

The Parker E-ACT Academy

Ashby Road, Daventry, Northamptonshire NN11 0QF

Inspection dates

20–21 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires Improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not used additional funding suitably to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. These pupils do not achieve as well as others in the school do.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have not successfully resolved all the areas for improvement identified by inspectors.
- Pupils' achievement is inconsistent. They do not make strong enough progress across all subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities do not attend as well as other pupils. A greater proportion of these pupils are excluded than other pupils.
- Teachers' expectations are not routinely high enough for the quality of pupils' work and its presentation.
- Recently appointed leaders have not yet had time to bring about sustained improvements.
- The quality of teaching is variable across the school. Good teaching practice is not shared effectively.
- Teachers do not consistently use the information about pupils' needs to plan learning that engages and challenges all pupils to make progress and to develop the appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills.
- In some lessons, low-level disruption affects how well pupils learn.
- Students in the sixth form do not make consistently strong progress because the quality of teaching is too variable.

The school has the following strengths

- In 2017, pupils' progress in English, modern foreign languages and humanities was above the national average.
- Staff work closely with each other to keep pupils safe. Pupils feel safe at school and know that staff will deal with any concerns.
- Pupils' behaviour is improving.
- There are some pockets of stronger teaching across the school.
- The requirements of the 16–19 programmes of study are met well.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well throughout the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - new leaders are supported to be fully effective in their roles
 - leaders, including governors, are more precise in their analysis of data, including the impact of pupil premium funding and SEN funding on the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, so that they can take swifter action to further improve the progress that these pupils make.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - there are more opportunities for teachers to share their good teaching practice with each other, improving the consistency of teaching across the school
 - teachers use information about pupils' abilities and needs to plan learning that engages them and is sufficiently challenging for all pupils
 - teachers raise the expectations of what all pupils are able to achieve and of the presentation and quality of pupils' work.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - putting effective strategies in place to reduce the absence and exclusions of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - eradicating low-level disruption in lessons so that all pupils can make at least good progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching in the sixth form so that all students make at least good progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders do not evaluate precisely enough how well groups of pupils are doing. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not achieve as well as others in the school.
- Leaders have not used additional government funding sharply enough to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. The approaches taken by leaders have not sufficiently secured better outcomes for these pupils.
- Leaders have not taken enough action to resolve all of the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. For example, they have not ensured that teachers routinely use assessment information to meet the learning needs of particular groups of pupils.
- Some subject leaders effectively share the good practice in their departments, but this is not the case in all subjects. Opportunities for teachers to learn from the good practice that exists in the school are not yet having a consistent impact on the quality of teaching.
- New senior and middle leaders are helping the school to improve. These leaders have introduced whole-school strategies to improve key aspects of the school's work, for example in relation to improving attendance. It is too soon to evaluate securely the effectiveness of these new strategies.
- Following the introduction of a new behaviour policy, leaders have an increasingly clear overview of patterns of behaviour incidents, including for specific groups of pupils. Staff are issuing fewer sanctions as pupils' behaviour improves and the impact on pupils' learning is reduced. Leaders recognise that these improvements are not yet sustained.
- Leaders' use of the Year 7 catch-up premium funding to help pupils who start school behind their peers is effective. For these pupils, there are marked improvements to their literacy, which is helping them to do better across a range of subjects.
- Pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum. Leaders have reviewed the key stage 4 curriculum and made changes in response to poor outcomes in some subjects. Since leaders agreed to share the sixth-form provision with another school, sixth-form students can now choose from a greater range of courses, including level 2 and vocational options. More students than previously choose to study in the sixth form due to this increased choice.
- The school's work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Leaders promote a different value each term. For example, in an assembly inspectors observed, pupils were encouraged to reflect on the value of perseverance and consider how they could be 'someone who rises up and not the person who gives up'. During tutor periods, pupils consider a range of moral and social issues such as bullying and extremism. Pupils said that they enjoy these lessons.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of fundamental British values. For example, Year 10 pupils engage with issues of individual liberty and the rule of law as part of a presentation on prisons. Pupils also learn about different faiths and cultures. For

example, primary school pupils complete a project about Africa as part of the transition process. Such experiences prepare pupils well for the challenges and opportunities of life in modern Britain.

Governance of the school

- Governance is provided by the E-ACT academy trust. Those responsible for governance have not ensured that school leaders have sufficiently resolved the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.
- Governors have not ensured that the school's use of additional government funding to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities has had enough impact for these pupils.
- Governors effectively conduct their responsibilities to safeguard the pupils in school. They have sound knowledge and skills.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders maintain accurate and appropriate records. They ensure a thorough approach to safer recruitment and that all appropriate procedures are in place for checking the background information of staff when they are appointed.
- Staff understand their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. One staff member described safeguarding pupils as being of 'paramount importance'. Regular safeguarding training helps them to have a good knowledge of the local risks that pupils may face. For example, a significant number of staff have recently received training in providing mental health first aid. Staff understand and use the school's simple and straightforward system for reporting any concerns.
- Safeguarding leaders are well trained and supportive of each other. They maintain accurate and appropriate records of safeguarding concerns, paying close attention to the speed with which they respond to concerns. These leaders work well with other agencies to ensure that pupils get the support they need quickly. Leaders follow a clear system when pupils arrive or leave the school to ensure that no pupil goes missing from education.
- Parents and carers, pupils and staff agree that pupils are safe at this school. Pupils are aware of whom to report concerns to and are confident that pastoral staff will deal with issues effectively. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet and receive advice concerning, for example, healthy living, consent and the police 'run, hide, tell' campaign linked to terrorism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is variable across different subjects. Some of the weaknesses identified in teaching, learning and assessment were also areas for improvement from the previous inspection.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of are not yet high enough. At times,

they do not use information about pupils' abilities and needs to plan appropriate activities. Occasionally, pupils work on the same activities regardless of their ability. As a result, groups of pupils including the most and the least able are not challenged sufficiently and do not progress as they could.

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are inconsistent. When teachers plan activities that engage and motivate pupils, pupils respond positively, achieve well and enjoy their learning. When teachers' planning fails to meet pupils' needs, however, this leads to low-level disruption and pupils make much less progress.
- Some teachers do not use questioning well enough to measure how much pupils have learned and to deepen their knowledge and understanding. Questions are often too narrow, and pupils are not encouraged to explain their ideas more fully. This limits their progress.
- The school has a policy on marking and feedback involving 'SLIP' (strength, level, improvement and pupil response). Many teachers follow the agreed approach to identifying pupils' successes and next steps.
- There are times when a lack of clarity leaves pupils unclear about what they have to do. When teachers' explanations are clear, pupils start work quickly and with enthusiasm. However, when they are less clear, the pace of learning slows.
- Pupils read regularly in lessons and at home. They have reading records that parents complete. Pupils who read to an inspector did so with enthusiasm and confidence.
- There are pockets of stronger teaching in the school where teachers plan appropriately challenging activities that engage pupils in their learning. For example, in a mathematics lesson, inspectors observed the teacher using skilful questioning to challenge pupils' misconceptions in algebra. In English, the teacher used the 'five-a-day' strategy to develop pupils' understanding and to inform future learning. Pupils responded keenly to these teachers' high expectations and well-planned activities.
- Most teachers have good subject knowledge and, as a result, are able to engage in detailed discussions with pupils about the topic matter. This helps to deepen pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Where learning is most effective, teachers have positive relationships with their pupils and pupils interact well with each other. In these instances, pupils feel emboldened to ask more questions and take more risks. Inspectors saw evidence of this in mathematics.
- Teaching assistants offer high-quality guidance to pupils in the 'pod' area. They support individuals from Years 7 to 11, creating an atmosphere that is conducive to work. Due to this effective support, some of these pupils attend school more regularly and their behaviour improves, helping them to make more progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have strong relationships with each other, within and across the different year

groups. Inspectors observed pupils of different ages interacting positively with each other during the inspection.

- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. They are aware of different types of bullying and are confident that, should bullying take place in school, teachers would resolve it quickly. Pupils act as 'buddies' to others who need support. One pupil who spoke with inspectors said that pupils are very 'accepting' of each other. There is good support for pupils' well-being through the student support centre, which all pupils can access.
- The school provides effective careers advice right from the start of Year 7 through to Year 11. For example, Year 11 pupils are involved in a 'My future' day, while Year 8 pupils attend a skills show. The proportion of pupils who are not in education, employment or training when they leave school is below the national average.
- Some pupils, particularly boys, do not consistently take enough pride in their work. Where teachers regularly monitor pupils' work, it is of a higher standard. However, some teachers do not consistently challenge poor presentation.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are more frequently absent from school than other pupils. The support for these pupils to improve their attendance has not been sufficiently effective.
- Fixed-term exclusions from school, although reducing, remain high. The proportion of pupils who are excluded from school is above the national average. However, the proportion of pupils who are excluded more than once is now below the national average.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are more likely to be excluded than other pupils in the school.
- Not all pupils behave well in lessons. Some of the poorer behaviour is because pupils find the work in class too difficult or too easy. Such behaviour slows the progress that these and other pupils make.
- Leaders have recently introduced a new behaviour system in the school. Following an initial rise, the number of recorded incidents of poor behaviour by pupils has begun to decline. Pupils and staff said that behaviour has improved as a result of the new strategy. Inspectors did not see any significant incidents of poor behaviour during the inspection.
- Pupils conduct themselves in a calm and appropriate manner around the school site. They interact well with each other when moving between lessons, during social times and in the dinner hall. Pupils were polite and personable when speaking with inspectors, holding doors and providing directions.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils was below that seen nationally for other

pupils in 2016 and 2017. Across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics, the gaps between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils were wider in 2017 than in 2016.

- The overall progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities was below the national average in 2017. These pupils did not make as much progress as other pupils, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- In every year group, with the exception of Year 7, current disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities are not making rapid enough progress across all subjects to catch up with their peers. Leaders' use of additional government funding has not had sufficient impact on these pupils' progress.
- The progress of girls has improved particularly in English and humanities. Girls also improved their progress in mathematics in 2017, having been significantly below the national average in 2016.
- From their different starting points, pupils of different prior abilities make broadly average progress.
- Pupils' progress is stronger in some subjects. In English, pupils' progress was above the national average in 2016 and improved further in 2017. Their progress in mathematics also improved slightly and was close to the national average in 2017. The inspectors' analysis of current pupils' work shows that pupils' progress in English and mathematics continues to be stronger than in other subjects.
- In modern foreign languages, pupils have made consistently good progress over time.
- The proportion of pupils who successfully move on to places of further education, employment or training at the end of Year 11 is above national levels. Pupils receive good-quality and impartial careers advice. This enables them to make post-16 choices that are appropriate to their abilities and aspirations.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is not consistently good across all subjects. Teachers do not routinely challenge students, particularly the most able, to ensure that they all make good progress. The school's information for current Year 13 students indicates that there are variations in the proportion of pupils who are meeting their target grades across different subjects.
- In 2017, the progress that students made was broadly average, but there was too much variation from different starting points. Some students did not achieve what they are capable of, particularly those who entered the sixth form having attained the equivalent of an average grade B at key stage 4.
- In 2017, disadvantaged students did not make as much progress as other students nationally.
- In 2017, the proportion of students who completed their courses was lower than the national average. During this academic year, this is also already the case. However, students are well supported in moving to appropriate alternative courses or provision.
- Leaders have a precise understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the sixth-

form provision. When students fall behind with their studies, leaders ensure that teachers support them.

- Teachers support those students entering the sixth form who need to re-sit GCSE examinations in English and mathematics. Most of the students achieve these qualifications when they retake these examinations.
- Attendance in the sixth form is higher than in the rest of the school.
- Safeguarding arrangements in the sixth form are effective. Students are well cared for by staff. They know how to stay safe, including online, and learn about age-appropriate issues such as driving awareness and alcohol abuse.
- Leaders have ensured that there are sufficient opportunities for students to participate in relevant work experience and work-related learning. A high proportion of students enjoy experiences which are relevant to their potential career choice.
- Students receive impartial careers advice and guidance that prepare them well for their next steps of choosing and applying to universities, apprenticeships and employment. A majority of students secure a place in education, employment or training at the end of their courses.
- Students are proud of their sixth form, and many have positive attitudes to their learning. They appreciate the strong relationships that they have with their teachers and the fact that teachers treat them as young adults. Students praise the support they receive from teachers, especially when they need help completing their next steps applications. Students said that the sixth form is improving.
- The school meets the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes. Leaders agreed to share the sixth-form provision with another local school within the trust at the start of this year. Students now have access to a greater range of courses, including at level 2, to suit their abilities and interests.

School details

Unique reference number	138235
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10041571

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	853
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	147
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mr Michael Wemms
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Mackereth
Telephone number	01327 705816
Website	www.theparker.co.uk
Email address	enquiries@theparker.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	2–3 December 2015

Information about this school

- The Parker E-ACT Academy is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- The school has been sponsored by E-ACT since September 2012. The trust is responsible for the school's governance and holds all the legal responsibilities for the school. The trust has set up an ambassadorial advisory group (AAG). The AAG does not have any delegated powers of governance.
- The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic groups is smaller than average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is just above average.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The school does not currently make use of alternative provision for its pupils.
- Since September 2017, the school has shared its sixth-form provision with another local school within the trust.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of key stage 4.
- The headteacher was absent during the two days of inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 40 lessons, across a wide range of subjects and in all key stages. Some lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders. Inspectors also observed tutor time and two assemblies.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in lessons across all year groups and in a sample of pupils' books.
- The lead inspector held a range of meetings, including with: the head of school; the senior deputy headteacher who has oversight of safeguarding; the leader responsible for the pupil premium funding; and two representatives of the multi-academy trust, including the deputy chief executive officer.
- Inspectors held further meetings with: the deputy headteacher with oversight of the sixth form and careers; leaders responsible for behaviour and attendance, teaching, learning and the curriculum; the coordinator for the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities; the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education coordinator; subject and pastoral leaders; and a group of staff.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, before school and during breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors spoke formally with pupils from key stage 3 and key stage 4, students from the sixth form and a group of other pupils. Inspectors also spoke with other pupils informally.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading, including pupils from Year 7 and Year 8.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents relating to the school's provision, including: self-evaluation and improvement planning records; minutes of meetings of the trust; plans related to additional government funding; behaviour, attendance and exclusion records; information about the attainment and progress of all pupils; safeguarding records; and information on the school's website. The lead inspector also checked the school's single central record and the school's system for recruiting staff.
- Inspectors evaluated the 107 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including 33 free text responses.
- Inspectors analysed the 49 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

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Nina Bee	Ofsted Inspector
Andy Hunt	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Shepherd	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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