

Inspection of a good school: Eldon Grove Academy

Eldon Grove, Hartlepool, Teesside TS26 9LY

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 March 2024

Outcome

Eldon Grove Academy continues to be a good school.

The head of this school is Christian Park. The school is part of the Extol Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Julie Deville, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jackie Butterworth.

What is it like to attend this school?

At Eldon Grove, each pupil's potential is recognised and celebrated. Leaders have a clear vision for excellence. Staff share this vision and are proud to be part of the team. A passion for high-quality education and the well-being of pupils is a priority for everyone working at the school. Pupils are well motivated and happy. Pupils know there is an adult they can turn to if they need help. Pupils are resilient, independent and work well together. They welcome those who are different from themselves. Bullying is rare.

The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their character and contribute to their school community. The student parliament, 'house' system and sports leadership roles are valued by pupils. They are proud to represent their school in sporting fixtures, musical events and when visitors come into school. Parents and carers are positive about their children's experience at the school. One said, 'The children are at the heart of what they (the school) do'. The inspector agrees.

In classrooms, pupils' behaviour and focus are exceptional. Staff skilfully lead discussions to develop pupils' understanding of each topic. Pupils listen attentively to staff and one another. Leaders at all levels know precisely what is required to ensure pupils achieve their best. Pupils are keen to succeed and do their best daily.

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

The school has created an ambitious curriculum for all pupils. The important knowledge, skills and vocabulary pupils need to develop are clearly set out. The curriculum for children in the early years is expertly planned. This helps children get off to a strong start in their education. Leaders have considered the topics that pupils might find most difficult

to understand. Teachers provide extra explanations or spend additional time teaching these tricky topics. As a result, pupils learn the curriculum successfully and achieve well.

The curriculum has been well designed by staff who are knowledgeable specialists. For example, music and the arts are prioritised for all pupils. This rich curriculum offer stimulates pupils' talents and interests. Staff take part in regular training and professional development. They become experts in their field. The curriculum is well adapted to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Support for pupils with SEND is highly effective. This includes plans that precisely set out each pupil's needs. Pupils with SEND participate and achieve well. Staff understand how to structure learning to get the best out of pupils. This includes revisiting pupils' prior learning and regularly checking their understanding. The school has identified the important vocabulary it wants pupils to learn. This vocabulary is embedded more fully in some subjects than in others. Where staff and pupils use vocabulary precisely, it contributes strongly to pupils' achievement.

Interactions between adults and children in the early years are of high quality. Staff direct children to activities intended to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills. The indoor and outdoor learning environments stimulate children's interests. Children who might struggle to communicate and participate in school are quickly identified. Additional support for these children is well planned. As a result, children gain confidence and flourish in an inclusive environment.

A new reading scheme has been established at the school. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning to read do so with increasing confidence. The school have prioritised reading for all pupils. A wide variety of books are available to borrow. These include books written by, and about, people from different cultures and backgrounds. This further develops pupils' knowledge of the world around them.

Pupils attend school regularly. The number of pupil absences has reduced over time. For some vulnerable groups or individuals, specific support is in place. This is intended to help these pupils re-engage with education. The school has been highly successful in this regard.

Pupils' personal development is a priority at the school. Pupils regularly learn about important topics, such as mental health, online safety and equalities. Pupils get advice and inspiration about a range of careers. Pupils participate in a 'Primary Engineer Project' and learn about working in the NHS or banking.

The British values of respect and tolerance shine through at the school. Everyone is seen as equal and pupils respect both staff and their peers.

Leaders' plans for improvement and evaluation of their own effectiveness are highly accurate. Strategies to improve the school are precise. Developments in the curriculum have been carefully considered. However, more remains to be done to ensure all pupils make the same progress in reading and mathematics as they do in writing.

The school has a tight-knit staff body. High-quality professional development is provided to ensure staff are skilled and knowledgeable within their roles. This benefits both pupils' education and staff workload. Leaders are mindful of staff well-being when making changes. Leaders' determination to improve the school is evident. Staff speak positively about the changes that have taken place at the school over time.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Improvements to the curriculum are still being embedded across the school. This limits the progress some pupils make over time. The school should ensure that the ambitious vocabulary and communication skills they intend pupils to develop are embedded so that pupils' progress continues to strengthen.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2019.

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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	139851
Local authority	Hartlepool Borough
Inspection number	10315572
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	512
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jackie Butterworth
Headteacher	Christian Park
Website	www.eldongroveacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	30 and 31 January 2019

Information about this school

- The school became part of Extol Academy Trust in July 2013.
- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher and several other senior leaders have joined the school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school runs breakfast and after-school clubs.

Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this ungraded inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. The lead inspector also spoke with a CEO and trustees as well as members of the local governing body.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with some pupils and teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in a range of situations, including in corridors, at breaktimes, at lunchtimes and in lessons. The inspector also spoke to pupils about behaviour and bullying. The inspector spoke with leaders, teachers and pupils about the school's programme of personal development and careers provision.
- The inspector considered the responses from parents to Ofsted Parent View. This includes the comments submitted via the free-text facility. The inspector also considered responses to Ofsted's online pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

John Linkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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