

# Inspection of a good school: Casterton College Rutland

Ryhall Road, Great Casterton, Rutland PE9 4AT

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Inspection dates:

29 and 30 March 2022

## **Outcome**

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Casterton College is an inclusive and popular school. There are many polite and courteous pupils. Relationships with staff are positive. Expectations are high. Pupils attend well and work hard. They know that their teachers want them to be successful. Pupils achieve highly, including those who are disadvantaged. However, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not consistently receive the support they need to help them manage their learning.

Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They have a strong understanding of diversity and of respecting differences.

Expectations of pupils' behaviour are high. The environment is calm and purposeful. Pupils behave well. Most parents and carers agree. Lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. When this does occur, staff swiftly address it. However, pupils are confused by the school's behaviour policy. They complain that staff issue sanctions unfairly and inconsistently. Parents think so too. As a result, some pupils do not enjoy school as much as they should. Most pupils say that they feel safe. Most say that staff deal effectively with bullying issues.

Of those who expressed a view, many parents say that leaders fail to listen to or act quickly enough on any concerns that parents may have about the school.

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

Leaders, including trustees, are ambitious for all pupils. They promote a culture of inclusion and high aspiration. Leaders have a clear philosophy of enabling pupils to achieve successfully and believe that 'ability is not fixed'. All pupils are entitled to study the same curriculum, which is broad. Pupils and parents value this.

Leaders have constructed an ambitious curriculum. The subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate lie at the heart of the curriculum. The proportion of pupils being entered for these subjects is rising quickly.

Subject leaders have identified the important knowledge pupils need to learn and when they need it. Pupils successfully build their knowledge over time. Teachers use well-considered approaches to help pupils recall and remember the knowledge they have been taught. Pupils value the extra help they receive from teachers, particularly in English and mathematics.

Leaders have only recently thought about how to make sure that pupils with SEND consistently receive the help that they need. Pupils with SEND achieve well. However, some pupils with SEND say that they do not feel staff always understand their needs. The support provided by additional adults is inconsistent. Leaders do not routinely check to ensure that pupils with SEND are well supported in lessons.

Reading is prioritised. Leaders have established effective systems to help weaker readers become more fluent. Teachers place a strong emphasis on pupils' understanding of technical subject words. This helps pupils to achieve well.

Levels of exclusion are low. Permanent exclusion is used appropriately as a sanction of last resort. Typically, the school is calm and orderly. Pupils say, however, that behaviour can be boisterous during social time. They also say that sometimes pupils can be disrespectful towards others. Staff take appropriate action when this is reported. However, younger pupils say that they do not always feel confident to report concerns.

Inspectors saw very little disruption to learning. However, many pupils perceive staff's application of the school's behaviour policy to be inconsistent and unfair. They shared many examples of this. Of those who shared their views, many parents echoed their sentiments. Some parents say that the school's systems for managing behaviour result in their children becoming worried and anxious about getting things wrong. They do not always believe that their children's concerns are heard. Nevertheless, most parents would recommend the school.

The planned curriculum for pupils' personal development is ambitious and well led. Pupils have opportunities to discuss and debate issues, such as the Friday debate session. Pupils value equality. Differences between people are celebrated, for example, on the school's innovative 'Diversi-tree'. However, pupils do not always have an equal opportunity to attend trips and visits.

Staff are proud to work at the school. Morale is positive. Leaders are mindful of staff's workload. Trustees actively and effectively support the work of the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained. They have received training on harmful sexual behaviour and radicalisation, for example. Staff understand their responsibilities for reporting concerns. Regular meetings help leaders to identify local priorities. They help pupils to learn about safety, including online safety and knife crime. Leaders act promptly to keep pupils safe. They work closely with external services, including health and the police. They pursue help for vulnerable pupils when needed. Pupils and parents value the support provided for mental health and well-being. Leaders have a good oversight of pupils in the care of the local authority.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The strategic oversight of the provision and support for pupils with SEND is inconsistent. Leaders have recently considered plans to strengthen this aspect of the school's work. However, currently, there is too much variability in how staff support pupils with SEND so that their specific additional needs are routinely met. Some pupils with SEND do not feel that staff always understand their additional needs. At present, there is no member of staff suitably qualified to lead this aspect of the school's provision. Leaders must ensure that all staff have the necessary knowledge and skills to understand, and provide the right support for, the additional needs of all pupils with SEND.
- Too many pupils and parents believe that the school's policy to manage behaviour is unfair and is inconsistently applied by staff. Pupils are concerned that incidents they perceive as bullying are not always resolved. The approaches taken by staff to manage behaviour result in some pupils not being able to enjoy school as much as they should. Leaders should ensure that all staff understand how to implement the behaviour policy both fairly and consistently, so that all pupils can enjoy their time at the school as they learn and achieve.
- Parents recognise the many positive features of the school. However, many do not feel that leaders listen to and respond appropriately to their concerns. Consequently, they are not confident that leaders will resolve their concerns, including their concerns around the provision for pupils with SEND. Leaders should consider how they might improve communication between school and home to strengthen this aspect of the school's work.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in December 2016.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 school and you are 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137340
<b>Local authority</b>	Rutland Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	10211631
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	903
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Sue Ball
<b>Principal</b>	Carl Smith
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.castertoncollege.com">www.castertoncollege.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 and 14 December 2016

## Information about this school

- At the time of the inspection, the school was not using any alternative education providers.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the principal and other members of the senior leadership team. Meetings were also held with pastoral leaders and the school's special educational needs and/or disabilities manager.
- The lead inspector met with the designated leaders for safeguarding. He reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's policy, records of the support provided for pupils and the checks undertaken for the recruitment of staff.
- A meeting was held with three members of the board of trustees, including the chair and vice-chair.

- Inspectors met formally with many groups of pupils across all year groups. They also met with pupils informally, around the school site and in lessons.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation, which included leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plan and policies relating to behaviour and the provision for pupils with SEND.
- The subjects that inspectors considered in depth were English, geography and mathematics. In each subject, inspectors visited lessons, scrutinised samples of pupils' work and held discussions with subject leaders, teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors considered the 161 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including 110 responses to the free-text service. Inspectors also considered 264 responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils and 65 responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.

### **Inspection team**

Chris Stevens, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Dawn Ashbolt

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
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