

The Eastwood Academy

Rayleigh Road, Eastwood, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 5UU

Inspection dates 18–19 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students enter the academy with standards that are broadly average. Their attainment is above average in most subjects when they reach Year 11, and has risen further in 2013.
- Students make good progress in Years 7 to 11. The progress of disabled students, those who have special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language is just as good as that of other students.
- Students' progress in mathematics is well above average.
- Students have good attitudes to learning. They are courteous to one another and to adults in the academy.
- Most teaching is good or better. Teachers are experts in their subject, and plan lessons that capture students' interest.
- Students are proud to make the most of opportunities they have to take responsibility. They enthusiastically participate in an enormous range of extra-curricular activities.
- Senior leaders, under the excellent leadership of the Principal, monitor all aspects of the work of the academy, and act quickly in response to issues as they arise.
- Governors understand the work of the academy from first-hand observation. Working closely with senior staff, they support the Principal well in a relentless drive for continued improvement.
- Most parents would recommend the school to other parents.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always share their planning well enough with support staff to make sure that they understand how best to support their students.
- The academy uses pupil premium funding well to promote good progress, but has not yet been able to close the gap in attainment between eligible students' performance and that of other students.
- The academy does not do enough to help the most-able students to develop their critical thinking skills and ability to work independently so that they are able to solve increasingly challenging problems.
- The academy does not provide enough on-site support for students who are persistently absent or are at risk of exclusion.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a total of 40 lessons or parts of lessons, of which 10 were observed jointly with members of the academy’s senior leadership team.
- Inspectors examined information on students’ progress produced by the academy, and compared it with data from similar schools nationally.
- They examined students’ books during lessons, held discussions with students in all year groups, and attended part of a meeting of the school council.
- Inspectors held discussions with the Principal and senior staff, including staff responsible for subjects and for the pastoral care of students. They also met with the chair of the board of directors.
- They took into account 41 responses to the staff questionnaire, and eight responses to the on-line Parent View survey, as well as 124 responses to the academy’s own questionnaire for parents.
- They looked at key documents, including the academy’s self-evaluation, minutes of meetings, information about safeguarding, performance management documentation, and records of behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

David Lewis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Colin Logan

Additional Inspector

Jennifer Griffiths

Additional Inspector

Brian Netto

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Eastwood Academy converted to become an academy on 17 August 2011.
- When its predecessor school, The Eastwood School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The academy is administered by the Eastwood Academy Trust covering the education of children and young people between the ages of 11-16.
- The Eastwood Academy is smaller than average. It has specialisms in performing arts, sports, mathematics and computing. It is a lead school in the Southend West Sports Partnership.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The proportion of students for whom the academy is in receipt of the pupil premium is close to the national average.
- Very few students come from minority ethnic groups, and few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special needs supported by school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is below average.
- There are no students educated off-site.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the performance of students eligible for pupil premium funding so that they make even better progress, in order to narrow the gap between their performance and that of students who are not eligible for this additional funding.
- Improve the facilities and support available for students who find it difficult to engage with school, to reduce the number of exclusions and the incidence of persistent absence.
- Improve further the quality of teaching and raise the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - involving support staff in lesson planning so that they make the best possible contribution to students' learning
 - encouraging the most able students to make a better contribution to their own learning by giving them opportunities to think critically about their work, and to solve problems independently.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When students come into the school their attainment is typical for their age. The proportion of students who gain five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, is above average.
- Most students make at least the expected level of progress from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4 and the proportion of students who make better than expected progress in mathematics is consistently above average. Following a dip in 2012, it is now above average in English. The academy no longer enters students early for GCSE examinations.
- These high standards are generally reflected in other areas of the curriculum, but students did less well in science and in modern foreign languages in 2012. The academy has addressed this issue robustly and unvalidated results for 2013 show considerable improvement. Scrutiny of students' books suggests that this improvement is set to continue.
- These high levels of achievement are supported by an exceptionally good range of out-of-school visits to cultural and sporting events, links with schools abroad, field trips and other events. These are very well attended and make a big contribution to students' sense of community at every level, their understanding of the importance of endeavour, and their appreciation of the arts. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is, therefore, excellent.
- The academy's specialisms are reflected in its out-of-school activities. The impact of its links with the Southend West Sports Federation is exceptional, and the performances in theatre, music and dance are also a strength as well attracting much support from students.
- Students who have disabilities or special educational needs are supported well in line with their needs. They make good progress and, overall, they do nearly as well as their classmates.
- Students for whom the school receives additional funding (the pupil premium) benefit greatly from the support they receive and, from lower starting points, they nearly all progress as well as other students. The gap between the attainment of these students and others is marginal in both English and mathematics and is significantly less than the gap seen nationally. The progress of these students improved in 2013. For example, the proportion of eligible students exceeding expected progress in English almost doubled, and over half of these students exceeded expected progress in mathematics.
- Standards of literacy in Year 7 are broadly average, and the promotion of a culture of reading every day, by staff and pupils alike, means that students' reading skills support their learning well across the curriculum. Additional help is provided for students targeted for support through the catch-up programme and makes sure that no one falls behind as they start secondary school. Standards in numeracy reflect the high standards students achieve in mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is mostly good or better, with teaching in about one lesson in eight judged to be outstanding.
- Teachers form good relationships with their students, and many question-and-answer sessions were seen in which students' knowledge was carried forward by detailed probing. This allowed

their understanding to edge forward in clearly defined steps, and at the same time gave teachers an up-to-the-minute understanding of their progress.

- In the best lessons, teachers provide good opportunities for students to think independently. In an excellent English lesson, for example, students in Year 11 worked in groups to consider social, moral, spiritual and cultural aspects of *The Crucible*, and prepare a presentation on their ideas.
- Students comment that they especially enjoy lessons where they have opportunities to be creative, for example in a lesson in which they worked in groups to deliver an acceptance speech at an Oscar award ceremony. Good use of questioning encouraged them to reflect on their own work and that of others.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is secure. Planning documentation shows that teachers understand clearly how their students learn best and, in the main, they adapt their teaching well to cater for their students' special needs. In a few cases, however, teachers missed opportunities to allow support staff to present more-able students with tasks that challenged their critical and creative skills.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are identified in discussions with their teachers before they join the academy. They attend an induction day designed to meet their needs. Their progress is monitored carefully throughout and any difficulties are followed up carefully with additional support.
- Teachers are not always so successful, however, in meeting the needs of the most-able students because they often present them with similar tasks, rather than giving them more open-ended tasks that challenge them to think more deeply for themselves.
- In less good lessons, a lack of pace sometimes allows students to become distracted, leading to low-level disruption. Although teachers always address these issues, in line with school policy, they do not always engage the attention of all students, and learning suffers as a result.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' behaviour is good. Students are polite to adults and to each other, and there is very little oppressive behaviour. Site staff confirm that students are typically respectful and polite, and that they treat their environment with respect.
- Students respond well to events designed to develop cultural understanding, such as Africa Day, to help them to appreciate the contribution that other cultures make to global and more local society.
- Students are proud of their academy, and are keen to take on responsibility, for example as prefects or as members of the school council. They greatly enjoy participating as reading buddies in links with primary schools, and as sports leaders.
- They take a responsible approach to the wide range of cultural and social activities that the school provides, and in lessons they participate well in discussions on moral and spiritual issues in response to, for example, literary works in English when expressing emotions in drama.
- The academy has good procedures in place for promoting good attendance. The academy no longer authorises term-time holidays, and a system of intervention in response to unexplained

absence is used well to encourage attendance. Celebrations of good attendance are prominently displayed around the school.

- Overall attendance has improved over the past year and is now broadly typical for this type of school. However, there are still a few students who are persistently absent and the academy is working closely with their families to improve attendance. Persistent absence is decreasing, but is still above average. The academy has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, but does not have facilities to support students who find it difficult to engage with the school environment, and exclusions are therefore above average.

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal and his team of senior leaders promote a very clear vision for the work of the academy, which is recognised and celebrated by staff and parents alike. Heads of subject areas and pastoral leaders confirm that the academy is well led, and welcome the ownership they have of what happens in their areas of responsibility.
- All aspects of the work of the academy are monitored carefully. The academy has a robust system for managing the performance of staff, which is well supported. Teaching is regularly monitored by formal and informal observations in lessons, and professional development is carefully linked to the needs of individuals and to the teachers' standards. The needs of teaching assistants and learning support assistants are less carefully monitored, and this is an area for development.
- During the inspection, 10 lessons were observed jointly with inspectors. A high level of agreement between senior leaders and inspectors showed that monitoring of teaching and learning is based on appropriate standards, and that feedback to teachers is designed to lead to appropriate improvement in the quality of teaching.
- The curriculum caters well for the needs of students across the academy. The academy has made the decision to concentrate on GCSE rather than vocational courses, though this is under constant review. The academy is part of the Southend West Sports Partnership, which gives students access to sportsmen and women at the highest level. Many students qualify as sports leaders, and some compete at national level.
- Leaders and managers are totally committed to the well-being and success of their students, and extra-curricular activities and partnerships make sure that they are well-prepared for life in modern democratic Britain. Good links with local colleges, and information available within the academy, support them well as they embark on the next stage in their development.
- The wide range of well-attended extra-curricular activities includes performances in drama, music and dance, as well arts and photography, and international visits and events closer to home. All students in Year 10 participate in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. These extra-curricular activities play a big part in creating the positive atmosphere that pervades the academy.
- Clear strategies are in place for ensuring the safety, including e-safety, of students in the academy. Arrangements for safeguarding and child protection meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The academy is governed by a board of directors, which includes staff and parents, as well as representatives of the community and local businesses. Members of the board visit the

academy regularly in order to gain a first-hand understanding of how the needs of all students are met. They understand their role in holding the academy to account, and have received training in the use of data, which enables them to work closely with senior staff to make sure that they have a good understanding of the work of the academy, and can accurately evaluate plans for development. They link performance of staff to students' progress and teachers' pay, and set challenging targets for the Principal. The academy's finances are well managed, and within budget. Pupil premium funding is well managed, and its impact is carefully monitored. All statutory requirements, including those for child protection and safeguarding of students, 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	137284
Local authority	Southend-on-Sea
Inspection number	428907

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	834
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Booth
Headteacher	Neil Houchen
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01702 524341
Fax number	01702 508665
Email address	enquiries@eastwood.southend.sch.uk

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