

Eskdale Academy

Eskdale Road, Hartlepool, County Durham, TS25 4BT

Inspection dates 18–19 March 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.

- Senior leaders have high ambitions for the pupils and the academy. They have successfully implemented rigorous procedures which have improved teaching and raised standards.
- Middle leaders and governors provide senior leaders with good support. As a result, the academy is improving rapidly.
- Leaders have developed a calm and well-ordered learning environment. They have created a culture in which pupils thrive and are beginning to excel.
- Pupils' achievement is good. The large majority of pupils make good progress from their below typical starting points to reach broadly average standards in mathematics and above average standards in reading and writing by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make good progress because skilled staff plan work for them which is at just the right level.
- Teaching is good and is improving. Teachers plan purposeful activities which enable pupils to learn new skills quickly. Teaching assistants support teachers and pupils exceptionally well.
- Pupils feel safe in the academy. Behaviour is much improved and is good because of the firm but fair approach taken by leaders over the last eighteen months.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are keen to learn and behave well. They make good progress because of effective teaching in a high-quality learning environment.
- Provision for sport and physical education (PE) is outstanding. Pupils develop new skills quickly through specialist coaching. As a result, the academy is beginning to win regional and national competitions.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The progress that is made by Key Stage 1 pupils is not as good as the progress made by children in the early years and pupils in Key Stage 2.
- Work that is planned for the most able pupils, especially in mathematics, is not always sufficiently challenging and sometimes they do not make enough progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 18 part-lessons, two of which were observed jointly with senior leaders. They also visited a range of other lessons for short periods including groups that support the development of pupils' reading and phonic skills (the sounds that letters make).
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders together with three governors, including the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative from Hartlepool local authority, the academy's School Improvement Partner and the Chair of the Stranton Academy Trust.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils in lessons and at various times during each day. They also spoke formally to a group of pupils on the first day of the inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of pupils' workbooks and information about pupils' current progress in lessons. They also reviewed a number of documents including the academy's development plan, attendance records, information relating to the work the academy does to keep pupils safe and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- Too few parents completed the online survey, Parent View, for their responses to be taken into account. However, inspectors considered responses to the academy's own parental survey. They spoke with parents informally at the start of the day.
- Inspectors took 24 questionnaires completed by staff into account.

Inspection team

Belita Scott, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Graeme Clarke

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Eskdale Academy opened in July 2013 and is part of the Stranton Academy Trust.
- This primary academy is smaller than the average sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or pupils who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for support through the pupil premium funding, is significantly above average. Pupil premium funding is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The academy hosts an additionally resourced language base for up to 10 Key Stage 1 pupils with special educational needs.
- An on-site pre-school facility, Owton Manor Nursery, is managed by Stranton Academy Trust. It was judged to be good at the time of its inspection. The inspection report can be found at: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>.
- Children in the early years attend full-time provision in the Reception class and part-time provision in the Nursery class.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The executive headteacher is a National Leader of Education.
- The coordinator for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is a specialist leader of education for inclusion.
- The academy has a breakfast club managed by the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the progress that pupils make in Key Stage 1 so that all achieve consistently well.
- Further improve the progress that pupils, especially the most able, make in mathematics by providing more regular opportunities for them to use and apply their mathematical skills to carry out investigations and solve problems.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Although not yet achieving outstanding outcomes, the headteacher, aided by the executive headteacher of the Stranton Academy Trust, has made significant improvements in all areas of the academy in eighteen months. Both senior leaders have high expectations of, and aspirations for, the pupils and the staff. They exemplify the academy's motto of 'Believe and Achieve'.
- Leaders have taken effective action to strengthen the quality of teaching through the appointment of new staff with specialisms in core subjects and by the provision of high quality training for existing staff. This is leading to rapid improvement and consistently effective teaching.
- Senior leaders' judgements of the progress that the academy has made are accurate. The academy's improvement plans are well focussed on key areas.
- Middle leaders use their time wisely to check on the progress that pupils make in the subjects that they lead and provide thorough feedback to individual teachers to secure further improvement.
- Performance management is well established for both teachers and teaching assistants. Teachers' pay progression is not automatic. It is dependent on effective teaching and better progress for pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, whether on roll in the academy or attending the additionally resourced language base, make good progress. This is because the academy does not tolerate discrimination, it recognises individual needs and promotes equality of opportunity very well.
- Pupil premium funding is spent wisely to provide additional and well targeted support for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, by the end of Key Stage 2, disadvantaged pupils attain above average standards. However, leaders recognise the need to close the remaining gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and their peers in the academy and are providing closely targeted support for individual pupils to ensure this occurs.
- The range of subjects and activities that the academy offers is good. High priority is rightly given to the development of pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Senior leaders have adopted the new National Curriculum. In personal, social and health education lessons, staff have worked hard to help pupils understand emotions such as anger and frustration. As a result, pupils are now better equipped to deal with their feelings and to seek solutions to problems. In this way, the academy fosters good relations effectively. This is just one example of the strong and successful emphasis senior leaders place on the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. This is demonstrated through the visible promotion of principles such as tolerance, respect and ambition. This is further enhanced through the school's work towards UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools Award, the work of the student council and the work of the 'playground friends'.
- Outstanding use is made of the additional primary school sport funding. The number of pupils participating in extra-curricular activities has increased, as has the range of sporting activities on offer. Pupils' skills have improved because of the work of a specialist coach, who is ably supported by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable leader for PE.
- Senior leaders, including governors, welcome the continued and effective support of the local authority. The local authority has a very accurate view of the academy's performance.
- Stranton Academy Trust, the academy's sponsor, has been instrumental in driving improvements in the academy. The sponsor is rightly confident about the capacity of senior leaders to further improve the academy.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors share the headteacher's ambitions for the academy and have been resolute in their decision-making to secure better outcomes for pupils. They have a good understanding of the academy's strengths and areas for development and provide strong challenge to senior leaders. Governors are knowledgeable about the quality of teaching and standards in the academy because they have a good understanding of published data and check regularly on the progress that is made in classrooms. Governors know the positive impact that the pupil premium and the primary school sport funding have had on pupils' progress and opportunities. They ensure safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements. Governors understand the link between teachers' performance and salary progression. They have taken rigorous action to tackle underperformance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are respectful and courteous in and around the academy; for example they hold doors open for other pupils and adults. Pupils report that behaviour improved during break times as a result of the provision of play equipment and the work of their 'playground friends'. Lunchtime is a calm, orderly and social experience in the separate dining hall.
- Pupils like to learn and some are developing a real thirst for learning. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 2 were determined to use the new library facilities during lunchtime breaks. However, on a very few occasions when their work is too challenging or too easy, pupils are distracted, lose concentration and do not work hard.
- There have been no exclusions since the academy opened. Parents told inspectors that behaviour is good and much improved since the new leadership team arrived. The staff who returned a questionnaire all agreed that behaviour is good and is consistently well managed.
- Pupils think the standard of behaviour is good and is much improved.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils and parents told inspectors that the academy is a safe environment for learning.
- Pupils understand the different forms which bullying can take and know what to do if they feel they are being bullied. Pupils told inspectors that adults deal quickly with any minor incidents such as name calling. Records confirm that incidents are dealt with immediately and rigorously. There have been no racist incidents since the academy opened.
- Senior leaders take e-safety very seriously and have provided high quality training for the staff team. As a result, all pupils know how to keep themselves safe especially when using the internet and other forms of modern technology.
- Although attendance is below average it is much higher than it was eighteen months ago because of work undertaken by the academy's parent support advisor with individual pupils and their families.
- Pupils who attend the academy's breakfast club arrive punctually for lessons in the morning, well nourished and ready to learn.

The quality of teaching is good

- The good quality of teaching, especially in reading, writing and mathematics, has resulted in pupils making increasingly good progress since the academy opened.
- All teachers mark pupils' work diligently. They tell pupils what they have done well, what they need to do next to improve their work and then give pupils the opportunity to act upon the advice. This process helps pupils to make rapid progress.
- On occasions, the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged in mathematics and do not get enough opportunity to use their skills to solve tricky problems.
- Highly-trained teaching assistants are deployed effectively and provide targeted support for individuals and groups of pupils. As a result, disadvantaged pupils and those with disabilities and special educational needs make good progress.
- Phonic (the link between letters and sounds) and early reading skills are taught well. Teachers plan activities which enable individual children and groups of pupils in the early years to make rapid progress. As a result, pupils love to read and are desperate to earn a pass to use the new library in the academy.
- Specialist staff in the additionally resourced language base ensure that the pupils who attend make good progress is the acquisition of speech and language skills through individualised programmes of work.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement data and pupils' current work confirm that the majority of pupils are making good progress. Increased expectations of pupils, rapid improvements in teaching and better behaviour are leading to more pupils reaching and sometimes exceeding the standards expected for their age. For example, Year 6 pupils had above average achievement in both reading and writing in 2014 and broadly average

achievement in mathematics.

- Similarly, in the early years, children are making good progress from starting points that are below those typical for their age. The proportion who reached a good level of development in 2014 is well above the national average.
- Leaders are aware that the progress of pupils in Key Stage 1, although improving, is not as strong as in the other key stages. This is due to instabilities in staffing that have now been addressed. However, pupils did achieve well in the most recent check on standards in the Key Stage 1 phonics test.
- Pupil premium funding has been used judiciously to employ more teaching assistants, provide high quality training and ensure targeted support for individual pupils. The impact of this spending can be seen in the good progress disadvantaged pupils make across the academy from their individual starting points. They attain well above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics compared to other disadvantaged pupils nationally. At the end of 2014 they reached similar standards to non-disadvantaged pupils nationally in all subjects. At the end of 2014, this group of pupils were behind their classmates by four terms in mathematics, three terms in reading and five terms in writing. The gap between them and their classmates is closing rapidly and current pupils are now only two terms behind in all subjects.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same good progress as their peers.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who attend the additionally resourced language base make good progress in the acquisition of language skills but slightly slower progress in mathematics.
- The most able pupils achieved exceptionally well at the end of Key Stage 2 last year. The proportion who reached the higher standards in reading was significantly above the national average. Recent assessments show that improved provision in Key Stage 1 is beginning to enable these younger pupils to make better progress.

The early years provision

is good

- Good leadership and management ensure that teaching in the early years is consistently good.
- Behaviour in the early years is good. Children, particularly the increasing number who have attended the academy's nursery for two-year-old children, settle quickly, respond well to instructions and play cooperatively with their classmates.
- The children feel safe and grow in confidence throughout their time in the early years. Governors make sure that all of the statutory safeguarding and welfare requirements for the early years are met.
- The indoor and outdoor learning environments are bright, stimulating and well resourced. Teachers plan activities well to address the needs and interests of individual children. For example, the outdoor car wash was visited by many boys who completed the necessary paperwork before starting to wash their bicycles in warm soapy water.
- Children enter the Nursery class with skills that are below those typical for their age. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes and are well prepared for their learning in Key Stage 1.
- Children acquire phonic knowledge and early reading skills well because teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations, plan daily activities which inspire the children and constantly check the progress they are making. In the Reception class, children use their knowledge of phonics to write simple sentences such as 'I can see a big elley funt'.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who reach expected standards in literacy and mathematics at the end of the early years is above average in literacy and numeracy.
- Staff work hard to involve parents in their children's learning. Regular workshops are increasingly well attended and parents are beginning to contribute to their children's progress logs known as 'learning journeys'.
- The standard of care in the early years is exemplary. For example, staff provide a simple breakfast every morning for children who are hungry when they arrive.

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 | 139584 |
| Local authority | Hartlepool |
| Inspection number | 449845 |

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

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|--|--------------------------|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 227 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Judy Thompson |
| Headteacher | Elizabeth Killeen |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Telephone number | 01429 272255 |
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