

Eaton Park Academy

Arbourfield Drive, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST2 9PF

Inspection dates 14–15 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good		2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good		2
Quality of teaching	Good		2
Achievement of pupils	Good		2
Early years provision	Good		2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders at all levels work well together and have successfully raised standards and improved teaching. They have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve teaching and learning further.
- Pupils get off to a good start in the early years classes, and they continue to make good progress throughout the academy.
- In the recent tests at the end of Year 6, pupils' levels of attainment in mathematics and reading were above national average levels.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They plan interesting activities so that pupils enjoy learning and make good progress.
- Classrooms and corridors are colourful and exciting. There are many displays of pupils' work, and excellent reminders and examples for pupils of how to produce high quality work.
- Pupils feel safe in the academy, work hard in lessons and behave well.
- The academy has developed a strong relationship with parents. There are good opportunities for parents to support their children's learning.
- Governors know the academy well. They are closely involved in checking how well it is doing, and in planning for the future. As a result, it continues to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' standards in writing dipped in 2014, and were lower than those in reading and mathematics. Pupils' writing is sometimes let down by their weak use of grammar, their spelling and, for younger pupils, the quality of their handwriting.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' writing sometimes does not focus on accuracy, or provide clear guidance to pupils about how to improve their writing.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils’ learning in 19 lessons. Seven of these were jointly observed with senior leaders. The work in a sample of pupils’ books, taken from Years 2, 4 and 6, was evaluated. Inspectors also attended two assemblies.
- The inspection team observed the behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the academy at break and lunchtimes. They met formally with three groups of pupils of different ages and backgrounds. They also had a number of informal discussions with pupils.
- Inspectors took account of 17 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the academy’s own survey of parents’ views. They spoke to a small number of parents at the start and end of the day. Inspectors also took account of 30 staff questionnaires.
- Meetings were held with academy leaders, including the co-principal, teachers in charge of subjects, the special educational needs coordinator, the early years leader, and with a group of governors. The academy’s Principal was absent for the two days of the inspection. The lead inspector also spoke on the telephone with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at important documents, including information about pupils’ achievement, records of their attendance and behaviour, plans for improvement and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Michael Phipps, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Prydwen Elfed-Owens	Additional Inspector
Stephen Docking	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Eaton Park Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 August 2012. When its predecessor school, Eaton Park Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The academy is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The academy's early years provision is full-time in both its Nursery and Reception classes.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium, at over four in ten of all pupils, is much higher than average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is higher than average.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British, and almost all speak English as their first language.
- A breakfast club and after-school club, managed by the governing body, provide childcare for pupils at the start and end of each school day.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of pupils' writing by making sure that:
 - teachers consistently teach pupils good handwriting skills and how to form letters accurately, especially in the early years and Key Stage 1
 - pupils develop a good understanding of spelling, punctuation and grammar and that they apply this in all their writing throughout the academy
 - teachers focus as much on developing the accuracy of pupils' writing as on its content and quantity
 - marking contains clear guidance on how pupils can improve their writing, and that teachers check to see this advice has been acted on.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Academy leaders work well as a team, and lead with commitment and energy. They have created a very positive learning environment in which good teaching and behaviour can flourish.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the academy's strengths and what needs to be done to further enhance teaching and achievement. Plans for improvement focus on the right areas, and are used well by leaders to improve the academy.
- Performance management is robust. The targets set for teachers are firmly based on the progress of their pupils. Teachers are held to account, in regular meetings, for the progress of their pupils. They are encouraged to improve their skills through regular training.
- Middle leadership is strong. Teachers in charge of subjects and other areas of the academy make an effective contribution to raising the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Parents are supportive of the academy. They appreciate the many opportunities they have to support their child's learning. The academy also works well with grandparents who have caring responsibilities.
- Leaders and governors make sure all safeguarding requirements are met. Policies and practices to keep pupils safe are effective. The school does not tolerate discrimination of any kind. It makes sure pupils of all backgrounds and abilities have an equal chance to succeed.
- Additional funds from the pupil premium are spent effectively. These funds provide extra staff so disadvantaged pupils are taught, when necessary, in smaller groups. Money is also spent on a nurture group for pupils in Key Stage 1, and on working with families of disadvantaged pupils. As a result these pupils make good progress.
- The extra sports funding is used well by the academy to employ its own sports coach. He provides high quality teaching, runs after-school sports clubs and develops the skills of other staff. Consequently, a greater number of pupils enjoy a wider range of sporting opportunities than before.
- The academy provides pupils with interesting and well planned lessons and topics. Pupils' learning is enriched by a wide range of clubs, including rugby, art, cooking, cross country, French and karate. Pupils enjoy a number of trips, activities, special events and visitors: pupils are currently preparing for a forthcoming visit by their local MP, and pupils in Year 5 are looking forward to their residential visit.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils gain learning credits through the Children's University by taking part in after-school clubs, family events and giving their opinions.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils vote to elect representatives to the academy council, which recently ran an assembly on Parliament and democracy. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures, and are respectful of others' beliefs.
- The academy enjoys a good relationship with the local authority. It has arranged for academy leaders to provide support to a neighbouring school. Local authority officers have visited the academy to help evaluate the quality of its work, and to plan improvements in pupils' writing.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are ambitious for the academy and have clear plans for its future. They have an accurate idea of the academy's strengths and weaknesses. They understand what data on pupils' performance tell them about how well the academy is doing. As a result they are able to support academy leaders and challenge them to improve further.
 - Many governors visit the academy regularly and see for themselves the quality of teaching and pupils' work. They know how good teaching is rewarded, that it is based on pupils' progress, and about how any underperformance in teaching is tackled.
 - Governors make sure the academy's finances are well managed. They understand how additional funding such as the pupil premium is spent, and check its impact on disadvantaged pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and courteous in lessons, at break and lunchtimes. They treat school buildings with respect. They look smart in their school uniform.
- Pupils are eager to learn. They settle to work quickly, so little time is wasted. Pupils enjoy taking part in lessons, answering questions and discussing their work with a partner. They think carefully about how

they can improve their work, cooperate well in class and help each other learn.

- Pupils enjoy taking on additional responsibilities, such as being school ambassadors, prefects, sports leaders, peer mediators and play leaders. They understand that this helps them develop skills they will need later in life.
- Pupils enjoy the rewards, including class points, they receive for working hard, behaving well and coming to school regularly. Sanctions for poor behaviour are rarely needed.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Parents who spoke to inspectors agreed. Pupils say they feel safe and well looked after. They have many opportunities to learn how to stay safe, for example when using the internet, and they know about road safety and 'stranger danger'.
- The school site is secure. Visitors are carefully checked when they arrive. All necessary checks are carried out before staff are appointed.
- Pupils told inspectors that bullying is very rare. Academy records confirm this. Pupils are taught about different types of bullying, such as name-calling and cyber-bullying. Pupils are confident if they told an adult, bullying would stop. Racism and exclusions from school are almost unknown.
- The school's breakfast club and after-school club keep pupils safe at the start and end of the school day. Pupils enjoy the interesting range of activities on offer.
- Effective work by academy leaders has raised pupils' attendance to national average levels. They stress the importance of regular attendance with pupils and parents, reward pupils who attend well, and work effectively with the small number of families who do not send their children to school regularly.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. Teaching is lively and interesting. Pupils say teachers make learning fun. This helps them to make good progress in literacy, reading and mathematics.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects, and of what pupils can do. They plan activities at the right level of difficulty for all pupils, including the most able and those who find learning more difficult.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are warm and respectful. Teachers praise pupils for their effort and contributions. Pupils who might find it difficult to settle into school are supported effectively in the school's nurture room.
- Pupils told inspectors that homework is set regularly, which helps them practise what they have learned in lessons.
- Mathematics is taught well. Pupils are taught early number skills, such as their times tables, effectively. Teachers make sure that pupils have the chance to use and apply what they have learned, in order to solve mathematical problems.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported in lessons. Adults work very effectively alongside pupils, checking they understand what to do, and breaking down tasks into smaller steps so they can succeed.
- Teachers make it clear to pupils what they are going to learn, and demonstrate what successful work will look like. Teachers ask well-chosen questions to check that pupils understand what they are learning.
- Teachers give pupils many chances to talk about their learning. This means pupils can explore new ideas, and practise what they are going to write.
- Teachers provide many interesting topics for pupils to write about. Pupils enjoy the '4D room' where they are surrounded by the sights and sounds of, for example, the Egyptian desert or life on the seabed. As a result, they enjoy writing imaginative pieces. Sometimes teachers concentrate too much on the imaginative content and the amount of pupils' writing, and too little on their handwriting or the correct use of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly and accurately. Teachers' marking is frequent and detailed. It gives pupils guidance on how to improve their work. Sometimes this guidance is not clear on how pupils can further develop the quality and accuracy of their written work.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children join the academy with levels of skills and knowledge which are below those typical for their age. In 2014 they left Year 6 with standards in reading and mathematics that were above national average levels. All groups of pupils, made similarly good progress.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1 and begin to catch up well. Although their attainment is below average they have generally made good progress from their individual starting points.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics and standards are high. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels in mathematics in 2014 was above national average levels. The proportions of pupils both making and exceeding the progress expected of them in Key Stage 2 are much higher than average.
- Pupils learn to read well. They are taught phonics (the sounds that letters make) every day, in small groups which are at just the right level of difficulty for them. They make rapid progress in this important early reading skill, and results in the 2014 phonics check were above national levels. Pupils are regularly encouraged to read books at the right level. Pupils enjoy reading, and talk with enthusiasm about their favourite books and authors.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same good progress as their classmates. Their progress is checked regularly, and effective help is quickly given when needed. They are supported very effectively by skilled teaching assistants, so they learn well.
- Disadvantaged pupils make the same good progress as their classmates. Compared to their peers in the academy, their attainment in 2014 was three terms behind in mathematics, two terms in writing and one and a half terms in reading. These gaps are closing rapidly. When compared with other pupils nationally in 2014, their attainment in reading and mathematics was at the same level, but it was around three terms behind in writing.
- The academy's most-able pupils achieve well and make good progress, especially in reading and mathematics. The proportions reaching the highest levels in the 2014 tests were above average in reading and mathematics, but fell in writing.
- Pupils' standards in writing by the end of Year 6 fell in 2014. Although levels of attainment were below average in the proportions that both made and exceeded the progress expected of them in writing were above national figures. This illustrates that pupils made good progress from their individual starting points. However the progress they made was not quite as swift as that in reading and mathematics. Although pupils write often, and express interesting ideas, spelling mistakes and errors in grammar sometimes detract from the overall quality of their work. Leaders are taking action to improve the quality of pupils' writing. Academy data indicate, and checks of pupils' work made by inspectors confirm, that standards of pupils' writing are set to improve in 2015.

The early years provision is good

- The recently appointed early years leader has made a very positive impact on the quality of teaching and on children's progress. She provides inspirational leadership and clear, strategic thinking about how to improve the provision.
- The quality of teaching is improving because the early years leader acts as an excellent role model for other staff. She helps them develop their skills by observing them regularly and suggesting ways for them to improve their practice.
- Adults organise interesting activities for children to learn new skills. There is a good balance of activities led by teachers and those that children choose for themselves. Good use is made of the outdoor area to enhance children's learning.
- Children behave very well and enjoy learning. Adults act as good models for how they expect children to behave. Inspectors were impressed with how polite and sensible the children in the Nursery Year were while they ate their lunch.
- Children are very well cared for. All safeguarding and welfare requirements are met. Staff make sure that children are safe and know how to keep themselves safe.
- Most children join the early years classes with skills in all areas of learning, but especially in speaking and listening, that are below those typical for their age. They make good progress from these low starting points because of good teaching. The proportion of children who enter Year 1 with a good level of development rose sharply between 2013 and 2014, but is still below national average levels.

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	138550
Local authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	448878

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	482
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Finney
Principal	Susan Dennison (Senior Principal), Louise Brammer (Co-Principal)
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01782 234760
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