

Inspection of a good school: Caister Academy

Windsor Road, Caister-on-Sea, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR30 5LS

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 November 2023

Outcome

Caister Academy continues to be a good school.

The principal of this school is Helen Seath. This school is part of Creative Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Marc Jordan, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Abbie Rumbold. There is also an executive principal, Ben Driver, who is responsible for this school and three others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils value their time in school. They learn well and they value the wide range of opportunities to be involved in something beyond the academic curriculum. Pupils who struggle to read are particularly well supported. They value the help they get to learn to read and know this helps them in other subjects too.

Leaders' high expectations permeate pupils' daily experiences. Pupils know how to behave, and they do so well. They experience consistent classroom routines, such as the 'hover and show' approach to using mini whiteboards. They listen quietly and respond well to teachers' guidance. Pupils' understanding develops well over time because they follow a clear curriculum in a calm and productive environment.

Pupils benefit from a well-considered personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. They are taught to respect others. They know it is fine to be yourself. They learn to keep themselves safe. They are, and feel, safe from bullying. Pupils' education is enhanced by the effective work of the school on these wider aspects of their development.

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

Provisional published outcomes in 2023 were not as good as they should have been in some subjects. There were several reasons for this, including the absence of key staff and aspects of the curriculum not being as effective as they should have been.

The school and the trust have effectively addressed this. Key staff are back in place. Areas of the curriculum which were not strong have been changed. The curriculum is now largely designed and taught well. These changes did not have time to fully impact on last year's published outcomes. They are securing higher standards now.

The order in which pupils are taught is based on the school's sound understanding of how knowledge develops over time. Teachers follow leaders' chosen pedagogical approaches consistently and well. They regularly check what pupils have learned. Teachers adjust what they teach to ensure pupils learn well. Leaders use assessment information to decide if and how to change the curriculum for the future. This helps to avoid pupils having gaps in their knowledge.

Clear teaching of the core knowledge all pupils need to know is especially beneficial to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). It gives them the sound basis on which to build their understanding over time. Where these pupils need extra help on top of this, the school specifies what this should be. As a result of effective and well adapted teaching to meet pupils' needs, pupils with SEND learn well alongside their peers.

The school has put a high priority on ensuring pupils who struggle to read are taught to do so. They have put in place an effective phonics scheme which helps those at the early stages of reading learn to interpret the text in front of them. This helps them to read with increasing fluency. It also helps them to understand the resources they use in other subjects.

In a small number of subjects, the specific knowledge pupils need to learn is not as well defined or taught as in most. In these subjects, what pupils learn is left too much to chance. Pupils do not learn key knowledge as well in these subjects.

Leaders and staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Classrooms are quiet spaces which are highly conducive to learning. Leaders have made attendance everyone's responsibility. A wide range of actions, including rewards and home visits, have led to improved rates of attendance.

There is a high level of participation in the 'electives' at the end of the school day. These provide a range of opportunities for pupils to develop their interests. The PSHE curriculum forms an important part of the school's curriculum. It teaches pupils important information about theirs and others' well-being in a helpful and timely way.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculums in a minority of subjects are not designed or taught as well as in most. Pupils learn less well in these subjects than they do in others. The school should ensure all aspects of the curriculum provide teachers with the detail they need to teach all subjects well.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2018.

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 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	141331
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10288536
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	694
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Abbie Rumbold
Principal	Helen Seath
Website	www.caisteracademy.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	16 and 17 January 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- Since the previous inspection, a new principal and executive principal have been appointed.
- 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.
- Inspectors met with the principal, executive principal, vice-principals and assistant principals, as well as other school leaders. The lead inspector also met with various

representatives of the trust, including the chair of the trust, the director of quality assurance and the chair of the academy council.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, physical education, history and science. 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 reading, geography, mathematics and PSHE.
- 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 also considered the views expressed in Ofsted's surveys of staff's, parents' and pupils' views, including any free-text comments.

Inspection team

Andrew Hemmings, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Zoe Fisher

Ofsted Inspector

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