

# Inspection of a good school: Exhall Grange Specialist School

Easter Way, Ash Green, Coventry, Warwickshire CV7 9HP

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Inspection dates:

2 and 3 July 2024

## Outcome

Exhall Grange Specialist School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are confident and articulate. They are proud to belong to the school. As they get older, pupils learn to understand themselves and their autism very well. They say this helps them to understand their peers, too. As a result, Exhall Grange is an inclusive and welcoming community, where pupils thrive.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They know that staff want them to do well and that they go the extra mile to help them to achieve. In turn, pupils have high expectations of themselves and high aspirations for their futures.

Pupils have an extensive range of opportunities to develop their talents and interests and to provide them with a secure understanding of the world. Pupils value trips to support the curriculum, such as to television studios, castles and theatres. In the sixth form, students are prepared well for adulthood. They learn how to order food and eat at a restaurant and to navigate different workplaces, for example. The Year 9 residential helps pupils to develop their independence and this is built on through the popular Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Pupils are enthusiastic about the annual 'Exhall's Got Talent' show. Pupils grow in independence and confidence as a result of the meticulously planned school enrichment programme.

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

The school is determined that pupils will achieve well. It places a thorough understanding of pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities at the heart of its provision. Staff are adept at adapting the carefully considered curriculum to ensure that pupils' learning and social and emotional needs are met. Pupils following the academic pathways benefit from a curriculum that allows them to build successfully on their learning over time. Here, teachers help pupils to practise and apply their learning so that they can recall the important information that they have learned. Pupils in these pathways achieve well. The curriculum for newer pupils with more complex needs is not as well developed and some

pupils are not supported to communicate as well as they could. This means that a few pupils do not make the excellent progress that the school intends.

Pupils are taught to read from the start. Children in early years enjoy stories, songs and rhymes to enhance their vocabulary and to begin to recognise sounds. Well trained staff deliver the phonics curriculum well. Pupils at the earliest stages of reading learn how to sound, segment and blend. They practise reading using books that precisely match the sounds they have learned. The school has identified that pupils do not always understand what they are reading and so teachers develop pupils' comprehension skills alongside the phonics curriculum. This prepares pupils well for their next steps.

Students in the sixth form benefit from a highly personalised curriculum that prepares them well for adulthood. As well as academic qualifications, students learn life skills and skills that prepare them for work. As a result of this very well-considered provision, students leaving the sixth form go on to very positive destinations.

Pupils are helped to become independent from the start of school. Children in early years learn to make choices and, by the time they finish the primary years, pupils are ready to tackle tricky tasks and to manage setbacks well. Secondary pupils flourish. They are very well prepared for their next steps. Sixth-form students enjoy helping younger pupils. They support early years classes, listen to younger children read and support many school events. They take their responsibilities seriously.

Careers is a real strength. From primary school, pupils learn about themselves and their skills. They use this to consider what jobs they may like to do. Work experience is carefully planned and, in the sixth form, students have many different experiences of the world of work. The school works closely with employers and education providers to make sure that all pupils are ready to make good decisions about their future.

Staff are committed to making sure that pupils receive the best quality education. They enjoy working in the school and say that leaders are mindful of their well-being and workload. Parents are very positive about pupils' experiences. They value the school and the opportunities that pupils receive. Governors know the school well. They understand their roles and make decisions in the best interests of pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The school's approach to ensuring that pupils with the most complex needs can communicate well is not yet fully in place. This means that a few pupils do not learn to communicate as effectively as they could. The school should make sure that they have

a clearly designed approach to teaching pupils to communicate well and that all staff are trained to deliver this effectively.

- The curriculum is not equally well developed in all pathways. This means that a few pupils do not follow a curriculum that matches the school's ambitions. The school should continue to develop the curriculum so that it is planned to meet the precise needs of pupils in all pathways.

## 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2014.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	125794
<b>Local authority</b>	Warwickshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10322797
<b>Type of school</b>	All-through special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	276
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	33
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Fiona Toye
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Seickell
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.exhallgrange.co.uk">http://www.exhallgrange.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	23 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher took up her post in September 2022.
- The school is for pupils aged 4 to 19. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The primary need of pupils at the school is communication and interaction difficulties, including autism.
- The school has a resourced provision for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school has a specialist unit for pupils who are visually impaired.
- 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 qualifications and apprenticeships.

- The school does not use alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors spoke to the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, other school leaders, the early years leader.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English and religious education. For each deep dive the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- In addition, the inspectors visited lessons and looked at a sample of pupils' books across the curriculum.
- The inspectors visited the early years provision and the sixth-form provision.
- Inspectors met with governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector 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 inspectors reviewed the school's documentation.
- The inspectors took account of the online staff survey.
- The inspectors spoke with pupils.
- The inspectors took account of the views of parents on Ofsted Parent View.

## Inspection team

Claire Price, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Dawn White

Ofsted Inspector

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