

Inspection of Lincoln Castle Academy

Riseholme Road, Lincoln, Lincolnshire LN1 3SP

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 July 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils have mixed feelings and opinions about this school. Some pupils enjoy attending, some do not. Some pupils feel safe, others feel let down. Pupils' frustrations stem from the changes that are being made very quickly. Not all pupils understand that these changes will make the school a better place for them.

Pupils and parents and carers voice concern about the number of teachers that have left over the last 12 months. The disruption has had a negative impact on pupils' learning. Many parents do not recommend this school.

Pupils are beginning to meet leaders' raised expectations. Many pupils said that behaviour is improving. However, many pupils are sent out of lessons because they do not meet the expectations well enough. When pupils are removed from lessons for poor behaviour and sent to the 'matrix room' or 'supervision room', their education does not continue.

Some staff have not yet built a positive enough relationship with some pupils. Staff deal with bullying when pupils report it. However, some pupils are not confident in reporting bullying to some teachers.

Students in the sixth form do not feel that they are a part of the school. They do not feel that their experiences reflect the vision that was 'sold to [them]' when they decided to study here. Some courses which students opted to study are withdrawn due to viability, with limited notice.

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

Leaders have not yet ensured that the curriculum is coherent. Subject leaders are considering how knowledge builds over time. However, curriculum planning is in its early stages in some subjects. Currently, it is not always clear what pupils should learn and when. This means some pupils do not learn as well as they should. There are some signs of improvement. New subject leaders know how to improve the quality of the curriculum and have the capacity to do so. They have not had the time to do this yet.

Many teachers do not have an appropriate level of subject knowledge. They are not well equipped to teach their subjects. Leaders have not ensured that teachers receive the training they need to teach knowledge in such a way that pupils remember it. Teachers do not use assessment well enough to check if pupils understand and remember important knowledge.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not always supported well enough to learn and progress through the curriculum. As a result, the education that these pupils receive is not adequate. They do not know and remember as much as they should.

Leaders have introduced a new strategy to improve most pupils' ability to read. It is too early to check the impact that this is having on the majority of pupils. However, there is no targeted support yet for pupils who are at the earliest stages of reading.

Most teachers and pupils agree that behaviour has improved recently. The atmosphere on corridors and in lessons is calm. Pupils are polite and respectful. They arrive on time to school and to lessons as they know there will be a sanction for being late. Some teachers do not follow the behaviour policy consistently.

Too many pupils are regularly absent from school. A new attendance team is supporting pupils to become better attenders. There have been some improvements to attendance recently. The 'link room' is a calm and nurturing environment which is helping some pupils become better attenders.

The 'life curriculum' is in place to help pupils develop their understanding of equalities, British values, relationships and different faiths and cultures. Form-time debates promote discussion on current issues and allow for pupils' social and moral development. Visits and extra-curricular activities are being reintroduced. Some pupils benefited from a recent trip to Wimbledon. Pupils do not benefit from high-quality careers education. This is particularly the case for students in the sixth form.

Staff turnover and poor teaching also affect the quality of education students receive in the sixth form. The programme of study does not prepare students for the world of work. Many students believe they are not prepared well enough to become independent. Students are not positive about their experience and feel let down and unheard. They say that studying at home would be more valuable as the school does not have the resources they need to study effectively. Leaders have not acted on these concerns. Attendance in the sixth form is poor at times. Students do not see the value of attending some lessons, including when there is no teacher present to teach them.

New leaders at all levels are starting to make improvements to the school. More staff are now of the opinion that leaders are engaging with them and considering their workload and well-being. Staff turnover is stabilising. Leaders know they have not communicated changes with parents well enough. They have taken some steps to address this.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders evaluate the procedures for safeguarding and make changes to ensure that the most effective systems are in place to identify and help pupils who need support.

Staff are trained regularly so they know about both contextual and national issues that could be affecting the pupils. Staff are vigilant and know they are accountable for recording and reporting any concerns using the 'pink slip'.

Safeguarding leaders consider any concerns so that the right help is offered at the right time to each pupil. They maintain robust records of concerns and actions they have taken to keep pupils safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not coherently planned and designed. In several subjects, the curriculum is not organised well enough to build pupils' knowledge over time. Pupils do not know and remember more in these subjects. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum in each subject is coherently sequenced to enable pupils to build their knowledge and understanding over time.
- Some teachers do not have adequate subject knowledge. Leaders have not provided enough opportunities for teachers to develop their teaching practice. Many lessons do not contribute well enough to pupils' learning. Pupils are unable to recall important knowledge. Sixth-form students do not see the value of attending lessons in which they do not learn well. Leaders must ensure that all teachers have good subject knowledge and are able to use appropriate teaching methods which enable all pupils, including those in the sixth form, to learn.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils with SEND have had their needs accurately identified. Teachers do not use this information well enough. They do not support some pupils with SEND in lessons effectively. Leaders must ensure that teachers know how to meet the needs of pupils with SEND.
- Leaders have not ensured that all staff use the behaviour policy consistently well. Too many pupils are sent out of lessons and miss education as a result. This has a negative effect on their learning. Leaders must ensure that staff understand how to apply the agreed behaviour policy consistently.
- Leaders have increased the capacity of the attendance team to improve pupils' attendance. This is starting to have a positive impact. However, there are still too many pupils who are persistently absent from school and missing their education. Leaders must ensure that those pupils who are regularly absent receive the support they require so that their attendance improves.
- Pupils do not benefit from high-quality careers education. There are significant weaknesses in the careers offer in the sixth form, which leaves some students unprepared for the world of work. Leaders must ensure that the provision of careers education, information and guidance is such that pupils, particularly sixth-form students, are well prepared for future next steps.

- Leaders have not engaged well enough with some stakeholders. Parents have lost confidence in the school. Sixth-form students feel unheard and let down. Leaders must ensure that all stakeholders understand the vision and strategy to improve the school and sixth form.

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	136537
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10227028
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
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	654
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	25
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jonathan Lovelle
Principal	Richard Hanson
Website	www.lincolncastleacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 March 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Harbour Learning Trust.
- A new principal and two new vice-principals took up their substantive roles in April 2022.
- The school uses one registered provider of alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical 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 computing, design and technology, science and computing. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with 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 subject plans, and spoke to pupils.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for: behaviour; personal development; sixth form; the use of the pupil premium funding; and the provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from key stages 3, 4 and 5.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader 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 improvement plan.
- An inspector met with early career teachers and mentors.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the trust and the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and considered the results of the Ofsted staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Rakesh Patel, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Stuart Voyce	Her Majesty's Inspector
Debbie Ridley	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Fletcher	Ofsted Inspector

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