

# Inspection of a good school: Eastcroft Park School

Hollinghurst Road, Tower Hill, Kirkby, Liverpool, Merseyside, L33 1EB

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Inspection dates:

3 and 4 November 2021

## Outcome

Eastcroft Park School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this welcoming and caring school. Their comments included: 'It feels like a family.' Staff model the school motto of 'never settle for less than your best', and pupils strive to achieve this. Parents and carers appreciate the care and support that staff provide for their children. A typical comment from parents was: 'The staff at the school are always ready to help with questions.'

Pupils feel safe at Eastcroft Park. They said that staff look after them well. Pupils know what bullying is and said that it is rare. If it was to happen, pupils know that their teachers would help them to stop it quickly. Starting in the Nursery class, teachers set high expectations. Children quickly settle into school life and understand the school rules and routines.

Pupils' learning is thoughtfully enhanced with a range of opportunities. For example, pupils visit a local art gallery to gain a deeper appreciation of art. Pupils take part in a range of activities such as 'knit and natter', computing club and residential visits. Older pupils enjoy supporting others to play a range of board games.

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

Pupils develop knowledge by following an ambitious curriculum. Curriculum plans in key stage 1 and key stage 2 clearly identify the important knowledge that pupils will learn. Pupils' learning over time is introduced in a logical way so it builds on what pupils already know. For example, in art and design, pupils learn how to draw facial features with accuracy before learning how to add shading to enhance their portraits.

Leaders ensure that children in the early years follow a curriculum that is broad and engaging. However, curriculum plans in the early years do not always clearly define the important knowledge that children should learn in each of the areas of learning. This means that some learning is left to chance.

Leaders and teachers check pupils' learning often. Pupils complete regular quizzes to test their own understanding in a range of subjects. Teachers use this information well in order to adapt their curriculum plans to account for any gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Teachers have the subject knowledge that they need to deliver the curriculum well. They provide exciting and engaging work that pupils said helps them to remember their learning. As a result, pupils know more and remember more over time.

Leaders introduced a new curriculum for phonics in 2019. This well-planned curriculum clearly defines what pupils should learn and when they should learn it. Pupils learn to read as soon as they are ready. They read books that are carefully matched to the phonic sounds that they know. This improves their confidence and fluency in early reading. Before children learn to read, leaders prioritise children's speaking and listening skills. For example, staff in the Nursery class modelled new vocabulary about bonfire night clearly to the children.

The COVID-19 pandemic has hindered leaders' progress with this new phonics curriculum. Some staff have not received recent training in phonics. This means that they lack some expertise in supporting pupils with their reading. Leaders are taking action to remedy this.

The reading curriculum introduces pupils to many different genres and authors. Teachers regularly check pupils' reading knowledge. Pupils who require support with their early reading are identified quickly by staff, and receive the help that they need to catch up. Over time, pupils become fluent readers.

Staff work well as a team to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders make sure that the support in place enables most pupils with SEND to follow the same curriculum as their peers.

Leaders have ensured that pupils receive many opportunities to develop as young citizens. Pupils are proud to have a range of responsibilities, such as becoming a class monitor. They show respect for people with different faiths, cultures, sexualities or disabilities. Pupils learn about how their bodies will change as they grow up, and about healthy relationships, and are well prepared for life beyond Eastcroft Park.

Pupils behave well in class and at social times. Pupils, including children in the early years, respond quickly to instructions. Any disagreements or upsets are dealt with effectively by staff.

Governors and leaders know the school well. Governors offer effective support and challenge to school leaders. All staff who responded to the staff questionnaire said that leaders avoid placing unnecessary burdens on them. Leaders' investment in curriculum resources has improved the staff's work-life balance. Staff appreciate how senior leaders are approachable and supportive.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. This includes when they are playing games online. Older pupils learn about the danger of gangs. Pupils know what to do if they have any worries, and said that staff would work to make things better for them.

Staff know pupils and their families well. Staff receive regular training that helps them to spot concerns quickly. They know how to report these concerns, and leaders act swiftly to resolve them.

Leaders check that vulnerable pupils attend school daily. When needed, leaders provide support for parents to ensure that pupils attend school regularly.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Some staff have not received suitable phonics training. As a result, not all staff deliver the phonics curriculum as it is intended. This slows some pupils' learning. Leaders should make sure that all staff are suitably trained in phonics to support pupils across the school to read well.
- Leaders have not ensured that curriculum plans in the early years clearly define the knowledge that children need to know. This means that sometimes children are not able to build on what they already know and can do. Leaders should make sure that all whole-school subject curriculum plans identify the important knowledge that children should learn from the Nursery Year. This will help to ensure that children's learning in the early years provides the right foundations for learning in Year 1 and beyond.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2012.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104447
<b>Local authority</b>	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	10204434
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	213
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Steven Dixon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julie Withey
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.eastcroftpark.co.uk">www.eastcroftpark.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 December 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there have been several changes to staffing. A new early years leader and deputy headteacher have joined the school.
- Three new governors have recently joined the governing body.
- The governing body is responsible for before-school provision at the school.
- The school uses alternative provision at Meadow Park School.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation.
- The inspector completed deep dives in these subjects: early reading, art and design and mathematics. He met with subject leaders, visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work and spoke to teachers and pupils. The inspector also listened to pupils reading to an adult.

- The inspector also considered other subjects, including history, science, and personal, social and health education. He met with subject leaders, reviewed pupils' work and evaluated curriculum plans.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents. He spoke to the headteacher and senior leaders throughout the inspection. He also met with the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator.
- The inspector also met with four members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He spoke on the telephone to representatives of the local authority, including the school's challenge adviser.
- The inspector held meetings with the staff responsible for safeguarding and the single central record. He considered leaders' safeguarding processes and questioned the staff's understanding of these procedures. The inspector observed pupils during playtimes, lunchtimes and at the breakfast club. He discussed safeguarding with pupils.
- The inspector considered the responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including the free-text comments. He also considered the responses to the staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Adam Sproston, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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