

Eston Park Academy

Burns Road, Eston, Middlesbrough, TS6 9AW

Inspection dates

22–23 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Students' achievement is inadequate. GCSE results in 2012 were far too low given students' average attainment when they entered the academy. Students currently make inadequate progress.
- The performance of students known to be eligible for free school meals varies too much between subjects. The academy does not use its pupil premium funding effectively to ensure these students achieve as well as they should, particularly in English.
- The sixth form requires improvement because students' achievement in vocational courses is not as good as it should be.
- Teaching over time is inadequate. It does not provide students with sufficiently challenging work at the right level so that they can make good or better progress.
- Too many teachers have low expectations of what students can achieve during lessons and registration periods.
- Teachers do not plan interesting, well-paced and varied activities that fully engage students' interest. As a result, students are sometimes restless and there is low-level disruption in some lessons. Behaviour, therefore, requires improvement.
- Students' work is not always regularly marked and too often the written feedback given to them does not clearly identify how they can do better or improve their work.
- Leaders and managers at all levels are not demonstrating the capacity to bring about the necessary improvements. They have not dealt quickly enough with inadequate teaching and this has led to a decline in the quality of education provided by the academy.

The school has the following strengths

- Students make good progress in science and as a result achieve good GCSE results.
- Students in the sixth form achieve well in most academic subjects.
- Students move around the academy in a calm and orderly way, and are polite and helpful to visitors. They wear their uniforms with pride and look smart.
- The small number of students attending off-site provision achieve well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 37 part-lessons. Of these, four were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with students, governors, a representative of the Academies Enterprise Trust, and school staff.
- The inspectors took account of the 68 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and also the views of two parents who contacted the inspection team.
- The inspectors observed the academy's work and looked at documents, including improvement plans, data on students' current progress, planning and monitoring files, minutes of the governing body meetings and records relating to students' behaviour, attendance and the academy's safeguarding procedures.

Inspection team

Mick Hill, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Nigel Drew	Additional Inspector
Heather Scott	Additional Inspector
Barbara Waugh	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- Eston Park is an average sized secondary school. It converted to become an academy in January 2012. When its predecessor school, Eston Park School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good overall.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after) is above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The academy does not meet the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The academy accesses additional education in construction for a small number of students in Years 10 and 11 provided by Learning Curve.
- The sixth form is managed jointly with Gillbrook Academy and Nunthorpe Academy.
- Most sixth form students were not in the academy during the inspection as they were on examination study leave.
- The academy receives support for leadership and management from the Academies Enterprise Trust.
- Eston Park is due to amalgamate with the neighbouring Gillbrook Academy in September 2014, sponsored by the Academies Enterprise Trust. There is a joint governing body in place to prepare for the amalgamation.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good, particularly in English, humanities and languages, in order that students, including those known to be eligible for free school meals and those studying vocational subjects in the sixth form, make good or better progress, by;
 - ensuring teachers routinely use assessment information to plan work which challenges all students at the right level
 - raising teachers' expectations of how much students can achieve in every lesson and during registration times
 - increasing the variety and pace of activities so that students are interested and engaged throughout lessons and during registration periods in order that students do not lose interest or cause disruption to the learning of others
 - providing students with regular, high quality written feedback so they know how to do better next time.
- Urgently strengthen leadership and management at all levels in order to bring about the

necessary improvements in teaching and students' achievement, by:

- ensuring that no teaching is inadequate
- involving all leaders and managers in regularly checking the quality of teaching, including the marking of students' work
- ensuring that teachers are held to account for the impact of their teaching on students' achievement
- identifying the training needs of teachers and providing high quality training to improve their skills
- sharing the strengths of the good and outstanding teaching that exists in the academy more widely to help other teachers to improve their practice.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Students enter the academy with knowledge, skills and understanding that are broadly in line with what is expected for their age. In 2012, students in Year 11 left the academy with GCSE results which were significantly below average. Their progress from their starting points in Year 7 was inadequate.
- Students make far too little progress in English, humanities and languages. In 2012 in English, for example, only 27 per cent of the students made three levels of progress from Key Stage 2, compared with the national proportion of almost 70 per cent.
- The attainment of students known to be eligible for free school meals is too variable between subjects. For example, in 2012 the results achieved by this group of students in English were on average three quarters of a GCSE grade lower than other students and significantly below the achievement of similar students nationally. This shows that the academy's efforts to promote equality of opportunity are inadequate.
- There are some signs of an improvement in the progress of current Year 11 students. These students have been the focus of the academy's efforts to improve achievement. However, the results the academy is predicting for these students, if achieved, would still be too low given their starting points and would not represent good progress over the time they have spent in the academy.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make slow progress in lessons because teachers do not use assessment information to plan work which challenges them at the right level. As a result, further support has to be provided for these students outside of lessons.
- In the past, students entered early for GCSE in languages did not do well, especially at the highest grades. However, this practice has now stopped.
- The Year 7 catch-up programme which aims to help those pupils that did not achieve the level expected for their age in reading and/or mathematics at the end of Year 6, has not yet had enough time to improve the skills of eligible students.
- The off-site provision for construction meets the needs and interests of the small number of students involved and they achieve well.
- A programme that encourages students to read each day, is helping to improve some students' attitudes to reading. The quality of these reading sessions is variable and improvements in students' reading skills from such sessions are not being built upon or extended well enough in other lessons. As a result, students' gains in reading are limited.
- The sixth form requires improvement. Students enter the sixth form typically with GCSE grades that are lower than those seen nationally. They perform well in most academic subjects and achieve grades that are broadly average when compared with sixth-form students nationally. However, the progress of students in some vocational courses is less than should be expected.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Too much teaching requires improvement or is inadequate. Although some teaching is good and outstanding the variations in quality mean that over time students' overall progress is inadequate and standards by the end of Year 11, and for vocational subjects in the sixth form, are too low and not rising quickly enough.
- Teachers do not always plan lessons to ensure that those students known to be eligible for free school meals are challenged or given the support they need to make good or better progress.
- Teachers do not routinely use assessment information to make sure that work is set at the right level for all students. For some the work is too hard, while for others it is too easy.
- Teachers' expectations of what students should achieve in lessons and registration periods are not high enough. This is seen, for example, in some registration periods in which students are largely unoccupied or given low-level tasks such as quizzes, which many do not even attempt.

One student, rightly, described the purpose of such activities as 'just filling time'.

- The pace of learning is slow in too many lessons and the work students are set is not interesting or varied enough to hold their attention, leading on occasion to restlessness and low-level disruption by a few students, which disturbs the learning of others .
- Teachers' marking is too variable and not good enough overall. Students are not provided with regular, high quality written feedback that tells them how to do better next time. Some students' books are not regularly marked and there is a lack of consistency in the setting and marking of homework. Some good marking was seen, in science for example, but even this varied in quality between teachers. Leaders and managers do not routinely check the thoroughness and quality of teachers' marking.
- A helpful approach to marking has been introduced in which students write responses to teachers' comments in green ink. Where this is applied diligently it has a positive impact on students' progress because it helps students understand how they can do better. However, not all teachers follow this practice.
- In some lessons, teachers are supporting the academy's drive to improve achievement in literacy through the recently introduced reading programme which includes, for example, displaying key words. However, this is not happening often enough to have any significant or sustained impact on raising standards in literacy. Similarly, teachers do not give students enough opportunities to develop their numeracy skills outside of mathematics lessons.
- Where teaching is good or better, as in a Year 8 science lesson on extracting starch from leaves, expectations of what students can achieve are high. Tasks are set which challenge students at the right level. In these lessons students respond to interesting and varied activities by showing a keen interest and working together in a mature way. As a result learning proceeds at a fast pace and students make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- There are too many occasions when students are not fully engaged in learning because the activities they are given to do are not interesting, well-paced or varied enough. As a result some students become restless and misbehave, which disrupts the learning of others in the class.
- Students move around the academy in a calm and orderly way, and are polite and helpful to visitors. They take pride in wearing their uniforms and look smart. However, students reported to inspectors that some of their lessons are disrupted by the poor behaviour of others. This is borne out by inspectors' own observations. Where teaching is weak, students' behaviour can be poor. When teaching is good or better, students respond positively by behaving well and keenly involving themselves in their learning.
- Students have a sense of right and wrong. They are encouraged to develop spiritually, to understand about different cultures and to support one another. The assembly programme and house system, for example, promote a strong sense of belonging to the school community. Similar encouragement is not given often enough in lessons or in registration periods.
- The academy site is secure, staff are visible around the site and there are safeguarding procedures in place. The staff deal with bullying when it is reported and keep a record of incidents. The students are positive about the guidance they are given about the risks associated with using the internet. They know about different kinds of bullying, including name-calling, and say that it is dealt with if reported.
- Sixth-form students speak very positively about their experience in the sixth form and the support they were given earlier in their school career.
- Absence rates in both Key Stages 3 and 4 have risen in the current year and are above the national average. The main reason for the rise in absence is high levels of sickness in the autumn term. However, the academy has effective procedures for tracking attendance and intervenes where it is a concern. As a result, instances of persistent absenteeism have reduced.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leaders and managers have not been successful in tackling the weaknesses in teaching and the quality of education provided by the academy has declined. Leaders remain too heavily dependent on external support in their attempts to bring about improvement.
- The quality of teaching is not checked often enough because it is the responsibility of too small a number of senior leaders. As a result, inadequate teaching has not been identified or dealt with quickly enough.
- Until recently, the training needs of teachers and other staff have not been properly identified and appropriate training has not been provided to improve their skills.
- The strengths of the good and outstanding teaching that exists in the academy have not been shared more widely to help other teachers to improve their teaching. Consequently, inspectors strongly recommend that the academy should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.
- The pupil premium funding is used to provide additional support and resources. However, these are not targeted precisely enough on the students for whom the funding is intended. As a result, the achievement of these students is too variable. In English, for example, students known to be eligible for free school meals underachieve in comparison with other students and with similar students nationally.
- The curriculum, including that in the sixth form, provides an appropriate range of courses and qualifications to meet the needs and aspirations of the students and provides a bridge between key stages and on to further education, training and employment. However, inadequacies in teaching mean that teachers do not adapt the curriculum well enough to meet the individual needs of all students.
- The academy is closely supported by the Academies Enterprise Trust, which has brokered help from a successful local school and commissioned reviews of the academy's performance. As a result of a review carried out in March 2013, far greater support has been provided in recent weeks. Additional leaders have been provided by the Academies Enterprise Trust, including an executive principal and a leadership consultant who is taking the lead on improving teaching. The capacity to bring about sustained improvement without this external support, however, is weak.

■ The governance of the school

- Before January 2013 there is little evidence that the governing body challenged the Principal and the academy's senior leaders robustly. The governing body did not question leaders sharply enough about their overly optimistic assessments of the academy's performance.
- In recent months, and especially since the March 2013 review, this has changed. The new interim improvement board is an effective instrument through which the governing body is set to drive improvement with far greater urgency. The leaders' view of the academy's performance is now honest and accurate. Short-term plans are in place, focused on the most important improvements that are needed.
- The governors have not ensured that performance targets for staff are linked well enough to students' achievement, with the result that teachers are not held to account for the progress made by students in their classes. There is little evidence that pay increases and promotions have been linked to the quality of teaching.
- The governing body manages the academy's finances efficiently, although the impact of pupil premium funding and the link between pay progression and performance are not being checked closely enough. The governing body makes sure that safeguarding requirements are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137816
Local authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	412585

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1073
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	155
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Triggs
Principal	Duncan Haig
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01642 466101
Fax number	01642 839215
Email address	estonpark@estonpark.co.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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 Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, 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.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

