

Inspection of The Pinetree School

Staniforth Road, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 3LH

Inspection dates: 24–25 September 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

We found that pupils enjoy coming to Pinetree because they feel happy at school. Pupils say that teachers are helping them to learn more and achieve good qualifications. Pupils like outdoor learning, for example planting daffodil bulbs and improving the garden. Leaders provide well-chosen theme days that also enrich pupils' learning.

Many pupils try hard in school and behave well. However, some pupils' behaviour is not good enough. We saw that a few pupils, who had been permanently excluded from their previous schools, were defiant, disrespectful and disruptive in lessons because staff did not manage their behaviour well enough. Consequently, it disrupted the learning of others. As a result, behaviour and attitudes to learning require improvement.

Nevertheless, many pupils know how to behave safely in school. Pupils say that there is no bullying in school. Leaders confirm that there are no recorded incidents of bullying of any kind. A recent survey showed that parents and carers say their children are safe and well cared for in school. Parents are generally pleased with the progress that their children are making.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The new headteacher and leadership team are improving the education provided for pupils. Their new curriculum, based on high academic achievement, will prepare pupils better for life after school. While pupils achieve well in examination subjects, especially in mathematics and English, leaders' plans for other subjects are not fully developed.

Pupils read every day in tutor time. This is helping some pupils to improve their reading. However, the books pupils are given to read are sometimes too difficult. Staff need to continue to promote reading skills across different subjects.

Many subject plans, especially in mathematics and English, support pupils to learn more and remember more. In design and technology, pupils recall technical vocabulary well. Plans build on what pupils already know. Pupils can remember the correct order of steps to help them to solve mathematical calculations. However, they have too few opportunities to use and apply this mathematical knowledge in real-life practical situations.

The subject leader of English has well-considered plans in place to help pupils build their basic literacy skills. For example, pupils are beginning to order their writing in paragraphs and the work in their books shows that they are using more complex language in their writing. However, pupils' poor handwriting skills, frequent spelling mistakes and untidy work often limit their progress.

Other subjects are developing appropriately. The food technology subject leader has

sequenced what pupils will learn well. In Year 8, pupils have learned basic hygiene and how to wash up, and are starting to learn how different ingredients influence how food tastes. However, plans do not take full account of the gaps in learning for pupils who are frequently absent. Year 11 pupils are not clear on the modules they have completed, how well they are doing or the subject-specific words they need to have learned.

Staff provide useful extra support in lessons for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Occasionally, a few of these pupils should be moved on to more difficult work sooner.

Pupils learn about tolerance, democracy and the rule of law through a well-thought-out programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE). Staff support pupils well, helping them to attend school often. Two out of three pupils attend every day.

Pupils benefit from useful careers information and guidance, including relevant work experience and visits to colleges for pupils in Years 10 and 11. They learn how to prepare well for a job interview and complete a job application form properly. The information pupils receive on careers and salaries helps them to consider different options.

Leaders have reviewed the school's marking policy, and the checks on how well staff are doing are simpler. This has effectively reduced staff workload.

Trustees and governors clearly understand their roles and are holding leaders to account well. Since taking over the sponsorship of the school, the new school improvement board is helping to strengthen leaders' understanding of curriculum development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know pupils well and ensure that they are safe in school. The designated safeguarding leaders work closely with families and outside agencies to ensure that pupils are safe and benefit from timely support. Staff carefully identify any potential risks to pupils in school activities. They assess these thoroughly and put strategies in place to mitigate risks appropriately. Pupils learn how to stay safe within well-chosen topics about the dangers of county lines, knife crime and the misuse of the internet and mobile telephones.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In the new subjects on offer, leaders need to carefully plan what pupils need to learn, why and when.
- Pupils' literacy skills need to be promoted more effectively across different

subjects.

- In mathematics, pupils need more opportunities to use and apply mathematics in real-life contexts.
- Pupils with SEND need more targeted support in their learning to help them make better academic progress.
- Leaders need to improve pupils' behaviour by training staff to manage pupils' poor behaviour more effectively.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

| | |
|--|--|
| Unique reference number | 139665 |
| Local authority | Norfolk |
| Inspection number | 10110204 |
| Type of school | Alternative provision |
| School category | Academy free school |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 30 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of governing body | Dennis Freeman |
| Headteacher | Katrina Warren |
| Website | www.pinetreeschool.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 6–7 July 2017 |

Information about this school

- Since the school was last inspected, a new chief executive officer (CEO) of the multi-academy trust (MAT), The Engage Trust, has taken over the sponsorship of the school. He is also the CEO of another MAT, The Unity Trust, which has been working in partnership with The Engage Trust for the past year. The Engage Trust provides special and alternative provision academies in the East of England.
- A new experienced headteacher has been appointed and the senior leadership team has been restructured.
- The school received a monitoring visit in November 2018, when it was judged as improving towards becoming a good school.
- The school uses four alternative providers based in Norfolk, which are The Locksley Hub, Appleseed Farm, Respect4Us and Open Road.
- School places are commissioned by the local authorities in Norfolk and Suffolk.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher of the school, the headteacher of the short-stay school within the MAT, the director of school improvement, the CEO, the assistant headteacher of the school, pastoral leaders, the designated safeguarding lead and the chair of the Engage trustees, who is also the Pinetree linked governor. The inspectors also spoke to the manager of Appleseed Farm.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, food technology and design and technology as part of this inspection. These included discussion with senior leaders and curriculum leaders about the intent and implementation of the curriculum, and discussion with pupils seen in the deep dives about their learning. Inspectors also looked at these pupils' books and discussed planning for sequencing, implementation and impact with curriculum leaders.
- Inspectors discussed safeguarding with the designated safeguarding lead and the chair of governors. They looked at risk assessment and how pupils' safety and well-being are checked when pupils attend alternative provision. Inspectors checked procedures and policies to promote safeguarding. They discussed how safe pupils felt in the school and looked at how effectively safeguarding was promoted within the curriculum.
- Inspectors also observed an assembly, arrivals at school and the breakfast club. They looked at planning across a range of other subjects, including PSHE, and visited Appleseed Farm, one of the alternative providers used by the school.

Inspection team

Declan McCarthy, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Jenny Carpenter

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019