

Inspection of Northampton International Academy

Barrack Road, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN1 1AA

Inspection dates:	8 and 9 October 2024
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Inadequate

The executive headteacher of this school is Martin Serrão. This school is part of East Midlands Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Joshua Coleman, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Kevin Crompton.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils show positive attitudes and try hard with their learning. Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. However, pupils do not all achieve as well as they should. While the curriculum has begun to improve, there is more work to do to ensure that all pupils gain the knowledge, skills and qualifications that they need to meet their aspirations.

There is a real sense of community at the school. Pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds get along well together. Differences are celebrated. Many pupils are proud to be involved in leadership committees that work hard to create a culture in which everybody feels represented. There are committees responsible for 'religious inclusion', 'community outreach', 'neuro inclusivity', and many more, as well as a large student council.

Pupils proudly meet the very high expectations that the school has of their behaviour. Classrooms are calm. Around school, pupils are polite and respectful. They feel safe at the school and trust staff to look after them. Caring staff provide excellent support for pupils when they need it, for example when pupils struggle with their mental health.

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

This school has improved rapidly under strong and determined leadership since the previous inspection.. School leaders and staff have worked effectively in many areas to improve the school's culture. They have raised expectations for behaviour. While pupils are not learning as well as intended, the school has raised its aspirations for what they should achieve. It supports pupils' wider personal development well. Pupils and staff identify the improvements the school has made with a shared sense of pride.

The school has developed a curriculum that runs from the early years all the way through to the sixth form. In all subjects, the important knowledge that pupils will learn at each stage is identified clearly. Communication is a priority. The curriculum helps pupils build their vocabulary as they progress. The ambitious curriculum gives all pupils the opportunity to study the full range of English Baccalaureate subjects at key stage 4. After being forced to close temporarily due to issues with the school building, the sixth form has been relaunched at a new location. It offers personalised pathways so that students can study subjects that interest them. Whenever it is appropriate, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) follow the same curriculum as their peers.

The curriculum is not delivered consistently well across the school. Sometimes, staff do not focus sharply enough on the important knowledge or explain new concepts clearly. Often, staff do not check precisely what pupils have learned before, or whether pupils have understood new information. Activities do not always help pupils secure their knowledge. Sometimes, staff do not provide pupils with useful guidance to help them improve. The school provides coaching and professional development opportunities that are helping to develop staff expertise. The curriculum is delivered more consistently in the sixth form. Here, expert teachers challenge and support students to be successful.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with SEND quickly. Dedicated staff provide these pupils with strong support. This is also the case for the many pupils who speak English as an additional language. However, some staff do not adapt their teaching to meet the needs of all pupils, including pupils with SEND and those who speak English as an additional language. These pupils do not always get the help they need. Consequently, not all pupils learn the curriculum as intended.

The reading curriculum has improved. Children begin to learn phonics as soon as they start in the early years. Staff check pupils' reading knowledge often. They make sure that learning activities and books are well matched to pupils' stage of learning. Most pupils learn to read quickly. Staff provide effective support for any pupils who fall behind. This support continues into the secondary phase when needed.

The activities in the early years are designed carefully to match the interests of children. Most children learn the school routines quickly and display positive attitudes to learning. Staff help children gain the social and communication skills they need to benefit from the rich opportunities that the well-resourced environment provides.

Most pupils attend school well. Behaviour has vastly improved in the school. Staff teach pupils what is expected of them. When pupils do not meet these expectations, sanctions are used fairly and consistently. A small number of pupils who struggle to regulate their behaviour, or who do not attend school as well as they should, receive excellent pastoral care.

There is a well-considered curriculum for personal, social and health education that runs right through the school. This prepares pupils well for their next steps in education and beyond. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and well. Pupils' personal development is further supported by a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents and interests in sport, the arts and other areas. The school has an established, and growing, Combined Cadet Force. All pupils benefit from a rich careers programme that begins in the primary phase.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They are positive about the opportunities to develop their expertise and appreciate the support of school leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers' checks of pupils' understanding are not consistent. They do not always make sure that pupils' prior knowledge is secure or that pupils have grasped new concepts fully. Gaps in pupils' knowledge or misconceptions are not always identified or resolved

effectively. The school needs to ensure that teachers routinely check that pupils' knowledge and understanding are secure before the learning moves on.

- Teachers do not routinely adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' needs. This includes, but is not limited to, pupils with SEND and those who speak English as an additional language. Teaching is not always structured well enough to help pupils understand new information. Pupils sometimes struggle to access learning activities. At other times, pupils are not challenged to think deeply enough. The school needs to ensure that all pupils can access and learn the curriculum as intended.

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 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

Unique reference number	142485
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10288351
Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,855
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	46
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Kevin Crompton
CEO of the trust	Joshua Coleman
Headteacher	Martin Serrão (executive headteacher)
Website	www.nia.emat.uk
Dates of previous inspection	13 and 14 September 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The executive headteacher was appointed in February 2023.
- The school is part of the East Midlands Academy Trust.
- At the time of the last inspection, the sixth form was on the same site as the rest of the school. The sixth form was temporarily closed in September 2023. In September 2024, the sixth form reopened on a separate site at Elgin House, Billing Road, Northampton NN1 5BA.
- The school uses three registered and two unregistered alternative provisions.
- 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 education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth-form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the heads of school and other school leaders.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the multi-academy trust, including the chief executive officer and the chair of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, history, modern foreign languages, art and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also visited lessons, spoke to pupils and looked at pupils' work in a number of other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors visited the sixth form. They met with leaders, spoke to students and visited a number of lessons.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders and scrutinised records relating to attendance, behaviour and personal development.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff, pupils, parents through discussions and Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

John Spragg, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Michael Wilson	Ofsted Inspector
Louise Aird	Ofsted Inspector
Sean Kelly	Ofsted Inspector
Gary Carlile	Ofsted Inspector
Keval Thakrar	Ofsted Inspector
Sally Manz	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024