

# Phoenix Park Academy

Harold Street, Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire DN32 7NQ

## Inspection dates

21–22 November 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher and senior leaders have created a calm and purposeful school, focused on the development of pupils' personal and social skills, confidence and the achievement of strong academic and vocational outcomes.
- Staff create positive relationships with pupils. Pupils' behaviour is well managed through the use of consistent systems, positive rewards and strong relationships with the adults who care for them.
- Staff have a strong commitment to safeguarding and leaders have developed effective work with other agencies which keeps pupils safe.
- The school has a strong commitment to a personalised and flexible approach to meeting the needs of each pupil. This has resulted in effective curriculum pathways which meet the needs of pupils with different starting points.
- Parents strongly support the school. They can see the positive difference that the school makes to their son or daughter's education and behaviour.
- Pupils achieve a range of academic and vocational qualifications which help them to move on to post-16 education and training. A high proportion move on to college courses at the end of Year 11.
- Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics as a result of accurate assessments and good teaching. Occasionally, the work set in some subjects is not pitched at the right level for some pupils.
- Leaders have a strong commitment to working proactively with local mainstream primary and secondary schools. This is valued by parents and professionals and has resulted in some pupils returning successfully to mainstream school.
- Leaders and teachers do not always monitor and evaluate key areas of the school well. Consequently, work remains to improve attendance for pupils with high absence rates and to further improve the quality of teaching and learning.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further strengthen the school's leadership and management by improving the monitoring and evaluation of key areas of the school's work, by:
  - making sure leaders and teachers analyse assessment and tracking information precisely to ensure the best outcomes for all pupils
  - establishing a clearer link between the impact of teachers' performance management objectives and the outcomes achieved by pupils.
- Make sure that the school's approach to assessing pupils' progress and attainment in key stage 3 is more closely aligned with the approach used in mainstream secondary schools.
- Ensure that the work set for those pupils with low starting points closely matches their abilities.
- Continue to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence by providing effective support for pupils who have higher rates of absence and their families.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The executive principal, senior leaders and governors share a clear vision to provide high-quality and relevant experiences and opportunities that promote pupils' achievement and personal development. Leaders and staff share a common purpose to do the best for all pupils. Leaders believe that for many pupils, the school should enable them to return to mainstream education. The school is increasingly successful in helping some pupils achieve this outcome.
- The recently appointed executive principal has improved the school's quality assurance systems. With the strong support of senior leaders, the areas for improvement identified in the predecessor school's last inspection have been addressed. As a result, pupils enjoy attending school and feel safe and well supported. One pupil who will be returning to mainstream school told inspectors, 'The school has really helped me' and another pupil said, 'The staff gave me loads of support when I was struggling'.
- Senior leaders are passionately committed to improving the outcomes achieved by all pupils. Leaders describe a culture where the school 'never gives up on any child'. This is evident in the development of an 'engagement group' for key stage 4 pupils who have had poor attendance at their previous schools.
- The executive principal has organised the work of the leadership team to ensure a consistent approach across the two school sites. Leaders ensure that they carry out monitoring of pupils' learning and progress and they check the quality of teaching and learning. Importantly, senior leaders have a strong overview of safeguarding arrangements and the management of pupils' behaviour at the Phoenix House and Park House sites.
- Leaders know that the curriculum must meet pupils' diversely different needs. For example, leaders have reviewed the key stage 2 curriculum to ensure that its content and assessment arrangements match mainstream requirements. This helps pupils prepare for their return to a mainstream school. Leaders understand that their approach to assessment in key stage 3 does not match the arrangements in mainstream secondary schools. Leaders have reviewed the key stage 4 curriculum in partnership with pupils and post-16 providers in the local area. This has resulted in the introduction of functional skills and preparation for life courses which better support pupils as they move to further education, training and employment, and to prepare them for life in the local community. The key stage 4 curriculum includes courses which help pupils understand sexual health and the risks associated with substance misuse.
- The curriculum includes a broad range of academic and vocational subjects and courses, which engage pupils and develop their knowledge, understanding and interests. It is enriched and enhanced by a comprehensive programme of extra-curricular activities and off-site visits. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about swimming and out-of-school visits. For example, key stage 4 pupils spoke about a visit to local employers involved in the development of wind energy. This visit helped pupils think about employment opportunities and their transition to post-16 education and training. Other pupils discussed their planning for a visit to the Jorvik Viking Centre, York. Pupils in key stage 3 follow externally accredited courses which lead to qualifications in a

range of subjects, for example creative writing, cookery, swimming, football skills, horse care and art. These courses help pupils develop their vocational skills and improve their confidence.

- Leaders ensure that the school's personal, social and health education programme helps pupils learn about and manage risks to their well-being and prepares them effectively for the next steps in their education and training. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is equally well promoted and staff and pupils display the values of respect and tolerance. This contributes to pupils' personal and social development and prepares them effectively for life in modern Britain.
- The executive principal and senior leaders collect a range of information about key areas of the school's performance. They share this information regularly with governors and the academy trust. Although leaders have introduced systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning, pupils' progress, pupils' attendance and their behaviour, they do not analyse the information that they collect with enough precision. Consequently, some aspects of the school's work which could be improved further are not being tackled quickly. Leaders recognise that there are different development priorities in each of the school's sites. Improving the attendance of some groups of pupils and embedding changes to the key stage 4 curriculum are important priorities.
- Leaders have recently introduced a revised programme for teachers' performance management. Leaders recognise that they need to continue to develop this programme as performance management targets are not always linked clearly to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders and governors have a clear commitment to improve pupils' attendance, behaviour and well-being. Additional funding, such as the pupil premium grant, has been used effectively to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. The school has employed a specialist worker to support parents and challenge poor attendance. This is having an impact and there has been an improvement in the attendance of an increasing number of pupils from their low starting points prior to joining the school. Leaders have used special educational needs funding effectively to provide targeted interventions, including support from a specialist online speech and language therapist.
- The executive principal and the school's special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) work proactively with primary and secondary schools in the local area to support pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion and manage admissions to the school. The SENCo provides highly valued outreach support to colleagues in mainstream schools. He has developed detailed and effective transition programmes to support pupils returning to mainstream school. Leaders have plans to strengthen their partnership with the local further education college. For example, a member of staff has been appointed to support pupils as they move to post-16 education at the college.
- Only one parent completed Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. However, inspectors met a group of parents on the second day of the inspection and had telephone calls with parents who were unable to attend this meeting. Parents spoke enthusiastically about the school and the positive impact that it has on their children's education and behaviour. The parent of a Year 6 pupil said, 'He loves his teacher and he loves the school.' Parents said that they are well supported by the staff and that they receive information each week about their children's progress. Parents value the work of the

school's parents support adviser.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors understand that the school has undergone a period of rapid change since academy conversion. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and describe their ambition for the school to work proactively in partnership with schools in the local area to support pupils at risk of permanent exclusion.
- Governors are actively involved in the development of the school. Link governors visit school regularly, support and challenge leaders and report back their findings to the full governing body.
- Governors reflect critically on their work. As a result, they know where they need to develop and have identified the training that they need.
- Working with the academy trust, governors have a strategic plan to manage the school's resources to develop the curriculum and learning opportunities further. The impact of this work has resulted in the improvements to the Park House site and the development of the vocational curriculum for key stage 4 pupils.
- Governors scrutinise and challenge the performance information provided by the executive principal and senior leaders. Governors understand the need to benchmark the school's performance. However, sometimes the analysis provided by leaders lacks the precision needed to secure further progress in the school's performance.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have established a strong, effective and vigilant culture that protects pupils from harm. Governors and staff are well informed about risks to pupils' safety and know what to do if they have a concern.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' safety and welfare in the alternative provision they attend is effective.
- The designated leader for safeguarding provides strong and effective leadership. She has made sure that the school works effectively with a wide range of other services, including the police. This work is valued by staff and parents.
- Leaders have taken steps to ensure that older pupils are taught about how to stay safe through courses on substance misuse and sexual health. As a result, pupils feel well prepared to keep themselves safe in the local community.
- Staff have developed strong and respectful relationships with pupils. Pupils report that they feel safe, are confident that they can raise concerns with staff and these will be acted upon. Year 6 pupils told inspectors, 'The adults are good at keeping pupils here safe.' Older pupils understand how to stay safe online. They know how to report inappropriate content, the dangers of sexting and how to protect their personal information online.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and support staff have high expectations of pupils and plan work that interests and challenges them. Work in mathematics and English is matched to the needs of pupils with different starting points. As a result, pupils are engaged effectively, have a positive attitude to learning and make good progress.
- Teachers have clear classroom routines which enable pupils to learn effectively, stay on task and organise their own learning. As a result, on the few occasions when pupils' behaviour affects their learning, they respond quickly to skilful direction from staff, return to task promptly and continue to learn.
- Teachers make sure that pupils understand what they are going to learn. Pupils are reminded of this regularly during lessons. Where appropriate, pupils studying for a qualification are told how the learning objective for a lesson links to the examination syllabus.
- Leaders have introduced a set of curriculum pathways for pupils at different stages of progress and engagement. Pupils are assessed on starting school and follow the pathway which matches their needs. As a result of this approach, those pupils with low attendance in their previous school are attending school more regularly.
- Teachers make effective use of resources to support pupils' learning. These include classroom assistants who help pupils learn and provide behaviour and emotional support, and the use of digital resources such as interactive white boards. These contribute effectively to pupils' progress.
- Pupils develop their confidence and independence skills because staff encourage them to take responsibility for their learning and behaviour. Pupils work safely in practical subjects; for example, pupils were using knives and other equipment safely in a key stage 4 cookery lesson.
- Work in books shows that pupils are set suitably challenging tasks in both English and mathematics lessons. Work is matched closely to pupils' differing abilities and, where appropriate, activities also focus on developing pupils' confidence and self-esteem. For example, the most able pupils in key stage 3 are set challenging work in English. The standard of their work shows strong improvement over time and they are writing with increasing skill and sophistication.
- The work in mathematics in key stage 4 helps pupils learn important practical skills, such as money management, that they will need after leaving school. Occasionally, for some pupils with different starting points, the work is not always closely matched to their abilities. Importantly, the progress some pupils make is affected by frequent absences.
- Leaders use baseline assessments and regular progress checks to evaluate each pupil's progress. Leaders use this information to identify when pupils are not making fast enough progress. Additional help and well-targeted support is provided to help these pupils get back on track.

- Phonics is taught well in key stage 2. Pupils' phonic knowledge is assessed accurately and learning activities build their confidence and develop their skills successfully. Pupils work hard and persevere with tasks. They are proud of their work and the progress they are making. As a result, pupils make good progress, they read confidently and with understanding and use their phonic skills to tackle new words.
- The school shares information regularly with parents. Weekly progress is shared in pupils' home-school diaries. In addition, parents are invited to attend a progress review meeting for their son or daughter every three months. Pupils' achievement is celebrated through special assemblies and displays and pupils receive certificates for completing short courses in key stages 3 and 4.
- Those pupils who start the school in key stage 4 attend The Orchard School, an alternative provider. Pupils learn academic and vocational skills in a training environment. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about learning vocational skills, including bricklaying. As a result, pupils said they felt well prepared to move to a post-16 course at the local college or to an apprenticeship.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils value the support and care that staff show them. They are confident that they can speak to a member of staff if they have a problem. Pupils speak positively about their achievements and are proud of their school. Parents value highly the work of the school. One parent said her son 'is making amazing progress' and 'I can't believe the standard of his work.'
- Staff provide opportunities for pupils to develop their social and communication skills. For example, some pupils arrive at school to attend breakfast club. They use this time to talk to staff over breakfast, play games and socialise with their friends. As a result, pupils have a calm start to the school day, develop their social skills and are better prepared for the day ahead.
- Staff understand the needs of pupils very well. Leaders have created a calm and respectful environment where the needs of each pupil are understood. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour and accept responsibility for their actions. Good behaviour is promoted through the consistent use of the school's reward system. As a result, pupils improve their behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop their independence skills, and to work and learn cooperatively. Pupils are well prepared for the move to post-16 education and training by effective careers guidance and the careful planning of school visits to local employers.
- The small number of pupils who attend alternative provision are well supported. Senior leaders have effective oversight of safety and welfare of this group of pupils.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- Pupils' behaviour and conduct in lessons and at breaktime, lunchtime and when moving around the school is good. Pupils are respectful to one another, to staff and visitors.
- Leaders have established effective systems to manage pupils' behaviour. This has resulted in positive behaviour which is promoted consistently and effectively by staff. For example, some pupils use reflection rooms to manage their behaviour.
- When pupils struggle with their behaviour in lessons, staff respond quickly and skilfully to make sure that their behaviour does not disrupt the lesson. Pupils return to task promptly and continue to learn. Pupils speak positively about the school's reward system and they value earning points for good behaviour.
- A new system for monitoring pupils' behaviour provides evidence of a reduction in the number of behaviour incidents across key stages 2, 3 and 4 in comparison with previous years. Leaders are developing their analysis of this information so that they can better understand the needs of pupils and help them to improve their behaviour.
- Pupils understand the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. They are confident that staff will respond quickly and effectively to any incidents.
- A small number of pupils have had fixed-term exclusions. These are used appropriately. An analysis of exclusion records shows that for some pupils there has been a reduction in the number of exclusions over time and an improvement in their behaviour.
- Attendance is below national averages for primary and secondary schools. As a result of significant disruption to their education in previous schools, many pupils start the school with low levels of attendance. Leaders have implemented an action plan to secure an improvement in attendance. Leaders recognise that they do not analyse attendance information well enough. Additional funding has been used effectively to support some pupils and their families and challenge poor attendance. This is having a positive impact and attendance is improving in comparison with previous years.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Good

- When pupils start at the school, many have not previously made the progress expected of them due to poor attendance at their previous school. As a result of accurate baseline assessments, good-quality teaching and regular progress checks, pupils make good progress in English and mathematics and have positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils successfully settle into school because of the proactive and effective partnership work with local mainstream schools and the pastoral support provided by staff. This effective partnership work enables an increasing number of pupils to successfully return to mainstream school. The school also provides effective outreach support to enable other pupils to remain in mainstream school.
- As a result of the systematic and effective teaching of phonics, pupils develop their reading skills from low starting points. Pupils sustain their interest and concentration in reading. The school uses a 'reading dog' to engage the interest of younger pupils. Key stage 3 and 4 pupils read confidently, and with understanding, using their skills to tackle unfamiliar words.



- The impact of the key stage 4 curriculum review has engaged pupils' interest, improved attendance and enabled pupils to move effectively to post-16 courses and training.
- Inspectors evaluated samples of work in English, mathematics and vocational subjects. Work in books is challenging, matched to pupils' different starting points and levels of ability and shows strong progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged make good progress from their starting points. Leaders regularly track the progress of individual pupils. Where progress is below expected levels, pupils attend catch-up interventions. Leaders evaluate the impact of these interventions effectively.
- There is an improving trend of pupils gaining GCSEs, entry level certificates, vocational and short course awards. In key stage 4, pupils take short courses in art, nutrition and health, sport, occupational studies for the workplace, sexual health and substance misuse. As a result, pupils have a positive attitude to learning and are well prepared to move on to post-16 education, employment or training.
- The needs of pupils with complex social and emotional needs are met effectively and these pupils achieve GCSEs and other accredited outcomes.
- Key stage 4 pupils with previously low levels of attendance in their previous school attend alternative provision to learn vocational skills, such as bricklaying, and achieve functional skills awards in English, mathematics and information technology. These courses develop pupils' employability skills. As a result, in 2016 most pupils successfully moved to post-16 education, employment or training. Leaders understand that pupils' progress is linked to good attendance; therefore, the alternative provision has systems to reward good attendance.

## School details

Unique reference number	141101
Local authority	North East Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10036388

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

Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Academy alternative provision sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	92
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	John Cottingham
Principal	Phil Hutchinson
Telephone number	01472 351412
Website	<a href="http://www.phoenixparkacademy.co.uk">www.phoenixparkacademy.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@phoenixpark.academy">office@phoenixpark.academy</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The Phoenix Park Academy opened in December 2014. It is an alternative provision academy for pupils who have been excluded, or are at risk of exclusion, from a mainstream school or those who have social, emotional and mental health needs. It is sponsored by the Wellspring Academy Trust.
- The school provides education for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities between the ages of seven and 16.

- Pupils join the school throughout the year, usually following a period of significant disruption as a result on non-attendance or exclusion. Generally, pupils in key stages 2 and 3 are placed at the school for a short time, before returning to a mainstream school. Typically, key stage 4 pupils are placed at the school for a longer period of time.
- Almost all the pupils are from White British backgrounds and few speak English as an additional language.
- The school uses three alternative providers: The Orchard Independent School, Creating Positive Opportunity (CPO Media) and the Vulnerable Young People’s Project.
- A high proportion of pupils receive support for their SEN. The proportion of pupils who have education, health and care plans is very small.
- There is no data for the outcomes achieved by Year 6 and Year 11 pupils in the Department for Education’s performance tables.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning over both days of the inspection on both school sites. They spoke to pupils, listened to them read and examined work in their books and folders. Inspectors visited and spoke to pupils at The Orchard Independent School, CPO media and the Vulnerable Young People's Project.
- Meetings were held with teachers, senior and middle leaders, governors and representatives of the Wellspring Academy Trust.
- Inspectors met with pupils and spoke to them informally at lunchtime and throughout the school day.
- Inspectors spoke to some parents in school at the beginning of the school day and spoke to others by telephone.
- Inspectors examined documents relating to governance, self-evaluation, school improvement planning, pupils' progress, attendance, behaviour, the curriculum, safeguarding and the academy trust's funding agreement.
- There was one response to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- There were no responses to the online staff survey.

## Inspection team

George Gilmore, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Nick Whittaker

Her Majesty's Inspector

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