

Eton Park Junior: A de Ferrers Trust Academy

Masefield Crescent, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire DE14 2SG

Inspection dates

9–10 April 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- This improving school still has further to go.
- In recent years, standards in reading at the end of Year 6 have been below average. Standards are rising but current pupils are still not making as much progress as they should.
- While curriculum planning, subject leadership and assessment have improved since the school became an academy, some teaching does not hit the mark and pupils' progress varies from one class to another.
- In mathematics, teaching in some classes does not build securely on pupils' previous learning. The teaching of reasoning in mathematics in lower key stage 2 could be better.
- The school's focus on improving pupils' vocabulary is at an early stage of development. Teaching introduces pupils to new words but does not routinely check how well pupils understand what they mean.
- Standards of handwriting and presentation are very mixed.
- Some classroom activities underestimate what pupils can do. Teachers give pupils instructions instead of explanations or oversimplify ideas and tasks.

The school has the following strengths

- Leadership is good. The executive principal and other leaders have put systems in place to strengthen teaching, improve the curriculum and lift standards.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and attend to their welfare is well organised, efficient and effective.
- There is strong teaching at the top end of the school.
- For three years running, many Year 6 pupils met the expected standard for their age in writing.
- Pupils do a lot of sport and benefit from good-quality coaching and extra activities.
- Pupils' behaviour is managed very well. Pupils get praise when they deserve it and helpful guidance when they need it. Support for vulnerable pupils is a particular strength.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning in reading and mathematics in order to raise standards across the school by:
 - continuing to improve assessment and subject knowledge so that teaching in all classes builds securely on what pupils already know
 - improving the teaching of reasoning in mathematics
 - checking pupils understand the meaning of new words, and when and how they can be used
 - helping pupils develop the ambition, resilience and confidence to use what they know to make sense of new information or solve problems
 - working with parents and carers to improve their involvement in their children’s learning at home.
- Improve the impact of leadership on the quality of teaching and pupils’ progress by making sure:
 - staff continue to benefit from training and guidance and have opportunities to learn from effective teaching
 - leaders at all levels keep a keen focus on the quality of learning as well as compliance with school policies.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The executive principal provides ambitious leadership, setting high standards for herself and others. Together with the vice principal, and with support from de Ferrers multi-academy trust (the MAT), she has put whole-school systems in place to improve teaching, the curriculum and pupils' behaviour. The school is on the right track and moving forwards, but leaders have more to do to make sure all teaching gives pupils what they need.
- Senior and subject leaders, and staff from the MAT, check on teaching to make sure that agreed policies and routines are working correctly. They do this successfully and staff understand what is expected from them. Looking to the future, there is scope for leaders to sharpen their focus on the quality of pupils' learning while making sure staff continue to benefit from training and seeing effective practice.
- All the subjects of the national curriculum are taught regularly and some subjects are linked together through topics. Subjects such as physical education (PE) and personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) stand out as particular strengths.
- In PE, the primary school PE and sport premium has been put to very good use. Each year, more and more Year 6 pupils leave school being able to swim 25 metres. Pupils' participation in after-school sports activities and competitive events has also increased. In PSHE, pupils learn a lot about how to take care of themselves and how to channel their energies in positive ways. The school's PRIDE (partnership, respect, integrity, determination and excellence) rule is woven through many school activities and reminds pupils about what they can achieve with the right attitude.
- Pupil premium funding is used appropriately, and with increasing effectiveness, to support disadvantaged pupils and boost their progress at school. Special educational needs funds are also spent wisely.
- The school provides a lot of information for parents and encourages them to come into school to find out about what goes on in class. During this inspection, parents came into classrooms to find out about the teaching of reading and grandparents joined pupils for lunch. In addition, teachers regularly send work home and remind parents to take an active interest in their children's learning. Parents who spoke with inspectors said they were happy with the school and the way it was run.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. The local governing body and the trustees have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, which they understand and carry out efficiently. Joining the MAT has led to improvements in provision and governance, and ensured that lines of accountability are crystal clear. Governors report that they act as the eyes and ears of the trustees and have well-established procedures for sharing information. Records show that governors and trustees use what they know about the school's effectiveness in order to shape strategy and drive improvements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school team is quick to act on any concerns about pupils' safety or welfare. Staff know exactly what to do if something seems wrong and make sure that they share their concerns with the right people at the right time.
- School records show that staff follow up unexplained absences from school to check pupils are safe. Staff have a good understanding of known risks in the local area. They work with other organisations, including the police, health professionals and social services, to protect pupils and support their families.
- All the necessary employment checks on staff are carried out and recorded correctly. The school site is well maintained and kept secure and medicines in school are kept in the right place. In lessons, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online and in other situations.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching in some classes could be improved. At times, teachers underestimate what pupils can do and make tasks too simple. At other times, staff give pupils instructions about how to complete tasks rather than explanations that would help them understand what they are learning about. This restricts pupils' reasoning skills and does not help them develop the ambition and confidence to cope with unfamiliar tasks.
- On occasions, teaching staff make mistakes that mislead pupils, both in their written comments in books and when teaching in class. During this inspection, inspectors saw several examples of staff using punctuation incorrectly. This needs urgent attention.
- In all classes, there is a focus on widening pupils' vocabulary and this is evident in classroom displays, activities and discussions. There is no doubt that pupils are benefiting from this and are improving their ability to make sense of texts. However, at times, teaching does not capitalise on pupils' interest in new words and fails to give them a secure understanding of the concepts that sit behind words. For example, when considering the words 'stowed' and 'furrowed', pupils were not taught what the words actually mean. This limits their ability to make sense of them in the future or when used in different contexts.
- Assessment across the school has strengthened in recent times and, in some classes, it is used very well and teaching is pitched just right. In Year 6 classes, for instance, teaching routinely gives pupils exactly what they need. It is brisk, purposeful and builds securely on what has gone before. These features are also evident elsewhere. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, seen during this inspection, the quality of questioning was superb. It prompted pupils to dig deep into what they already knew in order to solve new problems and challenges. The most able pupils responded particularly well to this and work in books indicates that this is typical. This very effective use of in-class assessment to move learning on at an appropriate pace is not so well established in some other classes.
- In all year groups, pupils write a lot and cover many interesting topics. Standards of handwriting and spelling are not as good as they should be, but are improving.

- In all classes, staff manage pupils' behaviour in constructive ways. Staff make their expectations clear and maintain positive relationships with pupils. They treat pupils fairly and are kind and good humoured in their manner. In response, pupils apply themselves to their work, enjoy learning and lessons run smoothly.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- This is a strong and distinctive aspect of the school's work.
- Pupils who find it hard to cope with aspects of the school day or who are facing difficulties outside school get first-class support. Indeed, the school allocates time and resources to help pupils understand and manage their emotions. Through small-group and one-to-one support, teaching programmes and work with specialists, the school helps pupils to develop healthy attitudes to learning, life, themselves and others.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors could explain how the school motivates them to make the most of their interests and abilities. They know that staff care about them and will always help them if they have a problem.
- Pupils in all classes are treated with respect by staff and their peers. They feel safe in school and learn how to look after themselves in different situations. Bullying is uncommon and is not tolerated if it happens.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In class, pupils are attentive to their teachers and their work. At playtimes and at breakfast club, they get on well with one another and instances of unkind behaviour are rare.
- Most pupils attend regularly and on time and wear the full school uniform. Indeed, overall attendance figures are in line with the national average, although a few parents keep their children off school for unnecessary reasons.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour very effectively. They make sure good behaviour is noticed and rewarded. Pupils who need to improve their behaviour get appropriate help, guidance and encouragement. Over time, there has been a marked decrease in the use of exclusion. It is now unusual for a pupil to be excluded from school. This is testimony to the school's inclusive and supportive culture.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- For the last three years, pupils' attainment in reading at the end of Year 6, while edging upwards, has been consistently below average. This is in marked contrast to their attainment in writing, which has been more in line with national figures. Attainment in mathematics has been more mixed, up one year then down the year

after. The pattern has been similar for disadvantaged pupils although, in 2018, their progress and attainment were weaker than that of other pupils nationally. Overall, pupils have not been as well prepared for learning at secondary school as they ought to be.

- For current pupils, progress in reading is improving in response to the school's work to lift standards, but it is erratic. Pupils do better in some classes than in others. This is also true in mathematics. This mixed picture of current progress is the main reason why outcomes for pupils require improvement at this time.
- That said, it is clear that standards in different subjects are on the up and that some pupils are doing well.
- Many of the most able pupils, especially at the top end of the school, are doing well in most subjects. The quality of work in their English and mathematics books presents a positive picture. They get a lot done and to a good standard.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good-quality support. In most cases, they respond well to this and are able to make the most of lessons.

School details

Unique reference number	142792
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10088520

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chief executive officer	Ian McNeilly
Executive principal	Helen Phillips
Telephone number	01283 247 910
Website	www.etonparkacademy.com
Email address	office.etonpark@deferrers.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This junior school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school runs a breakfast club from 8.00am each school day.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- In 2016, the school became part of de Ferrers multi-academy trust (the MAT). The MAT's board of trustees is responsible for setting the strategic direction of the MAT's schools. They employ a chief executive officer to oversee and work with all the schools in the MAT. At a local level, a governing body oversees Eton Park Junior School and Lansdowne Infant School.
- An executive principal, appointed in 2017, leads both Eton Park Junior and Lansdowne Infants. A vice principal looks after the day-to-day running of Eton Park Junior when the executive principal is at the infant school.
- When the predecessor school was inspected in December 2013, it was judged to be a

good school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. Inspectors also examined pupils' work in books and on display, and considered school test and assessment information.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and the school's routines at the beginning and end of the school day, in lessons, at lunch and breaktimes and when pupils were moving about the school site.
- By the end of the inspection, there were five recent responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, which were too few to generate a report. There were two free-text responses from parents, 10 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 19 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire. The inspectors considered these responses and spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day. Inspectors also spoke with some parents who visited the school for a reading event. In addition, inspectors spoke with pupils, staff, school leaders, the chair of the local governing body and the chief executive officer of the MAT.
- Inspectors examined school documents. These included: information about pupils' achievement, evaluations of the school's performance and several policy statements. Records relating to governance, staff training, special educational needs, behaviour, attendance, punctuality, exclusions, safety, safeguarding and the quality of teaching were also scrutinised. The school's website was also checked.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Julie Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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