

Eden Park Academy

119 Warwick Road, Carlisle, Cumbria CA1 1JZ

Inspection dates

13–15 December 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- School leaders and the proprietor have ensured that all the independent school standards are met. Outcomes for pupils, including those with special educational needs, and/or disabilities, are good.
- Staff have a shared culture of nurturing pupils and enabling them to make good progress. This means that pupils successfully develop new skills and this goes hand-in-hand with improved social and emotional development.
- Communication has improved between the school and children's homes. However, the focus on how learning can be enhanced at home is not yet strong enough.
- The curriculum is broad and tailor-made to meet the needs of pupils. Pupils learn about values that lie at the heart of modern Britain.
- Leaders ensure that effective systems are in place to improve the good quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Changes to the resources of the school have had a positive impact but some longer-term goals have yet to be achieved, including an expanded curriculum offer.
- Pupils are set clear boundaries. However, more could be done to ensure that they understand the difference between home and school rules.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and enable pupils to begin to catch up and engage in learning, often for the first time in many years. Occasionally teachers do not stretch the most able pupils sufficiently and, when this occurs, their progress is steady rather than rapid.
- The school's systems and procedures to safeguard children follow national guidelines and are secure. Pupils indicate that they feel safe in school. They make good progress in managing their own behaviour.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are good. The school carries out comprehensive baseline assessments of behaviour and attitudes to learning. However, when pupils arrive at school for the first time there are some gaps in the information that the school receives from feeder schools and local authorities that slows initial learning.
- The development of high-quality respectful relationships between pupils and staff lies at the heart of the school's success.
- Pupils gain a variety of skills and qualifications which they can build upon when they progress to further education, training or employment.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that all pupils can make rapid rates of progress by:
 - ensuring that the most able pupils are given tasks that consistently challenge them to reach their full potential
 - ensuring that useful assessment information is acquired from pupils' previous schools and local authorities to enable pupils to get off to a flying start
 - working in closer partnership with children's homes to ensure all staff have a shared understanding of pupils' learning and the different expectations of how children behave at home and in school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- After some turbulence in staffing in the period since the previous inspection, a cohesive and committed team has been established. Staff speak with great commitment about the mission of the school to rapidly improve pupils' behaviour and progress in learning. They share the vision of the head of education and deputy headteacher to provide a calm, happy and safe environment where pupils' past difficulties can be put behind them and they can make a fresh start.
- The proprietor and other senior managers of the group welcome the strong team ethos and have invested in improving resources so that good teaching is regular in an increasingly broad range of subjects. They recognise that they are on a journey of improvement and have set ambitious goals to expand the age range of pupils attending the school and the vocational curriculum in the future.
- The head of education knows the school well and his evaluation of its strengths and areas for improvement is correct. He has an accurate view of the quality of teaching and how it could improve by using reviews of pupils' workbooks, observation and planning and assessment information. There are gaps in the assessment information provided from referring schools. Leaders are aware that more needs to be done to collect and use such information to accelerate pupils' progress.
- Staff report that arrangements to improve their performance as teachers have improved and the bar has been raised. They welcome the changes and enhanced ambition, and recognise the positive impact this has had on pupils' achievements.
- Improvements to the curriculum and teaching have contributed to the good progress pupils make in their learning. The focus on setting short-term targets and capturing the small improvements in learning that pupils make has increased pupils' motivation. The focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy is very strong and linked to thorough assessment.
- There is a personalised approach to meeting pupils' needs, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Each pupil has a tailor-made programme linked to their age and gaps in learning. Leaders recognise that there is still more to do to ensure the most able pupils are challenged sufficiently across the wider curriculum.
- Most pupils who leave in Year 11 are supported to move on successfully to education, training or apprenticeships when they leave the school. They receive impartial, high quality careers advice.
- Pupils successfully explore life in modern Britain by engaging in a range of visits and listening to guest speakers. Recently, there have been opportunities to explore issues such as different cultures and beliefs, citizenship, law and order. Pupils begin to mature and show respect for the feelings of adults and their peers. There is a 'zero-tolerance' attitude to the use of derogatory language.

Governance

- Governance is strong. The proprietor has a good understanding of the work of the school and its impact. The proprietor and operations manager have supported the head of education well to implement their shared vision.
- Governors and senior leaders hold the deputy headteacher to account for the day-to-day management of the school. Governors hold frequent meetings and receive accurate reports on school performance. They have employed an external adviser to impartially evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its adherence to the independent school standards. Reports are clear and accurately identify areas for improvement and development.
- Governors have made sure that all of the independent school standards are met. All required information for parents is up to date and available on request from the school. A website is in the final stages of development and the head of school hopes to launch it early next term. Governors have ensured that arrangements to manage the performance of staff are rigorous.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Recruitment procedures are rigorous. Staff are suitably trained in how to identify and respond to concerns, including concerns about sexual exploitation, online grooming and extremism.
- Staff understand the risks that pupils face due to their personal circumstances and emotional development. There are detailed plans in place to minimise risks both inside school and on out-of-school visits.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The development of trusting and respectful relationships is seen by staff as a key requisite to successful teaching. Most pupils respond positively and behave in a calm and purposeful way. Teachers set the bar high in terms of behaviour. They know their pupils well and can pre-empt potential trigger points by quietly and calmly insisting on a level of behaviour that pupils will have to develop to be successful in life after school. This means pupils can begin to learn and make progress often for the first time at school.
- Good quality teaching and carefully planned activities result in pupils making good progress in their learning across a broad range of subjects, especially in the development of basic literacy and numeracy. They also achieve a range of entry-level qualifications in other subjects that prepares the foundations for further study after they leave the school.
- Teachers use the comprehensive assessments that they carry out about pupils' abilities and aptitudes to plan work that moves them on quickly from low starting points. However, the information that they receive from pupils' previous schools is often very limited. As a result, they cannot always plan tasks that enable pupils to immediately make progress when they enter the school.
- Pupils' prior knowledge in subjects such as history, geography, art, design technology and food studies are carefully checked but in some cases this does not lead teachers to set challenging enough targets, especially for the most able. This means tasks can lack

challenge and rates of progress are steady rather than rapid.

- Staff work well with pupils to develop resilience and perseverance in tackling tasks. There are usually high staff-to-pupil ratios which mean that there is always someone there to intervene when individual pupils struggle with learning.
- Pupils' books show that teachers' feedback enables pupils to understand where they have gone wrong and what they could do to improve. Some pupils struggle to complete homework and leaders recognise more could be done to encourage them to continue to learn in the home.
- There is a small library of books that leaders are planning to expand. Online resources are used well by teachers to illustrate learning points. Pupils rarely use online resources directly themselves as the school fears that they may be vulnerable to exploitation. Leaders realise this area of work should be reviewed to see if more can be done to exploit these resources while maintaining online safety.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils gain in confidence and self-belief. Teachers' strong focus on building trusting and respectful relationships lies at the heart of the school's approach. This develops pupils' attitudes to learning and they become more positive about their relationships with teachers and other adults.
- During the inspection pupils were observed interacting in a friendly and relaxed way with adults at the school. Pupils' surveys indicate that they feel safe and know how to keep safe when they encounter risks. The life-skills work they undertake helps them to prepare for life after Eden Park, for example in basic cookery and practical life skills.
- Leaders have developed a broad programme to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully. Various displays and photographs are included on wall displays and in pupils' portfolios to showcase the range of opportunities offered and the wide range of understanding that pupils develop.
- Staff are consistent in the way they tackle the inappropriate use of language and ensure that pupils understand the principles of right and wrong and how these are important British values. Records show that incidents of discriminatory or derogatory language are very rare and if they do happen are quickly stamped out.
- Records show that bullying is rare in this school because of the high levels of supervision in and around the school and the willingness of pupils to tell staff of any problems, confident that they will be dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Impartial expert careers advice is available to all pupils. Pupils are prepared well for the transition to the world of work, training or apprenticeship.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. All the pupils who spoke to the inspector were polite, friendly and respectful. They respond positively to the management strategies used by

staff to reinforce positive behaviours and attitudes.

- Incidents of serious misbehaviour are rare, responded to robustly and recorded in detail in the incidents log. Pupils are encouraged by a rewards programme and the success of such rewards is also carefully monitored and modified to make sure it has maximum impact. The number of pupils with complex behaviour that has required physical restraint by staff has reduced in recent months. Such incidents are increasingly rare.
- Staff report that they are confident in the support and training they receive to support pupils. They comment on the excellent teamwork that takes place when pupils need intensive support. They are able to share professional good practice and the daily team meeting helps them discuss each pupil's behaviour in depth.
- Behaviour and attitudes to learning are positive and this is reflected in the improvement in pupils' attendance. Attendance rates remain below average for secondary schools, at around 80%. However for many pupils this represents a massive improvement on their previous attendance rates at other schools. A significant proportion of pupils were not attending school at all before they came to Eden Park.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Observation of learning, work in pupils' books and portfolios and teachers' assessments of pupils' work show that pupils are generally making good progress in their learning, particularly in the basic skills of English and mathematics.
- Information gathered from initial assessments when pupils begin school is used effectively to plan learning. Targets set are generally challenging and take into account gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding from their previously unsuccessful experience of education. On a few occasions when pupils have settled in to the school the targets for the most able are not reviewed and reset to reflect even greater challenge.
- All pupils are looked after by local authorities and have social, emotional or mental health difficulties. The personalised approach, good-quality teaching and high staff-to-pupil ratios mean pupils' needs are well met. Consequently they make generally good progress from their starting points. Differences between their achievements and those of other pupils nationally begin to diminish.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities enables pupils to develop not only academically but emotionally and socially as well. This means that the level of maturity that pupils exhibit develops rapidly.

School details

Unique reference number	132112
DfE registration number	909/6050
Inspection number	10020789

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	4
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Radical Services Limited
Chair	Luiz Guilherme
Headteacher	Simon Harrison
Annual fees (day pupils)	£32,818
Telephone number	01228 537609
Website	No website (in development)
Email address	education@radicalservices.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–13 September 2013

Information about this school

- Eden Park Academy is registered as an independent special school for 12 boys and girls aged from 11 to 16, all of whom have social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- The mission of the school is that 'Every pupil will achieve excellent results in their qualifications, that range from entry-level certificates through to GCSE and vocational qualifications.' The ethos of the school is to offer a nurturing and caring environment that allows all pupils to thrive and reach their full potential.
- The academy is run by the Radical Services group which encompasses Pebbles Care and the Partners in Care groups. All pupils are looked after by referring local authorities.

- The head of education took up post in December 2014 and acts as headteacher for the two schools in England and another one in Scotland. The deputy headteacher took up post in September 2015.
- There are currently four pupils on roll, aged 11 to 16. One of the current pupils has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The proprietor, who is the company representative, has responsibility for the governance of the school. The head of operations assists the proprietor with matters of governance.
- The academy does not use any form of alternative provision. However, pupils are educated at places other than the main site when they participate in physical activities and practical subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed several lessons or parts of lessons and looked at pupils' work, teachers' planning and information about pupils' progress. He observed pupils' behaviour in different situations. He also visited the schools' workshop site and carried out a joint lesson observation with a senior leader.
- The inspector held meetings with the head of education, head of operations, deputy headteacher, and teaching staff. He spoke with pupils informally throughout the inspection to seek their views.
- The inspector scrutinised records relating to safeguarding, behaviour, incidents of restraint and attendance. School policies and school documentation were also examined.
- The inspector observed the start of the school day and break and lunchtimes.
- The inspector took account of eight staff questionnaires. There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View), and no messages from parents or carers.

Inspection team

Andrew Johnson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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