

Inspection of Emneth Academy

Hollycroft Road, Emneth, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire PE14 8AY

Inspection dates: 11–12 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Emneth Academy has had a turbulent time over recent years. There have been several changes of leadership and many changes of staff. Although things are now improving, the legacy of this upheaval continues to affect pupils. For example, development of the curriculum has not been given enough attention over the last few years. As a result, pupils are sometimes bored and lose interest in their learning. Until recently, leaders' expectations of pupils have not been high enough.

Pupils behave really well. They are polite and good-humoured at breaks and lunchtimes. Pupils say they feel safe in school and that there is no bullying. Pupils told us that 'teachers will sort it out if we argue.' Pupils behave well and are attentive in lessons when the work interests them. Pupils told us that they are happy at school.

Pupils grow into happy, healthy and well-developed young people. The school encourages pupils' growth with a long-standing personal development programme called the 'Emneth 20'. It sets out 20 experiences that all pupils should have during their time in the school. These include curriculum-related trips and activities, cultural enrichment and community-based activities.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have not given the school's curriculum enough priority over recent years. In some subjects, it is unclear what pupils are intended to learn or when. It is also not clear how teaching helps pupils' knowledge and skills to build up year upon year. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Leaders and staff have started work on making the curriculum more lively and interesting, and ensuring that content in each subject is covered well and in a sensible order. This is particularly clear in physical education (PE). Pupils enjoy PE and make strong progress in the subject.

In other subjects, the curriculum is delivered less well. Sometimes, pupils are given work that is too easy or too hard. Teachers do not take enough note of what pupils already know. As a result, pupils lose interest and 'drift off', instead of paying close attention.

The delivery of the mathematics curriculum sometimes causes pupils to get stuck and waste time. Some pupils are held back, doing work that is too easy for them. The curriculum lower down the school does not give pupils the chance to learn important knowledge in a logical way. Mathematics is much better taught in key stage 2. Older pupils explained to us how the curriculum builds on their previous learning and helps them to understand mathematics better.

Since September, there has been a new approach to teaching phonics. The order in which pupils are taught new sounds is now clearer. The new curriculum provides a well-structured approach to ensure that pupils learn phonics quickly and well. Staff have had training in how to deliver the new curriculum.

However, phonics still needs to improve. Staff are not yet using the training well enough. For example, teaching does not move at the lively pace that the school's scheme says that it should. This means that younger children become bored and lose interest.

Reading is now being given a higher priority. The school has introduced a new reading scheme and bought books that match pupils' reading abilities. Pupils say they enjoy reading and most now read at home regularly.

The science curriculum is better developed in key stage 2 than in key stage 1. Pupils enjoy experiments, such as testing sound waves and dissecting plants. Pupils behave well because they find the work interesting. In key stage 1, the curriculum is weaker. Pupils sometimes become bored in science because the work is dull.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is strong. The curriculum is adapted to meet every pupil's specific needs. Leaders provide effective support to ensure that teachers know how to help pupils.

Children do not get off to a strong start when they join the Reception class. While provision is improving, children do not always settle to work quickly and there is more work to do with learning routines. The environment is safe and children enjoy coming to school. Staff ensure that there are interesting activities to encourage children to learn through play.

Attendance has been too low in the past. Most pupils come to school regularly but a few do not. Leaders have made improving attendance a high priority. Staff support families well. Attendance is improving as a result.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture at Emneth. The system for recording concerns is clear. The designated safeguarding lead is quick to follow up any referrals. The school works with external agencies in the best interest of pupils to keep them safe. It works with the local authority to track pupils who leave the school so that they do not become lost from education.

Leaders keep detailed records of the safeguarding checks made on adults. The trust monitors these safeguarding checks on a regular basis. Leaders use external audits to check the robustness of safeguarding systems at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not sufficiently well implemented. Too often, parts of the curriculum are not well matched to pupils' needs. This causes pupils to become fidgety or not pay careful attention in class. Leaders must be clearer about how work is to be planned and delivered in order to ensure that the curriculum engages pupils fully in their learning and maintains their interest.
- The new phonics curriculum is not delivered well enough. Phonics is not being taught in the lively and interesting way that the school's chosen scheme says that it should. As a result, some pupils 'switch off' and lose interest. They do not develop their understanding and knowledge of phonics quickly enough. Leaders need to make sure that the school's chosen phonics scheme is delivered as intended.
- Teaching in mathematics is not fully effective. The school has a clear and appropriate curriculum for mathematics but it is not taught well enough. Pupils are given work to do that does not match their needs and abilities. Some pupils are held back because they are not given work that challenges them. Leaders should ensure that the delivery of the mathematics curriculum is fully effective and meets the needs of all pupils.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	144361
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10121343
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Derek Stringer
Principal	Barney Rimmer (acting principal)
Website	www.emnethacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Emneth Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 April 2017. When its predecessor school, Emneth Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school became part of the Eastern Multi-Academy Trust in April 2017.
- The current acting principal took up his post in January 2020. There have been several changes to leadership and staffing since Emneth became an academy in 2017.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the principal, the two assistant principals and staff. This included two newly qualified teachers, the special educational needs coordinator and the business manager.

- We held discussions with the chief executive officer of the trust, the chair of trustees, a representative of the local academy advisory board and the trust director of primary education.
- We visited lessons to look at work and spoke to pupils about what it is like to be a pupil at this school.
- We spoke to pupils and staff about how the school keeps pupils safe. We considered safeguarding records and documentation in the school, along with the single central record. We met with the safeguarding leads and representatives from the trust who maintain the single central record.
- We scrutinised a range of school documents, including the school's own self-evaluation and its improvement plans, as well as records about behaviour and attendance.
- We spoke to parents and carers at the start of the school day. We considered 14 responses made by parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and 14 responses to Ofsted's free-text system. Additionally, we took account of the 14 responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and the 41 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and PE.

Inspection team

James Adkins, lead inspector

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