

Inspection of Clacton Coastal Academy

Pathfields Road, Clacton on Sea, Essex CO15 3JL

Inspection dates:

26 and 27 April 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Clacton Coastal Academy is an improving school. While pupils report that they did not feel safe at school in the past, this is no longer the case. On a day-to-day basis, the school is much calmer, and behaviour is better than previously. Pupils benefit from consistent routines in the classroom. They can now learn in most lessons without disruption. Staff give time at the end of the day to help older pupils revise for their forthcoming exams.

There is cheerful hubbub at break and lunchtimes. Pupils typically mix well socially. Pupils say that incidents of bullying are reducing, and the school's records also show this is the case. Pupils know whom to go to if they have any concerns. The school's well-being team offers effective support for mental health. Many pupils train to be well-being ambassadors, providing support for one another. Sixth-form students are good role models. They enjoy helping the younger pupils, for example, when they attend breakfast club.

Parents have mixed views about the school. Their key concerns are regarding behaviour and bullying. Some parents are of the view that there is still more work for leaders to do to improve these areas.

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

Trust leaders had concerns that the school was not improving quickly enough and introduced an interim standards board. This is driving forward change and is having a positive impact. More pupils are attending school regularly, fewer pupils are receiving suspensions and the curriculum, and the quality of its delivery, is improving.

The development of a reading culture in the school is in its infancy. While leaders have given more time in the school day to help pupils improve their reading, not all pupils see the value of this or understand why it is important to be a good reader. Pupils who are learning to read follow a structured phonics programme. However, not all relevant staff are trained to deliver the programme well. Weaknesses in the mathematics curriculum are being addressed. There is a sharper focus on mental arithmetic, but it is early days. Pupils find it difficult to solve more complex mathematical problems.

Some other areas in the curriculum, such as expressive arts, are well organised. Leaders have considered the key knowledge they wish pupils to know, and whether their knowledge develops logically over time. There is a focus on revisiting content so it stays in pupils' long-term memory. However, there is a lack of ambition in some subjects. For instance, pupils learn information technology but not computing. Pupils do not cover all the content they need to in religious education (RE). There is currently not enough curriculum time for this subject.

Teachers are getting to grips with supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Some teachers use pupils' information in the support plans effectively to make sure they learn well in lessons. However, others do not. The SEND team is ably supported by trust leaders to ensure that pupils' needs are accurately identified and assessed. There is effective liaison with other schools and post-16 providers to ensure a smooth transition for pupils with SEND.

Staff and external advisers give pupils with SEND and their peers helpful careers information, advice and guidance. Sixth-form students have secured their next steps into employment, further education and training. Younger pupils benefit from access to employers and work experience. The delivery of the curriculum for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, including relationships and sex education (RSE), has not been as effective. Ad hoc delivery in previous years has left sixth-form students with gaps in their knowledge. This is limiting their preparation for adulthood. Leaders are adjusting the personal development programme as a result.

The stable staffing and the actions of leaders are improving behaviour. Pupils are clear on the school values of 'be ready, be respectful and responsible'. Staff are consistent in their expectations of how pupils should behave in lessons and around the school. Some pupils' behaviour still falls short of these expectations. This is particularly the case when temporary staff cover lessons. A higher-than-normal proportion of pupils are studying an alternative curriculum. Typically, this provision is providing pupils with an improved educational experience even though some pupils have less curriculum time than their peers.

Most staff enjoy working at the school, but a minority say that workload is high. Trust leaders check whether this is the case. They have made sure that additional funding is available to ease pressures on staff. Trust staff regularly visit the school to give extra support to leaders, including those who are newly appointed. Teachers who are new to the profession state that they are well supported.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders respond quickly to any issues that arise. For example, leaders brought in external agencies to help educate pupils when they saw an increase in incidents of sexting. Staff are also vigilant in reporting concerns, no matter how small, so that pupils get the help they need. The reporting and recording systems for safeguarding are robust.

Pupils know how to stay safe when they are online. They receive age-appropriate advice about the use of social media and their digital footprint.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Improving pupils' reading is in the early stages of development. Some pupils do not view reading as important. Some pupils are not supported as well as they could be with learning to read. This is limiting pupils' ability to access the wider curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that relevant staff receive appropriate training, and that they help pupils to understand the value of reading and its link to further education, employment and training.
- Some areas of the curriculum lack ambition. Weaknesses with the delivery of RE, computing and PSHE are hampering pupils' access to knowledge and understanding in areas of learning to which they are entitled. Leaders need to review the breadth and delivery of the curriculum to ensure it is equally as ambitious as the national curriculum.
- Not all staff are using the information regarding pupils with SEND and their needs effectively. This means that sometimes staff's approaches are too generic and do not help pupils with SEND learn to the best of their ability. This limits their achievement over time. Leaders need to ensure that staff are suitably trained so they can ensure the best support is provided to help this group of pupils learn well.
- While leaders have created a calmer environment, some pupils are not behaving well when they are taught by adults other than their normal teacher. The numbers of pupils who are accessing alternative provision because of their behaviour are still too high. This affects the learning of pupils and their progression through the curriculum. Leaders need to continue to develop pupils' behaviours for learning so that they are ready to learn, listen and are engaged with their learning regardless of who is teaching them.

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

Unique reference number	135957
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10207069
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1374
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	137
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Hall
Principal	David Lees
Website	www.clactoncoastalacademy.org
Dates of previous inspection	20 and 21 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current executive principal took up post in July 2020. Prior to this there were six principals in a period of 13 months.
- The school uses five providers of alternative provision, one of which is registered.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 13 receive information about the full range of education and training options open to them. This includes opportunities for a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with members from the interim standards board, including the chair, the chief executive officer of the trust and local authority representatives. Inspectors also spoke to the executive principal, senior leaders, staff and pupils about the school's provision.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, expressive arts, history, geography and computing to evaluate the quality of education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the provision for PSHE, RSE and RE. Inspectors reviewed curriculum plans and spoke with pupils and leaders.
- Inspectors met with the leader in charge of SEND and scrutinised documentation for SEND. Inspectors observed support for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's information on behaviour, bullying and attendance. Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records and spoke with trustees, trust leaders, local authority representatives, leaders, staff and pupils about safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors visited and spoke to via telephone the alternative providers that the school uses.
- Inspectors considered the 70 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the 69 free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the 85 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 146 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. Inspectors looked at the school's most recent school surveys. The lead inspector considered an email sent directly to Ofsted.

Inspection team

Liz Smith, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Paul Lawrence	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Cox	Ofsted Inspector
Sally Nutman	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Hemmings	Her Majesty's Inspector

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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

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