

Castle Business and Enterprise College

Odell Road, Walsall, West Midlands, WS3 2ED

Inspection dates 16–17 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The school, judged to be outstanding at its last inspection, has continued to develop and improve because of its commitment to excellence. Staff have an excellent understanding of their students and help them to achieve the very best of which they are capable.
- Detailed systems support the very effective tracking of the progress made by each pupil from when they first enter and ensure that excellent progress is sustained throughout their time in school.
- The sixth form is also outstanding because, in conjunction with Walsall College, it supports students in developing effective life skills and independence. The school and local authority are looking to develop student numbers further.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work extremely well together. All adults have very high expectations for their pupils which help them do their best in personal and social progress as well as their progress in learning.
- The skills of the staff are becoming more widely recognised and have a benefit beyond the school through the support and training that staff provide to other schools in the local area.
- Behaviour and safety are a high priority because many of the pupils are potentially vulnerable. Pupils are given very strong support in school and effective working with a range of other professionals extends this to support for parents, carers and families.
- The structure of the leadership team has changed over the last year as a result of careful thought and planning. It meets the needs of the school and its pupils very effectively.
- Work with the National College of School Leadership enables the expertise and best practice in the school to be shared with other schools and aspiring headteachers from around the country.
- Leaders support staff in making an outstanding contribution to the lives of their students. The school has high expectations and staff are held to account and are also given strong support in developing their expertise.
- Leadership at all levels, including governance, has a clear picture of strengths and areas for development. Their support for staff and commitment to excellence is sustaining high quality learning in a school that is always looking to improve still further.

authority area and beyond.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 lessons and saw every teacher who was in school during the inspection.
- They looked at pupils’ work from across the school and listened to some pupils reading. A meeting was held with representative pupils and the results of the pupil questionnaire were checked in order to gain their views about the school. Informal discussions with pupils were held during lessons and throughout the inspection.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and teachers with specific areas of responsibility in school, a group of representative governors and with the School’s Improvement Partner.
- A total of 10 responses to the Parent View online survey were taken into account, along with a much fuller survey of parents’ and carers’ views undertaken by the school in February 2013.
- The views of staff were gathered from discussions and from the very recent survey of staff opinion undertaken by the school.
- A range of documents were scrutinised, including those with information on pupils’ progress through the school, teachers’ planning and marking, school self-assessment and development planning, and key policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding.

Inspection team

Martyn Groucutt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Frank Price

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Castle Business and Enterprise College is a school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. An increasing number also have more complex needs, such as autistic spectrum disorders.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is far below average, but this is because every pupil is supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, in the care of the local authority, or who have a parent in the armed services) is well above average. Currently, no pupil attending the school has a parent in the armed forces.
- The school has not, in the past, received the Year 7 additional funding which is allocated to support pupils who had not reached the expected levels by the end of Year 6. The local authority has agreed to provide this funding in future.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and the proportion that speaks English as an additional language are both broadly average.
- The school works closely with Walsall College to provide vocationally based courses for pupils from Year 10 onwards, including the sixth form.
- The school provides support to other local schools to assist in the inclusion of pupils with a range of disabilities and learning difficulties in local mainstream schools.
- It also works with the National College for School Leadership to support and train potential school leaders for special schools, and with the University of Wolverhampton to support the training of special school teachers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In anticipating the substantial growth in student numbers in the sixth form, ensure that:
 - there are sufficient resources and suitable accommodation to cater effectively for this growth
 - the curriculum and the range of examinations that can provide accreditation develop to meet the needs that will be created by this group of students.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- The school takes great care to ensure that the progress of all pupils is monitored carefully from their arrival. Records on pupils' progress show clearly that, taking account of their widely differing starting points, the proportion making and exceeding expected progress is high.
- The school makes very effective use of the national progression guidance produced by the government for special schools to demonstrate its pupils' strong progress and high achievement.
- Attainment is low because of pupils' wider learning difficulties, but the school is highly effective in enabling pupils to fulfil their potential and disability is never seen as a barrier to learning.
- Pupils learn exceptionally well and, unless a problem such as a medical disability has an impact, continue to make effective progress throughout their time in school. Pupils show outstanding achievement in a range of areas. They do exceptionally well in English, mathematics and communication, and wider learning also includes life skills that help pupils work towards independence.
- From Year 10 excellent collaboration with Walsall College supports the development of a range of relevant vocational skills. Links with local businesses and commerce also support wider learning opportunities and boost pupils' confidence.
- There is an emphasis on developing reading skills. Very effective work is helping younger ones to learn letters and the sounds that they make (phonics), supporting rising standards. This is backed by excellent resources, such as the good range of specially selected reading books and materials.
- Pupils who benefit from pupil premium support show rapidly rising achievement in a variety of ways. For example, the school identified that its eligible pupils who speak English as an additional language were underperforming. Specific funding allowed the training of a skilled teaching assistant to work with this group and, as a result of her specific work, they have caught up and, in some cases, have overtaken others. This is a good example of the school's clear commitment to providing equality of opportunity for all in an environment that is free from discrimination.
- Sixth form achievement is also outstanding. Care is taken to ensure that at the end of Year 11 wise choices are made about whether to become a full-time college student, the path taken by a majority, or to remain at school. Those remaining focus on developing life skills and independence but also attend college one day a week so that wider learning is also supported. Plans are well advanced to develop and increase the school-based provision, starting in September 2013.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teaching is always at least good and a high proportion is outstanding in each of the key stages, including the teaching of English and mathematics. The excellent teamwork seen in all classes between teachers and teaching assistants is impressive. It gives strong support to learning and helps pupils to achieve their full potential.
- Staff work tirelessly for their pupils and this is a major reason why achievement is so high. Throughout the school adults and pupils get on together very well, and classrooms are places of learning where pupils are always encouraged, yet challenged, to do their best.
- Pupils are set challenging learning targets by their teachers which are monitored by the head of assessment. These are reviewed regularly and in a formal way half way through the year. Pupils not making anticipated progress are given additional help and support, which is effective in helping them to make up lost ground quickly.
- The older pupils in particular know their levels and are able to talk about what they have to do in order to move up to the next one. Pupils' performance, including their levels, is frequently discussed in class and is also reflected in the very good marking that teachers undertake

regularly. Pupils also benefit from the excellent use of technology, such as interactive whiteboards, to help them learn in lessons.

- Pupils enjoy discussing their own work and that of classmates. Discussions in lessons, and teachers' very effective questioning, show that pupils understand their work and also help them to think about how it could be improved.
- Within each class there is a wide range of ability and teachers have a detailed understanding of the current level at which each pupil is working. Lesson planning is detailed and ensures that a range of planned activities enable pupils to gain access to learning and be successful. This includes the teaching of English, communication and mathematics, which is highly effective, and also includes the broad range of subjects and topics that, for example, develop skills that support independence.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Staff, pupils and the vast majority of parents and carers are extremely positive about behaviour and safety in and around school, and on the trips and visits that contribute to the quality of pupils' learning. Pupils are very proud of their school and this helps to reinforce the very positive climate for learning.
- When they first arrive some pupils show very challenging behaviour. The behaviour policy is implemented effectively and all staff are trained in helping pupils to become calmer if their behaviour deteriorates. As a result, such pupils are supported in improving their behaviour and accepting responsibility for their actions, and over time their behaviour improves tremendously. One consequence has been a clear reduction in the number of fixed-term exclusions in recent years.
- Occasional cases of bullying are logged very carefully and firm action is taken to resolve issues. Pupils themselves understand that there are different types of bullying, including that based on prejudice, and are aware of the dangers of the misuse of the internet, including social networking sites.
- Great care is taken to ensure that pupils are safe on the days when they are working at Walsall College. The liaison between school and college is excellent and pupils really enjoy their days in college, benefiting greatly from them.
- A particularly strong outcome of the excellent support given to the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is the way in which the pupils get on so well together. They collaborate effectively and show each other great respect and tolerance.
- Over the last five years, attendance has improved considerably, in large part because pupils enjoy coming to school so much. It also reflects the very positive ways in which the school works with parents and carers to help them to provide strong support for learning beyond the school day.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, with high standards and expectations to which staff respond very positively. Staff show a strong commitment to the school and its pupils.
- Three assistant headteachers, each of whom has a very clear job description for which they are held firmly to account, provide excellent support in ensuring that education of the highest quality is delivered.
- Teachers who aspire to leadership roles are given strong encouragement, including opportunities to work alongside senior leaders. This has given several the opportunity to develop expertise and gain promotion.
- The leadership team promotes excellence in special education through work with the National College for School Leadership and, locally, with the University of Wolverhampton. It provides

effective outreach, helping other local schools to support their own pupils within mainstream.

- Effective monitoring of lessons, assessment and planning involve all senior leaders. These rigorous checks form part of a thorough process of appraisal, which also promotes teachers' self-assessment of their own performance and analysis of training needs.
 - Teachers understand the links between performance and pay, and those on the upper pay spine readily accept greater responsibilities.
 - The school's assessment of its own performance is thorough and effective. This allows it to prioritise areas for development within a cycle of continual improvement.
 - Links between parents and carers and the school are strong, including many opportunities to come into school. This might be for a coffee morning, or a part of training offered under the parent partnership programme, which helps to support wider family learning.
 - Strong links between the school and other professionals who work with children not only promote learning but also help the school to be an effective part of a wider network helping to keep families safe.
 - Leadership promotes very effective learning which enables pupils, whatever their ability, to make exceptional progress in literacy, numeracy and wider elements of learning. The rich experiences that pupils gain through the excellent curriculum underpin their enjoyment of school and outstanding behaviour.
 - The local authority provides 'light touch' support for what it readily acknowledges to be an excellent school. Current areas of joint planning include the extension of sixth form provision within the school.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body contains very good expertise and a strong commitment to supporting the school as a place of excellence. Governors have a clear understanding of teaching, ensuring that provision meets the needs of the pupils, and are prepared to tackle any staff underperformance. They have a good understanding of the data on pupils' progress, which enables them to challenge the school on its effectiveness in meeting pupils' needs. Challenging targets are set for the headteacher and a close eye is kept on the performance management of all staff, ensuring that good performance is adequately rewarded. Careful oversight of the budget leads to financial prudence, and the way in which the pupil premium is allocated ensures effectiveness. Governors carry out all their legal duties, including those for safeguarding.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	104269
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	402940

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	7–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	134
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	3
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Roberts
Headteacher	Christine Fraser
Date of previous school inspection	19 June 2008
Telephone number	01922 710129
Fax number	01922 710835
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