

Inspection of The Axholme Academy

Wharf Road, Crowle, North Lincolnshire DN17 4HU

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' conduct. Recent changes to the behaviour policy have supported a more focused atmosphere for learning. Most, but not all, parents and carers feel that their concerns, including about behaviour, are listened to well. Pupils are polite and respectful. In lessons, they focus on their education. Disruption to lessons is rare. During social times, pupils manage their behaviour well. Leaders use suspensions as a last resort. Pupils are well supported when they return to school following a suspension. Bullying is infrequent. Most pupils are confident that adults resolve bullying well.

Leaders are committed to providing pupils with a rich and diverse set of opportunities to develop their cultural capital. Many pupils have experienced a residential educational visit since the COVID-19 pandemic. Where finance is a barrier to participation, leaders support families through the pupil premium funding. All pupils complete enrichment activities on Friday afternoons. Pupils experience at least three high-quality enrichment activities per year, including yoga, debating and chess. Pupils have additional opportunities to participate in leadership roles, for example the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and sports leadership.

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

Subject leaders have designed curriculums that ensure pupils experience the full ambition of the national curriculum. Increasingly, these take account of what pupils know from key stage 2. Teachers explain new content clearly. They introduce new learning in a logical order. This supports pupils to build on what they already know. Teachers, especially in key stage 3, use end-of-topic assessments well to check what pupils know.

Leaders have recently updated the curriculum. The curriculum is becoming more embedded. Teachers' effective input is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Current published examination results are not as strong as leaders want. Most pupils do achieve well in GCSE qualifications. This enables them to progress on to appropriate education or training when they leave the school. Leaders provide effective support for pupils with complex circumstances to remain in education and secure suitable provision when they leave. Leaders' actions are in the best interests of pupils but affect published data adversely.

Leaders prioritise reading. Pupils read regularly in tutor time and in daily 'drop everything and read' sessions. Leaders choose texts that expose pupils to important cultural issues, such as diversity. Pupils in the early stages of learning to read are identified quickly. They receive additional help to catch up. This supports them to access the wider curriculum.

There is an agreed structure to lessons at The Axholme Academy. Most teachers apply this structure consistently. Retrieval starters, modelling and independent

practice are routine features of lessons. Where teachers have used these features effectively over time, pupils apply their understanding to new problems, reason effectively and are resilient to setbacks. Some pupils experience a more variable quality of education. In these lessons, teachers do not revisit the most important knowledge in a structured and frequent way. This means that some pupils do not secure the required knowledge in their long-term memory. This slows their learning.

A small minority of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) study a curriculum that is adjusted to meet their needs. These pupils receive additional support, for example with reading, to enable them to access the wider curriculum. Teachers understand the needs of these pupils well. Leaders are rightly revising this curriculum to support these pupils to catch up with their peers more rapidly.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils with SEND. They know their needs well. Leaders provide teachers with detailed information about the needs of pupils with SEND. These 'pen portraits' are regularly reviewed. Leaders train staff in how to use the portraits effectively to adapt their teaching. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not use these strategies consistently enough.

Most pupils attend school regularly. Leaders have established clear systems to support regular attendance. Despite recent improvement, too many pupils are persistently absent. Leaders have added additional staffing capacity to improve this further.

The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is taught through 'complementary studies' lessons. Leaders enhance the curriculum by using assemblies and tutor time to consider emerging safeguarding priorities. Pupils learn about healthy relationships and other important concepts, such as the protected characteristics. Teachers do not revisit important content regularly enough. Pupils' knowledge of some concepts, such as fundamental British values and other faiths and beliefs, is underdeveloped.

Over time, those with responsibility for governance have not had sufficient oversight of the work of school leaders. Trustees did not challenge consistently on important issues, for example on the impact of pupil premium funding. The new chair of the trust board and her team are rapidly improving this aspect of their work. They benefit from effective support from the local authority. While trustees are aligned with the vision of the principal, they now provide much greater scrutiny of leaders' work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated safeguarding leads are well trained. Pastoral staff have detailed knowledge of the pupils in their care.

Leaders provide regular update training for the wider staff team. Adults know how to report concerns about a pupil's welfare. Adults take action in a timely way to keep pupils safe. Leaders keep detailed records of incidents and check that staff provide pupils with effective support.

Leaders have adapted the PSHE curriculum and assemblies to promote important safeguarding messages with pupils. For example, all pupils have received an assembly about harmful sexual behaviours and how to keep themselves safe. During complementary studies lessons, pupils learn about the risks associated with drugs and alcohol. Pupils learn how to maintain their mental health.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Too many pupils are persistently absent from school. These pupils miss important learning, which results in gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should develop their systems for securing regular attendance further.
- The needs of pupils with SEND are not consistently well met. Consequently, some pupils with SEND do not develop a secure understanding of the curriculum and do not achieve well. Leaders should ensure that the information teachers receive about how to meet the needs of pupils with SEND is precise, and that teachers implement these strategies routinely.
- Some important knowledge from the PSHE curriculum is not revisited regularly enough. This results in some pupils not having detailed knowledge, for example, of other faiths and beliefs or British values. Leaders should check on the knowledge pupils have retained and adjust future learning to fill the identified gaps.

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	137759
Local authority	North Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10240760
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	545
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nichola Shaw
Principal	Damien Keogh
Website	www.theaxholmeacademy.com
Date of previous inspection	5 July 2017, 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 educational qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school uses six alternative providers. Five of these are unregistered and one is Ofsted registered.
- The chair of the trust board began in her current role in September 2022.
- The school is a single academy trust.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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.
- The lead inspector met with members of the trust board and the local authority school improvement partner.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the principal. They also met with other senior and middle leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding, personal development, careers, attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Members of the inspection team looked at a range of documents regarding the support that pupils with SEND receive. Inspectors looked at the quality of the provision for pupils with SEND in lessons.
- Inspectors met with the designated lead for safeguarding. They checked records of actions taken by leaders to keep pupils safe. Inspectors scrutinised the single central record of recruitment checks.
- Leaders from the alternative providers spoke to members of the inspection team.
- A wide range of pupils and staff talked with inspectors, formally and informally, about the safeguarding culture in school over the course of the inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- Inspectors looked at a range of information regarding behaviour. Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils at social times.
- The views of parents, pupils and staff who responded to Ofsted's surveys were considered.

Inspection team

Thomas Wraith, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Gordon Watts	Ofsted Inspector
Lynette Edwards	Ofsted Inspector
Matthew West	Ofsted Inspector

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