

Inspection of Lipson Co-operative Academy

Bernice Terrace, Lipson, Plymouth, Devon PL4 7PG

Inspection dates: 24–25 September 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy their time at Lipson and are proud of their school.

Pupils feel safe and well cared for. They have noticed that the school has improved over the last year. Behaviour has got much better and they say that everyone now gets on well with each other. However, on occasion, pupils can still be less well behaved at break- and lunchtimes.

Pupils are behaving better and working harder in class. This helps them to learn more and remember more. When teachers introduce the right knowledge, at the right time, pupils remember it and that builds on what they have learned before.

Lipson Co-operative Academy offers a very wide range of opportunities that pupils enjoy. Most pupils take part in extra-curricular activities. The school organises these into three areas: music, leadership and performing arts. These bring a richness to the school that pupils like. There is a very wide range of musical, leadership development and sporting activities available. This means that many pupils have learned to play a musical instrument since coming to Lipson and now take part in musical events.

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

In the most effective subjects, such as English, the teaching of the curriculum is well developed. Well-chosen books, plays and poetry are challenging and ambitious. This helps pupils to achieve well.

Some subject areas are improving, such as mathematics and science. Pupils are beginning to remember more and apply their knowledge. In other subjects, such as geography and modern foreign languages, the aims of the subject are unclear.

Teaching does not consistently provide pupils with the knowledge they need to be successful in the next stage of their education. The curriculum in Year 9 lacks sufficient breadth and pupils' choices are limited. Leaders are aware of this.

Despite some clear improvement, pupils do not achieve as well they should. However, teachers do make sure that activities are suitably matched to give the right help for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is particularly so in English and science.

Pupils now behave much better than they did in the past. Exclusions have reduced and behaviour in lessons has improved. Pupils say that they are now able to learn. However, there are times when some pupils are less well behaved, particularly at breaktimes. In some lessons, pupils are highly motivated, but in others they lack motivation for learning.

Leaders provide many and varied activities outside the classroom. The curriculum

helps pupils to understand right and wrong. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

Leaders use a wide range of resources well to support the school's vulnerable pupils. Staff know the pupils well. Leaders make sure that pupils are well supported when they move between schools, including into Year 7.

The new headteacher, with the support of his leadership team and staff, is rapidly improving the school. Some middle leaders are beginning to be effective, although others need further training. Governors work hard and have taken many effective decisions. They are keen to receive further training to enable them to hold the school to account.

The new leadership team of the sixth form knows what needs to be done to improve the curriculum for students. Their actions are starting to take effect. However, there is more that needs to be done to make sure that students achieve well enough in the range of subjects. Work placements and careers advice are well organised so that students are well prepared for the next steps that they take.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school's approach to safeguarding is strong. It has an up-to-date policy, good procedures and a strong culture of keeping children safe. The many pupils who spoke to us told us that they feel safe in the school. The identification of children needing early help is effective. The school understands its community and the pressures on children and their families. Staff are recruited using safe approaches following the training of senior leaders and governors.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the knowledge that pupils need to know and remember over time is unclear. In those same subjects, teachers are not clear about what to teach, when and in what order. All areas of the curriculum need to be clear about what knowledge pupils need.
- The curriculum in Year 9 lacks sufficient breadth. The curriculum needs to ensure that pupils can learn as much as possible for as long as possible.
- Teaching needs to help pupils know more, understand complex ideas and develop vocabulary. This will help pupils make stronger progress, which they need to do at both key stage 4 and in the sixth form within A-level subjects.
- When pupils can recall knowledge and it builds on prior learning, they achieve well over time. All curriculum areas need to have high ambitions for pupils to prepare them for success at the next stage of their education.

- Behaviour at the school is very much better than in the recent past. The school now needs to build stronger attitudes to learning within its pupils. When pupils are enjoying their lessons, they are hungry for knowledge.
- All middle leaders within the school need to have a strong vision for their subjects. They must know their subject in depth and use this to help other teachers. Securing a consistent approach across the school will enable standards to rise at both key stages. Governors are ambitious for the school and should receive development to help them challenge leaders.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	136668
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10088312
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of students in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,015
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	166
Appropriate authority	The trust board
Chair of trust	John Clamp
Principal	Martin Brook
Website	www.lipsonco-operativeacademy.coop
Date of previous inspection	7–8 March 2017

Information about this school

- Lipson Co-operative Academy is a large secondary school. It converted to academy status in 2011 under the Lipson Co-operative Academy Trust.
- A much larger proportion of pupils than the national average is eligible for free school meals. Similarly, a larger proportion of pupils than average receive support for their SEND, or have an education, health and care plan.
- Pupils are organised into year groups following a re-structure in June 2019. This places a greater emphasis on the identity of the individual year groups and the role of the form tutors.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team and middle leaders during the course of the inspection.
- The inspection considered the following subjects in depth, visiting classrooms, talking with team leaders and meeting subject staff and pupils: English, mathematics, science, geography and modern foreign languages.
- In order to inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector checked the school's single central record of recruitment and vetting checks, considered its safeguarding policy, interviewed the member of staff designated as the safeguarding leader, and spoke with pupils and staff. Surveys of the views of parents and carers, pupils and staff were also considered as part of the inspection process.

Inspection team

Malcolm Willis, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Benjamin Houghton	Ofsted Inspector
Teresa Hill	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Williams	Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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