

Inspection of Exeter A Learning Community Academy

Brayford Avenue, Corby, Northamptonshire NN18 8DL

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have worked tirelessly to improve the school. They are ambitious for all pupils. They are committed to removing any barriers that prevent pupils from experiencing success. This ambition is exemplified by the school's core values. These are identified as integrity, creativity, aspiration, respect, responsibility and empathy. As a result of leaders' persistent pursuit of excellence, the school has been transformed.

Classrooms are calm and purposeful. Pupils know how they are expected to behave in lessons. They listen closely to their teachers and engage well in their learning. Every pupil is keen to receive 'effort marks'. They say that the different badges they are awarded for their work motivate them to give of their best in lessons. Pupils also know that there are consequences when they do not follow the school rules of 'ready, respectful, safe'. This positive attitude to learning is developed right from the start of school. Children in the early years get off to an exceptional start to their education.

Leaders have prioritised pupils' personal development. Daily 'crew time' provides pupils with the opportunity to discuss topics that will help them to prepare for the next stage in their education, and life beyond school.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum. It has been crafted with care to identify the key knowledge and skills that pupils should acquire from early years to Year 6. Plans precisely set out the small steps of learning that pupils need to make along the way. The curriculum is being implemented consistently well. While the full impact of this is not yet manifested in every area, leaders and staff are checking closely on how they can refine and improve their curriculum even further.

Leaders ensure that staff have the skills they need to teach effectively. Teachers explain new learning clearly to pupils. They routinely check that pupils remember prior learning. In geography lessons, pupils use a song to recall the names of continents before moving on to a new topic, 'Would you rather live in the UK or USA?' Pupils use maps and globes to identify where these countries are. Teachers sort out any misconceptions that pupils have, for example when pupils confuse where the equator is located.

In the early years staff demonstrate high levels of expertise. They provide children with countless opportunities for purposeful learning. Children make potions in the mud kitchen, search for minibeasts, use their knowledge of phonics and mathematics as part of their play, grow their own vegetables and cook them on the outdoor firepit. Adults use every minute to extend children's learning. Children become independent and focused learners. They love working hard and take great pleasure in completing the 'bucket challenges' that are provided for them.

Early reading is prioritised. Staff are trained to ensure they have the expert knowledge they need to teach phonics well. Staff identify pupils who are not keeping up. These pupils receive extra support so that they do not get left behind. A love of reading is promoted right from the start of school. Children in the Nursery class visit the local library.

Leaders are determined that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) will receive the support they need to succeed. Teachers make effective adaptations in lessons so that pupils with SEND can access the curriculum. Identified pupils benefit from the specialist classes to meet their learning and social and emotional needs.

Relationships between adults and pupils are warm. In class, pupils show respect for their teacher and each other. Pupils learn how to recognise and manage their feelings as part of the school's personal, social and health education curriculum. However, some pupils do not apply these skills at social times. Some pupils say that behaviour is not as good at playtimes and lunchtimes. They give examples of times when other pupils are unkind.

Pupils are taught about the beliefs and cultures of others. Pupils understand the meaning of equality. They recognise discrimination. Pupils in Year 4 expressed their surprise when they discussed how a British female football team was banned in the last century. Leaders promote respect. A small number of pupils do not live up to leaders' high expectations that everyone should live out this important characteristic in school at all times.

The trust has kept a close eye on school improvement. It has worked closely with leaders at every step of the school's journey to become a good school. Staff appreciate the school's strong leadership. They value the support they have had. Almost all staff agree that leaders consider their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. Leaders have established well-organised systems to keep pupils safe. Staff receive regular training to recognise the signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. Every member of staff is vigilant. They do not hesitate to pass their concerns on. Detailed records are kept. Leaders take swift action. All concerns raised are taken seriously. Leaders liaise with external agencies to make sure that pupils and their families get the right help. They escalate their concerns at the right time.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- While leaders provide support for pupils who struggle to behave well, the behaviour of some pupils is not consistently strong at playtime and lunchtime. A small number of pupils are unkind and do not show respect for their peers. This stops some other pupils from enjoying these social times. Leaders must continue their efforts to ensure that the good behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school is duplicated at other times of the school day and that pupils make good choices about how they should behave at all times.

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	146827
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10267758
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	537
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair of governing body	Adrian Francis
Headteacher	Melanie Saunders and Matthew Shotton (Executive Principals) Hannah Crawford and Jennifer Doherty (Heads of School)
Website	www.exeterschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined Inspiring Futures Through Learning multi-academy trust (IftL) in January 2019. When the predecessor school, Exeter – A Learning Community Academy, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- Co-executive principals and co-heads of school have been appointed since the school joined IftL.
- A temporary academy improvement board is in place to hold leaders to account for school improvement.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club.
- The school has Nursery provision for two-year-olds.
- Leaders make use of one unregistered alternative provision.

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 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 the co-executive headteachers, co-heads of school and other members of the school leadership team. The lead inspector met with representatives of the academy improvement board, including the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, English, history and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils from the lessons visited and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a member of staff.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for safeguarding a meeting was held with the safeguarding team. Safeguarding records and the school's single central record were reviewed. Inspectors spoke with staff to check their understanding of how to keep pupils safe and to pupils about how safe they feel in school.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school and at playtime and lunchtime. They also spoke with groups of pupils to gather their views on behaviour in school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's parent and staff questionnaires. They spoke with parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

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His Majesty's Inspector

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