

Inspection of Eskdale Academy

Eskdale Road, Hartlepool TS25 4BT

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 April 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Eskdale Academy is an inclusive, welcoming school. Pupils are very happy in this nurturing school. Leaders have worked successfully to create a rich learning environment which stimulates and excites pupils. Pupils are proud of their school. They enjoy using the art gallery to explore different artists. Pupils work together, during break times and in lessons, to experiment and produce their own art master pieces.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils. They want pupils to thrive. Pupils' personal development and safety is central to the curriculum design. At the same time, leaders want pupils to achieve well academically. Staff work as a united team to help pupils to succeed.

Pupils understand the importance of the school's values. They readily uphold these values through their positive attitudes and their determined approach to succeed. Pupils enjoy celebrating their achievements through the many rewards that are offered.

The school is a safe haven. It has a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils' behaviour is good. They display good manners and are polite. Pupils know that adults are there and will help them with any concerns they may have. The new bereavement garden is a tranquil space. Pupils appreciate having a quiet place to reflect, think about loved ones, or have a moment to themselves.

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

Leaders have made reading a high priority. Reception children get off to a great start with phonics and early reading. This continues as pupils progress through school. All staff have received appropriate training. Staff model sounds accurately and pick up on pupils' misunderstandings quickly. Pupils who struggle with their phonics get the extra help they need to catch up. Pupils develop a love of reading. They talk articulately about book choices and authors. There is a rich selection of books around the school and in the library. These books are carefully chosen to promote diversity and difference.

The maths curriculum is strong. A well-planned curriculum and effective teaching combine to ensure that pupils' learning in mathematics is positive. Staff explain new learning clearly and make regular checks on pupils' understanding. Pupils are given regular opportunities to revisit and consolidate key mathematical knowledge. Pupils confidently discuss their mathematical ideas with each other and their teachers.

Supported by the trust, leaders have created a curriculum that is designed to meet the needs of pupils at the school. This curriculum is aimed to raise pupils' aspirations and to provide memorable life experiences. The curriculum is well sequenced. It sets out the key knowledge, skills and vocabulary for each subject. However, in a few

lessons, some teachers do not have the expertise to implement these plans successfully. In these lessons, information is not presented clearly. Pupils' discussions are limited and there are less opportunities to develop deep thinking. At times, content taught is disconnected. This makes it difficult for pupils to remember their learning over time.

Leaders are keen to support the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Effective systems are in place to identify pupils with SEND. Pupils in the additionally resourced language base are very well supported. Nurture groups provide valuable support for pupils who have social and emotional needs. However, plans to support the academic needs for some pupils with SEND are too vague. These plans do not provide enough detail to help staff to break the learning down into small steps. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not achieve as highly as they should. These pupils cannot always access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers.

The early years curriculum is well sequenced and ambitious. The activities that teachers provide are well designed and link to the children's developing needs and their natural interests. Pre-school children settle into nursery quickly. They enjoy their learning and socialise well. Staff model good speaking and listening to the children when they share stories, rhymes and books. Children count and use mathematical language with growing confidence. Staff keep parents well informed. During the inspection, parents were welcomed into school to enjoy an Easter craft session.

Opportunities for pupils' personal development are successfully planned. The personal, social and health education curriculum is well designed. There are lots of opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures and world views. As a result, pupils show respect for each other. They are clear about the difference between right and wrong. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their social and leadership skills. They enjoy leadership roles such as school councillors and Head Boy and Head Girl.

There is a strong, positive team culture within the school. Staff welcome the support they receive from school leaders and across the trust. Leaders consider teachers' workload. Trustees and governors know the school well. They provide appropriate challenge for leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, staff, trustees and governors place a high priority in keeping pupils safe. The curriculum is designed to support this aim. Staff understand that they are all responsible to ensure that pupils are happy, healthy and safe.

Leaders provide staff with regular safeguarding training. Staff know how to identify any pupils who may be at risk. They understand how to report and record their

concerns. Well-established recording systems are in place. Leaders ensure that vulnerable pupils receive effective and timely support.

The school's single central record is well maintained and appropriate recruitment processes are in place.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some targets within the SEND support plans are not specific enough. They do not give sufficient guidance to teachers. As a result, some teachers find it difficult to implement the curriculum successfully to support pupils with SEND. These plans also make it difficult to measure how the pupils with SEND are progressing. Teachers need more support to create sharper support plans. These plans should identify small steps of learning over time to enable teachers to provide timely, well-focused support to pupils with SEND. Leaders should ensure that these more specific plans help evaluate the impact of the support provided and measure more precisely the progress that the pupils make.
- Teachers are implementing the planned curriculum successfully in English, mathematics and science. However, some teachers lack the subject knowledge to implement the curriculum as well in the wider curriculum. Leaders need to ensure teachers receive ongoing professional development to strengthen their subject knowledge so that they can implement the curriculum plans successfully.

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	139584
Local authority	Hartlepool Borough
Inspection number	10200736
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	241
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Peter Ingham
Headteacher	Elizabeth Killeen
Website	www.eskdaleacademy.com/
Date of previous inspection	5 December 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school offers pre-school provision for 2-year-olds.
- The academy hosts an additionally resourced language base for up to 10 key stage 1 pupils with special educational needs.

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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, science and history. The inspectors met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and talked to pupils and teachers.
- The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers, subject leaders, the special educational needs

coordinator, the early years leader, representatives from the Trust, the school improvement partner, the governing body and groups of staff.

- The inspectors reviewed the school's self-evaluation and leader's plans for improvement.
- An inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 3 and 5 read to an adult.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school, including at lunchtime. The inspector also met with groups of pupils to discuss their views of the school.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the 16 freetext responses.
- In order to judge the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors read the relevant school policies, scrutinised the single central record, checked the school's procedures for the safe recruitment of staff and interviewed the designated safeguarding lead. The inspectors also met with school staff to check their understanding of safeguarding and their training. Additionally, the inspector met with governors and a member of the Trust to check their understanding of their statutory responsibilities to keep pupils safe. Inspectors spoke to leaders, teachers, governors and pupils about safeguarding.

Inspection team

Alison Stephenson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Birch	Ofsted Inspector

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