

Inspection of Caistor Grammar School

Church Street, Caistor, Market Rasen, Lincolnshire LN7 6QJ

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 May 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected Caistor Grammar School as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend Caistor Grammar School. They thoroughly enjoy their lessons and become independent learners. Students in the sixth form speak highly of the bespoke support that they receive. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils. They want everyone to experience academic success.

Leaders want pupils to become well-rounded individuals. They prioritise pupils' wider development. One pupil summed this up by saying, 'It's not just about the academic, they look after our emotional health and well-being'. Leaders have established an inclusive ethos. Pupils feel safe and happy.

Pupils are kind and respectful to each other. They know what bullying is and that they should report any form of bullying or derogatory language. Pupils have confidence that teachers deal with any incidents fairly and swiftly.

Many parents and carers hold the school in high esteem. As one parent put it: 'I couldn't have asked for a better school for my child; so much support from staff both in the classroom and through the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities on offer.'

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

The curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. It has a focus on academic subjects. All pupils study English, mathematics, science, a modern foreign language and at least one humanities subject into key stage 4. In many subjects, such as religious education, the curriculum is well sequenced so that pupils build on what they learned before. Pupils are highly articulate. They use subject-specific language and ways of interpreting information.

In most subjects, leaders have identified the concepts they want pupils to know by the end of key stage 3. This is to ensure that if a pupil does not choose to study this subject in key stage 4, they have the necessary knowledge to pick it up at a later stage. In a few subjects, pupils do not recall these concepts well enough. Some subject leaders have not identified the important knowledge that pupils need to know.

Most teachers' subject knowledge is secure. They present information clearly and choose activities that help pupils learn. However, this is not always the case. Most teachers use assessment well to check what pupils know and remember. There are still occasions when teachers do not match assessment to what pupils are learning precisely enough. Some teachers do not address gaps in pupils' knowledge when it is identified through assessment.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have a 'pupil passport'. This explains the support that they need. Teachers use this to ensure that pupils with SEND achieve well across the curriculum. Pupils with SEND said they felt well supported by teachers.

There is a consistent and well-understood approach to managing behaviour. School life is calm and well ordered. Teachers use assemblies to remind pupils to look out for one another. This is an environment in which pupils can solely focus on learning.

Leaders are ambitious for students in the sixth form. Students develop detailed knowledge of the subjects they choose to study. They concentrate on their studies in the area dedicated to sixth-form students. There are lots of opportunities for students in the sixth form to volunteer their time to help others. For example, many students mentor younger pupils. Sixth-form students are well prepared for future success.

During lunchtimes, there are many extra-curricular activities. Attendance at many of these clubs is high. Pupils say that this helps them to develop new interests and talents. Leaders ensure that there are three dedicated periods a week for pupils' wider development. In these sessions, pupils learn about relationships education, careers and staying safe. Pupils describe the debates they engage in about social and moral issues, such as modern slavery.

Trustees understand their statutory responsibilities well. They support and challenge leaders effectively. Recent appointments have strengthened the board of trustees.

Staff are overwhelmingly proud and motivated to work at this school. They agree that leaders take workload into account when developing and implementing policies.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding leaders are very well trained. They take effective and quick action to safeguard children. They build an effective working partnership with a range of external agencies. They also challenge these agencies to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils and families are supported.

Leaders ensure that staff are also well trained. Staff are vigilant and know the signs that may suggest a pupil needs help. All adults in the school understand how to record and report a concern about a pupil.

Pupils know who to speak to if they have a concern. They know they have access to a counsellor if required.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders have not identified precisely what pupils should know and remember. In these subjects, pupils do not always recall the important knowledge that they need. Leaders should clarify the curriculum in these subjects. They should identify the important knowledge that pupils should remember.
- Sometimes, assessment is not closely linked to what pupils have been learning. It does not always identify the gaps in pupils' knowledge. Leaders should ensure that assessment is used effectively to check what pupils know and remember. They should make sure that gaps in knowledge are consistently addressed.
- Not all teachers have the subject knowledge that they need. Explanations are sometimes not as clear as they could be, and sometimes misconceptions are not addressed. Leaders should ensure that staff have the professional development that they need to increase their confidence and the ability to teach some subjects 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 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	136350
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10229051
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	698
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	193
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lucy Jackson
Headteacher	Alistair Hopkins
Website	www.caistorgrammar.com/

Information about this school

- Caistor Grammar School converted to an academy in October 2011 and became a part of The Caistor Grammar School Trust. This is a single academy trust.
- The school uses two registered alternative provisions for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 11 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 and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, computing, religious education and design and technology. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also visited a range of lessons in other subjects. For these subjects, they looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for behaviour, personal development, the use of the pupil premium, the sixth form, children looked after and the provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors observed break and lunchtimes and spoke to pupils informally.
- Inspectors also met with groups of pupils and students from the sixth form.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leaders to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. He reviewed a range of documents, including the school's single central record.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and subject improvement plans.
- The lead inspector met with the representatives of the trust, including the chair of the board of trustees.
- The lead inspector spoke with representatives of the alternative provisions which are attended by a small number of pupils at this school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the responses to the Ofsted staff survey.

Inspection team

Rakesh Patel, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Teresa Roche

Ofsted Inspector

Christine Horrocks

Ofsted Inspector

Matthew Fearn-Davies

Her Majesty's Inspector

Roary Pownall

Her Majesty's Inspector

Vic Wilkinson

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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