

Inspection of Castle View School

Foksville Road, Canvey Island, Essex SS8 7FH

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 December 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Steve Durkin. This school is part of Zenith Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Andy Hodgkinson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Stewart Taylor.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are responsible and proud to be a part of Castle View School. They know, and appreciate, how the school prepares them for life beyond school as active and responsible people. Pupils develop a strong understanding of important issues such as homophobia, gender fluidity, stereotypes, sexual orientation and of other religions, faiths, cultures and beliefs. They discuss these with maturity and respect. Pupils learn, and know, that it is fine to be yourself. They are incredibly tolerant of differences.

Pupils behave well. Lessons are largely free from disruption. Pupils, including those whose behaviour has in the past fallen short of expectations, value the support they get. Pupils are happy to attend school. It is a safe and kind place to be.

The school is highly ambitious for pupils to achieve well. Trust leaders, school leaders and staff are committed to giving pupils the very best preparation for life in modern Britain. Pupils are beginning to see the positive impact of the changes the school has made to the curriculum. However, the school's work on this has not, at this stage, had sufficient impact. This means pupils have some gaps in their knowledge and do not learn as well as they should.

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

The school has done much to address the relatively weak outcomes in 2023. Where there were weaknesses in curriculum design, leaders have taken effective action to make improvements. They have considered what pupils need to learn and when. They have now set this out clearly for teachers.

Some of this work is very new. It is not, at this stage, being consistently used as well as it should be. Sometimes teachers do not teach these new curriculums as well as they might. There are occasions where teachers do not adapt the curriculum to ensure pupils in their classes learn well. Some teachers repeat information pupils do not need to go over again. Some try to teach too much in one go. This means pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to secure or deepen their understanding. Consequently, pupils' understanding is still not as secure as it needs to be.

The school has set about helping pupils who struggle to read fluently. Staff have been trained in how to support pupils who find reading challenging. There are some early signs of success from the reading programme the school has put in place. This, though, is also in its early stages and there are still a number of pupils who are not fluent readers.

The school ensures teachers have the information they need to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Often, teachers use this information well to ensure that pupils learn the curriculum to the same extent as their peers. Pupils with SEND experience the same strengths and weaknesses in their education as other pupils.

The school's work to develop pupils' character is exemplary. Leaders, staff and pupils relentlessly promote and re-enforce positive messages. This is so evolved that it permeates every aspect of the school. It is seen in pupils' calm behaviour in lessons and in their mature understanding of the key themes, such as equalities, respect, mental health and healthy relationships. Pupils not only learn about the sort of careers they could have, but about the behaviours which will help them to get a job.

Perhaps most impressive is how pupils and staff value one another. There are myriads of nominations for the headteacher's awards and many hundreds of 'I noticed' cards. The comments pupils write for each other in these ('she is amazing', 'he always puts other people before himself', 'she has been a great friend', 'she is always there for me no matter what') and for staff ('she has helped me a lot through the year with all my problems', 'we are lucky to have her') reflect the positive culture which runs through the school. This ethos has developed and thrived because of the strong moral purpose and effective leadership of the school and trust.

The school provides strong pastoral support. This has underpinned the broader positive work of the school and helped to secure a reduction in the number of suspensions. It has also helped to increase attendance, which is now in line with national averages. Pupils behave well because they are taught and supported to do so.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Where the school has introduced new curriculums, there are some inconsistencies in how effectively teachers adapt and teach these curriculums. This means the gaps in knowledge that pupils have are not closing as quickly as the school would like. The school, and the trust, should ensure that teachers have the ongoing training and guidance they need to understand how to adapt and teach the curriculum well so that pupils' gaps in knowledge close.

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

Unique reference number	147031
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10295105
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	1,056
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Stewart Taylor
Headteacher	Steve Durkin
Website	www.castleviewschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined Zenith Multi Academy Trust in September 2019. When its predecessor school, Castle View School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement overall.
- The school makes use of four alternative providers, all of which are registered with the Department for Education.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement 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 headteacher, other school leaders, the chief executive officer of the trust, and other trust leaders and representatives of the trust board and local governing body, including the chairs of both.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, physical education, art and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in modern foreign languages and history, and visited some history lessons.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record of recruitment checks; took account of the views 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' interests first.
- Inspectors visited one alternative provider and spoke to representatives of others.
- Inspectors spoke to wide range of pupils in single-sex groups.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff, parents and pupils through Ofsted's surveys of their views.

Inspection team

Andrew Hemmings, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ruth Brock	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Sutton	Ofsted Inspector
Nick Rudman	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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