

# Inspection of Castle Futures

17 Ravendale Drive, Lincoln LN2 2JN

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Inspection dates: 3–5 March 2020

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
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Personal development	<b>Good</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	<b>Yes</b>
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## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Staff have high aspirations for all pupils in this new school. They want pupils to do well in their learning, as well as in their personal and future lives. Staff go the extra mile to support pupils. A typical comment from pupils was that they look forward to being at the school every day.

Staff care for the pupils very well. Pupils know that staff are there for them if and when they need them. Pupils feel happy and safe and give back to the school in different ways. For example, they take good care of Pickle and Lilly, the pet rabbits. Coley and Pepper are much-loved dogs.

Pupils gain from a curriculum which challenges them to extend and deepen their learning. Staff expect all pupils to work hard and succeed.

Pupils are welcoming, polite and mostly well behaved. They say there is very little bullying, and that, if there is, staff spot it and sort it out quickly. Pupils respect each other and staff.

Pupils value the opportunities to take part in lots of activities. For example, they enjoy kick-boxing, go-carting and mini-golf and are looking forward to indoor climbing. They are proud to be part of this school.

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

Leaders have established a safe, positive and caring school with clear curriculum aims. They and staff successfully support all pupils to succeed and to move on to appropriate education or training at the end of their time at the school.

Leaders have made sure that the academic curriculum is broad and ambitious. It is planned to meet the varied special educational needs and/or disabilities of pupils. Teachers make sure that most learning is sequenced and progressive over the year. They plan learning which builds on what pupils already know and addresses the gaps in their learning. Staff prepare pupils well for GCSE examinations in English, mathematics and science. As a result, pupils cope well with the demands of these courses. Pupils follow courses which are in their best interests. They respond well to the curriculum. For example, in English, pupils deepened their analysis of the play *Blood Brothers*, and in science showed a mature understanding of the periodic table.

Relationships between staff and pupils are respectful and pupils are mostly well behaved. Staff support pupils effectively to improve their behaviour. Leaders have refined the behaviour systems. They have also changed the timetable and the length of lessons. These changes have contributed to pupils' improved behaviour and attitudes. Staff deal effectively with incidents of poor behaviour. Fixed-term exclusions are rare.

Leaders have put systems in place to improve pupils' attendance. Attendance of individuals is improving, with some having 100% attendance. Strategies put in place by leaders are helping to improve pupils' attitudes and attendance. However, a significant minority of pupils do not attend regularly enough.

All staff focus on the personal development of each pupil by supporting their self-esteem, self-confidence and well-being. Pupils speak highly of the care that they receive. They value the opportunities they have to work together and in the community. Staff nurture respect for others. For example, staff share 'top pupil' time at the end of every day. They reward and praise pupils for their successes and positive personal qualities.

Leaders provide some opportunities for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE). For example, pupils learn about a healthy diet and hygiene as they help to prepare lunch. Some aspects of social and moral development are well developed. However, leaders have not ensured that the PSHE curriculum is progressively sequenced or covers all expected areas well enough. For example, it is not sufficiently ambitious. There are some gaps in pupils' learning.

Trustees have a clear vision and have supported the headteacher in setting up the school. They have benefited from training and are starting to contribute to the school's strategic development. They are beginning to hold leaders to account.

The proprietor has ensured that all independent school standards are met. The school's accessibility plan meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. All statutory responsibilities are met. However, the school has admitted pupils below the age range for which it is registered.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained and understand their safeguarding responsibilities. They are vigilant and recognise changes in pupils' attitudes and behaviour. They know when pupils are worried or concerned. Staff take the right actions to make sure that pupils are safe.

Leaders carry out all required checks before new staff start working at the school. Safeguarding leaders work with many external agencies and local authorities to make sure that pupils receive the care and support that they need. Designated safeguarding leaders and staff know pupils very well.

Pupils learn about safety. For example, they understand some of the risks associated with the internet.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and proprietor)**

- Over the last year, trustees and senior leaders have deepened their understanding of their responsibilities. This is seen in the way that they have established a good school with a strong culture of safeguarding. However, strategic development is not as focused and sharp as it might be. Trustees and senior leaders need to develop their strategic planning by focusing on improving leadership and educational provision, with the aim of improving even further pupils' learning, attitudes, behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- Leaders have not developed a structured curriculum for PSHE. There are some gaps in pupils' understanding of fundamental British values. Leaders should develop a sequentially planned, more ambitious and well-taught PSHE curriculum.
- Attendance is improving, but some pupils do not attend regularly enough. Poor attendance means that some pupils have gaps in their learning. Leaders should continue to work with parents and carers to support and challenge them to make sure that their children attend school regularly.

## **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 are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	147170
<b>DfE registration number</b>	925/6018
<b>Local authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10124587
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	14 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	16
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	1
<b>Proprietor</b>	Castles Special Projects Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	John Marsden
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lee Wright
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£100-£200 per day
<b>Telephone number</b>	01724640814
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.castleseducation.co.uk">www.castleseducation.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:info@castleseducation.co.uk">info@castleseducation.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is an independent school for pupils aged 14 to 16. The school was first registered on 12 August 2019. It opened as a new school in September 2019.
- The school had its preregistration inspection in June 2019. This is the school's first standard inspection.
- The school is registered to provide full-time education for 40 pupils aged 14 to 16. The number of pupils on roll is currently 16. The school has admitted pupils below the registered age range. There is currently one key stage 3 pupil on roll.
- Six pupils are dual-registered with other schools. Castle Futures provides an alternative provision for those pupils.

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school offers specialist provision for pupils' social, emotional and mental-health needs.

## **Information about this inspection**

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- We met with the proprietor and trustee.
- We met with the headteacher, operations and business manager, attendance officer and the coordinator of the provision for pupils with SEND.
- We undertook in-depth analysis in English, mathematics, science and PSHE. We met with the lead teacher for each of these subjects, visited lessons, examined pupils' work and met with pupils.
- We considered other subjects, including cooking and music.
- I checked the school's single central record and met with the designated safeguarding lead and the safeguarding officer. I looked at safeguarding records. The other inspector and I met with staff to discuss safeguarding and their understanding of the school's systems for keeping pupils safe.
- I toured the school site to check the school's compliance against Part 5 of the independent school standards.
- We reviewed a range of documents. These included the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plan, policies and behaviour and attendance records.
- I met with two school improvement consultants and spoke on the telephone with a local authority officer.
- No responses were received to the parents', staff or pupils' surveys.

## **Inspection team**

Chris Davies, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David Young

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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Manchester  
M1 2WD

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E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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