

Eldon Grove Academy

Eldon Grove, Hartlepool, Teesside TS26 9LY

Inspection dates

30–31 January 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have ensured a caring ethos where ambition for pupils is tangible. Leaders focus firmly on raising pupils' aspirations and on the professional development of staff.
- Leaders, including trustees and governors, hold colleagues to account for pupils' outcomes. This ensures that leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils.
- Leaders' work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. This is supported by a curriculum design which ensures that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is given high priority.
- Current pupils make particularly strong progress in writing. Teachers are adept at building up pupils' skills, which pupils apply well in extended pieces of writing.
- Middle leaders receive effective professional development and use this well to lead improvements in their areas of responsibility.
- Disadvantaged pupils' outcomes have lagged behind those of other pupils nationally. With additional, tailored teaching in place, this group of pupils are now beginning to make stronger progress.
- In mathematics, pupils develop good calculation, reasoning and problem-solving skills. However, too often, the most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently well.
- Highly effective teaching and leadership have ensured that the early years provision is outstanding. Children show excitement for learning and make strong progress.
- At the end of key stage 1, pupils attain highly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Following a decline in pupils' outcomes in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 and 2017, attainment in 2018 improved. However, pupils only made average progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Pupils develop early reading skills well. The proportion of pupils that reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is consistently above average.
- The teaching of reading comprehension has improved. Pupils read high-quality texts and teachers set challenging activities in this subject. However, too often, teachers do not address pupils' underdeveloped and incorrect answers. This hinders pupils' progress.
- Overall, pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. However, when teaching does not meet their needs, pupils show a lack of focus and this hampers their progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and the most able, make stronger progress in their learning, by ensuring that:
 - the level of challenge in mathematics is consistently linked to pupils' starting points
 - teachers swiftly address pupils' underdeveloped and incorrect answers in reading comprehension activities
 - teachers plan learning activities that are well matched to pupils' needs and that sustain their interest.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have instilled a culture of high ambition within the school. They are passionate about raising pupils' aspirations and supporting the professional development of staff members. This is reflected in the determination, resilience and quest for continual improvement demonstrated by pupils and staff alike.
- Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching has fallen from outstanding to good. As a result, pupils now make good progress from their starting points rather than the outstanding progress previously. Too few of the most able pupils reach the higher standards of learning of which they are capable.
- Following the decline in pupils' outcomes in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2016, leaders introduced new approaches to teaching these subjects. There remains work to be done to further strengthen the teaching and improve pupils' progress in reading and mathematics.
- Senior leaders' support for less experienced teachers, including trainee teachers and newly qualified teachers, is highly effective. Partnerships across the trust and with other local schools provide a network in which teachers can work collaboratively. This, along with the support of a lead practitioner, gives teachers fresh ideas and the confidence to try new strategies. Leaders encourage teaching staff to reflect on and evaluate their practice through regular coaching sessions.
- Leaders' work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Leaders' focus on pupils' well-being and on preparing them for life in modern Britain is a constant feature in decisions regarding pupils' learning opportunities.
- Senior and middle leaders champion the subjects and remits for which they are responsible. They receive effective professional development, including opportunities to support other trust schools. As a result, they have high expectations of the quality of teaching. Their evaluations of the strengths and priorities for their subjects and areas of responsibility are accurate.
- The special educational needs coordinator has a firm understanding of the individual needs and barriers to learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). She checks that the targets teachers set with pupils and parents and carers are productive and achievable. She ensures that teaching enables pupils with SEND to make good progress. Where appropriate, she engages with external agencies to gain further expertise and advice.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is broad and balanced. They are in the process of reviewing and refining the curriculum to make sure it best meets the needs of pupils. Leaders have placed heavy emphasis on sparking pupils' interest and ambition through a range of learning experiences. For example, links with a local secondary school and a local college have provided exciting opportunities for pupils in science.
- Leaders have prioritised work to improve disadvantaged pupils' outcomes. They allocate some of the pupil premium funding to providing additional teaching to support these pupils. Leaders check carefully on the difference their actions make to

disadvantaged pupils' progress and adapt strategies as needed. This is starting to result in disadvantaged pupils making stronger progress. However, strengthening the outcomes for this group of pupils remains a priority across year groups.

- Leaders have ensured that the primary physical education (PE) and sport funding is spent well. Specialist sports coaches provide high-quality PE lessons for pupils and professional development for staff. Leaders have also increased pupils' participation in after-school and lunchtime sports clubs and activities.

Governance of the school

- Trustees and governors are committed to the school and are passionate about supporting pupils' future success. They know the school's strengths and priorities well because they receive detailed information from senior leaders. They use this to challenge leaders, particularly with regards to pupils' outcomes.
- Trustees and governors understand the responsibilities their roles necessitate. They have suitable expertise and knowledge to fulfil their roles. They maintain and extend this by engaging in appropriate training. For example, trustees are trained in the analysis of pupils' outcomes. This gives them a clear understanding of how pupils achieve in relation to national comparators.
- Senior leaders' improvement plans contain clear milestones which trustees use effectively to hold leaders to account. Trustees are also astute in scrutinising the reports of external advisers to verify the information they receive from leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders place the highest priority on pupils' welfare. Staff are well trained and understand their responsibilities in keeping children safe. Members of staff have strong relationships with pupils and parents and carers. They provide vital support for families whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- Staff with designated responsibility for safeguarding act swiftly to share information with external agencies where necessary. Their records are thorough and organised.
- Leaders have ensured that staff are checked appropriately for their suitability to work with children. Records in respect of this are well maintained.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors were unanimous in saying that they feel safe in school. They know how to stay safe in a range of contexts, including online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders have provided intensive support and professional development for new teaching staff where necessary. This has ensured that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good.
- The teaching of writing is effective. Teachers have a strong knowledge of English grammar, punctuation and spelling. They use this well to sequence lessons to build up

pupils' skills, which pupils then apply to frequent extended pieces of writing. Pupils are accustomed to improving their writing through editing and redrafting their work. Pupils make strong progress in writing.

- Leaders have ensured that pupils read high-quality books and texts that are appropriate for their age. Teachers are becoming increasingly skilled in posing challenging questions for pupils to check their understanding of the texts they are reading. However, teachers' expectations of pupils' written responses to their questions are variable. Consequently, too often, pupils' answers lack depth and those that are incorrect are not addressed by teachers.
- In mathematics, pupils develop number and calculation skills well. They also have frequent opportunities to reason mathematically and to solve problems, including in a real-life context. Lower attaining pupils often have additional teaching sessions prior to mathematics lessons. This supports them in making strong progress. However, in some year groups, the most able pupils spend too long on activities that are too easy before moving on to work that represents a suitable level of challenge for them. This hinders their progress.
- Pupils are enthused by their learning in wider curriculum subjects, such as history and geography. They retain knowledge about topics they have studied and articulate their understanding well. Pupils' interest in their topics is also piqued by the educational visits and visitors to the school, which teachers select carefully. Teachers are successful in expanding pupils' vocabulary through a focus on technical, subject-specific words.
- Teaching staff set appropriate targets for pupils with SEND. They also adapt their teaching and plan additional teaching sessions for identified pupils. Teaching assistants often provide crucial support that enables pupils with SEND to make good progress while learning alongside their peers.
- Leaders have revised their approach to homework. Many pupils enjoy consolidating and extending their understanding in 'home-learning' projects. For example, during the inspection, pupils were proud to share the models of volcanoes they had made at home. Some pupils also attend the home-learning café after-school club, where they benefit from teaching assistant support to complete their homework.
- Overall, pupils have positive attitudes to learning and they take pride in their work. However, too often, pupils' concentration drifts and their progress slows. This occurs when teachers do not have high expectations of pupils' participation in lessons and when pupils do not receive a suitable level of challenge.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Leaders have placed considerable emphasis on supporting pupils' social and emotional development. This is manifested in teaching that weaves such learning opportunities into a variety of subjects. For example, pupils develop important qualities such as empathy and compassion through drama lessons.
- A leader with responsibility for raising pupils' aspirations has been effective in

demonstrating to pupils the range of opportunities that are available in the local area. Partnerships with higher and further education establishments have been successful in broadening pupils' horizons and feeding their ambitions for the future.

- Pupils have an extensive range of opportunities to develop their leadership skills. For example, pupils are keen to fulfil the role of librarian, sports leader and 'playground pal'. Such opportunities contribute positively to the high levels of maturity and responsibility pupils show. Pupils' teamwork and cooperation skills are also actively promoted. For example, pupils selected to cultivate the school's allotment are keenly aware of the importance of working together to get the best results.
- Pupils' spiritual development is fostered effectively. For example, in religious education (RE), pupils are asked to consider themes such as love, peace and honesty. Similarly, teachers' focus on philosophical questions encourages pupils to think deeply about pertinent issues. This is further consolidated by pupils' regular involvement in charity and community work.
- Pupils have a strong understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. They are knowledgeable about the importance of a balanced diet and frequent exercise. Pupils also have a well-developed understanding of bullying and the different forms it can take. They understand how bullying can negatively affect mental health and well-being. Consequently, pupils show respect for each other and instances of bullying are very rare.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Adults have high expectations of pupils. As a result, pupils are sensible and, overall, they conduct themselves well. This creates a calm and orderly atmosphere in the school.
- Instances of poor behaviour and derogatory language are rare. Pupils are encouraged to make positive moral choices through lessons and assemblies. For example, reading lessons are used to explore dilemmas faced by characters and the possible consequences of their actions. This supports pupils' understanding of others and, hence, they show care for each other.
- Pupils value their education and they attend school regularly. Leaders' work to promote attendance and improve pupils' punctuality has been successful.
- Pupils spoken to during the inspection demonstrated enthusiasm for learning. However, too often, in lessons, pupils do not find the activities engaging. This is sometimes when tasks are too easy. On these occasions, their concentration lapses. This lack of focus means that some pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Across year groups and in a range of subjects, current pupils make good progress. Hence, most pupils reach the standard expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. The effective teaching of writing ensures that pupils now make strong progress in this subject.
- In reading and mathematics, the variability in the quality of teaching in some year

groups means that the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards of attainment is too low. In mathematics, some pupils, particularly the most able, are not challenged appropriately and so their progress slows. In reading comprehension, some teachers fail to address pupils' misconceptions swiftly, which limits pupils' progress.

- Following below-average outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 and 2017 in reading and mathematics, 2018 attainment showed considerable improvement in both subjects. The proportion of pupils that reached the standard expected for their age was above average in each of these subjects. However, the proportion that reached the higher standard in their learning was broadly average. Pupils in Year 6 in 2018 made average progress in reading, writing and mathematics over time.
- Key stage 1 pupils' attainment in English and mathematics has been above average for the last three years. Pupils are well prepared for learning in key stage 2. Pupils currently in key stage 1 make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The effective teaching of phonics ensures that pupils develop early reading skills well. The proportion of pupils that reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is consistently above average.
- Current pupils with SEND make good progress. Teaching is adapted well to meet pupils' needs.
- At the end of key stage 2, the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils have lagged behind those of other pupils nationally. Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are now making stronger progress and an increasing proportion are reaching the standard expected for their age. However, across year groups, too few disadvantaged pupils reach the higher standards of attainment.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Leadership in early years is highly effective and has ensured that the quality of teaching is exemplary. As a result, children make very strong progress and develop a love of learning.
- Children enter early years with knowledge and skills that are typical for their age. Adults are skilled in assessing children accurately and planning activities that meet their needs precisely. This enables children to achieve very well. Consequently, the proportion of children who reach a good level of development is consistently above average. In addition, approximately a third of children exceed the standards expected for their age.
- Adults have strong relationships with children. They are adept in planning the curriculum in response to children's interests. In doing so, they effectively foster children's excitement about learning. For example, during the inspection, children showed high levels of enthusiasm for learning about 'outer space'.
- Adults design well-thought-out activities, which each develop a number of skills. For example, during the inspection, children enjoyed building telescopes and rockets, and making maps of the solar system. Each of these activities was effective in developing, among other skills, children's fine motor skills, their knowledge of the world and their creativity.

- The activities available for children to initiate their own learning also support their language and social development. Opportunities for children to role play and work cooperatively together are effective in stimulating language development. Adults demonstrate expertise in knowing when to intervene to move children's learning on. As a result, children demonstrate a well-developed and expanding vocabulary.
- Children show high levels of independence in their learning and are able to sustain their focus for extended periods. This is because activities spark their interest and present a suitable level of challenge.
- Leaders have ensured that parents are fully engaged in their child's education. Through daily face-to-face and electronic communication, parents and adults from the setting share information about each child's development. Parents also attend workshops and events, such as a visit to the park. Through these occasions, parents are kept well informed about how to support their child at home.
- An atmosphere of care characterises the early years setting. Children are well looked after, and welfare requirements are met. Adults are successful in creating an ethos where children develop confidence in learning and can thrive.

School details

Unique reference number	139851
Local authority	Hartlepool Borough
Inspection number	10057885

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	518
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Jackie Butterworth
Executive Headteacher	Julie Deville
Telephone number	01429 273895
Website	www.eldongroveacademy.co.uk
Email address	exechead@eldongroveacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–4 February 2015

Information about this school

- Eldon Grove Academy is larger than the average-sized primary school. It has a Nursery class for children from the age of three. The school is part of the Extol Multi Academy Trust.
- Approximately 30% of pupils are from disadvantaged backgrounds and this is above the national average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below average.
- The executive headteacher is a national leader of education and is the chief executive officer of the trust. The school is a national support school. A number of members of staff are specialist leaders of education and some have a role as a moderator for the local authority.

- The school has a breakfast club for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in classes across the school in a range of subjects. Most of these observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' work, talked to pupils about their learning and listened to several of them read. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at playtimes and lunchtimes. Pupils' opinions about the school were gathered through formal and informal discussions.
- Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders, including the chief executive of the trust, the head of school, two trustees and a representative of the local governing body. Inspectors had telephone conversations with an external adviser and a local authority representative. They also met with a group of staff.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans and minutes of trust board and governing body meetings. They viewed safeguarding documents and monitoring records of the quality of teaching and learning. They also evaluated information relating to pupils' outcomes, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors gathered the opinions of parents at the start of the school day. They also took account of the views of 78 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

Karine Hendley, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Chris Cook	Her Majesty's Inspector
Deborah Ashcroft	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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