

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



19 July 2021

Andrew Davis  
Principal  
Exmouth Community College  
Gipsy Lane  
Exmouth  
Devon  
EX8 3AF

Dear Mr Davis

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Exmouth Community College**

Following my visit to your school on 1 July 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the monitoring inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8 (2) of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. I discussed the impact of the pandemic with you and have taken that into account in my evaluation.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

**Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school.**

## **Context**

Since the last full inspection, three members of staff have joined the senior leadership team. There is an assistant principal leading each phase: key stages 3, 4 and 5. An additional assistant principal is an internal appointment. Her role is to manage the well-being of staff and improve communication between leaders, staff and the wider community.

There are substantial changes to the school buildings. Some of the older buildings are being pulled down to make way for new buildings. Other existing buildings are being refurbished. Some lessons take place in temporary accommodation.

## **Main findings**

You are always looking for ways to move the school forward. You made appropriate additions to the senior leadership team to provide much needed capacity. New phase leaders ensure better teaching and learning of the curriculum. Another assistant principal has the well-being of staff as her priority. This is effective strategic thinking, with a staff of over 300 coping with a pandemic. In addition, the assistant principal makes sure that communication is effective and responsive to the needs of parents and staff.

Since the additional monitoring inspection in March 2021, you have acted swiftly to put curriculum changes in place. You have a clearer understanding of how pupils' knowledge increases over time. You have shared this successfully with subject leaders. As a result, the latest curriculum plans focus on what pupils need to know and when. Subject leaders are considering carefully how to develop pupils' knowledge in a logical way. Sometimes, teachers assess pupils in key stage 3 against GCSE criteria. However, pupils do not have sufficient knowledge of the subject for this assessment to be meaningful.

Only pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn how to read phonetically. This helps pupils with SEND to decode harder words. However, other pupils are not taught phonics. This impedes their progress. Year 7 pupils who struggle to read fluently are not always provided with reading books that match the sounds they know. As a result, they take longer to become competent readers. Pupils in key stage 4 are supported well in reading choices under normal circumstances. Staff's absence has limited guidance during the pandemic. Other aspects of SEND provision remain a key issue for improvement. Some parents express concern about time taken to support the needs of their children. You have reviewed the work of the SEND team to improve efficiency. There are times when the local authority SEND team do not have the workforce to support you. When this happens, you have used other agencies to meet pupils' complex needs. Despite this, you recognise that there is still work to do in this area.

Leaders have worked relentlessly to improve behaviour. You have joined the national behaviour hub, organised by the Department for Education (DfE). The new

behaviour management policy responds positively to pupils' better behaviour. The school is calm and orderly as a result. Following a survey of pupils' concerns, leaders have reacted quickly. They have made sure that there are no areas of the school campus that are not monitored vigilantly. This has eradicated minor infringements that occurred before. For pupils who need greater support to regulate their behaviour, specialist staff provide a bespoke curriculum. This is successful and many pupils reintegrate into the main school seamlessly.

Prior to COVID-19, your effective systems improved pupils' attendance. Currently, some families remain anxious about their children returning to school. Staff are communicating regularly with them. Slowly, this is encouraging pupils to return. However, attendance is not yet as high as it was before the pandemic. Years 11 and 13 pupils were not in school at the time of the inspection. Year 11 pupils who are attending the sixth form from September 2021 have several tasks to complete as part of their induction.

### **Additional support**

School leaders from the DfE's national behaviour hub have visited the school and spoken with leaders about potential changes to manage behaviour further. Leaders visit other schools in London and other areas to see best practice. You gain valuable professional training from the hub.

You work with a local multi-academy trust and neighbouring schools to improve teaching and learning and the SEND team's work on speech, language and communication.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, other senior leaders, pupils, staff and the chair of governors to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I looked at safeguarding and the work of pupils, visited lessons and listened to pupils read. I noted responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including 402 free-text responses, and responses to the staff questionnaire.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Devon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Kathy Maddocks  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**