

Inspection of Exmouth Community College

Gipsy Lane, Exmouth, Devon EX8 3AF

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 February 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Tom Inman. This school is an academy trust which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jason Hill.

What is it like to attend this school?

Exmouth Community school is a large, split-site school. Pupils move across the whole site for their lessons. At these times, most pupils conduct themselves well. Pupils feel safe in school. However, a few pupils do not behave appropriately at these times. The school has raised the expectations for pupils. They have changed structures to support this. Pupils say this is starting to have a positive effect. Most pupils understand and respect the changes.

When pupils have a concern, they know who they can speak to. The school provides different ways for pupils to report their concerns, including an online 'worry' button. Some pupils feel other pupils are not always respectful towards one another. When pupils report bullying or inappropriate language, the school follows this up.

Pupils participate in a broad range of extra-curricular activities. The school is encouraging more pupils to take up opportunities. This includes many sports, the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and a range of performance and orchestral groups. The house band meet weekly to perform. Pupils relished their involvement in a recent school production of 'Matilda'.

The school has recently enhanced the leadership roles it offers to pupils. Sixth-form students take roles as student ambassadors and contribute to the wider school community.

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

The school has planned a broad curriculum. Subject areas have developed different phases of their curriculum. Recent work to develop the curriculum, especially at key stage 3, has ensured that it is now carefully planned and sequenced. In the sixth form, the programmes of study are ambitious. The school has a clear understanding about which parts of the curriculum now need to develop further.

Teachers plan for pupils to regularly recall and revisit their learning. Yet, in some subjects there is a lack of expertise in implementing the curriculum. When this happens, teachers do not know how well pupils understand what they have learned, and pupils are not able to recall their learning.

Teachers provide models and structures to support pupils with their work. This is helpful, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school has improved the information teachers receive to support pupils. However, planning and adaptation to support pupils with SEND sometimes still lacks precision. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not get the appropriate support they need in a timely way.

In lessons, pupils behave well. They listen and follow instructions. They know teachers want them to do well and they understand teachers' expectations. Even so,

when the curriculum is not implemented effectively, pupils are compliant but not well motivated.

The school is ambitious for pupils to read widely. Pupils read daily. They understand the expectations of the school to read. The school checks carefully to know the reading needs of pupils. For those pupils in the early stages of learning to read, the school plans support to develop fluency and phonic knowledge.

Through the personal development programme, the school plans for pupils to have a broad range of experiences and develop their independence. The personal, social and health education curriculum is well considered. For example, 'Lesson 42', a weekly lesson about relationships and well-being, helps pupils' social and moral development. In the sixth form, students learn about student finance and budgeting in preparation for their next step. Pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their education. Career focused weeks spotlight careers throughout the curriculum. In the sixth form, students apply for a wide range of work experience, including placements in health, ecological sites and law firms.

The school ensures all sixth-form students are well supported to complete their courses. It helps students to overcome any barriers to their learning. The school provides nurturing support and education to help all pupils understand how to manage their mental health.

The school has been through a period of change in recent years with new leadership and appointments at different levels. There has been a re-setting of the school vision. Working with external professionals, governors and school leaders evaluate and identify next steps for the school thoroughly. Leaders communicate the school priorities clearly to all.

Some parents and pupils raise concern about the culture of some behaviour in the school. However, work has begun in earnest to put in practices to build a more sustained positive culture across the whole school. There is now positivity from staff, parents and pupils about the early impact of this work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Although leaders have developed the curriculum rapidly, some parts of the curriculum are not well implemented. When this happens, pupils struggle to retain and remember their learning. The school needs to ensure staff are supported with the knowledge and expertise they need to deliver the full curriculum.

- Adaptations to support pupils with SEND are not applied effectively across the curriculum. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not learn the curriculum well. The school must make sure appropriate adaptation is in place, so pupils with SEND are better supported with their learning.
- Leaders have recently raised expectations of pupils' behaviour, but new systems need time to be fully embedded. As a result, although pupils' conduct has improved in lessons, some pupils still do not behave well at social times and when moving around the school. The school needs to make sure the new systems are consistently implemented.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	136612
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10297981
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	2174
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	281
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jason Hill
Headteacher	Tom Inman
Website	www.exmouthcollege.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	February 2020

Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average secondary school. It is split across two sites.
- The school is a single academy trust.
- The headteacher took up their position in September 2023.
- The school uses 14 alternative providers. Three are registered and eleven are unregistered.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, religious education and drama. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders and teachers.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the trust, including the chair of the trust.
- Inspectors met and spoke to several pupils. They spoke to pupils in lessons, as well as during social times and as pupils moved between lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school improvement plan, self-evaluation documents, minutes of trust meetings and records of behaviour and attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The lead inspector contacted some of the alternative providers used by the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also viewed the responses to the pupil survey and the responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Rachel Hesketh, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
John Weeds	Ofsted Inspector
Lee Sargeant	Ofsted Inspector
Deirdre Fitzpatrick	Ofsted Inspector

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