

The Eastwood Academy

Rayleigh Road, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 5UU

Inspection dates

4–5 December 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The principal's clear, unwavering vision focuses on supporting pupils' high achievement across a wide range of pursuits. Staff implement the vision very well. As a result, pupils receive an outstanding education.
- Leaders at all levels are very skilled. They know what they do well, but they concentrate their energies on what they could still do better. Consequently, the capacity of leaders to continue to improve the school is high.
- Pupils make significant progress as they move through the school. They join the school with levels of attainment that are broadly average. By the time that they leave, their attainment is high and their progress is well above average.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are well looked after and that they are kept safe. Pupils are very happy to attend the school.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers' subject knowledge is very strong, they question pupils effectively and they plan activities that are suitably challenging.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the school's curriculum is a key strength. Pupils have access to a very effective range of curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are supportive of each other and they develop very strong working relationships with their teachers. Pupils' attitudes to learning are a key strength of the school.
- Pupils play an important part in leading improvements in the school. Younger pupils aspire to take on roles of responsibility.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are very well supported. Leaders use the additional funding for these pupils very effectively, and this ensures that they make strong progress.
- Governors have a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths. They provide leaders with effective support and challenge, which ensures that the school continues to improve.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders' actions have improved pupils' progress in modern foreign languages. However, their plans need to be developed further so that pupils make similar progress to that made in other subjects.
- Parents and carers are very positive about the school. However, some of them say that they do not receive helpful information about their children's progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Embed and develop leaders' actions, so that pupils make progress in modern foreign languages that is similar to that made in other subjects.
- Ensure that parents receive information about their children's progress that enables them to understand more clearly how they are developing.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The principal and senior leaders have very high expectations of themselves, the school's staff and its pupils. They focus relentlessly on ensuring that they 'add value' to pupils as they make their way through the school. Academic success for pupils is a key aim for leaders. However, their definition of success is much broader. Leaders focus on the challenges that young people face in modern society and aim to develop pupils who are confident and resilient in the face of them. Pupils rise to this challenge and, as a consequence, they make significant progress during their time at the school.
- Leaders have a very accurate understanding of the school's strengths and they identify appropriate areas for further development. Their improvement plans set very clear and challenging targets for all leaders; progress against these targets is reviewed closely. Middle leaders play a vital role in the school's success. They know what is expected of them and they are provided with the effective support and challenge that enables them to meet these expectations.
- Leaders are accurate in their evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching, learning and assessment. They use this evaluation to ensure that staff receive training that both develops their individual areas of need and supports whole-school goals. Staff are grateful for the high-quality professional development they receive; they are proud to work at the school. Leaders are very effective at training teachers and 'talent spotting' future leaders. Newly qualified teachers are very well supported. Consequently, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment continues to improve.
- Leaders have high expectations of pupils and set them challenging targets. They ensure that teachers assess pupils' work accurately and that they provide pupils with helpful feedback in line with their assessment policy. Leaders' approaches to reviewing pupils' progress are well developed and are used consistently by leaders and teachers alike. Leaders quickly identify pupils who require additional support and provide them with extra help. As a result, pupils make outstanding progress across the school from their different starting points.
- Leaders have developed a challenging curriculum that deepens pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. The majority of pupils study English, mathematics, science, humanities and modern foreign languages throughout their time at the school. They also study other subjects from within the disciplines of design and technology, the arts and physical education. Leaders' close work with the primary school in the multi-academy trust ensures that the curriculum challenges pupils from the day that they join the school. 'Life skills' lessons are further embedding leaders' work to develop pupils who are confident and resilient. Pupils said that they enjoy the subjects that they study. They appreciate the visits that they undertake and the interesting range of extra-curricular activities that are on offer.
- Leaders are very effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are taught to understand and celebrate differences, to support each other and to reflect on their own actions. They take part in debates, enter speaking competitions and undertake a range of visits to places of cultural significance. Fundamental British values, such as democracy and the rule of law, are embedded

within the school's culture. For example, pupils' impressive role in the leadership of the school is well established, very effective and something to which younger pupils aspire.

- Leaders have a very clear understanding of the barriers to learning that are faced by their disadvantaged pupils and those who are eligible for the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium. Teachers understand the needs of both groups of pupils and track their progress closely, providing additional support when required. Both groups of pupils make very strong progress. Literacy and numeracy support in Year 7 is particularly effective; by the end of the year, the vast majority of identified pupils catch up to where they should be.
- The funding for pupils with SEND is spent well. Leaders identify pupils' needs quickly and provide a wide range of appropriate and thoughtful support, through either teachers and learning support assistants or links with other professionals. As a result of leaders' actions, pupils with SEND make strong progress.
- Parents responded very positively to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View; the overwhelming majority of them would recommend the school. However, a minority of parents did not agree that they receive valuable information about their children's progress. Leaders do not report on pupils' improvements across some of the key characteristics that they are trying to develop, such as resilience and confidence.
- Leaders have acted swiftly and appropriately since the school's short inspection in March 2018. They have developed plans to further refine the curriculum from September 2019, while pupils' progress has improved in a small number of identified subjects. However, pupils still make less progress in modern foreign languages than in other subjects.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school well. They celebrate its many strengths, but they also focus closely on its priorities for improvement. Governors receive regular training in relation to their specific roles on the governing body. Through governors' meetings and their visits to the school, governors offer leaders effective challenge and support. Governors ensure that their statutory duties, especially in safeguarding pupils' welfare, are fully met.
- Trustees have ensured that the trust has developed at a pace that has brought benefits to the school, without overstressing senior leaders' capacity. Consequently, leaders have been able to maintain their focus and further improve the quality of education at the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff at all levels receive regular safeguarding training and they know how to identify pupils who are potentially at risk. Staff understand, and follow, leaders' protocols for reporting any safeguarding concerns.
- School leaders ensure that safeguarding concerns are properly recorded and they are tenacious in making sure that child-protection referrals are dealt with appropriately. The maintenance of child-protection files is very effective and leaders' work with representatives from other agencies is exemplary.
- All required checks are carried out when recruiting new staff to work with pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- As a result of leaders' actions, the quality of teaching is outstanding. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View agreed that pupils are taught well. Pupils who met with inspectors said that they enjoy their lessons and explained how they make strong progress across the curriculum.
- Teachers are very consistent in implementing leaders' classroom expectations, for example in ensuring that lessons are well resourced and that learning is planned based on a deep understanding of what pupils already know. This, coupled with pupils' drive, resilience and eagerness to improve their work, ensures that pupils make sustained and substantial progress.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are outstanding. Teachers consistently establish clear routines and have high expectations of pupils. Pupils respect their teachers and have excellent attitudes to learning. The well-established trust that has been developed between teachers and pupils empowers pupils to take risks and ask questions without the fear of failure.
- Learning activities are closely matched to pupils' starting points and lessons are carefully set within a sequence of learning. It is clear to pupils where lessons fit in to the bigger picture. This understanding speeds up their learning and allows pupils to make links between one lesson and the next.
- Teachers question individual pupils, and groups of pupils, very skilfully. Teachers provide pupils with specific, helpful guidance about what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers use their very strong subject knowledge to challenge pupils and to provide additional support, where necessary.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support to pupils with SEND. They plan closely with teachers and understand the needs of the pupils they are supporting. Teaching assistants' effective questioning and explanation of tasks support pupils with SEND to make strong progress.
- Teachers know their subjects very well and are highly skilled at supporting pupils to acquire and apply new subject knowledge. Teachers provide pupils with clear instructions when introducing activities so that no time is lost in lessons.
- Teachers' own demonstrations of tasks, for example in physical education (PE) and art, are highly effective in inspiring pupils to work at the same high standards. However, in modern foreign languages, some pupils are less clear about what is expected of them. As a consequence, their progress is not as strong as in other subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils said that they are very well supported and cared for; one pupil described the school as a 'home from home' and another said that there is 'support in every aspect of the school'. Teachers are determined to provide pupils with the help that they need to

overcome any barriers to their learning. The impact of this support is evident in pupils' very positive attitudes to learning, their high levels of confidence and their resilience in lessons.

- Pupils' confidence and aspirations are developed particularly well as a result of the wide range of responsibilities that they are able to undertake. The school's student senior leadership team is a particular strength and it forms a link between leaders, governors and pupils. This team plays a role in the school's development by leading the team of prefects and coordinating meetings with other pupil leaders. In addition, it has supported important changes at the school, for example the development of both the new canteen area and the school's bike sheds. Because of the strength in pupil leadership, younger pupils aspire to be prefects. Pupil leaders are very positive role models.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe in a variety of situations, including when using the internet. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school and that there is very little bullying. When it does happen, pupils say that it is dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils know that there are certain nominated staff who they can talk to if they have any concerns. However, pupils stated that there are many adults whom they felt they could approach if they needed to.
- Careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG) is highly effective and reflects leaders' commitment to ensuring that pupils have high aspirations and are well prepared for the next stages of their lives. Pupils are provided with a range of independent advice, including from post-16 providers, both in lessons and during specially organised events. Few pupils leave the school without a position in education, employment or training. Leaders are making excellent progress towards fully meeting the 'Gatsby benchmarks' (the government's targets for careers provision).

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons is excellent, including at lunch and breaktimes. Pupils are friendly, polite and well mannered. They closely follow the instructions of their teachers and they have excellent attitudes to learning. All staff who completed the Ofsted staff survey, and the overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View, agreed that pupils behave well.
- Leaders have high expectations of behaviour. Pupils know what is expected of them and they manage their own behaviour very well. Pupils understand the link between excellent behaviour, high-quality learning and substantial progress. Incidents of poor behaviour are rare and the use of fixed-period exclusion is below average.
- Overall rates of absence and persistent absence have decreased and are well below national averages. No groups of pupils are disadvantaged by poor attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils typically start Year 7 with levels of prior attainment that are broadly average. They make sustained and substantial progress over their time in the school. This is because of the high-quality teaching that they experience, combined with their drive and their excellent attitudes to learning.

- In both 2016 and 2017, pupils' overall progress scores in their GCSE examinations placed the school in the top 10% of all schools nationally. Provisional 2018 GCSE results are equally strong. Pupils' attainment has been consistently high.
- In 2018, pupils with low, middle and high prior attainment all made overall progress that was well above national averages. Disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND also made overall progress that was well above average.
- Pupils make progress that is consistently well above average across a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science and humanities. Progress in modern foreign languages, although not as strong, is improving.
- Pupils continue to make very strong progress throughout the school. For example, pupils currently in Year 11 are performing to the similar high standards set by the previous cohort at the same point last year. Pupils in Year 7 have made particularly impressive progress in the short time that they have been attending the school.
- Pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged make excellent progress. Their different needs are quickly identified by staff and they are supported very effectively in their learning.
- Pupils who attend off-site alternative provision are monitored very effectively. They attend regularly, are kept safe and are progressing well.
- Pupils are very well prepared for their next steps when they leave the school because they achieve excellent results and they receive high-quality CIAG. As a consequence, an impressive proportion of pupils enter and sustain places in post-16 education, training or employment.

School details

Unique reference number	137284
Local authority	Southend-on-Sea
Inspection number	10053269

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,000
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Lee Whittock
Principal	Neil Houchen
Telephone number	01702 524341
Website	http://eastwood.southend.sch.uk/
Email address	NHouchen@eastwood.southend.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	September 2013

Information about this school

- The Eastwood Academy is the lead school in the Eastwood Park Academy Trust (EPAT). Responsibility for the school's performance lies with the EPAT trust board. There is representation from the trust board on the school's local governing body. There is currently one other school in the trust.
- The school is an average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium or who speak English as an additional language is average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive SEN support or who have an education, health and care plan is below average.
- Pupils who are educated off-site attend either the YMCA or Figure of Eight Education.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers, teaching assistants, members of the governing body and trustees.
- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Inspectors observed learning in 44 lessons, or parts of lessons, some jointly with leaders.
- A wide range of pupils' workbooks were looked at by inspectors throughout the inspection to assess both the quality of teaching and pupils' progress over time.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils informally in class and around the school at break and lunchtimes to seek their views about the school.
- Inspectors met with five groups of pupils more formally to discuss many aspects of school life.
- Inspectors observed an assembly and made visits to morning registration sessions.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website and a range of school documents, including assessment information and the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness. Inspectors also scrutinised leaders' improvement plans and their records about behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the 190 responses and 98 free-text comments made by parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors considered the 56 responses by staff to the Ofsted staff questionnaire and the 95 responses of pupils to the Ofsted pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Daniel Gee, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Mary Rayner	Ofsted Inspector
Caroline Pardy	Ofsted Inspector

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