

Inspection of a good school: Aegir – A Specialist Academy

Sweyn Lane, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire DN21 1PB

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 May 2024

The headteacher of this school is Joseph Afolabi. This school is part of Inspire Connected Communities Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Lea Mason, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Rhodes

Outcome

Aegir – A Specialist Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils describe this school as 'magical' and 'special'. They love attending the school and value their education. One pupil summed up the views of many when they stated that staff 'help you to evolve into the person you are going to be in the future'. Pupils are keen to learn and achieve well. Staff have high expectations of every pupil.

Pupils enjoy a range of subjects and understand how what they are learning now will help prepare them for adulthood. They know how they will use their knowledge in a range of situations in adult life. They are very clear about the importance of reading and mathematics in the world of work.

Most pupils have excellent attendance, and they behave very well in lessons and around school. Pupils and staff enjoy positive and productive relationships. Pupils believe that staff care about them as individuals. They know that they can talk to staff if they have any concerns. Pupils trust staff to help them resolve any problems that may arise.

Pupils feel safe in school, and they are safe. They are taught how to reduce risks in school, at home and in the wider community. Staff are well trained and vigilant about safeguarding pupils.

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

The broad, balanced, ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum is designed to prepare pupils for future learning and adult life. Staff have secure subject knowledge. They check what pupils can do and use this information to strengthen pupils' learning. However, there is some variation in the implementation of the curriculum. For example, teachers do not

always make the best use of lesson time. Occasionally, the most able pupils say that they are not given opportunities to deepen their knowledge.

Reading and communication are at the heart of the curriculum. All pupils listen to stories, engage with books and experience the written word in various formats. A rigorous approach to the reading curriculum develops pupils' love, confidence and enjoyment of reading.

Pupils are committed to their education and behave exceptionally well in class. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct. These expectations are applied fairly in a positive climate for learning. Staff manage pupils' behaviour exceptionally well and take intelligent and highly effective action to help all pupils to succeed.

Pupils have deep levels of respect for others. They play a very positive role in creating a school environment where commonalities and differences are celebrated. They make a tangible contribution to the life of the school and the wider community.

The school consistently promotes pupils' extensive personal development. Pupils have access to a wide, rich set of experiences and they are given many opportunities to develop their talents and interests. Pupils regularly attend clubs, and experience trips and visits in a coherently planned way. Pupils benefit from activities provided by the school's own scout group.

The school's values of 'Aspiration, Respect and Connection' help to promote equity, tolerance and self-worth throughout the school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, British values and character education are also embedded in the classroom and through the wider curriculum.

Pupils are well prepared for future success in education, employment or training. All pupils move on to a purposeful and sustained destination. Careers education begins in Year 7 and all key stage 3 pupils benefit from a carefully planned careers week. Most key stage 4 and 5 pupils take part in work experience. All pupils receive considered advice about their next steps. Pupils gain high-quality, meaningful opportunities to encounter the world of work.

The current leadership team understands the school's strengths and areas for development and leaders are taking effective action to continue to improve the school. Senior leaders engage with staff and provide opportunities for them to access high-quality professional development. They consider the main pressures on staff and manage their workload in a constructive way. Leaders promote staff well-being through events such as a well-being breakfast and having an open-door policy.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, pupils are not supported to engage in purposeful activity promptly. As a result, some pupils do not make as much progress towards the curriculum aims as they might. The school should ensure that staff engage pupils with appropriate learning activity promptly so that all pupils are encouraged to achieve as highly as possible.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Aegir Community School, to be good in May 2014.

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	142136
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10288350
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	141
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	28
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Rhodes
CEO of the trust	Lea Mason
Headteacher	Joseph Afolabi
Website	www.aegirspecialistacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 June 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- At the time of the previous inspection, the school was part of the Mayflower Specialist School Academy Trust. In May 2024, this trust merged with Lincolnshire Wolds Community Trust to form the Inspire Connected Communities Trust.
- The headteacher started at the school in April 2024. Prior to his appointment, the director of education from the trust acted as interim headteacher from January 2024.
- The school provides education for pupils with a wide range of needs, primarily autism; moderate learning difficulty; social, emotional and mental health needs; severe learning difficulty, and speech, language and communication needs.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

- 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

- 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.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 met with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, key stage 4 leader, post-16 leader, curriculum leaders, staff, four parents and the trust's director of education and the lead professional for teaching and learning. The lead inspector met with the deputy chair of the board of trustees and the chair of the local governing committee.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, personal, social and health education and early reading. 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 visited other lessons and observed behaviour in class and around the school. They also scrutinised a range of documentation provided by leaders.
- Inspectors considered responses to Parent View, including the free-text comments, and the staff surveys.

Inspection team

Simon Mosley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Kathryn Hobbs

Ofsted Inspector

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