

Inspection of Pakefield High School

London Road, Pakefield, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 7AQ

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 September 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Daniel Bagshaw. This school is part of Clarion Corvus Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Jim Adams, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Peter Fraser.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to belong to this rapidly improving school. They are happy and enjoy spending time with each other, especially when gathering in the central atrium, 'The Street', during social times. Everyone gets on well in this harmonious school.

In recent times, ambition for what pupils can achieve has increased significantly. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), rise to their teachers' high expectations. A broad curriculum with a suitable range of subjects is in place for all pupils. Pupils have the opportunity to attend a range of trips and clubs. Most pupils achieve well.

Pupils' behaviour has improved beyond recognition. Pupils have a positive attitude towards learning and engage well. They work hard in lessons, and it is now unusual for pupils' behaviour to interrupt learning. The school is a calm and purposeful learning environment.

Pupils are kept safe. They know that staff look after them well and are alert to any safeguarding concerns. Pupils' welfare is of the highest priority.

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

The school and trust have systematically worked through every aspect of their work to raise aspirations and ensure high expectations. The school is much improved as a result. The published examination results for 2022 do not reflect the quality of education that pupils currently in the school receive or their achievements.

The curriculum has been reworked and now matches the scope of the national curriculum. The school has promoted the subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) to be at the heart of the curriculum. Teacher shortages in modern foreign languages in the past have meant that numbers opting for the full EBacc have been limited. However, more pupils now study the subjects that make up the EBacc. This ensures that they study a range of academic subjects that provides a breadth of options for future study, employment or training.

The curriculum is adapted well for pupils with SEND. A small number of pupils are provided with relevant alternative learning placements to suit their needs better.

Teachers have carefully planned what pupils will learn in each subject, ensuring that new learning builds systematically on what pupils already know. Staff with sound subject knowledge lead pupils through learning step by step. Teachers use assessment to find gaps in pupils' knowledge or misconceptions from the past. Teachers ensure that pupils catch up before embarking on new learning. Pupils with SEND have their needs identified and receive effective support from teachers and teaching assistants. School staff value the opportunity to hone their teaching skills through effective professional development.

The school has focused on improving pupils' reading and writing skills. However, a small number of pupils have yet to develop into confident, fluent readers. Pupils' books and verbal answers show that they have remembered key concepts. However, some pupils' difficulties with writing skills hamper their ability to explain their understanding fully in written work.

Pupils' behaviour has improved significantly. Strengthened behaviour and anti-bullying policies are in place. Staff are supported well to manage pupils' behaviour. Should pupils struggle to manage their own behaviour, there are well-defined procedures to support them. The school is a hive of industrious learning.

Pupils learn about being responsible and tolerant citizens. They learn how to keep safe, including when online. They explore a wide range of issues that will prepare them for their future lives. Effective careers education, advice and guidance support pupils to make choices about their next steps.

Leadership at all levels is effective. Leaders at all levels are rigorous in seeking out strengths and weaknesses and they monitor the impact of any actions closely. The school ensures that actions taken do not add unduly to staff workload. The school communicates regularly with parents and carers to promote a strong partnership.

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 has not yet ensured that the reading and writing skills of a small number of pupils enable them to get the most out of the improved curriculum. This means that some pupils may not be able to read the curriculum materials provided well enough. Some pupils are not able to demonstrate their understanding in detail when writing. The school should ensure that these pupils are supported to develop reading skills further so that they develop into confident and fluent readers. The school should also improve all pupils' writing skills so that they are able to show their learning in more depth.

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	146909
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10241659
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	687
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Peter Fraser
CEO of the trust	Jim Adams
Headteacher	Daniel Bagshaw
Website	www.pakefield.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined Clarion Trust in April 2019, which subsequently merged with another trust to become Clarion Corvus Trust in April 2023.
- Pakefield High School converted to become an academy in April 2019. When its predecessor school, Pakefield School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement.
- The school uses two registered alternative learning providers. It also uses a further six unregistered providers.
- 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.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

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

- The lead inspector met with the chair of trustees, the chair of the local governing body and other trustees and governors. Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science, French and media. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, carried out lesson visits, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The school's website and several policies and documents were considered.
- The inspectors considered the views of staff by speaking with them and reading 44 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. They considered 80 responses and free-text comments to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors spoke to pupils and took the nine responses to Ofsted's pupil survey into account.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspectors checked the single central record of recruitment checks and other safeguarding records. The inspectors also met with the designated safeguarding leads and spoke with staff and pupils.
- An inspector held telephone conversations with alternative learning providers.

Inspection team

Sue Child, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Kay Leach	Ofsted Inspector
Aron Whiles	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Skelly	Ofsted Inspector

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