

# Inspection of Foxfields Academy

Hospital Lane, Blaby, Leicestershire LE8 4FE

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Inspection dates: 17 and 18 January 2023

| <b>Overall effectiveness</b> | <b>Good</b>  |
|------------------------------|--|
| The quality of education     | <b>Good</b>  |
| Behaviour and attitudes      | <b>Good</b>  |
| Personal development         | <b>Outstanding</b>   |
| Leadership and management    | <b>Good</b>  |
| Previous inspection grade    | Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils of all ages thrive at Foxfields Academy. The school caters very well for pupils' academic and social and emotional needs. Pupils who may have had negative experiences in the past receive well-planned support to overcome their difficulties. Staff are skilled in helping pupils who sometimes struggle to manage their behaviour and emotions. When incidents occur, staff follow clear routines to reduce any negative impact on pupils' learning.

Pupils enjoy collecting points for good behaviour, attitudes and achievements. They are proud of the rewards they earn. They agree that this system motivates them to do well at school.

Pupils say that the staff 'help us to do our best all the time'. Pupils understand the school's core values of trust, honesty and respect. They agree that these values are important. Pupils say that they feel safe at school. They know that bullying is unacceptable. Pupils say that staff take bullying seriously and deal with any instances quickly and fairly.

Leaders and staff provide a wide range of activities to foster pupils' talents and interests. For example, there are regular opportunities for taking part in outdoor activities. Clubs such as football, animal care and art are offered every week.

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

Since the school opened, leaders have worked with determination to establish a broad and balanced curriculum across all subjects, from Years 1 to 11. They have faced considerable challenges, due to the pandemic. However, the curriculum now sets out the key knowledge and skills that pupils will develop, in almost all subjects. Leaders have carefully considered what pupils need to know, and when, as they journey through the school. In a small number of subjects, leaders have not yet finalised the curriculum. However, there is a plan to complete this work over the coming year.

The core subjects of English, mathematics and science are strong. For example, in mathematics, teachers have good subject knowledge. They check and correct pupils' mistakes quickly. In lessons, pupils successfully apply what they already know when learning new concepts. The work in pupils' science books shows that lessons flow in a logical sequence. This helps pupils to know and remember more in science.

Leaders prioritise reading. Staff assess pupils' reading ability as soon as they join the school. Staff ensure that pupils receive support to catch up quickly. Pupils of all ages read from books that match the sounds they know. They are developing as keen, confident readers.

Leaders provide an exceptionally wide range of activities and therapies to support pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs. The personal, social and health

education (PSHE) curriculum is very strong. It is highly relevant to pupils' needs. In lessons, pupils discuss and debate current topics knowledgeably and with enthusiasm. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The relationships and sex education curriculum is equally strong. Pupils learn about the importance of healthy relationships and consent.

Leaders and staff support pupils' broader development exceptionally well. There is a relentless focus on equipping pupils for their next steps beyond the school. Pupils can follow increasingly ambitious pathways into qualifications, employment or further education.

Almost all pupils travel some distance to school. This reduced contact with parents and carers means it is harder to create a positive home-school partnership. This can also affect some pupils' progress and attendance. Leaders recognise the need to strengthen their links with parents and carers.

All pupils at the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders and staff ensure that they adapt the curriculum to reflect each pupil's needs and targets. Small steps of progress are celebrated regularly, in classes and in assemblies. As with attendance, leaders wish to find ways to involve parents and carers more meaningfully in supporting their children's education.

Staff praise the support they receive from leaders for their workload and well-being. Those responsible for governance agree that well-trained and happy staff are the 'bedrock' of the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have instilled a strong culture of safeguarding. They ensure that all staff receive thorough training. Leaders and staff know the pupils, and their needs, very well. Staff know that they must report any concerns straightaway. Safeguarding records are thorough, showing leaders' prompt actions and responses to concerns. There are strong partnerships with a range of external agencies.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They know about the dangers of online bullying and harmful sexual behaviour. Pupils learn to have regard for personal boundaries, and treat everyone with respect.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of foundation subjects, leaders are still in the process of mapping out the curriculum beyond key stage 3. Resources and qualification routes are not finalised in some subjects, as well as some other details of curriculum refinement. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is fully planned and sequenced in all subjects, so that pupils in all year groups know and remember more over time.
- Fewer than half of pupils have consistently good attendance. This is due to a range of reasons, some of which are outside of the school's control. However, where home-school links are weak, attendance is adversely affected. Not all parents attend the review meetings for their children's education, health and care plans (EHC plans). Due to the pandemic, some parents have never visited the school. Leaders should ensure that pupils who are regularly absent receive the support they need to improve their attendance, including through the school's development of effective and purposeful engagement with parents and carers.

## 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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 148029   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Leicestershire   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10254754   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Special  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Academy free school  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 5 to 16  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 59   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | Board of trustees  |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                      | Stephen Hopkins  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Ashley Caress  |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.foxfields-cit.co.uk">www.foxfields-cit.co.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | Not previously inspected   |

## Information about this school

- The school opened in October 2020. It caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils at the school have an EHC plan. Currently, pupils who attend the school range from Year 2 to Year 10. The vast majority of pupils are boys.
- The headteacher and two other senior leaders took up their posts in August 2022.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school does not use any 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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior and curriculum leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the local governing board and the chair and chief executive officer of the Community Inclusive Trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector observed some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum, reviewed curriculum planning and looked at samples of pupils' work in some other subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around school.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks and holding discussions with leaders, staff and pupils.

## Inspection team

Christine Watkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sue Wood

Ofsted Inspector

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