

# Inspection of Countesthorpe Academy

Winchester Road, Countesthorpe LE8 5PR

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Inspection dates:	29 and 30 October 2024
The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Catherine Aitcheson. The school is part of LIFE 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 (CEO), Chris Parkinson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Liz Warren. There is also an executive headteacher, Gareth Williams, who is responsible for this school.

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

Staff have high expectations of pupils. Pupils' behaviour is improving. Disruption in lessons is rare. The school is working hard to reduce the number of pupils who are suspended from school.

Staff show vigilance and care. Pupils feel safe in school. Pupils said that there are many staff to turn to for help if they have worries.

The school provides many opportunities for pupils, and students in the sixth form, to develop their interests. This year's school production is eagerly anticipated. Pupils take on leadership roles. The Stephen Lawrence ambassadors, for example, expressed pride in their work and for 'having their voices heard'.

Too many pupils are absent too often. As a result, pupils, in particular pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are missing too much of their education. Effective work takes place to support pupils and their families. There are signs of improvement, but rightly, pupil attendance remains a key school priority.

The curriculum has improved. However, there are inconsistencies in how well the curriculum is taught in the different subjects. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should at the end of key stage 4. Students in the sixth form benefit from stronger provision.

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

The school is ambitious for all pupils. Work has been undertaken to bring about improvement, including to the provision for pupils with SEND, pupils' achievement, and attendance. However, this work has yet to have the necessary, full impact so that all pupils attend and achieve consistently well.

In most subjects, the curriculum is ambitious. It focuses on the knowledge that pupils need to know. It is clear what pupils need to understand and when. However, the implementation of the curriculum is too variable. Not all staff routinely identify gaps in pupils' learning in order to address them. When such checks do not take place, pupils struggle to develop a secure understanding of what they have been taught. In some areas, their recall of previous learning is poor. Published outcomes show that pupils do not achieve as well as they should in some subjects. Students in the sixth form receive a more consistently strong learning experience.

Provision for pupils with SEND is improving. Needs are identified more swiftly. There is high-quality support for these pupils from experts in the trust. Pupils with SEND receive precise support in skills sessions, for example. However, lessons are not routinely suitably adapted to meet the needs of pupils with SEND across all the subjects that they study. This restricts how well they can achieve.

The school prioritises reading. There is clear and coherent support for pupils who are at the early stages of reading. Sixth-form students are extremely positive role models,

offering high-quality mentoring to enhance pupils' reading knowledge. The library is an exciting hub of reading and learning.

Staff benefit from high-quality professional development opportunities. They value the trust subject communities. Some staff, for example in dance, are beginning to share their expertise with others in the trust.

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, access high-quality careers advice and guidance. They are introduced to a wealth of options to inform their next steps into education, employment or training. They are well supported.

Pupils benefit from a well-considered personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. Pupils are aware of how to keep safe in real life and on line. The work in Year 7 about puberty, for example, helps pupils prepare for a healthy lifestyle. Sixth-form students receive high-quality and age-appropriate support.

Pupils enjoy the opportunities they receive for debate and discussion. They value learning to appreciate the viewpoints of others. Pupils are taught about a range of cultures and religions other than their own. This prepares them for life in modern Britain.

The school has worked hard to improve its engagement with the community. This has resulted in more positive relationships and stronger community involvement. A greater number of pupils are making this their first-choice school. Parents and carers expressed gratitude for the positive work of the school and its impact.

The trust ensures that the statutory obligations are met. It provides effective governance. It has an accurate view of the school. It knows the aspects of the school that are not improving well enough. It is putting in place targeted support to further accelerate the school's improvement.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They show great commitment to the school and to the community. They appreciate leaders' consideration of their work life balance. They feel well led and managed.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Pupils' absence is too high, particularly disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. This means that some of the most vulnerable pupils are missing their education. The school must ensure that those pupils who need it receive support to improve their attendance.

- Learning is not always sufficiently adapted to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. When this is the case, these pupils do not learn as well as they should. The school must ensure that teachers are equipped with the information and skills needed to make sure that learning is appropriately adapted across all subjects for pupils with SEND, so that these pupils achieve well.
- The curriculum is not implemented consistently. Sometimes not enough checks are made to ensure that pupils have the correct knowledge, including knowledge of vocabulary, to complete a task. This impacts negatively on pupils' achievement. The school must ensure that regular checks are made in lessons to make sure that pupils' prior learning is skilfully built upon and that pupils acquire the knowledge they need to progress through the curriculum successfully and achieve well.

## 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>	147902
<b>Local authority</b>	Leicestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10347695
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1192
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	187
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Liz Warren
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Chris Parkinson
<b>Executive Headteacher</b>	Gareth Williams
<b>Headteacher</b>	Catherine Aitcheson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.clcc.college">www.clcc.college</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	5 and 6 July 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative provision and nine unregistered alternative provisions.
- 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued 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 put pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in these subjects: English, science, geography and mathematics. 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 visited lessons across a wider range of other subjects. They visited the sixth form.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, headteacher and other senior leaders. The lead inspector met with the CEO and chair of the trust. She met with three members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including education, health and care plans, to evaluate the provision for SEND.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of pupil attendance information. They observed the behaviour of pupils in classrooms and at social times.
- The views of staff and pupils who responded to Ofsted's survey were considered. Additionally, they reviewed the views of parents through Ofsted's parent View, including the free-text comments.

## Inspection team

Jayne Ashman, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Paul Sweeney	Ofsted Inspector
Jenny Brown	Ofsted Inspector
Dick Vasey	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Davies	Ofsted Inspector

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