

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Somercotes Academy

Keeling Street, North Somercotes, Louth, Lincolnshire LN11 7PN

Inspection dates:

10 and 11 December 2024

Outcome

Somercotes Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The principal of this school is Jacob Bailey. This school is part of Lincolnshire Gateway Academies 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), Martin Brown, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Philip Bond. There is also an executive principal, Philip Dickinson, who is responsible for this school and four others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Relationships are strong at Somercotes Academy. Pupils get along well with each other. They trust staff to keep them safe. Pupils know that staff want them to achieve their best. Pupils try hard in lessons and produce work of good quality. The majority of pupils achieve well, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is reflected in the school's improving performance in GCSE examinations.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school. There are clear routines to support pupils to behave well. Disruptions to learning are not tolerated. Incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with fairly. Pupils who struggle to meet expectations receive guidance that helps them to improve. As a result, the school is calm and orderly. Pupils told inspectors that behaviour has improved significantly in recent times.

The school provides well for pupils' character development. There are opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles. For example, pupils readily act as form prefects, eco ambassadors and sports leaders. Many pupils, including pupils with SEND, participate in a variety of sports clubs and performing arts showcase events. Trips to local sites of scientific interest and the Lincolnshire Show provide further opportunities for pupils to pursue wider interests.

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

The school has developed a broad and ambitious curriculum. At key stage 3, pupils study the full range of national curriculum subjects. At key stage 4, they choose from a range of academic and vocational options. These have been considered carefully to provide pupils with qualifications that are relevant to local career opportunities. All pupils have the opportunity to study the full range of English Baccalaureate subjects, and the majority of them do. The school is ambitious for pupils with SEND. It quickly identifies when pupils have additional needs and provides effective personalised support.

The school encourages pupils to read often. Pupils enjoy shared reading with their teachers. The school selects books, both classic and modern, that support pupils to build their vocabulary and explore different cultural perspectives. Weak readers receive help to develop fluency and confidence.

Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach. They use this to explain new concepts clearly. Learning activities are focused sharply on the important knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember. Teachers provide well-considered opportunities for pupils to explore new knowledge and to revisit what they have learned before. Most of the time, teachers routinely check pupils' learning. They expose and correct misconceptions, as well as finding opportunities to stretch pupils' thinking. However, this is not consistent across the school. At times, teachers do not check pupils' understanding carefully enough or give them opportunities to improve their work before moving on. When this happens, pupils do not achieve as well as they might.

The school provides a well-planned curriculum for personal, social, health and careers education (PSHCE). Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe and maintain positive relationships with others. They learn how to keep themselves healthy, both physically and mentally. The school's PSHCE programme helps to prepare pupils for their next stages in education and future careers. Pupils are well informed about the different colleges and courses that are available to them. They learn about equality and the fundamental British values, as well as about different faiths and cultures.

Pupils are polite and respectful. They follow instructions from staff without fuss. The vast majority of pupils show positive attitudes to learning. Most pupils attend school well. They enjoy the rewards they can earn for doing so. However, some pupils are absent from school too often. The school has begun to take action to make sure that all pupils attend school often to benefit from the curriculum offer. However, this work is still in its early stages.

The school has been well supported by the trust to develop the curriculum, raise achievement and improve expectations of pupils' behaviour. Most staff value the support they receive to develop their expertise and manage their workload. Parents and carers appreciate the opportunities that the school provides for their children. However, some parents expressed the view that the school could improve the way that it communicates with them and respond to their concerns.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Routines for checking pupils' learning are not applied consistently across the school. At times, teachers do not check carefully enough that pupils are secure in their learning before moving on. When this happens, sometimes misconceptions are not identified or corrected. Occasionally, pupils do not get the time or help they need to improve their work. The school should ensure that routines to check pupils' learning are implemented consistently.
- The school's actions to promote better attendance have not had the desired impact. Too many pupils are absent from school too often. As a result, some pupils do not benefit from the school's curriculum as well as they should. The school needs to ensure that it takes effective action so that all pupils attend school frequently.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in November 2018.

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	142392
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10339683
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	450
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Philip Bond
CEO of the trust	Martin Brown
Principal	Jacob Bailey
Website	www.somercotesacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	27 and 28 November 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Lincolnshire Gateway Academies Trust.
- The principal was appointed in January 2024.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- 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

- 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 principal, the senior vice principal and other school leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO of the trust and the chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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 discussions about, and scrutinised records relating to, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff and pupils. They considered parents' responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, as well as responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

John Spragg, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

James Laming

Ofsted Inspector

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