

Eden Park Academy

119 Warwick Road, Carlisle, Cumbria CA1 1JZ

Inspection dates

25–27 June 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The proprietor and leaders have sustained a good quality of education. They ensure that all the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders have built on previous good practice to improve teaching, raise standards and develop very effective communication with stakeholders.
- Staff are highly motivated. They work together successfully to support the school's vision to 'build a better future for pupils'.
- The school provides a nurturing environment where pupils thrive, behave well and develop a positive mindset.
- The curriculum is broad, and it is adapted successfully to meet each pupil's specific needs. It is enhanced with interesting experiences to deepen and enrich pupils' learning.
- The bespoke curriculum helps to minimise barriers to learning, including those that result from pupils' disrupted education in the past.
- Good teaching, built on accurate assessment, enables pupils to make good progress and gain useful qualifications. However, those sessions dedicated to literacy skills are not planned sequentially enough to develop each pupil's skills progressively.
- Across the wider curriculum, pupils' literacy skills are developed well in some subjects, but this is not consistently evident. Pupils are not always able to understand the reading materials used in some subjects.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics because gaps in their knowledge are addressed effectively. However, their reasoning and problem-solving skills are less well developed.
- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils grow in confidence and become motivated learners. They make an excellent contribution to their school and to the local community.
- Pupils feel safe and staff are vigilant of any signs of concern. Pupils learn to manage their behaviour effectively and behaviour is typically good. Punctuality at the start of the day can be problematic for some, however.
- Governance arrangements are in the process of being reorganised. Governors do not yet hold leaders to account and support improvement effectively.
- Pupils are prepared well for their next steps. In the last four years, all pupils who left in Year 11 have sustained a place at college or in an apprenticeship.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning and raise pupils' standards, by:
 - making sure that pupils' reading comprehension and literacy skills are developed systematically and sequentially in the sessions dedicated to these skills and across the curriculum
 - ensuring that pupils have access to good-quality reading materials that interest them and are appropriate for their reading age
 - supporting pupils to deepen their mathematical understanding by enabling them to better apply their learning to solve problems and reason mathematically.
- Improve pupils' punctuality.
- Develop governance further so that governors effectively hold leaders to account and support improvement.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and the proprietor ensure that all the independent school standards are met.
- The headteacher and head of education have made several positive changes since taking up their posts two years ago. They have raised the expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teaching is more focused on supporting pupils to gain useful qualifications, and their outcomes have improved as a result. Stakeholders say that communication with the school has improved immensely and they are very well informed.
- The recently appointed coordinator of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has improved the quality of pupils' personal education plans. She ensures that all teachers are aware of pupils' specific needs and of the strategies that help them learn best.
- Leadership is being distributed across the school successfully. Staff are highly motivated, and all have a role in leading improvement in aspects of the school's work. Staff share leaders' vision to 'build better futures for young people through positive destinations built on good qualifications'.
- The curriculum is adapted well to the specific needs of each pupil. When pupils enter the school, many of them have had long periods of absence from education, so filling the gaps in their learning is a key priority. The curriculum also focuses successfully on developing pupils' skills for learning, such as decision making, communication and self-management.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a range of experiences that support them to gain useful qualifications and develop their personal skills. At key stage 4, the curriculum follows course specifications. At key stage 3, the national curriculum is used as the basis for planning, taking account of baseline assessments. Outdoor education, design and technology, and work-based learning are particular strengths.
- Support sessions have been introduced to focus particularly on the development of pupils' literacy skills. However, reading, comprehension and literacy skills are not taught systematically enough to develop sequentially pupils' learning. Pupils' literacy and comprehension skills are developed well in some subjects, but the promotion of their literacy skills is not embedded fully across the curriculum.
- School improvement planning is based on accurate self-evaluation and supports the school's aims. Leaders support improvements in teaching and learning effectively. They are aware that literacy sessions are not yet fully fit for purpose.
- The headteacher, special educational needs and /or disabilities coordinator (SENDCo) and head of education provide incisive feedback to teachers to help them improve their practice. The school's values, improvement priorities and policies are reinforced effectively through the appraisal process. Staff training is planned carefully to support school improvement and to develop staff's skills.
- Pupils' learning is enriched with a range of activities, offered within the core curriculum. For example, pupils enjoy pony trekking, canoeing and mountain biking. Trips out and visitors to the school support pupils' learning about different faiths and cultures.

- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) understanding is a strength in the work of the school. Pupils' SMSC development is promoted across the curriculum and developed within specific units of work on topics, such as environmental awareness, working as part of a group and community action. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' communication and social skills. In the daily tutorial sessions, for example, pupils discuss the news and current affairs knowledgeably.
- Pupils explore moral values in a range of contexts, for example linked to their learning about the Holocaust and when discussing the impact of social media. They learn about different cultures and faiths through themed days in school and visits out to places of worship.
- Pupils are supported to understand British values and make a positive contribution to society. Their understanding of diversity and equality is enhanced through the wide curriculum and reinforced through the school's code of conduct. Pupils have a good understanding of protected characteristics and respect people's differences.
- Leaders work closely with a range of stakeholders, including home managers, virtual headteachers (from the placing local authority, who check on the progress of children who are looked after) and social workers. All of those who made their views known were extremely positive about the leadership and quality of care and education provided to pupils. They say, for example, 'Leaders and staff provide valuable opportunities that motivate children and help them to re-engage in education.'
- Leaders ensure that stakeholders are well informed. They communicate on a daily basis with carers and provide all stakeholders with detailed weekly and termly reports of each pupils' progress, behaviour and well-being.

Governance

- Until very recently, governance has been wholly provided by the proprietor. The proprietor is ambitious for pupils and has a good understanding of the school's provision and performance based on regular visits and reports from the head of education.
- The proprietor and leaders have ensured that all statutory duties are met. They invest in staff training and resources in order to sustain the good quality of education.
- Governance arrangements are in the process of being reorganised. A new governing body has been formed recently, but governors' roles and responsibilities are not yet defined. The recently appointed chair and vice-chair of the governing body are fully committed to the school's vision and aims. They have the relevant skills to challenge leaders and support improvement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is a prime concern of everyone at the school. Staff are vigilant and alert to signs of concern. Each pupil has a 'key teacher' who works closely with them and can be consulted on sensitive matters and any safeguarding concerns.
- All pupils have personalised risk assessments and there are clear guidelines to manage and reduce risks. Frequent meetings ensure that all staff and pupils are aware of positive strategies to help pupils cope with complex emotional and social challenges arising from

past traumas.

- All staff have completed safeguarding training to a high standard. Staff have also completed additional training that equips them to support pupils' complex social, emotional and mental health needs. For example, they have completed training to help them support pupils who have experienced adverse childhood experiences, attachment disorders, trauma and mental health difficulties.
- The safeguarding policy and procedures are detailed and take account of relevant legislation. The policy is available on the school's website. Staff are fully aware of the actions they need to follow if there are concerns. The arrangements for the safe recruitment of staff and the single central record meet requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Effective teaching is underpinned by teachers' positive and constructive relationships with pupils. Teachers help pupils to grow in confidence, so they feel able to participate in learning.
- Teachers know each pupil extremely well. Detailed assessment on entry to the school establishes pupils' starting points. Pupils typically have gaps in their learning due to disrupted schooling and trauma. Many also have SEND. Teachers plan carefully so that activities are appropriate to pupils' stage of learning. They help pupils to fill gaps in their learning and catch up with the standards expected for their age.
- Teachers devise activities that appeal to pupils' interests and build on their experiences. In design and technology, for example, pupils enjoyed developing their skills to make objects they could use or sell. In English, pupils inferred character traits from visual evidence, because the activity was based on a familiar figure. In history, pupils were interested to learn about their family crest.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and a detailed understanding of course specifications. They explain and illustrate new learning effectively and use good-quality questions to help pupils develop their understanding. They support pupils through course work suited to their abilities, so all pupils make good progress and attain a range of qualifications.
- For many pupils, their limited literacy skills are a barrier to deeper learning. Teachers support pupils to overcome shortcomings in their literacy skills as they arise and pay good attention to their individual learning targets in each subject. However, reading, comprehension and literacy skills are not taught systematically enough to develop their skills progressively. The sessions allocated to 'intervention' are sometimes missed and the available resources are not used sequentially.
- Pupils have only a limited choice of good-quality books that might appeal to their wide-ranging interests and that are suitable for their reading age. Some of the texts used to support learning across the curriculum are difficult for some pupils to understand.
- Mathematics teaching effectively supports the progressive development of pupils' mathematical knowledge. Pupils are encouraged to apply their mathematical knowledge in other subjects, such in design and technology and when cooking. However, pupils are less well taught to apply their skills to reasoning and problem-solving activities.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school provides a supportive, nurturing environment where pupils are helped to manage their behaviour and develop a positive mindset. Staff are understanding and encouraging. They are highly experienced and well qualified in helping pupils to cope with complex emotional and social challenges arising from their past traumas.
- Pupils' mental health and physical health are high priorities. Pupils are supported to understand their own emotions and the impact their behaviour can have on others. They learn how to keep physically fit and healthy, and do their best to promote their own and other's good health. For example, pupils contribute to the preparation of a tasty, healthy meal each day for the enjoyment of everyone at the school.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are promoted successfully in all their learning. Outdoor education, for example, supports the building of physical and mental resilience. Art activities are used as a medium to help pupils to express their feelings. Pupils learn to work as part of a group and are helped to develop their confidence when speaking.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and bullying does not happen. They have a well-developed understanding of risks to their health and safety and of different types of bullying. Their views are endorsed by carers and stakeholders who say, for example, 'Eden Park Academy is a safe and friendly school,' and, 'The support provided for their welfare goes above and beyond expectations.'
- Pupils make a positive contribution to school in many ways. They uphold the school's strong moral code, showing consideration towards staff and each other. They contribute to planning their personal curriculum, and as school council members, they contribute to decision making on a more strategic level.
- Pupils make a hugely positive and valued contribution to their local community through voluntary work. Two pupils have won a national carers award for their voluntary work in a care home with people who have dementia.
- Careers education, information, advice and guidance are strong aspects of the school's work. They are key factors in pupils' success in sustaining positive destinations on leaving school. Work-based learning and work experience are planned carefully to support pupils' ambitions and aspirations. Good-quality advice and support in making applications help pupils to gain places on apprenticeships and at college.
- Stakeholders are extremely pleased with pupils' personal development. They comment, for example, that, 'The young person in my care has had an amazing transformation since joining the school,' and 'has grown hugely in self-esteem and can now participate in social groups successfully. It has made a huge difference to their life.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff support pupils to manage their behaviour effectively. Pupils' emotional and behavioural needs have not been successfully met previously in mainstream schools and

their behaviour can be challenging when they first start at the school. Pupils' behaviour improves significantly as they get to know staff and respect the school's code of conduct.

- Pupils are well behaved in lessons. They are attentive and respond well to instructions. They usually concentrate on the task in hand and do their best to finish it. Occasionally, they can lose concentration, but teachers are adept at re-focusing their attention. Around the school, they are sociable and supportive of each other.
- Pupils' attendance improves significantly once they start at the school. As one carer says, 'Children come to the school from very difficult backgrounds, some have 0% attendance at other schools, which goes up to 100% at Eden Park. The children want to attend the school and enjoy it.' Average attendance is currently around 94%, which is close to the national average.
- Pupils' punctuality at the start of the day is problematic. Frequent lateness means that some pupils miss sessions and join lessons part-way through. This has a negative impact on their learning and can also unsettle them emotionally.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils have typically missed a lot of education before they start at the school. They join the school at various times of the year and their stay can vary from a few months to several years. Most pupils enter the school with knowledge and skills well below those typical for their age.
- Baseline tests effectively establish the most appropriate level of study and courses for each pupil. Pupils attend well and make good progress in their studies to attain a number of qualifications.
- A range of qualifications are offered, including GCSE, entry-level qualifications, functional skills and vocational qualifications. Pupils gain qualifications in English, mathematics, art, history, design and technology, and Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) units. The qualifications on offer meet pupils' wide range of abilities and generally support effectively their career interests.
- Changes to the curriculum have raised expectations of what pupils can achieve. All pupils who have left the school in the last four years have attained qualifications in English and mathematics. In the last two years, the number of pupils attaining GCSE in these subjects has increased. However, their limited literacy skills can be a barrier for some pupils in accessing GCSE qualifications.
- Pupils are prepared well for the next steps in their education. In the last four years, all pupils who left in Year 11 have sustained a place at college or in apprenticeships. The qualifications they acquired have supported them to gain a place on a course of their choice. Their excellent personal development has enabled them to pursue further qualifications confidently.

School details

Unique reference number	132112
DfE registration number	909/6050
Inspection number	10092579

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	7
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Luiz Guilherme
Chair	Luiz Guilherme
Headteacher	Elayne Bryan
Annual fees (day pupils)	£32,818
Telephone number	01228 537609
Website	www.pebblescare.com/education/eden-park-academy-carlisle/
Email address	education@pebblescare.com
Date of previous inspection	13–14 December 2016

Information about this school

- Eden Park Academy is an independent school for boys and girls aged from 11 to 16, who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties. The school is registered for 12 pupils.
- The school is run by Pebbles Care Limited. It serves young people who are looked after by local authorities across the country and live in various residential homes.
- There are currently seven pupils on roll. All have SEND and three have education, health and care plans.

- The headteacher took up the post permanently in September 2017, having been acting headteacher since April 2017. The headteacher acts as the headteacher for the Eden Park academies located in Carlisle and Leeds. The head of education took up post in June 2017 and provides quality assurance and support to the two academies in England and another two in Scotland. A coordinator of the provision for pupils with SEND was appointed in September 2018. She work across the schools in England.
- The proprietor has been responsible for governance until recently. A governing body has been established but is not yet operating fully.
- The school does not use alternative provision. Pupils attend the school's workshop at another site for practical activities and go to a range of venues for supervised physical education and outdoor education.
- The school was previously inspected in December 2016, when it was judged to be good.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning. She carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work, including for the Year 11 pupils who were not present at the school. She spoke with pupils to gain their views of the school.
- The inspector met with the vice-chair of the governing body, the headteacher, head of education, coordinator of the provision for pupils with SEND, and teaching staff. She spoke by telephone to the chair of the governing body and the proprietor.
- The inspector examined the premises and checked compliance with all the independent school standards.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including action planning, self-evaluation, monitoring of teaching and learning, tracking of pupils' progress, safeguarding policies and procedures, health and safety checks, and risk assessments. School policies were seen.
- The inspector spoke, by telephone, with home managers, virtual school headteachers, social workers and an independent careers adviser.
- The inspector took account of four responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire. She considered the views of staff and pupils, which were gained through discussion.

Inspection team

Jean Olsson-Law, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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