

# Inspection of Castles Futures Scunthorpe

Block M, John Leggott College, West Common Lane, Scunthorpe DN17 1DS

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Inspection dates:

5 to 7 July 2022

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## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**No**

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

The curriculum is not ambitious. It does not support all pupils to achieve well. Pupils experience a jumbled and disconnected series of lessons. They cannot remember what they have been taught. Expectations of what pupils can and should achieve are too low.

Pupils are not supported well to improve their reading. Some staff do not have the expertise to support pupils who cannot read fluently.

Pupils' behaviour is variable. Expectations of pupils' behaviour are not high enough. When pupils use inappropriate language, this is not addressed consistently so it is eliminated.

Many pupils have been out of school for some time before they join the school. Most pupils' attendance improves from very low starting points.

There are positive relationships between staff and pupils. When bullying does happen, pupils are confident that staff will deal with this quickly.

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

Leaders have not ensured that teachers have the skills and knowledge to meet pupils' needs well. Some thought has gone into how the school's curriculum is sequenced. However, the curriculum is not implemented well. Pupils are taught a random selection of topics. This does not allow them to build on what they already know. They do not get the opportunity to learn important content in any depth.

Staff are not clear about the crucial knowledge that pupils need to remember in each subject. Some staff's subject knowledge is not strong. This is because they have not received subject-specific training to teach each subject well. In some subjects, teachers have not considered how pupils will develop the knowledge they need to study a subject. For instance, in history, pupils are not taught about how historians construct their accounts of the past.

Pupils rarely get the opportunity to revisit what they have been taught. Staff do not use what has previously been taught to support pupils to understand new learning. Staff do not check that pupils understand what they have been taught before moving on to new content. They do not ensure that gaps in pupils' knowledge are addressed quickly. Pupils cannot remember what they have been taught across the curriculum.

There is a lack of appropriate resources to support pupils in learning. For example, in science, there is no equipment for pupils to conduct experiments. Sometimes, pupils do not settle and leave lessons due to a lack of interest in what is being taught. Some pupils do not feel sufficiently challenged. Staff's aspirations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. Some pupils are studying for qualifications

that are not sufficiently ambitious. This does not help prepare them well for their next steps in education, employment and training.

Although leaders are considering a reading programme to support pupils who join the school unable to read fluently, some staff do not have the expertise to teach reading well. Pupils are not well supported with a consistent approach to learning to read. They have not been taught systematic strategies that help them to read with accuracy and fluency.

Pupils' behaviour is inconsistent. Staff's expectations of pupils' behaviour are not high enough. Leaders do not identify behaviour trends over time. For instance, leaders do not check if incidents of challenging behaviour are increasing or decreasing over time. Pupils' behaviour in the morning is calmer. However, in the afternoon, pupils' behaviour is typically more fractious. Staff provide support when pupils are in crisis. Inspectors observed staff being calm and sensitive to pupils in crisis.

Many pupils, when they join the school, have not attended school for a significant amount of time. Attendance is low. However, most pupils' attendance improves over time as a result of leaders' work with them and their families. Leaders ensure welfare calls and home visits are made when pupils do not attend.

The school's relationships and sex education policy is aimed at primary-age pupils. Leaders wrote a new policy during the inspection. Despite this, the school's personal development curriculum covers the necessary content. Pupils have access to impartial careers advice and guidance, as required by the independent school standards. However, the school's careers programme is not comprehensive. Some pupils indicated that they are not receiving enough careers guidance to help them to make informed choices about their futures.

Pupils benefit from a range of trips and visits, which they enjoy. For instance, there are weekly visits to a farm to help pupils develop their social, emotional and independence skills. Pupils learn about some of the religions in modern Britain. However, they cannot remember what they have been taught about these religions. Pupils are taught about the risks that they may face online and in the local community. However, pupils find it difficult to remember what they have been taught about online safety.

The proprietors ensure that the building is well maintained. Issues with the temperature of the water being too hot and a lack of labelled drinking water were rectified quickly during the inspection. The proprietors ensure that the necessary health and safety checks are carried out to ensure that the building is safe for pupils and staff.

The school has CCTV. Leaders registered the school with the Information Commissioners' Office when it was pointed out by inspectors that the school was not registered.

The school did not meet schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 at the start of the inspection. The school's accessibility plan did not include all the required information. Leaders addressed this by the end of the inspection.

Leaders have not ensured that the school's admissions register contains the necessary information. For instance, leaders are not consistently recording the name and address of a pupil's previous school when they join the school and their new school when they leave. Leaders managed to add most, but not all, of the necessary information to the admissions register during the inspection.

Leaders do not ensure that the independent school standards are consistently met over time. There are several unmet independent school standards. Leaders were not aware of the extent of the school's weaknesses. Leaders do not check that the school's systems and procedures are working well. They have not checked to ensure that the school's curriculum is well planned and implemented effectively and that pupils receive a good quality of education. Leaders do not ensure that staff receive high-quality professional development so that they can carry out their roles and responsibilities well.

Since the school opened, there has been a high turnover of staff. Most staff who currently work at the school enjoy working here. Most, but not all staff, feel well supported with their workload.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel confident to talk to staff if they have any worries or concerns. Staff receive a wide range of safeguarding training. Leaders check that staff understand the training they receive. Daily safeguarding briefings ensure staff are kept up to date with any safeguarding issues. Staff are well aware of the local safeguarding risks. They understand the critical role they play in keeping pupils safe.

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) ensures that referrals are made to the local authority when pupils are at risk of harm. Detailed records are kept of actions taken. The DSL is tenacious when pupils are not getting the support and intervention that they need.

The school's safeguarding policy is available on the school's website.

## **What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)**

- The curriculum is not broad or ambitious enough. In some subjects, consideration has been given to how the curriculum is sequenced. However, staff do not implement the school's intended curriculum. Instead, pupils experience a jumbled and unconnected series of lessons. Subject content is rushed through. Pupils

rarely get to explore an idea or concept in depth before moving on to new content. Gaps in learning are not closing quickly enough, and pupils cannot remember what they have been taught. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum is broad, ambitious and appropriately sequenced to clearly set out the precise detail of what pupils need to know and in what order. They should also ensure that staff provide opportunities for pupils to regularly revisit what they have previously been taught so that they remember what they have been taught.

- There is no systematic approach to the teaching of reading. Barriers to reading are not identified well enough. Not all staff are trained in a reading programme to support pupils to read fluently. Some staff do not know how to support pupils to learn to read well. This means that pupils are not consistently receiving the right support. Leaders state that they are looking into a reading programme to help pupils read with fluency. Leaders must ensure that staff are trained in the school's chosen reading programme. They should also make sure that pupils' barriers to reading are identified quickly when they join the school so that the necessary support can be put in place.
- Leaders do not ensure that all pupils get the chance to achieve qualifications that match their abilities. Some pupils are completing qualifications that are too easy for them. This is not helping to prepare them for their next steps in education, employment or training. Leaders must ensure that pupils can access qualifications that match their abilities and aspirations.
- Behaviour expectations are not high enough. Leaders do not identify behaviour trends over time. This means leaders cannot take quick action when some aspects of poor behaviour increase. Sometimes, pupils use inappropriate language. This is not dealt with quickly enough. Leaders must ensure that they monitor behaviour more consistently so that they can identify trends over time and further improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes.
- There are few plans or strategies in place to provide pupils with high-quality careers advice and guidance. This means that pupils are not receiving a high-quality careers programme. Leaders must ensure that there is a comprehensive programme for the delivery of careers education. Leaders must also ensure that staff who are responsible for this programme receive training to carry out their role effectively.
- Proprietors and senior leaders have not ensured that the independent school standards are consistently met over time and that the school's weaknesses are addressed. Leaders must ensure that the school consistently and continually meets the independent school standards. They must also ensure that all leaders understand their roles and responsibilities and have access to the necessary training to carry out their roles well. Proprietors need to ensure that leaders are effectively held to account and that the school's weaknesses are addressed swiftly.

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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>	147782
<b>DfE registration number</b>	813/6009
<b>Local authority</b>	North Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10202213
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	47
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	7
<b>Proprietor</b>	Castles Education LLP
<b>Chair</b>	John Marsden
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lee Wright
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£32,500
<b>Telephone number</b>	01724 407112
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.castleseducation.co.uk">www.castleseducation.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:scunthorpe@castleseducation.co.uk">scunthorpe@castleseducation.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Castles Futures Scunthorpe is an independent school for pupils aged between 11 and 16. The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs. The majority of pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Many pupils join the school having not attended a school for some time.
- The school is situated on the campus of John Leggot College. The school is based in a separate building.
- The school's proprietor also owns Castles Futures Lincoln. The headteacher is also the executive headteacher of Castles Futures Lincoln and Castles Futures Scunthorpe.
- There is a head of school who is responsible for the day-to-day running of the school.
- Leaders intend to close the school on 21 July 2022. The intention of leaders is to amalgamate Castles Futures Scunthorpe with Castles Futures Lincoln. The amalgamated school will be based at a new site in Gainsborough.
- Year 11 pupils were not present during the inspection as they had left the school after sitting their examinations.
- The school does not use any alternative education provision. However, some pupils receive outreach support at Castles Futures Lincoln. A few pupils receive support from two members of staff at a local community centre for one hour, three times per week.
- The school uses off-site physical education provision at a local sports centre.
- The government's website, Get Information about Schools, has not been updated since July 2021 to reflect the current number of pupils on the school's roll and the number of pupils with an education, health and care plan.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors 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 has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Some staff were absent during the inspection due to COVID-19.

- This was the school's first standard inspection since the school opened in September 2020.
- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: English, science, history and personal, social, health and economic education. Here, inspectors talked to some pupils about their work, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke to teachers and curriculum leaders. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans in all other subjects.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils in all year groups. Due to some pupils' needs, and at the request of pupils, an adult from the school was present for some of the discussions. Inspectors also met pupils without an adult from the school present. An inspector heard some pupils read.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents relating to the school's work to safeguard pupils. Inspectors spoke to some staff about the impact of the safeguarding training they receive. An inspector spoke to the school's DSL. An inspector scrutinised some of the school's behaviour and attendance logs. The school's single central record was reviewed.
- An inspector held a telephone call with the local authority designated officer and a representative from Doncaster and North Lincolnshire local authorities.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school and the school's special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector met with the chair of the board of proprietors and one other proprietor. An inspector met with some of the school's administrative staff and an early careers teacher.
- Inspectors visited the local sports centre used for physical education. An inspector attempted to visit the community centre that the school uses for a few hours per week to provide outreach support. However, this was closed.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey and the views of pupils who responded to Ofsted's pupil survey. There were no responses from parents or carers to Ofsted's parent survey, Ofsted Parent View.

## Inspection team

Michele Costello, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Gordon Watts	Ofsted Inspector
Jo Sharpe	Ofsted Inspector

## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

### **The school failed to meet the following independent school standards**

#### **Part 1. Quality of education provided**

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
  - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
  - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work-
    - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan; and
    - 2(2)(h) that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress.
- 2A(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor-
  - 2A(1)(e) makes and keeps up to date a separate written statement of its policy with regard to the provision of education as required by each of paragraphs (a) and (b).
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
  - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
  - 3(b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
  - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
  - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
  - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
  - 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range.

### **Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006[13].

### **Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
  - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
  - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

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