

Inspection of an outstanding school: Maplefields Academy

Tower Hill Road, Corby, Northamptonshire NN18 0TH

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 June 2023

Outcome

Maplefields Academy continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this exceptional school. They learn a challenging curriculum. This is a task they rise well to. Staff strive to give the very best to all their pupils. Pupils receive high levels of care and are well prepared for wider society.

Pupils feel happy and safe in school. They are confident that their teachers will do the right things for them. They know that adults will listen to any worries or concerns they may have. Pupils said that the school is a 'family'.

Parents and carers are appreciative of the support their children receive. As one parent commented, typical of many: 'This is a very helpful, supportive school. It helps pupils not just with their education but also with their social and emotional well-being.' Parents particularly like the support their children receive through 'Dr Dan' and music therapy.

Staff are vigilant about all pupils' emotional and mental health. The school's outreach service provides workshops for parents and families. These are well received. A few pupils sometimes need support to regulate their emotions in school. Staff support these pupils well. They focus on helping pupils to manage their own behaviour and emotions. Consequently, the behaviour of these pupils improves over time.

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

Leaders and staff are highly ambitious for all pupils and students. They want them to succeed and achieve their full potential. Leaders know their pupils very well. They have devised a curriculum that meets their needs. Pupils learn about communication, healthy relationships, independence and self-worth. This well-matched curriculum helps pupils to make exceptional progress.

Curriculum subjects are precisely sequenced. Each subject has a learning pathway. It enables pupils to encounter key knowledge in a logical order. This means that it is easier for pupils to learn more and remember more.

The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. It enables pupils to learn a wide range of subjects. They achieve well and are prepared for their next stage in education or employment.

Teachers' knowledge of the school's curriculum is strong. In lessons, teachers are clear about what they want pupils to know and learn. Pupils recall learning from previous lessons. Teachers ensure that pupils' misconceptions and gaps in knowledge are addressed.

Leaders ensure that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are quickly identified and well considered. They make careful checks on the alternative provision used to support a small number of pupils. They make sure that their placement is just right.

Leaders ensure that reading is prioritised in school. They know that for pupils to access the school's ambitious curriculum, they will need to learn to read well. Regular checks are made to ensure that pupils learn to read quickly and efficiently. Pupils read books that match their reading ability. Inspiring spaces around school support pupils' love of reading.

Pupils learn to manage their emotions and feelings. Staff ensure that pupils understand the high expectations of the school's behaviour systems. Pupils live up to these high expectations. Staff have regular training to support pupils with additional emotional and social needs. Thus, over time, the number of behaviour incidents in school has declined.

Leaders have devised an exceptionally strong personal development curriculum. Pupils learn about the wider world. There are many visits and trips, such as to Rockingham Triangle for sports day or to Wicksteed Park with the local Rotary Club. Leaders provide a very wide range of extra-curricular provision, which they continue to build on. For example, pupils have opportunities to attend a thriving forest school, a fishing club and to go horse riding.

Leaders have given very careful thought to how their pupils will transition to other settings or employment. Pupils learn about different careers. The 'Job Hub' supports pupils to apply for jobs within school. The 'alumni fund' provides a gift for pupils as they move to post-16 provision. Consequently, more pupils make a successful transition. Post-16 students follow a personalised curriculum. These students make strong progress in their learning and are well supported to make successful choices in their education or employment.

Leaders engage with staff to promote their well-being and workload. Those responsible for governance ensure that they make regular checks on leaders' work. They fulfil their statutory roles well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school's safeguarding arrangements are robust and effective. Staff know how to identify pupils who may be vulnerable or at risk. They know how to raise their concerns in a timely way. Leaders use all available information to make sure vulnerable pupils get help quickly. Where needed, staff make timely referrals to other agencies. They ensure that pupils and families receive the support they need.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including online. Representatives from the police and charities visit the school to help pupils understand how to stay safe and the consequences of harmful actions.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in January 2013.

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	138634
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10211602
Type of school	All-through Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	114
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	10
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Howard Reid
Headteacher	Jessie Walker
Website	www.maplefieldsacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses a range of alternative provision. One of these providers is registered. Five are unregistered.

Information about this inspection

- 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 spoke to the headteacher and other leaders who have oversight for the quality of education, safeguarding, behaviour and personal development.
- Inspectors spoke to the external school improvement partner. They also met with the leaders with responsibility for governance at the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors visited lessons to evaluate pupils' behaviour. They also considered pupils' behaviour during social times. Inspectors also scrutinised records for behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors checked the school's single central record for pre-employment checks. They also spoke to pupils and staff regarding safeguarding in the school and viewed the school's systems and arrangements for safeguarding. This also involved conversations with representatives of the alternative provision used by the school.

Inspection team

Steven Barnes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Matthew Rooney

Ofsted Inspector

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