

Inspection of Castleford Academy

Ferrybridge Road, Castleford, West Yorkshire WF10 4JQ

Inspection dates:	28 and 29 January 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Wesley Bush. This school is part of Castleford 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), George Panayiotou, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Adam Fletcher. There is also a director of secondary education, Daniella Cook, who is responsible for this school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school that has high ambitions for and expectations of pupils. Pupils are taught to be 'ready, respectful and safe' and aspire to reach their maximum potential. Pupils realise these expectations and achieve highly across most subjects. The school is welcoming to all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils have mature attitudes to learning. They are studious in lessons. Most pupils feel happy and have positive relationships with staff. Pupils move around the school site calmly and follow routines well. Bullying is rare and is dealt with quickly should it occur. Pupils are unanimous in their view that they feel safe and have trusted adults to speak to at the school.

Pupils enjoy a huge range of diverse extra-curricular and enrichment experiences. For example, pupils participate in a soul band, eco-club, trampolining, book worms and British Sign Language clubs. The school is to be commended for ensuring that all pupils are encouraged to participate in new activities.

Pupil leaders are very enthusiastic about their responsibilities. They are proud of changes they have made to the school and the support they provide to the wider community. Prefects describe how rewarding it has been to organise a charity colour run and debate which charities to support.

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

The school provides an ambitious curriculum that prepares pupils for the next steps in their education, training or employment. The curriculum is well thought out and is based on educational research. In all subjects, the school has developed methods that ensure pupils know more and remember more over time. Pupils are provided with a broad range of subjects to study. However, the number of pupils entering the English Baccalaureate has reduced and remains below the national average.

Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. In most lessons, pupils' understanding is thoroughly checked and tasks are carefully designed to secure important knowledge. However, on occasion, the work set is not clearly understood by pupils. In some cases, misconceptions are not addressed. This results in some pupils lacking the important knowledge they need to access further learning.

Pupils make excellent progress through the curriculum. In most subjects, they achieve highly. Pupils who are disadvantaged benefit from strong teaching and support strategies. Pupils with SEND are swiftly identified. They receive the precise support they need to access learning. For example, pupils who are deaf receive pre- and post-teaching interventions to ensure they have secure knowledge and skills.

The school has a relentless focus on reading. Pupils are challenged in lessons with high-quality texts that develop their comprehension and inference skills. The school ensures

that pupils receive continuous exposure to different texts and develop a love of reading. The school quickly diagnoses pupils who are weaker at reading. They receive swift and tailored support to improve.

The school has high expectations of behaviour. Most pupils agree that staff are consistent in their application of the behavioural policy. A smaller proportion of pupils say that this is not as consistent in some lessons. When this happens, behaviour can sometimes be more variable. Most pupils attend school regularly. The school has introduced an extensive range of strategies to improve the attendance of a small number of pupils. However, it is too soon to see the impact of this work.

Pupils benefit from an exemplary programme of personal development. They develop an expansive appreciation of the world around them. Pupils describe in detail their knowledge of the ways people can be different and of fundamental British values. Pupils are encouraged at every opportunity to develop and widen their talents. For example, pupils talk excitedly about being involved in the school drama production of 'Matilda' and the musical instruments they are learning to play. The school's careers programme is woven into every aspect of the curriculum. Pupils talk confidently about their career plans.

Leaders are determined to improve the life chances of pupils. They support many other schools by sharing the benefit of their expertise, resources and experience. Staff receive an array of training opportunities to develop their expertise. Leaders are considerate of staff workload. Trustees and governors provide timely and supportive challenge to leaders about the school's work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, the school does not ensure that teachers set work that is understood by pupils or that checks of pupils' understanding are effective. This limits how well pupils secure important knowledge in their long-term memory. The school should ensure that staff help pupils to know and remember their learning and check for any gaps in their understanding.

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	136633
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10381203
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,477
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Adam Fletcher
CEO of the trust	George Panayiotou
Headteacher	Wesley Bush
Website	www.castlefordacademy.com
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 October 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses eight registered and four unregistered alternative providers of education.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for deaf pupils known as the Resource Base for Deaf Children.
- 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.
- 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 headteacher, other leaders, staff and pupils. They met with members of the academy council and trustees. They met with the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, English, science, modern foreign languages, physical education and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors visited lessons and spoke to pupils about their learning in history and geography. Inspectors discussed the achievement of pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged.
- Inspectors visited lessons and considered how the needs of disadvantaged and pupils with SEND are met. They observed pupils at various times of the school day.
- Inspectors visited the resource base for deaf pupils. Inspectors spoke with pupils and staff at this provision.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; considered the views of parents; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors evaluated responses from parents and carers to Ofsted Parent View. They spoke with some parents. Inspectors also evaluated the responses that staff and pupils made to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Chris Carr, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Dave Wadsworth	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Hassack	Ofsted Inspector
Julie McGrane	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Lane	Ofsted Inspector

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