

Vista Academy Littleport

Address: Camel Road, CB6 1EW

Unique reference number (URN): 150263

Inspection report: 18 November 2025

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

The improvements in the culture of the school, the quality of teaching and the targeted support of leaders have all contributed to improved pupils' attendance. Pupils' attendance has now risen to close to national averages for all groups. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities attend very well. Leaders work tenaciously with other professionals, such as local health services, in order to reduce barriers to attendance.

Vista Academy Littleport has become a calm, positive and safe learning environment. Pupils understand the school's high expectations of behaviour and most meet them. Staff apply behavioural systems well, so that classrooms are purposeful and pupils can learn. At times, when the curriculum is not as well delivered or when some adjustments are not made to meet their needs, some pupils do not engage with their learning as well as their peers.

Pupils behave well around school. Although the number of suspensions remains high for some groups of pupils, incidents of serious disruption or bullying are increasingly rare and are not tolerated. Pupils get on well with each other and staff. They get support if they struggle to focus on their learning. This helps most pupils to engage more positively with lessons.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The school has built an entirely new curriculum since its establishment as a new academy in 2023. This curriculum has been carefully designed so that pupils build secure knowledge over time. The curriculum is broad and ambitious for all pupils. In key stage 4, pupils choose a range of academic and vocational courses that match their aspirations and interests.

Leaders have prioritised training for staff so that they have the subject knowledge that they need to teach the intended curriculum well. They know how to ensure that the curriculum is accessible to all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils who find it difficult to read are given help so that they can access the curriculum. As a result of this work, most of the time the curriculum is taught well. Staff check how well pupils have learned and understood new knowledge. They often use this information to identify and close gaps and misunderstandings, although in some subjects, this is not yet consistently effective.

Pupils receive and act upon regular, clear feedback to improve their work. Leaders know that there is further work to do to ensure that the curriculum is taught as well as they intend across the school. Leaders have plans in place to ensure that pupils' literacy is developed across the range of subjects so that pupils can express their ideas more accurately and articulately.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Staff seek to support pupils to be the best they can be. The school accurately identifies the needs of pupils when they join, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff use information, such as that provided by external providers, to make effective plans for pupils. They commission specialist support for pupils who need it and work closely with the headteacher of the virtual school.

Staff receive the information that they need to understand how pupils in their classes learn best. Staff receive effective training on assessing, planning, carrying out and reviewing the approaches they use with pupils with SEND. Increasingly, they know how to check pupils' progress against their targets. Staff have developed their knowledge so that they make appropriate adaptations to the curriculum. This means that pupils can access learning.

The school checks how well pupils are learning, attending and developing. Leaders have improved how effectively they act on these checks. Staff make effective use of pupil premium funding to ensure that disadvantaged pupils enjoy a wide range of opportunities. The school ensures that its use of alternative provision is well matched to pupils' needs.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have made significant improvements at Vista Academy Littleport. They have successfully established a positive, ambitious culture. Pupils, parents and carers, and staff see the impact of the changes that have been made. They are rightly confident in the school's capacity to further improve, and they support its work. The school's curriculum is increasingly well taught and effective. This curriculum is now accessible and ambitious for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff tenaciously ensure that pupils get the support and advice they need to enjoy school and prosper.

Leaders know where further work is needed to embed the important changes that have been made in the last two years. There are clear plans to build upon these improvements so that pupils develop their literacy, communication and resilience. Leaders are determined that all pupils develop secure knowledge so that they achieve well. The school has robust systems to check on the impact of its work. Trustees and trust leaders rigorously check that pupils are safe and that they receive the education to which they are entitled. Staff are fully supported with their wellbeing and professional learning. As a result, staff turnover is very low. Staff use the expertise of other schools in the trust to develop their practice. This helps staff carry out their roles effectively.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils' personal development and wellbeing are a key part of the school's work. The school's 'character curriculum' develops pupils' knowledge of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Pupils learn about different types of relationships, the dangers of social media, the importance of diversity and how they can contribute positively to the community. They learn how not to be a 'bystander'.

Typically, this programme of development is designed and taught well. The school uses a range of external providers to deliver parts of the programme. As a result, the majority of pupils engage positively in personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) lessons. Pupils become more ambitious, self-confident and resilient. At times, a minority of pupils do not engage with some PSHE lessons fully. Consequently, they do not learn aspects of the curriculum as well as their peers. The school ensures that pupils who need additional help or adaptations to help them engage fully with their learning receive effective support. Most pupils respond very positively to the pastoral care and support they receive.

Pupils receive useful guidance that informs their next steps, for instance when they choose their GCSE options or apply for college. They take part in work experience and they learn how to research a range of careers and qualifications. They learn about managing their finances. Pupils participate in many extra-curricular opportunities. There are many well-attended clubs, such as netball and drama. There are also an increasing number of overseas trips. This broadens pupils' horizons. Pupils develop their leadership skills, for example, through their roles in the school council.

Needs attention ●

Achievement

Needs attention ●

Although the quality of the curriculum and teaching has improved considerably since the previous inspection, this is not reflected in published outcomes. These are well below national averages for pupils' progress and attainment.

Key stage 3 pupils usually gain important knowledge, which they can apply with increasing confidence across a range of subjects. Pupils who need support with reading receive effective help, so they can access the curriculum. Older pupils often still have important gaps in their knowledge. They sometimes struggle to articulate their ideas orally and on paper. Principally, this is because of historic weaknesses in the quality of teaching and the curriculum. Staff usually identify these gaps in knowledge. Interventions are targeted and put in place to close them. However, sometimes staff do not address these gaps quickly enough in lessons. Consequently, pupils do not consistently move on to new content as confidently as they should. This makes it hard for them to gain the breadth and depth of knowledge they need to achieve well.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils enjoy attending Vista Academy Littleport. Older pupils in particular acknowledge that the school is much better than it used to be. Staff know their pupils very well and are determined for all pupils to be the best that they can be. Pupils receive a warm welcome when they come into school. If pupils need additional support or adaptations to do well in school, staff typically provide them with this. The school works closely with other providers to ensure that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, feel they belong and can access the curriculum.

Pupils take part in many experiences that broaden their interests and raise their aspirations. This includes many clubs, visits and residential trips, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and events, such as drama productions. Pupils meet a range of employers and learn first-hand about the world of work. They receive clear guidance that informs them well for their next steps. As a result, pupils come to school more often.

Pupils increasingly enjoy their learning. Most pupils are keen to do as well as they can and work hard. As the quality of teaching has continued to improve, increasingly they are able to build important knowledge across the curriculum. However, in part due to historic weaknesses in the quality of teaching that are being tackled by the school, pupils do not gain the breadth and depth of knowledge they need to achieve as well as they should. This is reflected in published national outcomes.

Pupils feel safe in school. They know that if they have a problem, there is an adult who will be able to support them with this. This school is a calm, friendly environment. Pupils get on well with each other and with staff. In the rare instances of bullying, discriminatory or unkind behaviour, staff deal with this swiftly and effectively.

Next steps

- Leaders should further develop the school's teaching of literacy across the curriculum so that pupils can consistently communicate their ideas accurately and effectively.
 - Leaders should embed the agreed approaches to teaching and learning, including in personal, social, health and economic education, so pupils develop the detailed knowledge that ensures that they learn and achieve well.
 - Leaders should continue to embed how well staff support those pupils who need adjustments or adaptations so that they are able to consistently show commitment and dedication to their learning.
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About this inspection

The school is part of the Eastern Learning Alliance multi-academy trust. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Lucy Scott, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jim Warwick.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our updated inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the executive headteacher and other senior and middle leaders. The lead inspector spoke to the CEO and the chair of the board of trustees. Inspectors met with and spoke to other trust leaders, staff and pupils during the inspection.

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.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of four alternative provisions, two of which are unregistered.

Executive headteacher: Nick Harrison

Lead inspector:

Steve Woodley, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Rakesh Patel, His Majesty's Inspector

Louise Cooper, His Majesty's Inspector

Tash Hurtado, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 18 November 2025

School and pupil context

Total pupils

532

Well below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

600

Well below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,152

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

29.32%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

4.51%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

16.17%
Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25	33.0%	45.2%	Below
2023/24	31.7%	45.9%	Below
2022/23		45.3%	

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25	38.8	45.9	Below
2023/24	39.7	45.9	Below
2022/23		46.3	

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24	-0.51	-0.03	Below
2022/23		-0.03	
2021/22		-0.03	

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25	6.7%	25.6%	Below
2023/24	10.5%	25.8%	Below
2022/23		25.2%	

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25	25.0	34.9	Below
2023/24	29.5	34.6	Below
2022/23		35.0	

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24	-0.72	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23		-0.57	
2021/22		-0.55	

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25	6.7%	52.8%	-46.2 pp
2023/24	10.5%	53.1%	-42.6 pp
2022/23		52.4%	

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25	25.0	50.3	-25.3
2023/24	29.5	50.0	-20.6
2022/23		50.3	

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24	-0.72	0.16	-0.89
2022/23		0.17	
2021/22		0.15	

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (1 term)	8.2%	7.7%	Close to average
2023/24	10.0%	8.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (1 term)	22.8%	21.1%	Close to average
2023/24	31.1%	25.6%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional 

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard 

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard 

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention 

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement 

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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