

Inspection of The Eastbourne Academy

Brodrick Road, Hampden Park, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN22 9RQ

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 May 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel safe in school because they know that the adults care about them. Pupils told inspectors that bullying does happen sometimes but if they report it, the adults will deal with it quickly. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive and respectful. Leaders have developed clear behaviour rules so that classrooms can be calm places for pupils to learn. These rules are well understood by everyone in the school, but not all pupils abide by them. In lessons where this is the case, pupils find it harder to learn.

Pupils talk enthusiastically about their 'Sphere' lessons, which cover topics on health, relationships and citizenship. They are unwavering about not tolerating racist views or discrimination against pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The 'scholars' programme further develops pupils' talents and passions. Through joining the dance and football scholars programme, pupils study additional qualifications in sports leadership. Creativity is celebrated through school performances and competitions against other local schools.

School leaders want all pupils to achieve as well as they can. While pupils do know and remember more in subjects such as history, geography and mathematics, leaders have not prioritised the support that some pupils need to be able to read and write well.

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

Leaders are ambitious for what they want all pupils to achieve by the end of secondary school. In subjects such as English and Spanish, the curriculum does not clearly identify and order the knowledge and skills that pupils need to achieve this ambition. Pupils struggle to connect new learning to prior knowledge or key ideas. They told inspectors that they enjoy subjects such as mathematics and history because they find the content 'easy'. The level of challenge in these lessons does not encourage pupils to think hard enough. Leaders have clear plans to help the significant number of pupils who have struggled to learn to read well during the COVID-19 pandemic. These plans are not yet implemented to give pupils the help they need to catch up quickly.

Teachers use assessment to check that pupils learn the intended curriculum. This is used to provide feedback to pupils and help the teacher adapt what they teach next. However, pupils do not always understand this feedback well enough to be able to improve their work or self-check and correct mistakes. As a result, they rely heavily on their teachers to provide help and guidance. They lack the confidence and skills to learn independently.

Leaders have introduced clear lesson expectations to support the teaching of all pupils, including those with SEND. Pupils with SEND are quickly identified and personalised plans set out what additional support they need to learn well. Leaders do not ensure that these plans are considered effectively by all teachers when

planning. Therefore, pupils with SEND do not always receive the support they need in lessons.

Pupils learn about diversity and tolerance. The Rainbow Group supports pupils to explore ideas about gender and sexuality. While all pupils understand that they should treat everyone with respect, a significant minority of pupils continue to use derogatory language towards their peers. Some pupils, particularly girls in Years 7 to 9, accept this behaviour, so do not always report it to staff. These pupils say that they feel it is important to have 'a thick skin', though deep down this language makes them unhappy. Pupils receive appropriate careers advice and guidance. They understand the options open to them when they leave school.

Leaders and governors unite in their ambition to reduce the number of exclusions issued to pupils for poor behaviour. The trust brings together staff across its schools to share good practice around safeguarding and support for pupils with SEND.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise the safety and welfare of all pupils. When pupils report a concern, they take quick and appropriate action. The safeguarding team works with the trust and the local authority to regularly review safeguarding procedures. Leaders are aware of the risks that pupils face in their community. They provide expert-led training around child exploitation and county lines to ensure that all staff know how to spot the signs that a pupil is at risk.

Governors and the trust fulfil their statutory duties. They routinely check records to make sure that leaders carry out appropriate checks when they recruit new staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders want all pupils to achieve well and access an ambitious curriculum. In subjects such as English and languages, leaders have not been clear about the component knowledge and skills that they want pupils to learn. As a result, pupils cannot remember enough to acquire new knowledge securely. Leaders need to ensure that their plans for an ambitious and aspirational curriculum are in place for all subjects so that all pupils are prepared for the next stage of learning.
- Too many pupils accept derogatory language towards them from their peers. This means that not all incidents of discrimination are reported. Leaders need to ensure that all pupils know that discrimination of all kinds is not tolerated and therefore should be reported. This will ensure a deeper culture of respect among peers.
- Leaders know that a significant number of pupils still cannot read or write well enough to help them learn the intended curriculum. Leaders must ensure that

their intended plans to support reading and writing are enacted as a priority so that pupils are better prepared for future learning.

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	136106
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10211194
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	847
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Goodson
Principal	Victoria Stevens
Website	www.theeastbourneacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	17 January 2017

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Swale multi-academy trust.
- The current headteacher joined the school in March 2018.
- The school uses five alternative providers to provide education and support for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical educational 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, geography and drama. Inspectors

discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, teachers and pupils, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. They also spoke with representatives of the governing body and the board of trustees.
- Inspectors considered the 47 responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including 19 free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff survey and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the school's website and policies and met with safeguarding leaders. They also spoke to pupils, staff and governors and scrutinised school records of the safeguarding checks on adults working in the school.
- Inspectors reviewed and scrutinised a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' plans for improving the school, their evaluation of how well the school is currently performing, minutes of local board meetings and records of attendance and behaviour incidents.
- A meeting was held with a group of pupils to discuss their views about many different aspects of their school. Inspectors also held informal conversations with pupils at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors also contacted each of the alternative providers used by this school.

Inspection team

Michelle Lower, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ginny Rhodes	Ofsted Inspector
Christopher Doherty	Ofsted Inspector
Rachel McDonald-Taylor	Ofsted Inspector

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