

Inspection of a good school: Bishop Alexander L.E.A.D. Academy

Wolsey Road, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG24 2BQ

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 March 2023

Outcome

Bishop Alexander L.E.A.D. Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel happy and safe at this school. Parents who shared a view described a welcoming environment, approachable staff and a place in which their children flourish. Leaders have high expectations about what pupils can achieve academically. Leaders reflect on the impact their curriculum has on pupils' learning. They have made changes to the curriculum to help pupils fulfil their potential.

Pupils behave well. They are calm and attentive in their lessons. Children in the early years learn about how to talk politely to other people. Pupils interact positively with one another and with visitors. One pupil, typical of many, said, 'teachers are very caring'. Pupils are not worried about bullying. They are very comfortable about sharing any concerns they have with staff. Pupils are confident that staff act quickly and effectively to address their concerns.

Pupils enjoy performing leadership roles and contributing to the school community. Some pupils become members of the school council; others are lunchtime leaders. An 'active citizens' group looks at ways to improve the school environment and pupils' experiences. Older pupils have the opportunity to become subject ambassadors or ambassadors for particular groups of pupils, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum. They have identified the important knowledge they want pupils to learn and when they will learn it. They have listed the vocabulary that pupils will learn in each subject. Leaders have used themes such as 'Where in the world?' to organise the curriculum. Teachers use these themes well to help pupils recall previous learning. Leaders have ensured that the early years curriculum prepares children for key stage 1. Children proudly show their writing to visitors. Some pupils who would benefit from engaging with more complex concepts do not always get the opportunity to do so.

Leaders have responded appropriately to disappointing published outcomes in mathematics and reading. For example, they make sure that teachers check that all pupils have the understanding they need before moving learning on. They promptly identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. Teachers and teaching assistants act swiftly to address pupils' misconceptions. Pupils learn in groups based on their precise levels of understanding. This helps teachers to ensure that pupils learn new knowledge in a way that enables them to understand it. Staff provide effective support outside the classroom for pupils who need extra help. This support is carefully timed, so that pupils do not miss out on their learning in the classroom. The changes that leaders have made are having a positive impact on pupils' knowledge. Pupils can recall their learning. Pupils' work demonstrates that they are developing their knowledge over time.

Leaders have prioritised reading. Staff use consistent approaches to teach pupils how to read. They have ensured that the order in which pupils learn phonics is logical. Children in the early years quickly develop their phonics knowledge. All staff have completed training about teaching children how to read. The books that pupils read are carefully matched to their phonics knowledge. Pupils regularly practise their reading. They hear teachers model reading every day. This helps pupils to develop their reading fluency and comprehension. Staff consistently check pupils' understanding. They provide further support if necessary. Pupils enjoy reading. They can explain how to use different reading techniques to understand a text.

Teachers promptly identify pupils with SEND and their precise learning needs. Teachers match activities to pupils' needs. This helps pupils with SEND to access the curriculum alongside their peers. Leaders ensure that staff have the information and strategies they need to support pupils with SEND effectively.

Pupils behave well. Most pupils enthusiastically take part in their lessons. Teachers and pupils have established positive relationships. This includes children in the early years. Pupils play sensibly with their peers during social times.

Leaders have adopted a well-sequenced personal, social and health education curriculum. Pupils learn about citizenship and keeping healthy. Beginning in the early years, children learn about careers connected to the subjects they study. Pupils learn about different religions and beliefs. Pupils discuss and debate important issues. Pupils confidently talk about British values. They are less secure in their understanding of protected characteristics.

Leaders have made a range of clubs available. Pupils participate in archery club, rugby club and art club. Pupils take part in residential trips to Rand Farm and Walesby Forest. Pupil ambassadors have recently completed a survey to find out how pupils with SEND would like to improve the clubs on offer.

Staff feel that leaders are considerate of their well-being. They talk about leaders being approachable. Teachers say that adjustments to marking have improved their workload. They benefit from training provided by the school and the trust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise safeguarding. Staff receive regular training. Leaders record when staff have completed training and ensure that staff knowledge is always up to date. Leaders use quizzes to review the impact of training. Staff know how to report concerns and the importance of sharing information. Staff retain ownership of their safeguarding referrals. They check that leaders have followed up on their concerns.

Leaders work effectively with other agencies when it is necessary to secure pupils the help they need.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe, including online. They know that they can share concerns with staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that there are deliberately planned opportunities for pupils to deepen their learning and engage with complex concepts across the curriculum. As a result, some pupils who are capable of developing the depth of their knowledge are not doing so. Leaders should ensure that pupils have consistent and well-planned opportunities to engage with the most complex aspects of the subjects they study and have the chance to achieve greater depth of understanding.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in 17 and 18 January 2017.

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	140544
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10227217
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	248
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Buck
Headteacher	Nicky Spencelayh
Website	www.bishopalexanderacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 and 18 January 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. As part of each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, 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 listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a known adult.
- The lead inspector met with subject leaders in science and geography and scrutinised samples of pupils' work in these subjects.
- The lead inspector met with leaders responsible for behaviour, personal development, the provision for pupils with SEND, and the pupil progress leader.

- The lead inspector met with the person responsible for early years and visited the early years provision, including the nursery.
- To evaluate the school's safeguarding arrangements, the lead inspector met with safeguarding leaders and reviewed the actions they take to keep pupils safe. He also viewed a range of documents in relation to safeguarding, including the school's single central record.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body as well as a member of the trust board and the deputy chief executive officer of the trust.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and considered the results of the Ofsted questionnaire for school staff.

Inspection team

Matthew Fearn-Davies, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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