

Eastfield Academy

St Albans Close, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN3 2RJ

Inspection dates

26–27 September 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- During a period of staffing instability, leaders have not ensured that the quality of teaching has remained consistently good.
- Pupils are not making fast enough progress, nor attaining highly enough, in key stage 2.
- Not all teachers use the assessments they make of pupils' understanding to plan appropriate work for different groups of pupils. As a result, some pupils find work too difficult, whereas the most able pupils are not given work that is demanding enough.
- Teachers do not consistently address pupils' basic mistakes in their spelling, grammar and punctuation, nor give them opportunities to write longer pieces across the curriculum.
- Although pupils' skills in calculation are visibly improving, their ability to solve problems and reason mathematically is not yet high enough.
- Pupils are not making sufficient progress in science. Not all teachers plan enough lessons where pupils can investigate and write accounts of what they are doing.
- Staff have, this term, begun a new way of measuring how well pupils are doing. However, leaders have not yet ensured that the data in this system is consistently accurate.
- Middle leaders are relatively new and keen to make an impact. However, they have not had enough chance to observe how well their colleagues are teaching, nor to show them how to teach their subject highly effectively.
- Leaders are not ensuring that the pupil premium is having a direct impact on the academic progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Targets that teachers are set through their performance management do not make them accountable for pupils' overall progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Children settle very quickly into the early years because teaching is consistently good. Leadership of the early years is of high quality and parents are fully involved in their children's learning.
- All pupils look very smart in their uniform and are proud to be part of Eastfield Academy.
- Staff keep pupils safe and ensure that pupils, particularly those who are vulnerable, are very well looked after.
- Staff celebrate the many cultures and nationalities of pupils, so pupils become very respectful of others.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, and thereby outcomes, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - use the checks that they make on what pupils know or can do when they plan the next steps in learning
 - give work to pupils across the curriculum that is suitably matched to their needs and, in particular, that they consistently challenge the most able pupils so greater proportions achieve a greater depth of understanding
 - correct pupils' basic errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation and ensure that pupils develop good skills in these areas
 - give pupils sufficient opportunities to write at length across the curriculum
 - plan and deliver lessons in mathematics that give pupils ample opportunities to solve problems and to reason mathematically
 - enable pupils to make good progress in science by planning plenty of opportunities for pupils to investigate and to record the results with increasing skill over time.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - senior leaders check that the information that staff enter into the school's new assessment system is consistently precise
 - middle leaders have an accurate idea of the quality of teaching across the school and are able to model best practice to their colleagues
 - the pupil premium is spent so that disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, consistently make accelerated progress in English and mathematics from their starting points
 - the school's system of appraisal for teachers is effective by accurately reflecting the need to raise outcomes across different subjects.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that the quality of teaching is consistently good. While teaching has continued to improve in the early years and in key stage 1, it has declined in key stage 2. The headteacher has now secured a full complement of permanent teaching staff. These teachers are enthusiastic and committed to the school and its pupils, but their arrival is too recent to demonstrate enough impact.
- New subject leaders are keen to improve the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make. However, they have not yet had sufficient opportunity to see their colleagues teach. As a result, they are unable to report to senior leaders and governors about the quality of teaching. They have also not been given opportunities to support colleagues who are less confident or who are not yet highly effective, by modelling best practice to them in their given subject area.
- Leaders have not spent the pupil premium funding in ways that will ensure that all these pupils make good academic progress in English and mathematics from their starting points. As a result, too few disadvantaged pupils attain well, and not enough of the most able disadvantaged pupils attain a greater depth of understanding.
- It is too early to measure the impact of the improved feedback and advice that senior leaders are giving to teachers. Also, the targets that teachers receive regarding pupils' progress through the school's performance management process only relate to one subject. This means that progress could be declining in other subjects even though targets are met.
- Senior leaders have very recently adjusted the system by which staff measure and record pupils' achievements. Though all staff are clear about this system, leaders have not yet checked that the information teachers are beginning to enter is accurate.
- Following the much lower outcomes of pupils in key stage 2 in 2016, the multi-academy trust did not provide leaders with good support soon enough to restore the quality of teaching quickly to its previous good level. However, a new and effective adviser from the trust took up her post from the start of the summer term 2017. In this short time, she has made a good impact across the school by, for example, raising the skills of staff to assess pupils' work and by completing a comprehensive overview of the support that pupils are receiving.
- Prior to the inspection, the headteacher had correctly and clearly identified the areas of weakness that inspectors found. The school development plan that leaders and governors have written matches these areas closely. Leaders are keen to improve the school so that it not only becomes a good school once again as soon as possible, but continues to improve until it is outstanding.
- Senior leaders ensure that the curriculum that pupils receive is broad, balanced and interesting for pupils. For example, the topic 'May The Force Be With You' allows pupils in Year 1 to learn about the history of flight while, in the Year 2 topic of 'The Plot Thickens', pupils study The Great Fire of London, Guy Fawkes, light and dark, and electricity. Pupils in Year 6 study 'It's all Greek to Me', which includes work on ancient civilizations and Greek mathematicians.

- The curriculum is enhanced with a good range of extra-curricular clubs which help pupils to develop their skills and talents. As well as those provided through the primary physical education (PE) and sport premium, which is well spent to improve participation for pupils in sports such as fencing, netball and dodgeball, staff organise clubs such as arts and crafts, team building, football and information technology.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. As a result, pupils are thoughtful and reflective. For example, pupils in Year 6 are asked to think about the sacredness of the natural world. One pupil had written, 'The world can't look after itself. Personally, I think it is our job. We could make a start by creating less fires and smoke because it pollutes the air.'
- Staff celebrate the many different faiths, cultures and nationalities of pupils, and this is reflected in much bright display work around the school. For example, each classroom door has a map showing the different countries pupils come from and the different languages they speak. Pupil 'EAL ambassadors', who have previously arrived into the school having little or no English, provide excellent support for new pupils who come to Eastfield Academy from abroad. These pupils help their peers to settle in quickly and to learn to communicate well. They reflect the school's highly caring ethos.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. As well as teaching pupils to be respectful of school rules, staff give pupils opportunities to learn about the benefits of democracy. For instance, pupils vote for members of the school council and, from Nursery onwards, contribute to the plans teachers make about their lessons. Pupils are also very respectful to others regardless of their faith, appearance, family structure, culture or beliefs. For example, when asked if the school taught them to value others equally, one pupil summed up the thoughts of others by saying, 'Of course. Why wouldn't they? Everyone is valued.'
- Senior leaders ensure that the funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well used. The coordinator for these pupils monitors their progress well and ensures that their parents are kept well informed of the provision pupils receive and the progress they are making.
- Staff who inspectors met explained how they now had a very clear idea of the priorities of the school. They explained how leaders treat them with respect and that they feel well supported in their role by both leaders and the multi-academy trust.

Governance of the school

- Governors make a clear and improving contribution to the school. As well as ensuring that pupils are fully protected, they are asking increasingly effective questions about the achievement of pupils. Led by a confident chair, they have a good knowledge of the school's many strengths and, like senior leaders, have correctly identified the weaknesses that leaders need to prioritise to improve the school. Governors meet with senior leaders regularly to discuss the school development plan, and they play an effective overall strategic role. They are committed to taking all action necessary to ensure that the school's trajectory of improvement is brisk and that teaching throughout the school and pupils' achievements are consistently good.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are kept safe. All staff are regularly and thoroughly trained in all aspects of safeguarding, including in areas such as extremism and female genital mutilation. As a result, staff can recognise the many different signs that might indicate a pupil could be being harmed. They do not hesitate to use the school's clear procedure to report any concerns they have immediately to leaders.
- Leaders compile comprehensive records of any concerns, keeping parents fully informed unless doing so would further increase the risk of harm to a child. They make prompt referrals to a range of external agencies where necessary and work particularly well to support pupils whose home circumstances may make them vulnerable. The school website contains good levels of information for parents on how to keep their child safe while, for example, using modern technology.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Although teaching in the early years and key stage 1 is good, it is not consistently so in key stage 2. Not enough teachers make accurate assessments of their pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. They do not use their judgement to plan suitable work for different groups of pupils. As a result, pupils who need to catch up are given work that is too difficult for them. Expectations are often too low for the most able pupils, who teachers do not challenge consistently with work that makes them think hard.
- Not all teachers follow the school's marking policy to address the basic errors that pupils make in their spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Pupils' progress in their writing has slowed because not all teachers have given pupils sufficient opportunities for extended writing, including across the curriculum. As a result, teachers have not developed pupils' stamina to write at length when this is required.
- Teachers are using a new scheme to teach mathematics increasingly well. They have made the improvement of pupils' understanding of numbers a priority, and this is proving successfully in helping pupils to calculate with increasing accuracy. However, teachers are not consistently delivering lessons in mathematics that give pupils sufficient opportunities to solve problems and to reason mathematically.
- Although teachers ensure that pupils have a broad scientific knowledge, not all teachers are planning sufficient lessons for pupils to conduct scientific investigations. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write about what they predict will happen, record their results and draw scientific conclusions from their work.
- Teaching, though not yet consistently good, is improving. For example, teachers have identified specific pupils who need relatively small amounts of additional support to help them to become considerably more skilled in their English and mathematics. They have begun plans which include personalised homework for pupils and a clear focus on precise targets.
- Teachers teach phonics consistently well. As a result, pupils become confident readers

from a young age. Teachers promote an enjoyment of books, using 'reading champions' who ensure that all pupils in key stage 2 are heard reading at least weekly, as well as encouraging parents to hear their children read at home.

- Teaching assistants support and extend pupils' learning well. They are vigilant in noting any pupils who begin to lose focus. They consistently ask pupils pertinent questions sensitively. These promote pupils' confidence and independence.
- Classrooms are purposeful working environments where good-quality classroom displays support pupils' learning, reminding them of what they need to remember and practise.
- Teachers organise a popular weekly homework club for both pupils and parents. As a result, pupils get a valuable opportunity to practise their skills alongside members of their family.
- Teachers consistently maintain good discipline in lessons. Pupils are respectful and almost always pay attention. On the infrequent occasions where a few pupils lose concentration for short periods, it is because the activity is too difficult or unduly easy.
- Pupils with significant physical needs are fully included in lessons. Teachers collaborate well with external agencies to ensure that these pupils have the right resources to be able to access the curriculum and learn well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff ensure that pupils become keen learners who know that making mistakes is an essential part of learning. Pupils read through the targets they are given before they begin work. They say these targets help them know what they need to improve most, and they are given time in the school day to do this.
- Pupils inspectors met were very keen to explain how safe they, their friends and siblings feel in school. They explained how there is little bullying and name-calling, and that there are always members of the pastoral team, or their teacher, who they can approach if they ever feel concerned or upset. Pupils say that staff consistently sort out any problems that a pupil has both briskly and effectively.
- Pupils know how to stay safe, including from different forms of bullying. As well as being taught about the dangers of strangers, water, roads and fire, they know how to stay safe when using the internet or a mobile phone. They understand that they should not upload personal details or respond to a message from someone they do not know personally, and to report to an adult they trust any message or image that worries them.
- Pupils like staying healthy and know how to do this. They know, for example, which foods they should avoid eating too often and which things to eat plenty of. Pupils say that they greatly enjoy PE and the many sporting opportunities that the school provides for them.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In classrooms, disruption is rare. Pupils behave well and pay attention to adults.
- Staff manage the small number of pupils who find it difficult to control their behaviour well, so that lessons are not interrupted. Staff deal with any occasional unkind language from a pupil instantly and decisively. They help these pupils to understand the consequences of their action and to make better choices over time.
- Around the school pupils are respectful and well behaved. They are consistently polite to visitors and are keen to tell them about any positions of responsibility, such as school council membership, head boy or girl, or prefect, that they hold.
- Pupils are very proud of being a part of Eastfield Academy and wear their smart uniform with great pride. Inspectors saw pupils taking care to adjust their ties so that they looked their very best.
- Lunchtimes and breaktimes are very happy occasions where pupils mix cheerfully together regardless of their family circumstances, culture, age or religion. They quickly and sensibly walk into class independently at the end of these times and are ready for their next lesson.
- Pupils' attendance overall is in line with the national average. Data from the school shows that it is continuing to improve. Historically, a higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils have been persistently absent, compared with the national average. However, leaders and staff give clear messages to families about the importance of pupils attending school promptly and regularly. As a result of this, and the hard work of staff in working with parents whose children do not attend regularly enough, persistent absence for pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, is falling.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Until 2015, pupils in key stage 2 had made significantly greater progress in all subjects, compared with that of other pupils nationally, by the time they left the school. However, because pupils in the 2016 Year 6 cohort had not received consistently good teaching over time, progress fell the following year. Leaders concede that teachers' assessment in writing, which showed pupils' progress in writing was in the top 1% of all schools nationally, was not accurate. This year, teachers' writing assessments have been moderated by the local authority to ensure their accuracy.
- Only just over one in four pupils overall attained the expected combined standard at the end of Year 6 in 2016. No pupils achieved the higher combined standard. This meant that most pupils in this cohort did not leave for secondary school well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Unconfirmed data for 2017 shows that, though pupils' progress in reading in key stage 2 has improved, their progress in both writing and mathematics is in the lowest 25% of all schools nationally. Again, only just over one in four pupils left the school this summer having met the combined standard of attainment.

- The progress of disadvantaged pupils has stayed too low for two years. Though their progress in reading has improved from the previous academic year, their progress in mathematics has remained in the lowest 5% of all schools nationally. One third of disadvantaged pupils met the combined standard of attainment in 2016. This year, it is just 7%. Workbooks from disadvantaged pupils currently in the school show that not enough of them are making good progress. This is also true for the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- The proportion of the most able pupils overall making good gains in their learning is not high enough. Provisional information for key stage 2 indicates that, for example, the progress of these pupils in writing is in the lowest 5% of all schools nationally. None of these pupils met the combined standard at greater depth this year.
- Pupils who need to catch up are not making fast enough progress over time. As a result, none of the low-ability pupils left the school at the end of the summer term having attained the expected combined standard.
- Inspectors and senior leaders met to undertake an extensive scrutiny of pupils' work, from both last year and this, across different year groups in key stage 2. This confirms that pupils' progress requires improvement because it is not consistently strong.
- A comprehensive package of support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including effective assistance from teaching assistants, means that these pupils make good overall progress from their starting points.
- Though the proportion of pupils who passed the Year 1 phonics screening check fell in 2016, good and improving teaching means that it has risen again. In 2017, it is broadly in line with the national average.
- The achievement of pupils at the end of key stage 1 has been at least in line with the national average for the last two years.

Early years provision

Good

- Around four in five children enter the school with skills that are below, or well below, those typically found in children of the same age. However, due to consistently good teaching which meets children's needs, they quickly begin to catch up.
- The early years leader, though relatively new to the profession, is highly skilled and is both determined and passionate about making the early years a centre of excellence in the school. She has a clear knowledge of each child and ensures that her staff are given high-quality training and support so that they can assess children accurately.
- The early years leader ensures that there is very regular communication between staff in the Nursery and in the Reception class. As a result, staff know children well and children's good progress continues seamlessly as they transfer from Nursery to Reception.
- Staff have shared ways of working and are very effective in asking children appropriate questions, presenting them with good choices, praising positive behaviour and modelling communication. As a result, children settle in rapidly and develop early confidence.
- Inspectors saw how two-year-old children, who the Nursery has just begun to admit,

integrated well alongside other, older children. Staff were sensitive to the needs and abilities of these children and had ensured that they had removed items such as scissors so that two-year-olds could play and explore happily and safely.

- The outdoor area is well used to promote children's learning and engage their interests. Children in the Nursery learn how, for example, to use boxes to create 'stepping stones' to walk across and draw tracks on the ground using chalk.
- Children's behaviour is exemplary. Despite their very young ages, they cooperate happily, regardless of whether they are making sandcastles in Nursery or learning new phonic sounds in the Reception class. Children act safely and sensibly and follow the instructions they are given.
- Staff ensure that children who are in the early stages of learning English are well supported. For example, staff use picture cards to help children to speak common words. Once children have developed a basic initial vocabulary, staff teach them simple phrases and sentences.
- Because staff use additional funding for both disadvantaged children and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, these children make the same good progress as others. Good communication between the early years leader and the coordinator for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities leads to these pupils' needs being identified quickly and appropriate support being put in place.
- The quality of the communication and partnership with parents is a particular strength. Parents send staff information and photographs about the things children learn at home. Staff use these to help them assess what children can do. Parents are also welcomed warmly into the early years classrooms. For instance, staff explain what sounds or letters children have been learning and ask parents to help their children find objects with these sounds or letters over the weekend. Parents inspectors met told them how much they appreciated being involved in their child's education.
- Due to the consistently good teaching that pupils of all abilities and needs receive, they make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1. The proportion of pupils who attain a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has consistently improved over four years, and is now above the current national average. This year, almost four in five children achieved this.

School details

Unique reference number	138423
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10037190

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	236
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Ben Brown
Headteacher	Tracey Hamilton
Telephone number	0160 4405042
Website	www.eastfieldacademy.co.uk
Email address	enquiries@eastfieldacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 July 2014

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.
- Eastfield Academy is a slightly smaller than average-sized primary school. It is a member of the David Ross Education Trust.
- The school has a Nursery and a Reception class in the early years foundation stage. It has just begun to admit two-year-old children to the Nursery.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is high. Almost half of pupils speak English as an additional language.

- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2, by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in all classes. Several observations took place accompanied by the senior leaders. In total, 16 lessons, or parts of lessons, were observed. The inspectors also scrutinised many examples of pupils' work.
- The inspection team held meetings with senior leaders, subject leaders, representatives of the governing body and pupils, as well as a representative of the multi-academy trust. They analysed the 36 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, studied the free-text comments and also met with parents at the start of the school day.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's development plan and self-evaluation, policies and records related to safeguarding, records of pupils' behaviour, the school's information about pupils' outcomes and attendance, and records of the governing body.

Inspection team

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