

Easterside Academy

Erith Grove, Easterside, Middlesbrough TS4 3RG

Inspection dates

7–8 February 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and her team have provided inspirational leadership that has led to strong rates of progress and the highest standards of care for pupils.
- Leaders have developed an innovative and vibrant learning community where well-planned and engaging lessons are complemented by imaginative projects, outdoor learning and extensive extra-curricular provision.
- Leaders have developed strong systems and external partnerships to check the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Governors are astute and insightful and are closely involved in the life of the school. They have the expertise to hold leaders to account for key aspects of performance.
- All teachers are committed to developing the highest standards of behaviour and welfare. The care team's work with parents and pupils is exemplary in promoting positive behaviour and overcoming barriers to learning.
- Leaders' work to develop strong links with parents and families is innovative and much valued. It has had a direct impact on improving pupils' learning behaviours and outcomes.
- Provision in the early years provides children with imaginative and rigorously planned experiences that support children in making rapid rates of progress.
- The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are extremely effective. All staff and the specialist care team are continually mindful of pupils' welfare.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of effective teaching and close monitoring.
- As a result of strong engagement with families and robust procedures, levels of attendance have improved rapidly and are now in line with those seen nationally. Pupils are happy at school and value their education.
- Teaching does not consistently challenge the most able and middle-ability pupils to work at greater depth.
- The strong progress pupils make in English and mathematics is not consistently matched in other subjects, including science, religious studies and geography.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress in science, religious studies and foundation subjects, including geography and history, by:
 - providing further opportunities for pupils to deepen their knowledge and apply their understanding in these subjects.
- Enhance the quality of teaching to further strengthen pupils' progress by:
 - setting pupils tasks that are closely matched to their abilities
 - providing learning experiences and tasks that enable increasing proportions of pupils to work at greater depth
 - strengthening the impact of strategies that help teachers to learn from the best practice at the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher and her team have built a distinctive ethos that supports continual improvement at all levels and enables pupils to make extremely strong progress. Their focus on developing positive behaviours transforms learning opportunities for pupils. The relationships between pupils, staff and parents are exemplary.
- The headteacher and governors maintain a relentless focus on improving outcomes for all pupils. They consistently review the progress of disadvantaged pupils and closely evaluate the impact of teaching and additional support. As a result of their actions, progress has consistently improved over the last three years.
- Senior leaders have accelerated rates of progress across the school. They check pupils' progress regularly and have developed an accurate view of pupils' performance. As a result of close tracking, teachers are able to respond promptly to address any underachievement and plan interventions to support pupils to make better progress.
- Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the school's overall strengths and areas for improvement. They have developed appropriate improvement plans that have a history of yielding improvement. Senior leaders and subject leaders carry out regular monitoring of the quality of teaching and the standard of work in books. These processes have led to high standards of work and presentation from pupils.
- Performance management arrangements are extremely robust and closely checked by the headteacher, governors and school improvement partners. The headteacher has developed a comprehensive system to review all aspects of teachers' performance and this is regularly reviewed against their targets, their teaching and the progress pupils make. Lesson observations are carried out with external partners to verify the accuracy of judgements.
- The leadership of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is highly effective. In the first instance, well-targeted teaching and effective support from teaching assistants support pupils in making good progress. Specialist support is provided for pupils in the high needs resource base. In addition, progress is further enhanced by the strong links leaders have developed with external partners to promote speech and language growth and social, emotional and behavioural development.
- Leaders and governors assiduously track the impact of the use of pupil premium funding to improve provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. This has contributed to strong progress in external assessments over time, with disadvantaged pupils often matching and exceeding their peers. The school's current tracking information shows that disadvantaged pupils continue to make strong progress and that differences in attainment are also diminishing rapidly against non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.
- Leaders provide a curriculum that is exciting, broad and balanced. They ensure a close focus upon the acquisition of the key skills of literacy and numeracy. The development of pupils' skills and understanding in reading, writing and mathematics is complemented in subjects such as science and history. At times, teachers do not plan as assiduously to greater depths in the subject-specific aspects of science and

geography.

- Leaders have imaginatively developed the use of outdoor learning to support pupils in developing wider environmental awareness and in managing risks and problem-solving. Pupils access extensive extra-curricular activities in sport, cookery and booster classes to further enhance their learning.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional. A cohesive programme aligns key assembly themes to work carried out in class. Pupils explore different religions and have visited different places of worship, including cathedrals and mosques. Pupils have an awareness of different types of families and show considerable respect for equality, including differences of faith, race and sexual orientation. They have a commitment to their local community, visiting local care homes in cross-generational work to become a dementia-friendly school.
- Leaders' work to promote close partnerships with families is pioneering. Parents joined the children, staff and governors in compiling a list of 101 key experiences children should experience in their time at Easterside Academy. Parents regularly join their children at 'stay and play' sessions and open mornings. The inspection coincided with an open morning where parents joined their children in Years 5 and 6 in history sessions, cake-making and poetry workshops. On arrival at Nursery, the care and attentiveness shown towards the children was demonstrably extended to their parents.
- Funding from the government to promote sport and increase physical activity is being used highly successfully. In 2015/16, pupils participated in more external competitions than ever before and secured silver awards for learning outside the classroom and school games participation. Pupils and staff have worked with external coaches and gained access to specialised experiences, including yoga and wheelchair basketball, alongside football, dance and swimming. Over half of pupils take part in the extensive extra-curricular sporting provision.
- Leaders are outward-looking and receive effective support from a school improvement partner who reviews pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. The school has established a partnership with the Discovery Alliance to further moderate standards and share good practice. A number of leaders have become moderators at different phases for the local authority and two senior leaders provide further expertise as specialist leaders of education. The headteacher's expertise in accelerating progress for disadvantaged pupils has recently been recognised with her appointment as a high-attainer reviewer with the Transforming Tees project.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. The governing body has a strong combination of specialist insight and close community awareness that enables them to rigorously hold the school to account. They use their school improvement partner and the local authority head of achievement to provide additional objective analysis of school performance that supports them in checking standards.
- The chair of governors forensically examines the impact of pupil premium spending and asks leaders to consider the impact of long-term developments upon provision. Governors visit the school regularly and check the accuracy of the information they receive. After being apprised of teaching and learning developments, a governor tested

out leaders' assertions by talking to pupils about resilience and inviting them to capture examples of effective learning for him on their tablet devices. They did so with confidence and assurance.

- Governor committees provide a regular focus on pupils' progress and curriculum provision. Through their work with the Discovery Alliance, governors subject the school to the additional scrutiny of the chairs of five primary and one secondary school. This openness reflects an outward-looking group who are determined to secure ongoing improvement. Their commitment to continuous training is exceptional.
- Governors are proud of the school and passionate in their commitment to pupils and the wider community. They ask tough questions but often receive swift answers from the 'total-quality' approach of the headteacher.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The central importance of ensuring that pupils are safe permeates all aspects of the school's work. All staff take their responsibilities for pupils' welfare extremely seriously. Safeguarding training for all staff and governors is extensive and up to date.
- Leaders carry out extremely rigorous checks to ensure the suitability of adults working on-site. Governors have thorough training in safer recruitment. Concerns over pupils' welfare are pursued swiftly and documented thoroughly.
- The care team provides support for pupils' welfare that has a transformative impact on the lives of pupils at the school. Their pre-emptive work with families and children to address concerns before they escalate is both innovative and effective.
- Leaders and the care team have developed finely honed links with external partners to continually address pupils' welfare and their social and emotional well-being.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders have developed a sustained focus upon developing a vibrant learning culture. Considerable emphasis is placed upon developing the key skills of literacy and numeracy and enhancing these by teaching the wider attributes of resilience and enquiry. As a result of effective coaching and modelling, pupils develop strong learning behaviours.
- Pupils are encouraged to regularly discuss their learning and this develops their articulacy and self-confidence. In the majority of lessons, learning is effectively managed as pupils are quick to settle and eager to learn as a result of clear classroom routines and good teaching. On occasions, a minority of pupils have not fully acquired the reflective or 'peer critique' skills to take full advantage of their learning partner work. This can leave them inactive while others discuss and share.
- Teachers develop pupils' writing skills by enabling them to write in a range of styles. Themed projects, often intensified by external visits, give context that makes writing purposeful and relevant. This was reflected in accounts of visits to Alnwick Castle and explorations of pestilence and plague in historical writing.

- In Year 6, the teacher displayed excellent subject knowledge, providing pupils with a convincing understanding of key grammatical features of language. Pupils were able to use this knowledge to investigate key features of texts and also use them to improve their own writing.
- Teachers promote the key skills in mathematics from an early age and pupils' awareness of number and place value is built upon as they progress through the school. In Year 6, pupils developed a fluency in their approach to arithmetic methods and were given increasing access to problem-solving. These approaches contributed to strong rates of progress in 2016.
- Teachers have responded purposefully to the dip in phonics outcomes in 2016. Inspectors observed a range of phonics sessions where effective grouping and well-modelled sounds supported pupils in developing an accomplished awareness of the relationships between letters and sounds. Effective teaching is contributing to good progress.
- Historically, pupils' progress in reading has been less rapid than in writing and mathematics, but leaders are building a dynamic reading culture. Pupils were observed reading with fluency and expression, showing a clear awareness of sentence demarcation. This was reinforced by an understanding of key grammatical terms. While there was some variance in the range of texts covered in pupils' reading records, all adults listen to pupils individually reading at least once a week.
- Inspectors listened to a range of pupils read and were impressed by the clarity of their reading. Less-able pupils use decoding strategies to help them pronounce unfamiliar words. The most able pupils read with fluency and show perceptive textual understanding.
- Assessment systems are enabling teachers to track pupils' progress and address any underachievement more swiftly by modifying their teaching or organising additional support and interventions.
- Specific nurture group work, effective support by teaching assistants and dedicated resources are helping pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to make good progress.
- Teaching in the early years is particularly stimulating. The creative use of resources and imaginative planning encourage active and purposeful learning from the moment children arrive. Children are happy, engaged and curious through the many stimulating opportunities to learn.
- Teachers work effectively with teaching assistants to plan and provide well-targeted support that is contributing towards the good progress that pupils make. Teaching assistants know their children well and intervene effectively to provide support.
- Teachers do not plan as effectively to deepen pupils' knowledge in science or foundation subjects such as geography. While these subjects provide the context for engaging writing tasks, teachers do not probe the subject-specific skills with sufficient depth and there are more limited opportunities for them to apply their learning.
- Teaching promotes good rates of progress but does not consistently enable middle-ability and the most able pupils to reach levels of greater depth. They are not given sufficient opportunities to move on in their learning or apply their knowledge, skills and

understanding in more advanced ways.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. The wider curriculum and daily practice ensure a constant focus on pupils' welfare. The wide range of activities to raise self-esteem and promote positive mental health is a defining aspect of the school's ethos. Pupils could describe how the school's open culture and message, 'don't keep it in – let us know', have enabled them to talk about their feelings safely.
- The work of the care team in anticipating welfare concerns and supporting positive behaviours is exceptional. They work closely with pupils, parents and external agencies to develop positive behaviours and tackle barriers to learning. There are many instances where these partnerships have transformed pupils' learning and their wider engagement with school.
- Pupils value the friendliness and support of their teachers. They feel that bullying is extremely rare and are confident that adults would address any unacceptable behaviour. Pupils also value the opportunity to use the worry box to share any concerns they may have. They value the close support of pupils and staff in 'one big happy family' where 'no one is left out'.
- Pupils feel safe in the school and the vast majority of their parents agree. One parent wrote: 'I am proud my child attends this school as we feel welcomed, safe and involved in thriving experiences.'
- Pupils develop physical well-being through imaginative engagement with the outdoor environment and regular opportunities to participate in sport. Activities such as yoga have promoted a physical discipline and emotional calm, while heightened participation in sport and competitions has developed pupils' skill, stamina and competitive skills.
- Pupils are able to discuss personal safety and the actions that the school has taken to help them keep safe. They demonstrated a good awareness of how to keep safe online.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Leaders have clear behavioural expectations that are implemented with robust consistency across this school. In developing learning behaviours, pupils are mindful of the emotional impact of their words and actions on the feelings of others. Pupils are kind and considerate to one another and work alongside their working partners to share ideas and check the quality of their work. They routinely held doors open for inspectors and asked us how we were enjoying our time at their school. They were keen to discuss their learning and their pride in the experiences they had taken part in.
- Teachers show a relentless focus on developing strong learning behaviours that are enabling pupils to become more independent in their learning. Pupils could talk about how the 'tough turtles' initiative had helped them to become more independent without

relying excessively upon adults. Well-targeted resources, such as the 'caddy packs' with literacy and numeracy materials, support this independence.

- Pupils show a visible pride in their school and their community. They talk to one another and adults with confidence and articulacy.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and work conscientiously. Incidents of low-level disruption are extremely rare. Behaviour systems encourage positive attitudes to learning and the rare instances of misbehaviour are deftly addressed. As a result of excellent support and partnership work, standards of behaviour have consistently improved over three years so that instances of internal isolation are increasingly rare.
- Leaders have introduced robust systems to promote improving levels of attendance. This is continually celebrated in assemblies and highlighted in all newsletters. The school commissions the services of its own educational welfare officer to support attendance and work alongside the care team in improving engagement with families. As a result of this work, attendance has consistently improved over a three-year period so that it is now in line with national averages, while levels of persistent absence have significantly reduced.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2015, all pupils at key stage 2, including disadvantaged pupils, made significantly better progress than that seen nationally in writing and mathematics. In 2016, progress remained significantly strong in mathematics and positive in reading and writing. At key stage 1, the proportions of pupils achieving expected standards continued to increase and reflected strong progress from starting points. However, differences remain in the proportions working at greater depth.
- Current pupils are making consistently strong progress in mathematics, reading and writing across key stages 1 and 2. The sustained focus on these skills across the school contributes to positive progress for all pupils.
- Pupils' progress in science, religious studies and foundation subjects is not as strong as in reading, writing and mathematics as pupils do not have regular opportunities to deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- As a result of effective planning, exceptionally well-resourced learning and high-quality teaching, children make excellent progress in the early years and are achieving good levels of development close to those seen nationally from significantly lower starting points. Their rate of progress in a short period of time is rapid and sustained.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards in the phonics screening check has typically been rising above that seen nationally, despite a dip in 2016. Leaders have carried out an intensive review of provision and current pupils are clearly making strong progress, with the vast majority on track to meet the required standard in 2017. Standards of reading are good and pupils read with clarity and understanding.
- The majority of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress through effective and well-resourced teaching and tailored support. Individual case studies illustrate that the support with speech and language and social and emotional needs had significantly improved rates of progress for these

pupils.

- In 2015, disadvantaged pupils made extremely strong progress. Pupils' progress in 2016 remained positive when compared with other pupils nationally, although the proportion working at higher levels was lower. A thorough review of their work in books shows that they continue to make good rates of progress across many year groups and subjects, in many cases equalling or surpassing their peers.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are not making as strong progress across a wide range of subjects, as they are not given sufficiently regular opportunities to apply their learning and work at greater depth.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Children enter the early years with knowledge, skills and abilities that are well below those typical for their age. As a result of incisive leadership, precise assessment, robust planning and high-quality teaching, children make outstanding progress.
- Leaders continually review the impact of provision and all teachers and teaching assistants reflect upon their practice. The team benefits from a leader who brings expertise as a specialist leader in education. Recent professional development on language development has led to changes in practice that have had a demonstrable impact upon improving pupil outcomes.
- Leaders have developed exemplary approaches to develop effective parental involvement in their children's learning. From 'stay and play' sessions to open mornings to shared reading activities, parents are regularly involved in their children's learning. As one parent said: 'The weekly 'stay and play' sessions are a great opportunity for parents to become involved in their child's learning.'
- Teachers provide a highly stimulating and exceptionally well-resourced environment where children are inquisitive and curious and show excellent levels of concentration. Learning areas are divided with care and attention and children share their learning objectives clearly on their learning walls. All adults are adept at talking with and questioning children, which develops children's understanding and their confidence in speaking and listening.
- Parents speak extremely highly of the Nursery provision, where children arrive happy and eager to learn. One parent described how her child was 'confident and calm' through the support of 'amazing' staff who 'know her routine' and were helping her to 'make great progress in all areas of learning'.
- Children settle to learning swiftly and sustain excellent concentration in phonics and numeracy lessons from a very early age. Teachers have good subject knowledge that supports children in developing positive reading and arithmetic skills. Teachers promote children's interest in writing from a very early stage and children display a clear pride in the skills they develop.
- In the afternoon sessions, children showed the ability to learn with enthusiasm, curiosity and independence in the continuous learning sessions. Children are taught how to consider one another's feelings and resolve conflicts. As a result, children behave extremely well and cooperate effectively with one another.

- All teachers monitor children's progress rigorously and record this accurately. Learning journals across Nursery and Reception show that children make excellent progress from their starting points. Teachers have an accurate picture of children's abilities and learning needs and adapt teaching and learning opportunities skilfully to further their development.
- Children make consistently high rates of progress from low starting points. Attainment differences from low starting points are continuing to diminish rapidly as a result of close monitoring and effective teaching. Pupils' academic progress is complemented by rapid progress in their social and emotional development and their speech and language skills.
- Safeguarding practices in the early years are highly effective. Children are taught how to manage risks from an early age and the robust safeguarding culture that permeates the school is equally apparent in the early years. There are no material breaches of statutory welfare requirements as children are safe and well supported.

School details

Unique reference number	140714
Local authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	10023851

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	306
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Jonathan Reay
Headteacher	Mrs Delyth Linacre
Telephone number	01642 273 006
Website	www.easterside.mgrid.org.uk
Email address	eastersideacademy@middlesbrough.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school converted to an academy in April 2014. The school works alongside other stand-alone academies in the Discovery Alliance to monitor standards and share good practice.
- This is an above-average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who

access special needs support is average.

- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is well above average.
- The school has a high needs resource base that provides education for 12 children with specific learning or behavioural needs from across the borough.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and the proportion whose first language is not English are well below average.
- In 2015 the school exceeded the government's floor standards, which set the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics. The unvalidated data for 2016 outcomes indicates that the school will also exceed the minimum targets for 2016.
- The school has achieved a number of awards including Basic Skills Award, Investors in People, Leading in Parental Partnership, Learning outside the Classroom Silver Award, Geography Bronze Mark Quality Award, Artsmark Gold Award and Sainsbury's School Games Silver Award.
- The headteacher is a high-attainer reviewer with the Transforming Tees project. Two members of the senior leadership team are specialist leaders in education for the early years and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a wide range of lessons, covering all classes in the school. The headteacher accompanied the lead inspector on a number of observations on the first morning of the inspection.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. Meetings were also held with members of the school's care team. The lead inspector also met six members of the local governing body, including the chair and vice-chair. The lead inspector met the school's improvement partner. The lead inspector talked to a group of pupils at lunchtime on day one of the inspection and the inspection team talked to pupils in lessons and at breaktime about their learning.
- Inspectors talked to parents as they dropped their children off at school on day two of the inspection. They also talked to parents who had joined the Years 5 and 6 open morning on day two of the inspection.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed during lessons, lunchtimes and playtimes.
- Inspectors listened to groups of pupils reading and talked to them about their reading.
- Inspectors extensively examined the quality of work in a wide range of books. They discussed pupils' work and their learning with them in lessons.
- Inspectors looked at the school's work and considered documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, curriculum plans and information relating to pupil achievement and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took into account 26 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey and 10 free text responses. They also took into account 37 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Malcolm Kirtley, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andy Jones	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Aitchison	Ofsted Inspector
Dawn Foster	Ofsted Inspector

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