

Inspection of Tulip Academy

Neville Avenue, Spalding, Lincolnshire PE11 2EH

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 June 2025

The quality of education **Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Outstanding**

Sixth-form provision **Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade Outstanding

The interim headteacher of this school is Kyna Adkins. The school is part of the Community Inclusive Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by a chief executive officer (CEO), Peter Bell, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Dr. Stephen Hopkins.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at Tulip Academy. Specialist staff provide exceptional support that is tailored to pupils' specific needs. Pupils feel safe and valued because of the school's kind and inclusive environment. Parents and carers trust that their children's needs are understood fully and met with expert care.

Pupils strive to achieve their best. High expectations from staff help pupils to expand their boundaries. Pupils grow in confidence and independence as a result. Lessons are well structured and engaging. Hands-on activities, alongside highly effective communication tools, support learning. This strengthens pupils' ability to interact with others and succeed.

Pupils in this friendly school are polite and considerate. They enjoy learning in a calm and well-organised environment. They receive high-quality personalised support to develop skills to aid their emotional regulation and social communication. As a result, pupils gain a deep understanding of themselves and others as they prepare for their next steps.

Pupils gain significantly from an excellent personal development offer, including strong careers guidance. This allows them to explore the world in school and in the wider community. Carefully planned experiences enhance pupils' learning and broaden their horizons. These include visits from the emergency services, trips out in the local community and access to equine therapy.

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

The school provides pupils with high-quality education through carefully designed pathways. Each pathway identifies clearly what pupils should learn based on their developmental needs. Staff adapt their teaching skilfully to meet pupils' unique profiles. The flexible implementation of each pathway provides pupils with a truly personalised experience. This is a key aspect of the school's success. A range of therapists work alongside the school's dedicated staff to ensure that the right help is in place for each pupil. As a result, pupils do exceptionally well from their individual starting points.

At the heart of the school's work is a commitment to ensuring that every pupil has a voice. A structured approach to teaching communication is embedded in daily life. This supports pupils to express their needs and ask for help, fostering independence and resilience. Pupils seek support through well-established communication systems and convey any concerns with confidence.

Reading is an essential part of school life. Pupils engage with stories in diverse and engaging ways, including sensory storytelling, adapted books, phonics-based learning and interactive texts. This allows every pupil to enjoy literature in a way that suits their needs. For some, this means recognising words and symbols, while non-verbal pupils have the chance to develop their phonics skills in meaningful ways.

Staff use their expertise to check where pupils are at with their learning. The targets outlined in pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans are woven seamlessly into every element of the curriculum. Teachers use the information to break down learning into manageable chunks. Staff are highly attuned to how pupils feel and respond during lessons. They use this knowledge to maximise moments of engagement or to give pupils a break from learning.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. Staff are highly skilled in helping pupils to manage their behaviour. This keeps disruption to a minimum. Staff establish routines that support pupils to know what is expected of them. Through high-quality pastoral support, pupils develop skills to regulate their own behaviour and work through challenges. They develop a sense of who they are and how they fit into the world.

The personal development of pupils is at the heart of everything the school does. The well-defined personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum provides a strong basis for pupils to develop an understanding of themselves and others. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for adulthood and life beyond school, especially those in Year 11 and in the post-16 provision. A wide variety of coherently planned experiences enrich the curriculum. These include residential visits, trips to the shops and opportunities to support the wider community. Access to work placements and partnerships with local colleges provide pupils with essential life skills and practical experience. This robust support system ensures that every pupil makes a smooth transition to their next steps.

The school leadership team is supported by a highly engaged and responsive trust. Staff are well supported with their workload and well-being. They are proud to work at the school and passionate about providing the best provision for the pupils they work with.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	142667
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10379588
Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	215
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	10
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Dr. Stephen Hopkins
CEO of the trust	Peter Bell
Headteacher	Kyna Adkins (Interim headteacher)
Website	www.tulip-cit.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	25 and 26 February 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Community Inclusive Trust.
- Tulip Academy was established in September 2022 following the merger of two existing special schools to form one school with two sites.
- Tulip Academy is a special school. It caters for pupils aged between two to 19 years with severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, autism and a range of other special educational needs and/or disabilities. Many pupils require complex medical care. Some pupils have life-limiting conditions. All pupils have EHC plans.
- Although the school is registered to have children in the early years, at the time of the inspection, there were few children on roll in this phase. As such, inspectors did not

give a grade and report on the early years provision to avoid identifying individual children.

- At the time of the inspection, one of the school's sites was undergoing extensive building work as part of a planned expansion.
- The school makes use of one registered and one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Year 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and with other senior and curriculum leaders. The lead inspector met with the CEO of the multi-academy trust, the chair of the local school's board and the chair of the trust.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading and communication, mathematics and physical development. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, teachers and pupils, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at other aspects of the school's curriculum, including PSHE, visited additional lessons and looked at further samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at other times around the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors took note of the responses received to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and considered the results of Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Nyree Parker, lead inspector

Elizabeth Mace

Anne Maingay

His Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025