

# Cromer Academy Trust

Norwich Road, Cromer, NR27 0EX

**Inspection dates** 4–5 June 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b> <b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Students make progress at rates that compare very well with those achieved nationally. This is particularly the case in English and mathematics.
- Teachers plan lessons that ensure students are well taught and are well prepared for public examinations.
- Behaviour is good and students feel safe and cared for because the atmosphere at the school is caring and positive.
- Leaders and managers, including the school's governors, have made a notable impact on levels of achievement and the quality of teaching as a result of ensuring that the school's systems for getting the best work from its teachers are effective.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The marking of students' work does not always give enough guidance to them about what they need to do to improve.
- Teachers do not always set work consistently enough that is at the correct level for students of different ability levels.
- The school has not given enough support to subject and other leaders to make sure they develop the teaching ability of those teachers they are responsible for.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 27 lessons, of which 5 were joint observations with school leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, school leaders and managers, teachers, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body as well as other governors with specific responsibilities, groups of students, and a representative from the academy trust.
- The views of the 51 parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were considered, along with the views of those who communicated with inspectors during the inspection by telephone or letter.
- The inspection team observed the school’s work, scrutinised the school’s data about students’ achievement, examined records relating to behaviour and attendance, and looked at documents used by leaders to monitor and evaluate the school’s performance. It also examined the work in students’ books and the homework set by teachers.
- Inspectors observed students as they moved around school at break and lunchtimes and when they were assisted in small groups or on a one-to-one basis.

## Inspection team

James McAtear, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Brenda Watson

Additional Inspector

Hermoine Horn

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Cromer Academy is a smaller-than-average sized secondary school with three forms of entry.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students in the care of the local authority, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those with a parent in the armed services, is below that found nationally.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is below average and very few speak English as an additional language.
- Cromer Academy Trust converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2011. When its predecessor school, Cromer High School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is a little below average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- A few students attend Sidestrand Hall to study subjects like mechanical engineering and hair and beauty at a level equivalent to GCSE.
- The school has specially resourced provision for students with special educational needs. Eight students attend this specialist unit for those with a range of specific learning needs. These students are drawn from Cromer and other schools in Norfolk.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2011.

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

- Improve achievement by:
  - making sure that students are given clearer, more detailed guidance, through the marking of their books and folders, about how to improve their work and reach higher levels of attainment.
- Improve teaching by ensuring that all teachers consistently set work at the correct level for different groups of students within each class set.
- Strengthen leadership and management by making sure the school develops the role of subject and other leaders in improving teaching through:
  - gaining a clearer and more focused understanding of the needs of their departments
  - building on these through effective training and monitoring.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students arrive at the school at levels that are broadly in line with those expected nationally. By the time they complete their final year they make progress in English and mathematics that is better than expected nationally. This is particularly the case in English where students progress at levels which are much higher than that found nationally. The school has been effective in identifying those who may be falling behind and intervening quickly to help them get back on track in these key subjects.
- Levels of achievement in subjects other than English and mathematics are more variable. However, current data held by the school indicate that this picture is improving rapidly. The work examined by inspectors confirms this data. The school now checks the achievement of students more regularly and is effective in addressing anything that may prevent students achieving well. In 2012 the proportion of students attaining 5A\*-C grades including English and mathematics increased significantly.
- In 2012, the attainment in English of students for whom the school receives pupil-premium funding was around a half a GCSE grade below that of their classmates. In mathematics this was around a third of a grade. During the current academic year this gap has narrowed very slightly. These students are now making progress at rates which are broadly similar to those of other students in the school. The school spends the extra money effectively to provide individual and small-group tuition to ensure that eligible students are very well prepared for public examinations and that their levels of literacy are raised enough to allow them to perform well in a wide range of subjects.
- Students for whom the school receives the Year 7 catch-up premium, which is provided to assist those who did not attain Level 4 in English by the end of Year 6, make good progress with both reading and numeracy. This is because the school uses the funding it receives well, spending this on an extensive programme to develop reading skills and to support on a one-to-one basis any students who face particular difficulties in their learning.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make progress that is in line with or better than that achieved nationally by similar students and by their classmates.
- Students from minority ethnic groups and those few who speak English as an additional language progress at rates which compare favourably with their classmates and with similar students nationally.
- Students read widely because the school makes sure that reading is a regular feature of their work in lessons and when they are completing homework.
- Students who attend more vocational courses at Sidestrand Hall also achieve well. The school works closely with its partners to make sure that students receive the support they require to make this happen.
- Although the school makes use of early entry to GCSE examinations this has had no adverse effect on the achievement of students including the more able.
- Students in the school's specialist resource base make rapid progress. This is because the teaching and guidance they receive is highly skilled. They respond well to this and are able to

perform successfully when they are learning in classes alongside other students.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- Teaching at the school is effective because it engages students' interest and attention. Lessons are well planned and organised and students appreciate and respond to this by working hard to learn well. Students gain knowledge, skills and understanding rapidly.
- Those adults who assist teachers in the classroom are effective because they work cooperatively as a team with the teachers and because they know and understand the needs of the individual students they are helping in detail so that all students are able to benefit from the teaching they receive.
- The quality of discussion and questioning in lessons is usually good. For instance, in one Year 10 science lesson students were asked, 'Which of these processes could be taken away and photosynthesis would still happen?' They respond well to more challenging questioning and work that makes them think at a deeper level about the concepts they are learning.
- Students in the school's specialist resource base are taught well. This is because their teachers take full account of their particular needs and adapt the work to make it understandable to them. At the same time they make sure that the work they do continues to challenge them.
- Students attending courses outside the school site are learning well. Their progress is tracked carefully and the school works well with Sidestrand Hall to make sure the work students do in both places is complementary.
- The school provides additional teaching for those, at any level of ability, who may have fallen behind in their work. This is carefully targeted to those who most need it. This is often provided by teachers outside of the normal school day. Students appreciate and respond well to this extra help.
- The guidance provided by teachers to students in their folders and books does not always guide them in enough detail or with enough clarity and regularity about how to improve their work.
- Sometimes the work set for students by some teachers does not provide the correct level of challenge for them. When this happens they learn less well because either the work is too easy or they have covered it at this level already so that they are less interested or, at other times, it is too difficult for them and they do not gain from those lessons.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- The behaviour of students in lessons is good. They show respect to one another and to their teachers. This is because the school has strengthened its systems for managing behaviour well and because relationships between teachers and students are usually positive. As a result the attitudes of students to learning are good.
- Students also behave well during social times like lunchtime and break time. They conduct themselves considerately when they move around the school in the corridors and between buildings. They mix well together.

- Students say they feel safe at school and that instances of bullying are uncommon. They are taught well about different types of bullying. For instance they understand the forms bullying can take over the internet and are able to explain the possible effects of homophobic or racist bullying.
- Attendance is now broadly average. Punctuality, both to lessons and at the beginning of the school day, has now improved considerably. Systems, which have recently been introduced, have had a notable impact on this and make for more purposeful starts to lessons.
- Students take an active part in the life of the school and its surrounding community. For instance, students now provide a samba band that performs at local events including a local church on behalf of the Academy. Contributions of this sort mean that students are increasingly proud of their school and its activities.
- Students are courteous and friendly and respond maturely to visitors to the school. They show good manners and support a culture of achieving well so that it is seen as positive to progress well at school and to be actively involved during lessons.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- Cromer Academy is well led and managed. The recently appointed headteacher, along with other senior leaders, has made a notable impact on the quality of teaching and standards of behaviour.
- The systems the school uses to manage the performance of its teachers are working well to improve the rates of progress made by students and to improve standards of teaching. The overwhelming majority of staff, parents and students say that the school is well led and managed and the findings of the inspection team confirm this. Plans to improve the school's work are based firmly on a detailed knowledge of its work and a clear understanding of what it needs to do to improve further.
- The school provides a curriculum that is effective in meeting the needs and aspirations of its students. For example, its provision to develop the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of the students is highly effective. During one Year 8 geography lesson a recent curriculum visit to the Norfolk Broads was used to highlight the conflicts that exist between different groups using the local environment. Through their experiences, students' understanding of their world was being developed well.
- The school works effectively with a range of partners to improve the learning of its students. For example, its systems to communicate effectively with providers of education at other sites like Sidestrand Hall are good and it has an effective partnership with the attendance service that is helping to improve rates of attendance rapidly. It has worked well with other local schools to ensure that the continued training of its teaching staff is of a high quality.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding, such as those checks carried out on new employees prior to their appointment, meet requirements.
- Leaders are effective in tackling discrimination and promoting equality. For example, the school has made a notable impact on the levels of achievement now reached by boys who had previously performed less well than girls.
- The school does not yet support subject and other leaders in their role so that they are able to

monitor and develop the teaching skills of those they manage in their departments in order to increase the proportion of lessons that are outstanding.

- The academy trust is working well to make sure that the school is making the best use of its resources for the benefit of its students.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are able to identify areas of particular strength in teaching with clarity and know clearly where teaching and achievement still needs to improve and how this will be achieved. They know what is being done to reward good teaching and tackle any underperformance. They support the headteacher well in implementing a robust system to manage the performance of teachers and provide a high level of challenge to school leaders. For instance, they make sure that the funding the school receives for pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is spent effectively in raising their achievement. Governors are highly ambitious for the school and its future success.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137431
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	412753

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy converter
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	453
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Fincham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Penny Bignell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01263 511433
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