

Inspection of Branston Community Academy

Station Road, Branston, Lincoln, Lincolnshire LN4 1LH

Inspection dates:	4 and 5 March 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The principal of this school is James Carter. Branston Community Academy is a single-academy trust. The school is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Malcolm Norman.

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils enjoy attending this school. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. There are high expectations in the school. However, over time, pupils at the end of Year 11 have not achieved as well as they should in public examinations. That said, students in the sixth form do typically achieve well.

The school has established clear routines that pupils understand. This has improved pupils' behaviour and reduced low-level disruption. As a result, pupils are more able to focus on their learning. Bullying does happen occasionally. Staff usually deal with this effectively. Most pupils say they feel safe in the school. However, a few pupils are not confident that all staff deal with bullying well. Pupils understand the school's values of 'kindness, respect, aspiration, resilience and community'. Most pupils abide by these values. On occasions though, pupils experience derogatory language.

The school is passionate about ensuring that pupils develop into confident young people. There are many opportunities for pupils and students to be positive role models and support their peers, for example as trained well-being ambassadors. Pupils and students enjoy a wide range of experiences that support the curriculum, including trips abroad, performing arts trips to London, and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) events supported by the Royal Air Force.

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

The curriculum is broad and ambitious. Most curriculum subjects have identified the essential knowledge that pupils should learn in a logical order. Teachers demonstrate a good knowledge of the subjects they teach. In some subjects, pupils develop their knowledge and skills securely over time. However, in others, teachers do not consistently check pupils' understanding. This means that some teaching does not identify gaps in knowledge and misconceptions effectively. This hinders pupils' progression through the curriculum. The delivery of the sixth-form curriculum is more consistent. Staff use their expertise well to enable students to succeed and achieve well. Sixth-form students benefit from specialist teachers and interesting lessons. As a result, students work hard, are engaged in their learning and achieve well.

The school's approach to supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is not as thorough as it should be. Pupils' needs are not routinely identified well. This means staff are not sufficiently well informed about the support these pupils require. Additionally, on occasions, teachers do not adapt teaching consistently well for pupils with SEND. This means pupils with SEND underachieve and do not reach their potential.

The school identifies pupils who find reading difficult. Pupils follow a number of reading programmes, which supports them to catch up. They are starting to gain the knowledge and skills that they need to become confident, fluent readers. However, the work to develop a coherent reading strategy is in its infancy. This has an impact on how quickly these pupils develop their comprehension and vocabulary.

The school has reset behavioural expectations. Classroom routines are fully embedded, and pupils understand what is expected of them. Pupils comment on how behaviour has improved. Despite this, there remain a few pupils who do not behave as well as they should during unstructured times. Behaviour sometimes falls short of the school's high expectations, including by pupils using derogatory language. In the sixth form, teachers create an environment that allows sixth-form students to focus on learning. As a result, students achieve well, particularly in vocational courses.

The personal, social, health and economic education programme is thoughtfully and logically sequenced. Pupils are taught about issues that may have an impact on them, such as the wider risks of vaping and the importance of consent. Pupils learn about people with protected characteristics. Across the school, pupils' experiences are enhanced through a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities, such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, aviation club and a range of sports and music clubs. In the sixth form, students develop their leadership skills through being members of the well-being committee and sixth-form committee.

Pupils receive a comprehensive programme of careers education. This includes up-to-date information about employers, universities, colleges and apprenticeships. As a result, pupils are well informed about their next steps. Pupils in Year 10 and students in Year 12 value their work experience. They develop their interpersonal skills through leadership opportunities and mentoring younger pupils. The sixth form prepares its students well for future success in their next steps. This is particularly strong for those who wish to progress on to university.

School and other leaders, including trustees, are highly committed to the pupils. They recognise further work is needed to ensure pupils achieve as much as they should across the curriculum. However, the systems and processes in place to quality assure the school do not give leaders a clear picture of what is happening in all aspects of the school's provision. This means areas of the school's work that need developing are not identified well enough. As a result, progress in some school improvement matters is not as effective as it could be.

Staff are positive about the changes that the school has recently implemented. They are proud to work at this school and value the support they receive for their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's approach to supporting pupils with SEND is not as thorough and effective as it should be. As a result, too many pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they

should. The school should ensure there are robust systems in place to identify pupils' individual needs and consequently provide effective support to meet their bespoke needs so that they can routinely achieve well.

- In some subjects, teachers do not consistently check pupils' understanding and so do not adapt what they teach to meet the needs of pupils. This means that some teaching does not build on what pupils know and understand well, and gaps and misconceptions are not addressed effectively. This hinders progress. The school should ensure that staff are confident in checking learning so that teaching enables pupils to secure the detailed knowledge they need to achieve well across the full range of subjects.
- The systems and processes in place to quality assure the school's provision do not give leaders a clear picture of what is happening in all areas of the school. This means areas of the school's work that need developing are not identified well enough. As a result, progress in some school improvement matters is not as effective as it could be. The school should ensure that quality assurance processes enable leaders to develop a clear understanding of the strengths and improvement priorities.

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	136358
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10347505
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,153
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	148
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Malcolm Norman
CEO of the trust	James Carter
Principal	James Carter
Website	www.branstonca.lincs.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 12 May 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The principal took up their post in September 2024.
- The school uses one unregistered and two registered 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, 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 held meetings with trust leaders, members of the governing body, the headteacher, senior leaders, other school leaders and staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, science, physical education, geography, and history. 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 reviewed a range of documents, including records linked to attendance and behaviour, school development plans, school self-evaluation documentation and records of governing board meetings.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour at social times.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils to gather their views about school.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted’s online survey for staff and held discussions with staff. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted’s online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments, and held discussions with some parents.

Inspection team

Anne Maingay, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
Sean Kelly	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Wilson	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Davies	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Davies	His Majesty’s Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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