

Inspection of Castle Wood Academy

The Avenue, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire DN21 1EH

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 February 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Castle Wood Academy are happy and enjoy being at school with their friends. Adults have high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. Pupils respond well to these expectations. They are focused on their learning and classrooms are calm. Pupils understand what bullying is and say that it is rare. When it does happen, adults deal with it. Pupils feel safe in school. Some safeguarding procedures are not sufficiently thorough.

Pupils enjoy studying a wide variety of subjects. They enjoy being challenged by their work. One pupil summed up the views of many when she explained that teachers push them to learn all they can.

Pupils value the responsibilities given to them, such as house captains, play leaders and being part of the 'tech team'. They appreciate how the pupil parliament allows them to share their views.

The vast majority of parents and carers are positive about the school. Parents value the different activities the school provides, such as Forest School. Many appreciate the support their children receive in school from adults and from Margo the dog.

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

The school provides a good quality of education. Staff have worked hard to improve the curriculum they offer pupils. Leaders have a clear vision for how they want to develop the curriculum further.

The curriculum has been designed with the pupils in mind. Pupils learn about the history and geography of Gainsborough. Most subjects are well thought out and carefully planned. In these subjects, teachers make sure that pupils understand what they are learning and how it builds on what they already know. Teachers have good subject knowledge in these subjects. They use this to explain new things clearly to pupils. Pupils discuss their learning confidently. In geography, they explained how they use their knowledge of coordinates to help them read a map. Leaders are well on the way to developing the whole curriculum. They are still developing a few subjects, such as design and technology, art and design, and religious education.

Leaders have made reading a high priority. Staff are well trained and there is a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics. Children begin to learn the sounds that letters make early on. Staff pay close attention to how well pupils learn their sounds. They provide support to pupils when needed. Books used by pupils to help them learn to read are well matched to their ability. Pupils say they enjoy reading. However, while pupils are good at reading the words on the page, they sometimes struggle to understand the meaning of what they have read. A small number of pupils occasionally do not notice when they misread a word.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Most parents of these children agree. Teachers and teaching assistants know the needs of these pupils well. They use training and resources effectively to support these pupils' needs.

Children quickly settle into routines when they start school. Adults build strong relationships with them. Children confidently take part in a range of activities. The outdoor space is used well. Children have opportunities to develop physically and understand how to stay safe when using the equipment. Adults in the early years know what children need in order to make progress in their learning. However, leaders have not made sure that in all subjects, learning in key stage 1 builds well enough on what children have learned in the early years.

Most pupils attend well. Systems are in place to make checks on pupils who are absent. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders had improved the attendance of pupils who were regularly absent. The pandemic has had a negative impact on some pupils' attendance. Leaders' actions are beginning to ensure that all pupils once again attend regularly.

Governors' roles and responsibilities are not clear enough. An external review of governance has taken place recently. Governors and trustees are taking appropriate actions in response to the weaknesses highlighted by this review.

Staff appreciate leaders' efforts to manage and reduce their workload. Staff say that they enjoy the teamwork ethos at the school. They feel that they are well cared for by each other and by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and parents agree. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. They say they can speak to adults in school if they are worried or have a concern. Staff follow clear systems to report a concern. Leaders work closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils and families get the support they need.

Leaders provide staff with safeguarding training. However, they do not make sure that this training is consistently effective. Occasionally, leaders do not record their actions in response to safeguarding concerns raised. This leads to gaps in some pupils' safeguarding records.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently well planned and sequenced in some subjects, including design and technology, art and design, and religious education. However, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.
- Leaders have not made sure that teaching in key stage 1 builds on what children have learned in the early years. Pupils are not always able to apply their previous learning. Leaders should ensure that the key knowledge children learn in the early years is connected closely to the curriculum thinking in key stage 1.
- The teaching of phonics is secure. Most pupils use their skills well to read unfamiliar words with accuracy and fluency. However, the skills pupils need to understand what they read are less well developed. Some pupils struggle to understand what they have read. Leaders should ensure that reading comprehension skills are planned and taught well from the early years.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective. However, the culture of safeguarding is not consistently strong. Leaders' records of their actions to support pupils and families sometimes lack detail. Leaders do not check sufficiently well that staff understand the safeguarding training they receive. Senior leaders, and those responsible for governance, must ensure that the school's culture of safeguarding is consistently strong.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	140329
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10211660
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	297
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of local governing body	Claire Kirk
Headteacher	Sue Wilson (Executive Headteacher), Gary Brown (Head of School)
Website	www.talloaksacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 January 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is the first year the school has had Year 6 pupils since opening as a primary school in 2015.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school and other leaders.
- The lead inspector met with three members of the trust, including the chair of the board trustees. She met with three members of the local governing body, including the chair. She also spoke with a representative from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, design and technology, and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work. They also looked at the curriculum plans for computing, religious education, art and design, and music.
- Inspectors spoke with parents. Account was taken of the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also spoke to groups of pupils and staff.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator. They reviewed the school's SEND provision and scrutinised plans for individual pupils.
- The lead inspector met with leaders to discuss safeguarding. Inspectors met with staff to discuss their understanding of the safeguarding risks and reviewed the school's procedures to keep pupils safe. Inspectors considered documentation relating to safeguarding, the school's single central record and the system for undertaking checks on new staff.

Inspection team

Heidi Malliff, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
George Huthart	Ofsted Inspector
Christopher Wheatley	Ofsted Inspector

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