

# Inspection of Castle East School

Hillside Road East, Bungay, Suffolk NR35 1JS

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Inspection dates: 19 and 20 March 2024

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Outstanding**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5  
of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Anna Mears. This school is part of East Anglian Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer Angelo Goduti, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Stella Mackenzie.

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

Pupils thrive at this inspirational school. There is restless ambition from everyone to ensure that pupils' needs are catered for and that they achieve well. Pupils love coming to school and are proud to be members of the school community. This is because of the kindness, care and help they receive from staff.

High expectations and mutual respect underpin relationships between staff and pupils. Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are given the tools and help they need to work well alongside their peers and contribute positively to the life of the school.

Pupils relish the additional opportunities that the school has designed for them. This includes visits to the local community such as the church, library and theatre. Pupils are proud to have their work displayed in local exhibitions and shows. Through these experiences pupils develop independence and resilience.

The school's impact on pupils' academic and personal development is remarkable. Parents are effusive about the difference the school has made for their children, with many describing it as 'transformational'.

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

The school has created an ambitious curriculum that is well adapted to meet the needs of pupils. The curriculum is of a consistently high quality across subjects including head, heart and hands (3H) and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Through this curriculum pupils achieve well, regardless of their starting points. They are well prepared for their next steps and life beyond the school.

Teachers are well trained. They combine strong subject knowledge with their understanding of pupils' needs to teach the curriculum highly effectively. Teachers break subject content down into small steps. They use their expert knowledge of the curriculum to ensure that pupils secure these steps before moving on to learn more complex content. This ensures that pupils progress through the curriculum successfully.

The school has created a culture of very positive behaviour. Staff are highly skilled in helping pupils meet these expectations. They use what they know about pupils to act swiftly to ensure that pupils stay focused on learning. Pupils learn ways to manage their own behaviour. They use these strategies effectively. Pupils get on well outside of lessons and around the school. They play and socialise well together both in organised activities and unstructured time.

Many pupils join the school with a history of high absence. The school works with families and pupils effectively to understand the barriers to good attendance. A range of strategies are used to create bespoke support to help pupils attend school regularly. These are highly effective in reducing absence.

The school has designed a rich and varied programme of additional opportunities for pupils to experience. These complement the curriculum. They give pupils authentic opportunities to interact with, and contribute to, their local community. Pupils have access to a broad range of clubs, that are well attended by all. Many pupils take leading roles in helping to support these activities.

Pupils have a comprehensive and well-planned careers programme. This includes bespoke work experience opportunities to cater for pupils' individual ambitions. Older pupils get the information and help they need to make the right choices for their next steps. This includes visits to local colleges.

Reading is given a high priority. The school has created the culture, incentives and opportunities that inspires pupils to read. The well-used library is bustling with pupils at breaktimes and at lunchtime. Pupils who find reading more difficult are given the help they need to read well.

Leaders, governors and trustees have a clear, shared vision of success. They work together closely to ensure the very best for pupils and staff. Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel valued and are supported well.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	148541
<b>Local authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10295135
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Academy free school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	80
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Stella Mackenzie
<b>CEO of trust</b>	Angelo Goduti
<b>Headteacher</b>	Anna Mears
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.castleeastschool.co.uk">www.castleeastschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is part of East Anglian Schools Trust.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and have communication and interaction needs.
- 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 senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also met with representatives from the local governing body and board of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, head, hearts and hands and personal, social and health education. 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.
- The lead inspector also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects and looked at samples of pupils' work from these subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; 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 considered the response to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire. They also considered responses to the confidential staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Marc White, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Ashley Best-White

Ofsted Inspector

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