

Inspection of Casterton College Rutland

Ryhall Road, Great Casterton, Stamford, Lincolnshire PE9 4AT

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 September 2023

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
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| The quality of education | Good |
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| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
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| Personal development | Good |
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| Leadership and management | Good |
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| Previous inspection grade | Good |
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The principal of this school is Carl Smith. This school is part of the Casterton College single-academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of governors, co-chaired by Tim Smith and Liz Odom.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where all staff want pupils to be successful and happy. The school has a clear vision for its pupils: 'Ability is not fixed'. The curriculum has been designed to help pupils to make good progress, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils are taught how to stay safe in and beyond school. Bullying is not tolerated. Most pupils say that when it happens, staff take it seriously. Staff act quickly to resolve any issues. Sometimes, however, not all pupils feel confident to report issues of bullying.

Pupils behave and get on well together. The atmosphere in lessons is purposeful. Pupils respect each other and their teachers. They know that their teachers have their best interests at heart.

Pupils demonstrate the school's values. They have high aspirations of themselves, the school and the community. Many parents believe that the school has high expectations for their children.

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

The school has put in place a curriculum that sets out the knowledge that pupils should learn in each subject. Pupils' knowledge and skills are carefully built over time. Pupils study a wide range of subjects. They achieve well.

Pupils settle quickly into their learning. Most teachers have strong subject knowledge. They ask questions that help pupils develop their understanding. They remind pupils what they have learned in previous lessons. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning and answer questions. This helps to embed pupils' understanding.

Many teachers promptly identify pupils' misconceptions and correct them. They use their knowledge of pupils to decide the next steps for learning. Pupils say, 'Teachers want us to do well, so we want to do well for them and ourselves.' As a result, pupils and staff have positive relationships.

The reading curriculum is ambitious. All subjects support pupils' reading. The majority of pupils feel confident to read aloud and interpret texts. The English curriculum creates opportunities for pupils to read various authors. Pupils appreciate the author visits and events such as 'World Book Day' to celebrate and develop a love of reading. Staff provide extra support for pupils who enter the school with weaker skills in reading. This helps these pupils improve their reading.

The school makes sure that pupils with SEND can access the full curriculum. Pupils' needs are quickly identified. Teachers and learning support assistants make sure

that pupils with SEND do not miss out on learning. Teachers know the pupils well. They use the school's 'passport' system effectively.

The personal development programme is well planned. Pupils learn the importance of knowing what it means to be an active citizen in modern Britain. Pupils value their personal, social and health education lessons. They learn about different protected characteristics. They understand both the legal and ethical issues related to discrimination. Pupils are respectful of each other. Most pupils feel they can be themselves. Older pupils said that they value their tutor time, especially 'well-being Wednesdays'.

The school is developing its careers education programme. Pupils receive sound advice from their tutors. The school acknowledges that more work needs to be done to ensure that all pupils have greater access to impartial careers advice and guidance.

Pupils have lots of opportunities to discover new interests and nurture their talents. The majority of pupils engage in the vast range of activities the school offers beyond and during the school day.

The school has been creative in designing programmes that support pupils' mental health and well-being. The school therapy dog, 'Radar', is used effectively to support pupils with complex needs.

Many pupils attend well. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is not as strong as others in the school. This is a priority for the school.

Teachers and pupils are clear about behaviour routines and rewards. There is a supportive structure in place. Pupils who find it challenging to regulate their own behaviour receive effective guidance. Pupils behave well.

Staff feel that leaders consider their workload and well-being. They feel that leaders respond well to staff's feedback. Teachers commented that they appreciate the Friday professional learning sessions. They feel that leaders are committed to supporting them with their career development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils do not feel that they can report bullying. They feel that it will not always be dealt with effectively. This means that some pupils do not routinely

report their concerns. The school should ensure that all pupils feel confident to report bullying concerns and that all concerns are successfully addressed.

- Disadvantaged pupils' attendance is not as strong as others in the school. Leaders must continue their ambitious plans to ensure that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils improves.
- Some pupils do not have a full enough understanding of the careers and further education opportunities open to them. They are not as well-informed as they could be when planning their next steps. The school should implement its ambitious plans to ensure that all pupils have the knowledge they need to make well-informed decisions about their futures.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

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| Unique reference number | 137340 |
| Local authority | Rutland Council |
| Inspection number | 10254765 |
| Type of school | Secondary Comprehensive |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 967 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Tim Smith and Liz Odom (Co-chairs) |
| Principal | Carl Smith |
| Website | www.castertoncollege.com |
| Dates of previous inspection | 29 and 30 March 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school has increased the senior leadership team since the last inspection.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers and one unregistered alternative provider.
- The number of pupils on the school's roll has increased since the school's previous inspection.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires the school to provide pupils in Years 8 to 11 with the information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- 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 and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, senior leaders and other leaders, including the coordinator of the provision for pupils with SEND.
- The lead inspector met with governors and spoke with parents.
- Inspectors did deep dives in six subjects: English, science, mathematics, modern foreign language, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with curriculum leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons and considered pupils' work. Inspectors spoke with pupils and teachers. They heard pupils read.
- On the second day of the inspection, inspectors examined the curriculum in a wider range of subjects, including computer science, geography, design and technology, and food technology.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from a range of different year groups, including pupils with SEND. They spoke with pupils informally and observed the behaviour of pupils during social times.
- An inspector spoke by telephone with a representative of one of the alternative providers used by the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the view of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interest first.
- Inspectors took note of the responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan. They considered information about pupils' attendance, behaviour and suspensions, and the wider curriculum.

Inspection team

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| Sally Wicken, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Sue Wood | Ofsted Inspector |
| John Morrison | Ofsted Inspector |
| Peter Monk | Ofsted Inspector |
| Simon Mosley | Ofsted Inspector |

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