

Inspection of Cambridge Park Academy

Cambridge Road, Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire DN34 5EB

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 February 2023

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
| Personal development | Good |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Sixth-form provision | Good |
| Previous inspection grade | Requires improvement |

What is it like to attend this school?

Cambridge Park Academy is a special school which caters for pupils with autism spectrum disorder and moderate and severe learning difficulties. Leaders have high expectations for all pupils. Using personalised learning targets, teachers support pupils to develop the knowledge and skills they need to be prepared for later learning and adulthood.

High-quality communication and interaction are key features of the school. Staff have expert knowledge of how to structure language development. They support pupils well to use a range of communication aids such as now and next boards, visual timetables and signing. These aids ensure that pupils access their personalised learning pathways. As pupils progress through the school, they learn to communicate with confidence.

Leaders have established clear expectations for pupils' behaviour. The learning environment is calm. Leaders provide staff with effective behaviour management training. As a result, staff understand the reasons for pupils' behaviours. All staff foster warm and caring relationships with pupils. Adults support pupils who struggle to manage their behaviour and emotions sensitively. Pupils have a range of strategies to help them if they are feeling angry or worried.

Leaders ensure they include parents and carers in the design of their child's learning targets. Teachers provide regular information to help parents support their child at home. Most parents speak highly of the support their child receives.

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

With support from external specialists, leaders have considered the very earliest stages of learning to read. Pupils on the personalised pathway follow a detailed curriculum which helps to develop their pre-phonics knowledge. This includes taking turns, active listening, actions and rhymes. Teachers use assessment effectively to identify and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge. As a result, pupils have a firm foundation for the next stage in their learning. The formal phonics curriculum is well established. The leader for reading provides regular coaching and support for all staff. Phonics teaching is consistent across all lessons. Pupils read books which contain the sounds they know. They demonstrate resilience when reading unfamiliar words.

Leaders have reviewed and refined the curriculum. In addition to the three learning pathways, personalised, semi-formal and formal, the curriculum is organised into six phases of learning. This helps to provide greater opportunities for pupils to develop learning strengths in different areas. For example, pupils following the personalised pathway can now access phonics teaching in the formal pathway. In mathematics, teachers draw on learning across different phases to tailor teaching to individual needs. However, there are limited opportunities for

pupils who are ready to move beyond the current planned curriculum to access greater challenge and deepen their learning.

In subjects other than English and mathematics, procedures for assessment need further development. Teachers use assessment well. However, they do not have the precise subject information they need to identify and support pupils' next steps in learning. For example, in environmental education, a careful balance between theoretical and practical activities helps to develop pupils' understanding of concepts such as recycling and sustainability. However, work in pupils' books demonstrates that some pupils' understanding is already beyond the level of the planned curriculum. In physical development, pupils' individual targets are too broad. Staff have not identified the specific steps of learning necessary to support pupils' progress.

The early years provision is highly personalised. Adults work intensively with children to build their social communication skills. Teachers manage the learning environment and resources carefully to prevent children from being overstimulated. Through carefully structured support, adults build children's understanding of how to engage with learning activities. This helps adults to support children at the very earliest stages of communication.

The curriculum for personal development helps pupils to understand themselves and others in a social context. Pupils have a developing understanding of equality. Incidents of sexist or derogatory language are rare. There is a carefully sequenced programme for relationships and sex education and health education. Pupils learn about the changes that will happen to their bodies as they grow older. Older pupils understand the features of positive relationships and consent. The curriculum in the sixth form successfully prepares students for adulthood and employment. Students learn about aspects such as self-care, food preparation and budgeting. Students work towards formal accreditations in areas such as horticulture and catering. Pupils in key stage 4 receive targeted visits to post-16 colleges. An increasing range of employers come into school to talk with pupils about careers options.

Staff speak positively about the recent changes to leadership in school. The new headteacher is helping to establish a collaborative team ethos. Leaders manage staff's workload and well-being effectively. Early career teachers speak positively about the training and support they have received. Leaders from the trust provide highly effective support to help leaders sustain school improvement. The local governing board holds leaders to account effectively for the quality of education in the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Procedures for ensuring all adults who work in school are safe to do so are robust. Leaders monitor these procedures regularly. The designated safeguarding lead

provides staff with high-quality training and support. Regular briefings help staff understand the local and national risks that may impact pupils in school. Staff are vigilant. All concerns are reported and acted on swiftly. Leaders collaborate effectively with external partners. This helps to ensure pupils and families have the support network they need.

Pupils feel safe in school. They know that adults care for them. Leaders do not allow bullying to happen. Teachers help pupils to understand how to stay safe online and in the community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Procedures for assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics need further development. Teachers do not have a precise picture of pupils' subject knowledge and understanding. Leaders should ensure that there is a consistent approach to assessment in all subjects that helps teachers prepare pupils for the next steps in learning.
- For some pupils working in the formal pathway, the curriculum does not provide sufficient opportunities to challenge and deepen pupils' learning. This limits opportunities for these pupils to access higher-level accreditations. Leaders should extend the curriculum sequence within the formal pathway to ensure that pupils can achieve the highest outcomes possible.

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.

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 | 137363 |
| Local authority | North East Lincolnshire |
| Inspection number | 10255725 |
| Type of school | Special |
| School category | Academy special converter |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 219 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 11 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Graeme Brook |
| Headteacher | Stephen Kernan |
| Website | www.cambridgepark.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 8 February 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The headteacher started in September 2022. Prior to that, the trust's special school improvement lead took on the role of interim headteacher. The improvement lead continues to support the school for one day a week.
- There has been significant turnover in teaching and support staff since the last full inspection.
- A new purpose-built primary building has replaced all temporary classrooms.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken it into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and senior leaders, the chief executive officer and deputy chief executive officer of the trust, the trust's special school improvement lead, the chair of the board of trustees and members of the local governing board.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, communication and interaction, physical development and environmental education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders for personal development, spoke to single-sex groups of pupils and visited the off-site sixth form to review curriculum and careers provision.
- To judge the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record of recruitment checks and the procedures for safer recruitment of staff. The lead inspector held a meeting with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss actions taken following recorded concerns. Inspectors met with staff to check their understanding of safeguarding and the impact of the training received.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. In addition, inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Alex Thorp, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

David Penny

Ofsted Inspector

Angela Spencer-Brooke

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

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

© Crown copyright 2023