

Inspection of The Castle Rock School

Meadow Lane, Coalville, Leicestershire LE67 4BR

Inspection dates: 12 to 14 October 2021

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Sixth-form provision

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are not getting a good deal at this school. Too many are affected by the poor behaviour of others. Lessons are frequently disrupted. Behaviour on corridors and in external areas can be unruly. Too many pupils wander the corridors or grounds during lesson times. Staff do not always challenge them. When they do, pupils often respond disrespectfully or ignore staff. Some pupils feel unsafe. Some pupils described being at school as 'overwhelming' because of reckless behaviour. Some pupils do not attend school regularly.

Many teachers accept poor behaviour as the norm. They have low expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Pupils do not learn enough about issues that would help prepare them for life in modern Britain. The curriculum for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is not well planned.

Some pupils experience derogatory name-calling. Not all pupils feel that teachers address bullying issues. Some told inspectors that teachers do not always intervene when fights break out.

Students in the sixth form enjoy more positive experiences. They value their teachers and education. However, their learning is disrupted when younger pupils who misbehave are placed in their classes. Their teachers are often called away to deal with poor behaviour.

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

The school has been through a period of significant turbulence. Leaders and trustees did not manage the school's expansion well enough. Leaders did not support staff or pupils to manage these significant changes well enough. They did not ensure that there was an adequate curriculum in place across all key stages.

Leaders have not established a clear curriculum vision. There is an appropriate range of subjects on offer. However, leaders have not ensured that the curriculum in each subject is of good quality. The plans that show what pupils should learn in each subject are not well thought out. Subject leaders have not been trained or supported to develop their curriculums. They have not identified the most important concepts and knowledge that pupils should know. Leaders have not thought enough about how curriculum plans should help pupils build on their knowledge as they move through the school. Subject plans do not show how teachers will help pupils know and remember more over time. Some subject leaders are beginning to write more effective plans. For example, in art, plans consider pupils' existing knowledge and how they will acquire new learning. The proportion of pupils studying a modern foreign language is low, but leaders intend to increase this.

Poor behaviour has a negative impact on most aspects of the school's work. Staff do not consistently challenge poor behaviour. Low-level disruption often prevents pupils from learning. Many pupils work hard and want to do well. However, too often, teachers accept work that is poor quality, or not finished. Sixth-form students are keen to learn. They say that their teachers have good subject knowledge, but are often absent from class.

Many pupils show wilful disrespect for staff. Some staff do not address this. Some do not model professional standards of conduct.

Leaders have not acted quickly enough to address pupils' underachievement. Many pupils have fallen behind in their learning. Leaders have taken appropriate steps to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), who receive extra help to support them to catch up in reading. This is not the case for all pupils who need support with their learning. For example, leaders have identified reading as a key priority to help pupils access the curriculum. They are researching effective strategies to boost pupils' reading skills. They have introduced an approach to develop pupils' oracy. These initiatives are new. Curriculum plans do not consider how to fill gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Pupils' personal development is not promoted well. Leaders have only recently begun to plan a coherent programme for PSHE education. Pupils cannot recall what they have learned about previously. For example, they have limited understanding of different faiths and cultures. They do not have the knowledge to prepare them for life in modern Britain. Some pupils enjoy extra-curricular activities such as music and sports. However, these opportunities are few, and many have not restarted this term.

Leaders have not ensured that the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes are met. Students in the sixth form receive very little PSHE education, including careers education. Students recognise that there are gaps in their knowledge about the world of work, as well as about issues that affect them, such as relationships and consent. Most students in the sixth form have benefited from work experience.

Teachers who have recently joined the profession feel well supported. They are developing their practice well, albeit in difficult circumstances.

School leaders recognise the considerable weaknesses in the school, but they have not taken effective action to address them. Those responsible for governance do not recognise the extent of the school's weaknesses. They have not held leaders to account effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Too many pupils truant during the school day. Staff do not always know where these pupils are or whether they are safe.

Some pupils do not feel safe because of the unruly conduct of others. Hazards on the school site are not well managed. For example, cars pose a risk in areas where pupils gather. Pupils are not always adequately supervised.

Safeguarding leaders work well together and take appropriate action in response to child protection concerns. The most vulnerable pupils are well supported. Staff raise concerns quickly and leaders respond appropriately. They involve external agencies and make sure that pupils get the help they need quickly. These pupils are monitored well to make sure that concerns do not escalate.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not established a clear, cohesive vision for the curriculum. They have not given subject leaders sufficient guidance on the expectations for the curriculum in their subjects, or on how to design an effective curriculum. Leaders should establish a clear vision for the school's curriculum. They should ensure that staff have the training and support they need to develop effective curriculums for their subject areas.
- Subject curriculum plans are poor and incomplete in many subject areas. Pupils have gaps in their learning and do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders should identify the key concepts and content that pupils should know in each subject. They should ensure that curriculum plans are well sequenced and designed to build knowledge to help pupils know and remember more over time.
- Expectations of pupils' behaviour are not high enough. The policy to manage behaviour is unclear. Staff do not routinely challenge poor behaviour. Learning is often disrupted, and pupils' behaviour is sometimes unsafe. Some pupils are worried that they may come to harm. Leaders should communicate clear expectations and establish an effective system to manage behaviour that all pupils and staff understand. They should ensure that all staff have consistently high expectations and are supported to tackle pupils' poor behaviour.
- Leaders have not ensured that all areas of the site are safe. This poses a potential risk to pupils' health and safety. Leaders should ensure that they take action to reduce the risks to pupils' safety, such as those caused by hazards on the school site. They should ensure that sufficient supervision is in place, including as pupils leave the site at the end of the day.
- Too many pupils are frequently absent from school. Leaders should develop strategies to support all pupils, particularly older pupils, to attend regularly.
- Pupils' personal development is not promoted well. They do not receive adequate PSHE education. Leaders should ensure that pupils are provided with the knowledge they need to prepare them for life in modern Britain, including effective careers education in all key stages. Leaders should develop and implement plans to provide pupils with enrichment opportunities.
- Leaders have not ensured that the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes are met. Sixth-form students receive very little PSHE education. This

means that they are not well enough prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern Britain. They do not know enough about the different routes open to them once they leave school, or about different career options. Leaders should ensure that an effective PSHE education programme, including appropriate careers education, is implemented.

- Those responsible for governance do not recognise the extent of the school's weaknesses. They do not hold leaders to account effectively and have not ensured that leaders acted quickly enough to stem the school's decline. Trustees should ensure that they have the knowledge and understanding that they need to be effective in their roles. They should work with leaders to develop a coherent vision for the school and ensure that leaders adopt a strategic approach to identifying and addressing weaknesses. They should check and ensure that leaders challenge and hold staff to account effectively.

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	138478
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10207409
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of students in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,321
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	194
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Michala Worrell
Headteacher	Duncan Baldwin
Website	www.castlerocksch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school's age range changed in September 2020 to include pupils aged 15 to 18. Approximately 700 pupils were added to the school's roll in September 2020.
- The school uses the following alternative off-site providers: Elite Tuition, Coalville Education Learning Partnership, Melton Learning Hub, Generation Youth and T.E.C.K. The school also uses Enstruct Training, which provides tuition on site.
- The school does not meet the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- The headteacher was absent from school during the inspection.
- Inspectors met with the chief executive officer and leaders from the Apollo Partnership Trust. We met with senior leaders, subject leaders and groups of staff. Inspectors spoke with pupils around school and met formally with groups of pupils from all year groups.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science, geography, and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, spoke to teachers and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. Inspectors visited a range of lessons in other subjects, including those in the sixth form.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's work in relation to safeguarding, including looking at safeguarding records, attendance registers and the school's procedures for recruiting staff.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's self-evaluation document and plans for improvement.

Inspection team

Deborah Mosley, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Chris Stevens	Her Majesty's Inspector
Dave Gilkerson	Her Majesty's Inspector
Gill Martin	Ofsted Inspector
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