Leaders use additional funding efficiently. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are making strong or improving progress across the curriculum. Pupils who left primary school below the standard expected for their age are catching up, particularly in reading.
- Leaders have constructed a curriculum that has an academic focus and promotes pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Working with the trust, leaders have put credible plans in place to add further breadth to the curriculum.
- Leaders have ensured that high levels of challenge are helping the most able pupils to increase their achievement. However, a small minority of teachers do not ensure that pupils move on to more challenging activities quickly enough.
- Leaders' determination to tackle poor attendance has borne fruit. Attendance is improving markedly. However, a small number of pupils are still absent too frequently, so overall attendance remains below the national average.
- Behaviour has improved significantly over time and is good. Nonetheless, leaders have been less successful in helping a small number of pupils to improve their behaviour. As a result, they are excluded too often.
- The trust and governors have explored the reasons why pupils have left the school. Leaders have accurately identified that they have not always communicated reasons for actions clearly enough. Consequently, a small minority of parents have had concerns about the school's provision for some pupils' learning and managing their behaviour.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that leaders:
 - implement and evaluate fully the planned changes to the curriculum, to ensure that it continues to meet the needs and aspirations of all pupils
 - continue to improve communication so that all parents understand and share the school's ethos, aims and approach to managing behaviour.
- Improve behaviour and attendance by:
 - reducing further the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school, so that levels of absence and persistent absence are at least in line with the national average
 - reducing the number of incidents that lead to repeated exclusion from school and removal from lessons for a small number of pupils.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment and further improve outcomes, particularly for the most able pupils, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers move pupils on to more challenging activities quickly, when it is appropriate to do so.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- On taking up his post in September 2017, the headteacher quickly identified the need to address pupils' poor behaviour and attitudes to learning. He immediately introduced high expectations of behaviour and a new behaviour code. Staff, pupils and the very large majority of parents say that behaviour and learning have improved as a result. A number of parents referred to the changes in the school as 'amazing'. One free-text comment to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, reflected the views of most parents who responded or who spoke to inspectors. Commenting on her child's experience, the parent stated: 'She was worried about some of the changes made at first...she finds some of the rules overly strict, but she and I feel it works.'
- Leaders have worked relentlessly to establish a culture where pupils feel that they can succeed, and staff believe that they can make a difference. Leaders have raised expectations and aspirations of both staff and pupils. Almost all pupils want to learn and have positive attitudes to learning. Teachers want pupils to achieve as well as they can. Good relationships between pupils and staff support pupils' learning and personal development. Pupils and staff have a shared understanding of, and pride in, what it means to be part of the 'Charter community'.
- Leaders have been uncompromising in their determination to ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school is good. They have insisted that teachers meet the professional standards expected of them as a minimum requirement. Leaders use their regular checks on the quality of teaching to identify where teachers need extra support to meet leaders' high expectations. Leaders have taken firm action where practice has not improved. Teachers have risen to the challenge and share leaders' ambition for pupils. Teachers feel valued, well supported, show great commitment and are proud of the school. As a result, the quality of teaching is good and improving and pupils are well cared for.
- Staff, including teachers new to the profession, appreciate the opportunities they have for training and professional development. They value the weekly training sessions that strike a good balance between whole-school priorities and individual's improvement needs. Staff also benefit from training and opportunities to share ideas of how to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment provided by the trust.
- Leadership of the provision for pupils with SEND is effective. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has ensured that pupils' needs are accurately identified. This has resulted in a reduction in the number of pupils on the special educational needs register. She has ensured that staff have had training and support to ensure that they are appropriately skilled to make good provision for pupils with SEND.
- Subject leaders are effective. They know the strengths in subject areas and make good use of support available from the trust to inform their improvement plans, plan sequences of learning and share good practice. Subject leaders know how their actions contribute to whole-school priorities for improvement and help monitor progress towards achieving them. Those who are new to leadership roles are well supported to develop leadership skills.
- Leaders make efficient use of additional funding, including the pupil premium grant and

Year 7 catch-up funding. They are increasingly precise in analysing the impact that additional funding has on improving pupils' achievement. As a result, disadvantaged pupils currently in the school typically make good progress and their achievement is improving towards that of other pupils nationally. Pupils who did not achieve the standards expected for their age at the end of Year 6 are catching up with their peers, particularly in reading. This reflects the importance leaders place on developing pupils' reading skills throughout the school.

- School leaders have constructed a curriculum that embodies the trust's principles of developing knowledge in core subjects and experience of the arts and culture. The curriculum meets pupils' needs. In 2018, all pupils progressed to education, training or employment at the end of their studies in Year 11. Leaders have rightly identified, however, the need to provide opportunities for learning in technology subjects. They also want to strengthen further their provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE). Leaders have credible plans in place to do so and have identified the importance of checking that the planned changes will continue to meet pupils' needs and aspirations as the school expands its provision.
- The headteacher and pastoral leaders have taken decisive action to challenge poor attendance. Effective systems to monitor attendance and address reasons for poor attendance are in place. As a result, absence and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent have reduced. However, despite their concerted efforts, there are still some pupils who are absent too frequently, so absence remains above the national average for all pupils.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and its areas for improvement. They have rightly recognised that despite the significant improvements in behaviour, there remain a small number of pupils who are excluded from school or removed from lessons too often. Leaders have not analysed their information about the behaviour of these pupils precisely enough to consider how they can further reduce incidents that lead to exclusion from school or lessons.
- The trust, governors and leaders recognise that communication has not always been as good as it should have been. They recognise that this has contributed to parents removing pupils from the school due to leaders not being clear about the reason for actions or assuaging parents' concerns about changes that they made. Although communication has improved, there is still a small minority of parents who are not fully supportive of the school or the way their concerns are responded to.

Governance of the school

- The trust provides both challenge and support to leaders. An experienced executive headteacher has provided advice to the headteacher and senior leaders and provided an external view on the effectiveness of their work. The trust director of standards regularly checks on the work of leaders, as does the chief executive officer (CEO). Arrangements to hold school leaders to account for their work are robust. Specialist subject leaders from the trust have provided support to subject leaders to develop the curriculum and improve teaching, learning and assessment. The trust also has commissioned independent reviews of areas of the school's work, for example its provision for pupils with SEND.
- The local governing body (LGB) knows the school well. Its members have a broad

range of knowledge and expertise, so that they are effective in their roles. Members of the LGB visit the school regularly to get an accurate view of the quality of education provided. The LGB has challenged leaders, for example about the changes in the numbers of pupils with SEND, and has checked that provision is meeting pupils' needs. Members of the LGB have responded appropriately when parents have raised concerns about any aspect of the school's work.

- The trust and LGB have challenged leaders about the number of pupils who have left the school. They have worked closely with leaders and the local authority to explore the reasons for this and have a good understanding of trends and patterns within the group of pupils involved. As a result, the degree of pupil mobility, in terms of pupils leaving the school, is much reduced. Leaders, trust and the LGB are working with the local authority to reduce this further and ensure that decisions are made in the best interests of the pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils report that they feel safe in school. Older pupils attribute this to the much-improved behaviour and the very positive relationships that have been established in the school. Pupils learn to stay safe from a variety of risks. Assemblies are used to inform pupils about how to recognise risks and stay safe from harm. Visits from outside organisations, including the police, teach pupils about a variety of topics, such as online safety and the dangers of extremism and radicalisation.
- Leaders ensure that the checks required for adults to be safe to work with pupils are carried out diligently. Trust staff and the safeguarding governor make sure that the single central record of these checks is accurately maintained. Governors are fully aware of their responsibilities to keep pupils safe from harm. Policies and practice reflect the latest published guidance. Governors regularly check that staff understand their responsibilities regarding safeguarding.
- Staff receive regular training on how to recognise the signs that a pupil is at risk of harm. All staff have had training on the 'Prevent' duty. As a result, staff are confident to refer any concerns to the safeguarding team. The designated safeguarding lead acts promptly on any concerns. Referrals to external agencies, when required, are made in a timely fashion, so that pupils and their families get the help that they need.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have established a culture in their classrooms where almost all pupils demonstrate consistently positive attitudes to learning. Teachers' expectations of pupils' commitment are high. Pupils engage fully with learning activities and are willing to ask and answer questions. Established, consistent routines mean that lessons typically flow smoothly. These contribute strongly to pupils' learning and progress over time.
- Clear explanations are a consistent feature of the most effective teaching in the school. Teachers are able to use their strong subject knowledge to frame explanations in a way that pupils find easy to understand. Pupils told inspectors that they feel this helps

them learn and shows that teachers 'know their stuff'.

- Teachers routinely use questioning to check pupils' understanding and recall of previous learning. Teachers have clear, consistent expectations of how pupils should phrase their spoken answers. These help pupils to structure their written answers in a way that accurately shows their understanding.
- The teaching of English is increasingly effective. Reading is promoted in all subjects. Pupils recognise the importance of being able to read with understanding and teachers help pupils use specialist terms and vocabulary accurately. Pupils typically apply their writing skills equally well across the curriculum. Teachers model how to structure written arguments well and pupils develop the ability to do this for themselves.
- Pupils apply their learning in mathematics confidently and most respond well to increasingly challenging work, making good progress as a result. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding in science and geography. Most pupils do so to good effect.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils who need it. They have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and identify barriers to pupils' learning. This support results in most pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils making progress that is as strong as others who have similar starting points. The support for pupils who speak English as an additional language is very effective, contributing to strong progress for this group.
- Teachers carefully consider the sequencing of learning activities and how these build upon pupils' knowledge. They make good use of examples that demonstrate high standards in different subjects and encourage pupils to aim for the best that they can achieve.
- Opportunities to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are used well. In English, for example, pupils reflect upon cultural differences over time when reading texts. In geography, pupils consider the impact of humans on the environment. In science, pupils consider healthy lifestyles and the dangers of the misuse of drugs and alcohol.
- Teachers routinely consider the challenge provided for pupils of different abilities when planning learning activities. However, a small minority of teachers do not ensure that pupils, often the most able, move on to more challenging activities when they are ready to do so. This limits the rate at which these pupils make progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pastoral leaders have a detailed understanding of pupils' needs and have the confidence of pupils and their families. Pupils' welfare is a high priority and a wide range of needs are met through the strong relationships established with the most vulnerable pupils and their families. Leaders ensure that strong relationships with external agencies allow pupils to get extra help, if it is needed.

- Pupils mix happily with one another around the site and enjoy the outside spaces. They interact positively with staff and are confident to speak to visitors, reflecting the warm relationships that exist. Pupils, on the whole, are very confident, polite and well mannered. There is a strong sense of pupils being proud of the school and their achievements. Pupils wear their uniform with pride and are happy to talk about their learning and progress with visitors.
- Pupils say that bullying is dealt with effectively by teachers and that it happens infrequently. This is reflected in school records, and in the comments of staff, and the large majority of parents who responded to Parent View.
- Pupils learn to be respectful of others. They show a good understanding of difference and know why they should respect others' beliefs and opinions. As a result, there are few instances of racist, homophobic or derogatory language.
- Leaders have placed a strong focus on developing pupils' understanding of right and wrong. Pupils know that they are representatives of the Charter community at all times. They know that high expectations of their behaviour and relationships with others do not end beyond the school gate. There is a coherent programme of careers education. Pupils who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire and those who spoke to inspectors feel that they get the right amount of good-quality, independent advice. Visiting speakers from local industry, vocational services, health care and universities make pupils aware of the opportunities available to them after they complete their studies. Leaders ensure that pupils know about pathways for further study provided locally, for those who want to continue education or training.
- A range of extra-curricular activities allow pupils to pursue sporting, cultural or artistic interests. Roles as ambassadors allow pupils to experience roles of responsibility and act as role models for others. Those interested in music can learn to play a variety of musical instruments, including bagpipes and the piano. Pupils learn about a range of religions and beliefs in religious education (RE) and discuss the similarities and differences of religions such as Islam, Judaism and Christianity. Leaders successfully support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders provide PSHE through assemblies, visiting speakers and opportunities identified in the curriculum. Pupils learn about healthy lifestyles in science. Pupils learn about healthy relationships in science and RE. Leaders want to strengthen the school's work to support PSHE further and are reviewing the curriculum to see how they can do so.
- A number of parents told inspectors how the school had provided support or shown flexibility in approach to its policies to meet their children's needs. The LGB and the trust have followed up concerns they have received and checked on leaders' actions to ensure that necessary adjustments are made, for example, to take into account medical conditions or pupils with SEND. However, information and communication from the school in the past have not always indicated that there has been this flexibility.
- While the very large majority of pupils develop positive attitudes to learning and value their education, there remains a small minority who have yet to develop consistently positive attitudes to school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons has improved significantly because of leaders' firm action to address previously unacceptable behaviour. They have been unswerving in their determination to eradicate poor behaviour that previously meant many pupils and staff felt unsafe and where disruption to learning was widespread. Those pupils, staff and parents who experienced the predecessor school recognise the great strides taken to improve behaviour.
- Pupils' learning behaviour is developing and levels of engagement in lessons are strong. Pupils appreciate the rewards that they can achieve for good behaviour. As a result, incidences where learning is disrupted by poor behaviour have reduced significantly over the past two years.
- The school is a calm and orderly environment. Pupils arrive promptly to lessons and are ready to learn. The very large majority of pupils respond to well to established routines and teachers' consistent expectations regarding behaviour and conduct. As a result, lessons typically flow smoothly, and pupils are not allowed to disrupt the learning of others.
- Attendance is improving because of leaders' actions to instil its importance in pupils and parents and to address the causes of absence. High attendance is rewarded and celebrated. Leaders take rapid action, when appropriate, to hold pupils and parents to account when absence is unnecessary. As a result, attendance is improving and fewer pupils are absent frequently. However, despite leaders' closer monitoring of attendance and the support and challenge that is in place, a small number of pupils are still absent too often.
- While still too high, exclusions are reducing because pupils increasingly meet 'the Charter expectations' and understand the impact the school is having on their ability to achieve and develop personally.
- Permanent exclusions have been used appropriately and as a last resort to deal with serious incidents of poor behaviour. Inspectors' review of information indicates that before permanent exclusion leaders have followed appropriate procedures. They have sought support for the pupils concerned from professionals and external agencies to try to avoid exclusion.
- Leaders have accurately identified a small group of pupils where their work to improve behaviour has been less successful. Leaders' analysis of the causes of external exclusions or removal from lessons has not been precise enough to identify how they can better support these pupils to manage their behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- As a result of effective and improving teaching, learning and assessment pupils' achievement is improving strongly in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- In 2018, pupils' progress across the curriculum at the end of key stage 4 was in line with that of all pupils nationally. Pupils' attainment, including in English and mathematics, improved significantly compared with that of pupils in the predecessor

school. This reflects improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

- Inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' work, observations of learning and review of assessment information show that most pupils are making strong progress across the curriculum in all year groups. Leaders identify where there are variations and take swift action to reduce differences in progress for individuals or groups.
- Pupils join the school with standards of attainment that are typically below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders ensure that the curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in these subjects. There is a particular focus on reading, as leaders recognise that the ability to read with comprehension allows pupils to access the wider curriculum. Because of this focus and increasingly effective use of Year 7 catch-up funding, pupils with low prior attainment generally make strong progress in English and most other subjects.
- Differences in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others with similar starting points are closing noticeably. This is because interventions to support these pupils are more effectively targeted and because teachers' expectations of this group are equally as high as for other pupils.
- Teachers use available information well to plan how to overcome individual pupils' barriers to learning. Teaching assistants are skilled and have a detailed knowledge of the additional help that the pupils they work with need. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and well supported. As a result, pupils with SEND currently in the school are making strong and improving progress.
- Support for pupils who join the school speaking little or no English is very effective. They receive thoughtful, bespoke support. These pupils make strong progress and achieve well.
- Leaders' analysis of 2018 results led to teachers providing greater challenge for all pupils, particularly the most able. In 2018, the most able pupils made less progress than others in the school and compared with similar pupils nationally. Teachers' focus on modelling and exemplifying what pupils need to do to achieve high standards is having an impact on the standard of current pupils' work. Achievement is improving, including for the most able. However, a minority of teachers do not move pupils on to more challenging work quickly enough, which limits the progress that pupils in their classes make. This is particularly true of the most able pupils.

School details

Unique reference number	142883
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10088635

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	731
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	David Tibble
Principal	Barry Smith
Telephone number	01493 738111
Website	www.gyca.org.uk
Email address	office@gyca.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Great Yarmouth Charter Academy opened as Trafalgar College, a free school established by the Inspiration Trust, in September 2016. It merged with a sponsored academy in the trust, also known as Great Yarmouth Charter Academy, on 1 September 2018. The sponsored academy opened in September 2017, as a successor to Great Yarmouth High School, which was judged to require special measures when inspected in April 2016.
- Great Yarmouth Charter Academy, in its current form, has the same school leadership team appointed to lead the sponsored academy in September 2017. The majority of staff had worked at Great Yarmouth High School. The school initially was based on two sites in different parts of the town, but all pupils moved onto the current premises at the start of the summer term 2019.
- The previous Great Yarmouth Charter Academy had an unannounced inspection, under section 8 of the Education Act, in February 2018 due to concerns about the behaviour and safety of pupils at the school. This determined that safeguarding arrangements

were effective and noted that behaviour had improved significantly in a short time compared with the predecessor school.

- The school is smaller than the averaged-sized secondary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. There are above-average proportions of pupils from other minority ethnic backgrounds and just under a third of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is much higher than in most schools. The proportion of pupils with SEND is below average, although the proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is broadly average.
- The Inspiration Trust is responsible for the governance of the school. A number of responsibilities are delegated to a local governing body. The trust provides support through an executive headteacher, its director of standards, specialist subject leaders and training and professional development opportunities. Trust representatives, including the CEO, regularly check on the work of leaders and governors and the quality of education provided.
- The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school. Most of these observations took place with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also observed reading intervention sessions and pupils who were in the school’s isolation room. Inspectors also scrutinised pupils’ work and reviewed assessment information. Members of the inspection team observed a whole-school assembly.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, members of the local governing body and the CEO and director of standards for the trust. The lead inspector held telephone conversations with three representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documentation, including the self-evaluation summary, the school’s development plan, minutes of meetings of the local governing body, safeguarding records, school assessment information, attendance and behaviour records, and school policies and procedures.
- Formal discussions were held with groups of pupils from each key stage, selected by inspectors to discuss their experiences of school. Inspectors also spoke to pupils in lessons and at break and lunchtimes. Inspectors considered the 77 responses to Ofsted’s online pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors analysed the 43 responses from Ofsted’s online survey of parents, Parent View, including the 38 free-text comments provided by parents. An inspector spoke to parents at the end of the school day and the lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a parent.
- There were no Year 11 pupils in school at the time of the inspection, as they had completed their public examinations. A small group of Year 10 pupils attended a geography field trip on the second day of the examination.

Inspection team

Paul Wilson, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
John Craig	Ofsted Inspector
Prue Rayner	Ofsted Inspector
Kathryn Herlock	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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