

Inspection of Springwell Alternative Academy Grantham

New Beacon Road, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 9LD

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 September 2022

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

What is it like to attend this school?

The ethos of the school is expressed through the 'golden threads'. These include values such as 'genuine care' and 'patience and resilience'. Leaders and staff uphold these values. There is a strong focus on catering for pupils' individual needs and circumstances. Staff know and understand the pupils very well. The aim is to provide 'second chances' for pupils who have struggled to cope in a mainstream setting.

Parents and carers praise the care and education that their children receive. A typical comment is: 'My child is very happy and settled and enjoys going in every day.'

Pupils' behaviour in lessons is usually calm and cooperative. They take part in well-planned learning activities, supported by skilled staff. Strong relationships between staff and pupils promote positive attitudes to learning. During their time at the school, the behaviour of some pupils has significantly improved. Most pupils have also improved their rates of attendance.

Pupils say that they receive regular teaching about bullying. They understand that it is wrong. They know to speak to a trusted adult if they have concerns. Staff are quick to respond to any allegations of bullying. Many pupils say that they feel safe at the school.

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

Pupils join the school at any point in the year. Some attend part time, or for a short placement. Others remain at the school until the end of Year 11. In response, leaders have constructed a curriculum that prioritises the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. There is a corresponding focus on promoting pupils' personal development and supporting their social, emotional and mental health needs. Leaders' aim is to enable pupils to achieve success when they leave the school. This applies equally to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils can also access a range of topics and subjects, accreditations and qualifications. Leaders have prioritised the important knowledge and skills that pupils need to gain, in all areas.

In lessons, staff regularly recap what pupils already know when introducing new concepts. This helps pupils to know and remember more. For example, in mathematics, pupils were working out how much change was required from £20. They used familiar methods to tackle the new task with confidence.

Teachers check how well pupils are doing during lessons. They use these assessments to plan the next steps for individual pupils.

There is a strong focus on reading. The three library areas contain a range of high-quality books, both fiction and non-fiction. Leaders have deliberately chosen some texts to reflect cultural diversity. Staff assess pupils' reading ability as soon as they join the school. Pupils of any age who are at the early stages of reading follow a systematic phonics programme. They read from books that closely match their phonics knowledge. Staff provide consistent, skilled support. Pupils are developing well as fluent, confident readers.

Sometimes, pupils struggle to regulate their behaviour. When this happens, staff step in to help, so that lessons are not unduly disrupted. There are clear policies for behaviour expectations and management. Leaders have ensured that all staff receive the required training. Occasionally, however, staff do not consistently apply the methods set out in the policies. Leaders have not checked closely enough to make sure that they pick up on these inconsistencies.

Leaders promote pupils' broader development well. The curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is strong. Pupils have opportunities to learn about, and discuss, a wide range of real-life topics. There is an increasing focus on developing pupils' awareness of differences, and of cultures other than their own. Pupils say that they treat everyone equally.

Some pupils feel that they have limited opportunities to express their views in school. Leaders wish to expand how they can more meaningfully gather the views of pupils about the life of the school.

Staff say that leaders prioritise their workload and well-being. They praise the range of training opportunities provided by the multi-academy trust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff place high importance on safeguarding. There are robust policies and procedures in place to identify and record any concerns, however minor. Staff know pupils well and are quick to spot signs of concern. Leaders say that their 'door is always open' for staff to seek advice. Staff agree that pupils' safety is paramount. Leaders ensure that training is up to date for all staff and governors.

Leaders liaise effectively with parents and external agencies to ensure that pupils are safe. Pupils learn how to stay safe when online, and how to recognise harmful sexual behaviour.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils do not feel that leaders take their views about the school into account as well as they could, including in relation to how staff manage pupils'

behaviour. As a result, they do not always feel as well supported or listened to as they may wish to be. Leaders are aware and have plans to resolve this, including through staff recruitment and by creating more occasions to capture pupils' opinions. Leaders should ensure that these proposals enable them to gather pupils' views about the school, including in relation to behaviour management, and that this informs future strategies and school improvement planning.

- Leaders' monitoring of aspects of the provision is not as sharp as it should be. As a result, leaders have not ensured that staff consistently implement all strategies, including in how they support pupils to regulate their own behaviour. Leaders at all levels, including governors, should make sure that their monitoring of the provision is precise enough to ensure that staff's practice consistently follows policy and leaders' expectations.

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](#)' 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	147197
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10243444
Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Academy alternative provision
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	46
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Hearl Lenton
Principal	Lisa Ashcroft-Day
Website	https://springwellalternativeacademygrantham.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Springwell Alternative Academy Grantham opened in September 2019.
- The school is part of the Wellspring Academies Trust.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- At the time of the inspection, there were no children on roll in the early years foundation stage.
- The school meets 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 graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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.
- Inspectors met with the executive principal, the executive vice-principal, the head of school and other members of the senior leadership team from the school and the multi-academy trust.
- The lead inspector met with the deputy chief executive officer and the director of learning from the multi-academy trust. The lead inspector held a virtual meeting with the interim chair of the local governing board.
- The lead inspector held telephone discussions with leaders of two commissioning schools associated with the provision.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, science and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector observed some pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum and reviewed curriculum planning in some other subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around school.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks and by holding discussions with leaders, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Christine Watkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Anita Denman

His Majesty's Inspector

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