

Inspection of Northampton Academy

Wellingborough Road, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN3 8NH

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 March 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this school. They know that staff 'go above and beyond' to provide an outstanding education for them. Pupils are happy and feel safe.

Leaders have the highest aspirations for their pupils. They ensure that pupils receive a high-quality education. Staff meet the needs of all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), exceptionally well.

The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. They are respectful, well mannered and polite. They exhibit the school's values of respect, determination, ambition, tolerance and integrity. Pupils said that bullying is not tolerated. It happens rarely. Pupils know the importance of treating everyone as an equal. Pupils say that 'difference unites us'.

Pupils relish taking responsibility as school leaders. For example, they can be digital leaders, promoting e-safety across the school, STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) leaders, sports leaders or well-being ambassadors.

Parents and carers are extremely positive about the education their children receive. One view shared by many was, 'I have been blown away by the guidance and support that is in place for the pupils. My child has been given her wings and is starting to fly.'

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

The school's curriculum is broad and ambitious in all three key stages and for all pupils, including those with SEND. Leaders have carefully planned the curriculum so that pupils can learn new knowledge in a highly structured way. Lessons are extremely well sequenced to ensure that pupils build on what they have learned before. Pupils develop detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum. Pupils achieve exceptionally well.

Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. They explain concepts to pupils clearly. Teachers use a wide variety of strategies to enable pupils to know more and remember more. These include effective questioning, 'do now' activities at the start of lessons, and short quizzes.

Teachers' assessments are effective, and they use the information they collect extremely well. Teachers ensure that pupils deepen their understanding of the subject by swiftly addressing misconceptions and errors. Teachers provide useful feedback. The school's 'reflect and refine' tasks enable pupils to reflect on what they have done well and how they can continue to improve. As a result, pupils produce high-quality work.

Reading is at the heart of leaders' priorities. They recognise that reading and literacy are key to high achievement. Pupils read every day. Staff provide pupils who are

struggling with reading with bespoke support. This support is proving to be successful and is developing pupils' fluency and love of reading.

The sixth-form provision is strong. Students do well and immerse themselves in the wider life of the school. They benefit from the support, encouragement and opportunities that the sixth form provides.

Leaders work diligently with external agencies and SEND experts to identify the needs of pupils with SEND. Teachers are trained well and are suitably informed of these pupils' individual learning needs. This enables teachers to use support plans effectively in the classroom. Pupils with SEND benefit from well-considered programmes of support. They make exceptional progress through the curriculum.

There is a consistent approach to managing behaviour across the school. Staff understand pupils and their individual needs. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils are highly respectful and supportive of each other.

There is an impressive personal development and character programme. Leaders consider the education of the whole child. Leaders have ensured that the school's values permeate through everything that the school does. This enables the school's vision to be 'an academy of character and excellence' to be achieved. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They talk enthusiastically about the school's 'culture day'. Pupils are welcome to wear traditional clothes and share food from other cultures.

High-quality pastoral support ensures that all pupils understand the protected characteristics and have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships. The school provides a robust programme to support pupils' personal development and well-being. For example, pupils can spend time with Lily, the school's therapy dog.

There is a strong careers programme in place across the school. This includes visiting speakers, work experience and employer engagement. Careers support is strong and students have access to appropriate careers advice.

Those responsible for governance understand the vision of the school. They support and challenge senior leaders well. Senior leaders provide high-quality professional development for staff. Teachers appreciate leaders' support regarding workload and welfare. They feel valued by leaders. One teacher, typical of many, said, 'The school is looking for the best in everyone. Leaders celebrate what we do.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has an exceedingly strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are robust and fit for purpose. Safeguarding training is provided for all staff throughout the year with frequent updates. This ensures that

staff are alert to the signs of vulnerability and abuse, and entirely proficient in reporting concerns. The school enjoys robust relationships with external providers, including children's services and alternative education providers.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. This includes when they are online.

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	134814
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10241273
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
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	1709
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	244
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Reena Keeble
Principal	Chris Clyne
Website	www.northampton-academy.org
Date of previous inspection	12 and 13 November 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- 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 uses two registered providers of 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 inspection the school had 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.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in English, geography, science, physical education, design and technology and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also visited a range of lessons in other subjects. For these subjects, they checked the work pupils had produced in lessons and spoke to pupils in the class.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for behaviour, personal development and the provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from key stages 3, 4 and 5.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. She reviewed a range of documents and the single central record.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation.
- The lead inspector met with the governors and trustees.
- Inspectors observed pupils around the school at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. They considered the results of the Ofsted staff and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Dawn Ashbolt, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Shazia Lydon	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Rhatigan	Ofsted Inspector
John Harrison	Ofsted Inspector
Javier Sanchez-Garcia	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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