

Inspection of Exmouth Community College

Gipsy Lane, Exmouth, Devon EX8 3AF

Inspection dates: 11–12 February 2020

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

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils say the school wants the best for them. The school helps them to develop their interests and talents. Many pupils take part in school productions, dance performances and sporting activities. Pupils say the school provides a wide range of courses that match their interests. Students in the sixth form say they enjoy their studies.

Pupils' conduct in lessons means they can usually learn without disruption. However, pupils, staff and parents have mixed views about behaviour. Behaviour at social times is not as strong as in lessons. Bullying, although infrequent, is dealt with effectively by staff. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and how to raise a concern.

Pupils do well in subjects where their learning is well planned. However, there are weaknesses in how the school's curriculum is planned and taught in a number of subjects.

Pupils are tolerant of different beliefs and cultures. They enjoy putting democracy into practice in school council elections. Pupils have been keen to help others by training as mental health first aiders. Pupils appreciate the support the school gives them to prepare for their next steps.

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

Pupils follow a broad curriculum. Pupils and parents appreciate the breadth of choice the school offers at GCSE and in the sixth form. However, most pupils do not study a language beyond year 9. The school has changed the structure of the curriculum so that more pupils can learn a language for longer. This is having some impact.

Leaders have developed a curriculum that reflects the school's values, such as integrity or creativity. While these values have guided curriculum leaders, the curriculum has not always been well thought out. For example, in some subjects, leaders and teachers have not thought carefully enough about what pupils should learn earlier in the school in order for them to do well later on.

Pupils do well when teaching helps knowledge to stick, for example in history and science. In these subjects, pupils remember what they learn and have the confidence to answer more complex questions. Students in the sixth form value teachers' specialist knowledge. This helps students to develop their own subject expertise, as is evident in their work.

Sometimes, teaching has lower expectations for some groups of pupils, particularly those with lower prior attainment. For example, in languages, time is wasted on activities that do not help pupils to develop their use of vocabulary or key verbs. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is uneven. Sometimes, teaching for these pupils is not planned carefully enough.

Leaders have not checked on how effectively the curriculum is implemented in the classroom.

Leaders have successfully encouraged better attendance, including in the sixth form. Pupils now understand the importance of attending regularly. Sixth-form students are responding to the clear expectation for them to attend every lesson. Pupils are attending school more frequently, including those who had high rates of absence.

Relationships between staff and pupils are usually respectful. However, staff do not apply the new behaviour policy in the same way and pupils think this is unfair. A small number of pupils are taking longer to adapt to the school's expectations.

Leaders have developed a strong programme of personal development across the school. Pupils told us about the importance of a healthy diet and exercise and how they help their mental well-being. Pupils learn about different cultures and beliefs. They learn about the experiences of refugees. This helps the school to support pupils with this background. Pupils appreciate the careers guidance they receive, including help to secure useful work experience placements. Students in the sixth form feel particularly well supported. Sixth-form students say they have had much help and guidance to secure appropriate university courses or apprenticeships.

The principal has been determined to change the culture in the school. This has driven leaders to make recent improvements to the school curriculum. Leaders and many staff share the principal's vision. Governors are supportive of the principal and provide effective challenge.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Governors and staff are well trained and knowledgeable about safeguarding. Staff know how to spot and report a concern. They do this well. The pastoral and safeguarding teams pick up concerns quickly and act appropriately.

The safeguarding team acts quickly to support pupils and their families. Leaders are creative in securing outside help for pupils who need it.

The school supports pupils with complex needs well. This helps to prevent problems escalating. School counsellors are supporting pupils with their mental health needs while pupils wait for external support.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff do not apply the school's behaviour policy consistently. As a result, some pupils are not rising to the expectations of good behaviour that the school has of

them. Leaders should ensure all staff apply the behaviour policy in the same way across the school. Leaders should make better use of the information the school holds on behaviour. This would help them to be more proactive in identifying and understanding which groups of pupils are not responding and why.

- In some areas, the curriculum is not coherently planned. This interferes with pupils' learning. Senior leaders should support curriculum leaders and teachers to sequence the curriculum better. Curriculum leaders should make sure teaching ensures pupils have the right building blocks in place to support future learning, particularly in key stage 3.
- Leaders do not check closely enough that the curriculum is implemented as they intended. This hampers their ability to develop the curriculum further. Leaders should ensure that teaching uses effective activities and strategies so that all pupils, including those with low prior attainment or pupils with SEND, learn and achieve more.

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 are the school and you are 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	136612
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10122340
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	2227
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	300
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Margaret Turgoose
Principal	Andrew Davis
Website	www.exmouthcollege.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Exmouth Community College is a larger-than-average secondary school.
- The school uses alternative provision at Chances Educational Support Services.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors met with the chair of the governing board and governors. Inspectors also met with the principal, senior leaders, curriculum leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. Inspectors held telephone conversations with an alternative provider and the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: English, history, modern foreign languages, mathematics and science. Inspectors visited lessons, met with staff,

looked at pupils’ work, talked with pupils, interviewed curriculum leaders and examined documentation.

- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead. The inspection team talked with a range of staff about safeguarding training. Inspectors examined documentation and school records.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils to discuss their views about the school. Inspectors considered 165 responses to the pupils’ survey, 108 responses to the survey for staff and 143 responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View. We also took into account views received during the course of the inspection in a telephone conversation with a parent, an email and a letter.

Inspection team

Tracey Reynolds, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Gary Lewis	Ofsted Inspector
David Herbert	Ofsted Inspector
Jon Webb	Ofsted Inspector
Matthew Collins	Ofsted Inspector

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