

Inspection of The Parker E-ACT Academy

Ashby Road, Daventry NN11 0QE

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 November 2021

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this school and attend well. Their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are polite and courteous. The environment is calm and orderly, including when pupils move between the two school sites. Occurrences of bullying are rare. Pupils and parents and carers are very confident that staff will deal with any instances of bullying that occur. Leaders act swiftly to address any issues that may put pupils at risk of harm. A high proportion of parents would recommend the school. One parent, typical of many, wrote: 'The school has improved tremendously.'

Pupils, including students in the sixth form, are achieving better than they did before in this inclusive school. Expectations are high. Relationships are positive. Pupils study a broad range of subjects in all key stages. The curriculum is well planned so that all pupils understand what they need to know and be able to do at the right time. The content of the curriculum has been thoughtfully designed to inspire pupils in most of the subjects they study. Pupils, particularly in key stage 4, do not always have the secure knowledge they need to complete longer extended assessment tasks.

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

The curriculum is ambitious. Pupils study a broad range of subjects. The subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate lie at the heart of the curriculum. The proportion of pupils opting for these subjects in key stage 4 is rising. The school's 'independent learning sessions' are effective in helping pupils to keep up with the curriculum, including those needing extra support for reading.

Leaders have comprehensively reviewed curriculum plans in almost all subjects, including in the sixth form. These plans are detailed and precise. Subject leaders have thoughtfully considered how their subjects contribute towards the academic and personal development of pupils. In geography, for example, pupils have many opportunities to learn about people and places beyond where they live. In English, leaders choose literary texts to mirror the 'human journey' as people get older. The social and cultural aspects of learning are well thought out. Aspects of the curriculum for computing at key stage 3 are not at such an advanced stage of planning as in other subjects.

Subject leaders have devised effective systems for assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding. They have introduced regular assessments to check that pupils have remembered key content. In most subjects, pupils are achieving better than has been the case in the past. This is especially so at key stage 3 and in art, design and technology. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. They use this to ask precise questions to help pupils know and remember more. In some subjects, however, pupils are less confident in applying the knowledge they have gained when completing extended assessment tasks. Sometimes they are unable to complete these tasks independently.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. Leaders' oversight of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has been transformed. Leaders' personalised support for pupils in the 'Parker Plus' centre is helping young people with complex needs to re-engage with learning.

Pupils are motivated and have positive attitudes towards their studies. There have been no exclusions since April 2019.

The curriculum for pupils' personal development is strong. The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activity, especially in sport. Pupils have opportunities to develop leadership skills. Examples include the sports leaders programme and the school's junior leadership team. Pupils learn about equality of opportunity and diversity. They receive a high-quality curriculum about how they can make safe choices. Recently, leaders have delivered detailed sessions about harmful sexual behaviour and online safety.

Leaders ensure that all pupils receive impartial careers advice. There is a well-planned programme for Years 8 to 13. The proportion of pupils entering education, employment or training has increased. Students in the sixth form are well supported to take their next steps. Many students are successful in gaining places on university courses and apprenticeships.

A culture of high expectation underpins all aspects of the school. Leaders have invested in high-quality professional development for staff. Staff, including teachers at an early stage in their careers, value the opportunities provided. Leaders check to make sure that their programmes are having the desired impact. Staff morale is highly positive. Governance processes further enhance the professional development of leaders. Trustees have a precise understanding of the school's effectiveness. They are very skilled in holding school leaders to account.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of vigilance. Leaders know the local safeguarding risks. Pupils learn about them through their personal development programme. Pupils say they feel safe in school. They know whom they can talk to about any concerns they have. This includes access to a trained counsellor. Leaders take swift and decisive action to protect pupils from harm. They work well with external agencies, including social care and the police. All staff receive high-quality training. They understand their responsibilities well. Record-keeping is thorough. The oversight of children in the care of the local authority is strong.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not always check that pupils have all the knowledge they need to be able to complete extended written tasks or assessments. When this happens, pupils sometimes show a lack of confidence in completing tasks, particularly at key stage 4. Sometimes they opt out or do not finish the work set. Teachers should ensure that pupils' understanding of the concepts taught are secure before setting tasks for pupils to complete or before moving learning on, to help pupils to remember and apply more of what has been taught.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	138235
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10200164
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1186
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	201
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lord Jim Knight
Headteacher	Simon Cox
Website	theparkeracademy.e-act.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	21 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the E-ACT Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school's sixth-form curriculum is delivered as part of a partnership arrangement with one other local school: The Danetre and Southbrook Learning Village (DSLVL). This partnership is known as the Daventry Sixth Form.
- The school uses two alternative education providers for a small number of pupils on a part-time basis. These providers are unregistered.
- The school has a specialist resources base for a small number of pupils experiencing behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. This base is known as The Parker Plus Centre.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which under the Technical and Further Education Act 2017 (as amended) requires schools to

provide students in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team. Meetings were also held with the senior designated leader for safeguarding and the school's coordinator for the provision of pupils with SEND.
- A meeting was held with the national and regional directors of the trust, who have oversight of the school's governance structure. A separate meeting was held with the school's parent ambassadors who are involved in supporting governance.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation, including policies and record-keeping for behaviour management, exclusions, attendance, safeguarding and alternative education provision.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in English, geography, art, design and technology and science. In each subject, inspectors visited lessons, scrutinised pupils' work and held discussions with subject leaders, teachers and pupils in all key stages. Inspectors also visited several tutor-time sessions and two assemblies.
- A meeting was held with a group of teachers who are early on in their careers.
- Inspectors spoke to several groups of pupils formally and informally around the school site and across all key stages.
- The lead inspector met with a group of parents on the school site.
- The lead inspector visited the specialist resource centre for pupils experiencing behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- The lead inspector considered 85 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 45 free-text comments. Inspectors also reviewed the 98 responses to Ofsted's survey for staff and 11 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Chris Stevens, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Gulbanu Kader	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Long	Ofsted Inspector
Adrian Rollins	Ofsted Inspector

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