

East Park Academy

Hollington Road, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV1 2DS

Inspection dates

11–12 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- East Park Academy is a school where pupils flourish and make exceptional progress.
- Manor Multi-academy Trust (MAT) and the local governing body provide exceptional support to and oversight of the school. Their wide-ranging expertise provides very effective guidance to leaders and staff.
- The 'East Park 8' values flow through the heart of the school. They inform the thoughts and actions of all adults and pupils throughout each day.
- Pupils are dedicated ambassadors for their school. They relish the significant range of roles and responsibilities on offer to them. They fulfil these with energy, understanding and a determination to make a difference for their peers in the school.
- Leaders ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported extremely well. This is both within the specially resourced provision and mainstream school.
- All adults who spoke to inspectors or responded to the online survey say they are proud to be a member of staff at the school. They are compelling in their respect and appreciation of leaders' abilities to bring about improvements alongside positively promoting the well-being of staff and reducing workload.
- Leaders have crafted an exciting curriculum that engages pupils and helps them develop a sense of themselves within the wider world. Pupils use writing and mathematical skills for a range of purposes across the curriculum. Pupils in key stage 1 do not have extensive enough opportunities to write at length.
- Pupils read widely and often. They appreciate the library facilities and outside reading courtyard. Teachers develop pupils' early reading skills effectively. There are a few pupils whose home reading books are not closely matched to their phonics skills.
- Leaders show determination and dedication in keeping all pupils safe. They have invested deeply in prioritising the welfare of both staff and pupils. Attendance is improving. There is the potential to further reduce rates of persistent absence.
- Leaders in the early years have developed routines and a curriculum that recognise and respond to the needs of children. They make sure that high-quality teaching is a consistent part of each and every day.
- Adults in the early years foundation stage are knowledgeable and skilled. They sensitively support and challenge children to grow and develop as independent, inquisitive and confident learners.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Promote opportunities for more pupils in key stage 1 to create extended pieces of writing.
- Ensure that pupils' home reading books consistently provide them with opportunities to apply their phonics skills.
- Further reduce the amount of persistent absence.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The quality of leadership at all levels is superb.
- Leaders, including directors of the MAT and governors, have a unique vision for what it means and feels to be a member of East Park Academy. This is tangible as soon as you enter the school.
- The headteacher sets a very high standard, both for herself and others. Consequently, under her leadership, the school has become a place where staff and pupils love spending time learning and developing together. When pupils were asked how to make the school better, suggestions included, 'Make it eight hours a day, not six.'
- Leaders exercise shrewd judgement and have created an aspirational climate for learning, where pupils and staff are nurtured and motivated to do their very best and they overcome challenges and experience success. It is an inspirational school and one that has much to share with other schools.
- Directors of the MAT make astute and timely decisions. This has allowed leaders to maintain the strong focus on improving the quality of education for pupils. As a result, pupils of all abilities make excellent and sustained progress across the school.
- A key factor in bringing about the school's current level of success has been leaders' ability to spot talent and create highly effective teams that get the best from everyone. One staff member, sharing the views of many said, 'The headteacher sees the vision for my career before I even see it coming.'
- Leaders actively welcome challenge, seek advice and embrace coaching in order to improve. To this end, leaders make sure that everyone stays current with training, receives precise feedback about their work and has many opportunities to share ideas and learn from others. Staff clearly value the support and challenge they receive and made this clear through their responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and during a meeting with an inspector.
- The school curriculum is extremely well organised. Focus weeks, in addition to trips and residential visits, enrich and enhance subject learning. Pupils and staff seize these opportunities to immerse themselves in a subject. Consequently, learning is deepened, helping pupils to acquire knowledge, understanding and skills in all aspects of their learning. Every subject incorporates features that support and promote the school's vision and values. For example, respect, collaboration, independence and creativity, four of 'East Park 8' values were transparent during observations of the school's 'Around the World' curriculum.
- The school is highly inclusive. Leadership of provision for pupils with SEND, both within the specialised resource provision and the mainstream school, is very effective. Leaders and staff demonstrate passion and determination for each individual pupil to access a high-quality education. Assessments clearly identify the most appropriate provision and support for pupils with SEND. A notable strength is the importance given to the voice of the pupil within their individual plans. Leaders monitor the use of additional support and funding closely to ensure that there is a positive impact. As a result, pupils with

SEND make strong progress. Parents agree, saying their children are well supported.

- Pupil premium funding has been used resourcefully in order to meet targeted pupils' many different needs. Leaders' insightful knowledge of their school context focuses spending on care, nurture, well-being and safety in the first instance. Staff within the well-being team have been instrumental in building positive relationships and developing trust with vulnerable families. Parents praise the pastoral support for families provided by the school in times of difficulty and say that key staff ensure that pupils are well supported during difficult times and continue to make good progress. However, whether using funding to provide breakfast, improve behaviour or raise academic standards, leaders' decisions have resulted in success. This is a clear example of the evaluative and reasoned culture in the school bringing benefits to the pupils.
- In a similar vein, leaders spend the primary sport funding well. Leaders' focus has been instrumental in lifting the profile of sport and physical education (PE) in the school, both within the school day and through extra-curricular activities. By the end of key stage 2, pupils are capable swimmers. All pupils experience a wide range of sports. Pupils' involvement in sporting events across the MAT has increased enjoyment in sport participation, deepened pupils' understanding of competition and how to behave with sportsmanship. 'Active Friday', a weekly kilometre walk for staff and pupils, is now an established part of the week.
- Leaders are unequivocal about the importance of staff well-being. Words transpire into action that makes a difference with high staff morale clearly visible. Staff are vocal in their praise of the value and investment in their health and well-being. Many staff champion the way leaders have provided a work-life balance, given them back a family life while also improving their practice as a teacher or a leader. Not an easy task, but one which leaders continually face head-on and another example of the excellent leadership in the school.
- There is no doubt that pupils are more than ready for secondary school by the time they leave East Park Academy. Not only that, they identify themselves as citizens of worth with something valuable to contribute to society. The values, attitudes, knowledge and skills acquired in their primary years give pupils the outlook and ability to make the most of their life ahead.

Governance of the school

- The MAT structure and areas of delegated responsibility are clearly communicated to all parties. The directors have a first-rate understanding of their role and can call upon an impressive skill set. They demonstrate a core moral responsibility to improve the quality of educational life for pupils and staff of East Park Academy. This has proved a powerful motivator, and influenced every decision made. In turn, outcomes for pupils have significantly improved.
- Trustees' consideration of the committee structure of the local governing body has created a committee with the knowledge, confidence and ability to support and challenge leaders. Governors routinely check information for themselves by talking with pupils, staff and parents, examining data and pupils' work and accompanying leaders on classroom visits. They make sure that the information they receive and gather informs their evaluations of leaders' work and to plan for further improvements. Trustees' robust monitoring of leaders' work secures continual improvement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Relevant checks on staff and visitors are carried out correctly. Record-keeping is organised well, and all information is kept securely.
- Leaders of safeguarding are well informed, conscientious and take their responsibilities seriously. Leaders are fully aware of the potential risks pupils and their families face in the community. They use this knowledge to keep pupils safe and to support families.
- Leaders are quick to act on any concerns raised, and pass information to the right people in a timely manner. Leaders' knowledge, confidence and conviction that pupils deserve the very best care enables them to challenge external agencies if necessary. They do not stop challenging until they are secure that pupils' needs are being met and that pupils are safe.
- Everyone understands their duty of care and their role in making sure that the school is a safe place for pupils. Leaders and governors test out staff awareness by issuing quizzes to staff and opening every staff meeting with a 'safeguarding starter.' They then follow up with further information and training as necessary. Pupils, through the junior leadership team, also play their part.
- An exceptionally small number of parents raised concerns about bullying through the online survey. Inspectors considered this aspect of safeguarding in detail. Inspectors found leaders' management of behaviour to be clear, fair, consistent and accurately recorded and reported on. Pupils demonstrate high levels of autonomy, maturity and responsibility. They value being able to talk to junior coaches or an adult if they are worried about anything. Some older pupils spoke of historic bullying from a few years ago and some pupils responding to the survey said bullying happens. The pupils who were spoken to during the inspection were absolute in their sincerity that bullying is not a problem now. They are confident that they can share problems of any kind and that these will be resolved.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- A striking characteristic of teaching at East Park Academy is the teamwork and consistency of approach. In every class, teachers' and teaching assistants' expectations are united and work builds securely and progressively on previous learning. This fine-tuning of teaching is achieved through the highly effective use of assessment by teachers who are always looking for ways to improve what they do.
- Teachers' classroom management is superb. Teachers expect the best from pupils but also make sure that rules are fair and that pupils learn to understand and respect others. Conversely, pupils expect the best from teachers. They recognise and value how much all staff do to help them learn and develop.
- Exceptional teamwork between staff also means that time and expertise are used to best effect. Everyone's efforts focus on modelling high standards, meeting pupils' needs and getting the best from them. 'Over the shoulder' feedback has been instrumental in moving pupils on in their learning and understanding. Consequently, staff set consistent expectations for progress, which pupils understand and use to help

them in their learning.

- A vision of leaders is that you cannot distinguish between a teacher and teaching assistant when you walk into a classroom. This vision was a reality in all lessons visited by inspectors. Staff themselves feel this within school, saying that, 'We are all interconnected in some way. There are no hierarchies here.' To sum up, they say, 'It is a buzzing, vibrant and caring place to work.'
- Regular training for all staff keeps them alert to new ways of doing things and open to support and change. If something does not work, staff change it. If something works very well, staff share it. Indeed, school leaders encourage and expect staff to try new ideas and to take risks within a safe environment but also hold them to account for the impact on pupils' work and progress. A common consensus among staff was that leaders, 'Don't mind you making mistakes, just don't make the same one twice.'
- In short, teaching promotes high standards and respect for all.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and respectful. There is a mutual and deep respect between pupils and adults, and pupils and their peers. This is demonstrated throughout all areas of the building and the school day.
- Staff sensitively support pupils with individual needs in the resource base to develop independence and an understanding of safety. Staff draw upon a wealth of expertise to support individual development. They are unwavering in their commitment to providing these pupils with the personal skills that will help them to have some independence within their life. For example, to allow independence in completing work at the end of a lesson, the lights are turned off as the bell rings so pupils with hearing impairments know that the bell has gone.
- Pupils have many opportunities to learn the skills they need to develop their emotional well-being, build their resilience and manage life's challenges. The 'mindful week' provides time each day for a different form of mindfulness and well-being activity that pupils and staff appreciate as it helps them to calm and focus.
- Pupils are clear about how their school's 'East Park 8' values and '#observeus' link to their development as individuals. They understand the things you need to know to be able to communicate on the internet or via text safely. As a result, pupils understand their responsibilities in keeping safe, both in the real and the virtual worlds.
- Leaders' ethos of developing leadership qualities in people extends to the pupils. They provide a range of roles and responsibilities, including prefects, coaches, librarians, head boy and girl and a junior leadership team. Pupils take these roles seriously. A full application process involving writing a supporting statement and providing references prepares pupils with life-skills. The shortlisting and interview process is rigorous. Pupils are proud of their achievement if appointed for a role. These young leaders symbolise all that is East Park Academy.
- Members of the junior leadership team work in partnership with senior leaders. Their

monitoring is exacting. They make no excuses. An example given by pupils was that an analysis of mathematics books had found not enough reasoning happening. When asked why this was important, they responded, 'Because it means that we have not done enough through our lesson to get to the reasoning section.' They went on to explain the significance of this on their learning over time.

- Pupils show a deep sense of self-worth, responsibility and respect as a citizen in our modern society. One pupil verbalised the thoughts of many junior leaders, 'I am proud to be changing children's lives.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils conduct themselves exceptionally well within lessons and around the school. They concentrate well in lessons and are confident and responsive learners who successfully complete the tasks given.
- Attendance had been static at figures that were below national figures for two years. In the current year, attendance rates have risen and are currently broadly in line with national levels. Persistent absence has reduced and is now in line with national levels. However, there is more work to be done to continue to bring rates of persistent absence down even further.
- The importance of good attendance has a high profile across the school. Leaders monitor attendance carefully. They are alert to the possibility of children going missing from education and work with external agencies to minimise any risk.
- There have been no exclusions this year.
- At playtimes, pupils play cooperatively together. Pupils are happy, friendly and readily talk to adults. They follow instructions well. Pupils demonstrate self-discipline as they move around the school.
- Pupils have a deep understanding of the school's behaviour policy. They talk about the systems for supporting behaviour very precisely. They particularly enjoy earning 'team time' in recognition of achievement and appreciate that leaders recognise and value their hard work.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and well mannered. They confidently welcome visitors and willingly engage in conversations. During visits to classrooms, around the school and in the playground, pupils were proud of their work and of what they achieve in school.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Since becoming part of Manor MAT in 2016, there has been a rapidly improving trend in outcomes for all pupils.
- Academic standards have risen significantly in the previous two years. In 2018, at the end of key stages 1 and 2, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was well above age-related expectations. This represents remarkable progress from pupils' starting points on entry to school. For current pupils, these high standards are being maintained and strengthened further.

- Published outcomes at the end of Year 6 show pupils' progress as exceptionally strong, especially in reading and mathematics. Consequently, attainment at the end of key stage 2 is improving.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils attaining the standards expected for their age at the end of key stage 1 was at the national average in mathematics and well above the national average for reading and writing. Pupils attaining greater depth was in line for reading and well above the national average for writing and mathematics.
- Leaders' development of the progression of mathematics knowledge, skills and application within a lesson, within a unit of work and over time stands out for all to see. As a result, pupils of all abilities make excellent and sustained progress across the school.
- Pupils' attainment in the Year 1 phonics check was above the national average in 2018.
- Teachers deliver phonics in a systematic way, which ensures that pupils progress swiftly through the phonics programme. Pupils develop strong decoding skills, which they enjoy applying in their reading during their phonics sessions. Occasionally, pupils' home reading books do not provide opportunities for them to apply their phonics skills.
- Pupils' very high standards of presentation in all subjects are commendable. It demonstrates the pride pupils have of their learning and their work. Pupils write for many, varied reasons across the full range of subjects. Key stage 2 pupils show themselves to be engaged writers who understand the purpose of writing. They demonstrate knowledge, stamina and increasing sophistication in a range of skills. Key stage 1 pupils apply their phonics and spellings within short pieces of writing. However, there are limited opportunities for them to write extended pieces.
- The progress across the curriculum of disadvantaged pupils matches that of other pupils in the school. Leaders and teachers are relentless in providing appropriate extra support for these pupils whenever they need it.
- The progress that pupils with SEND make ensures that they are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make very strong progress in all subjects in all year groups. Internal school information, alongside scrutiny of current pupils' work, shows that the proportion achieving the standards expected for their age, in all subjects, is improving as a result.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- School leaders set out their ambition for children from the very start. Leaders and teachers see home visits as pivotal in developing the partnership and bond between family and school. The visits are invaluable in supporting teachers to plan activities that build upon children's interests from the very first moment they step through the door of the school. Children and parents respond well to a friendly face that they have seen before. Not only that, the well-being team can be called upon to provide further sensitive support for children with additional or well-being needs. These combined actions give children the very best start to their school life.
- Adults in the early years continue to grow the partnership with parents in many ways.

An increasing number of parents participate in school events through initiatives such as 'Follow-me Fridays' and a range of workshops. Parents receive informative reports on their child's progress each half term.

- Most children enter the early years with skills and knowledge well below those typical for their age. By the time they leave the Reception Year, all children have made substantial progress in all areas of learning. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development in 2018 was in line with the national average.
- Leaders' 'can do' attitude has seen the introduction of Little Parkers, an early years provision to supplement the mainstream nursery. Since its introduction in January 2019, it has strengthened the provision, improved children's outcomes and been central to the safeguarding and nurturing ethos of the school.
- Teaching is highly effective. For example, systematic phonics teaching means that children make an excellent start with reading and writing. The classrooms and outdoor space are vibrant and stimulating, providing engaging resources for all areas of learning. There is an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Children love receiving their 'book licence', which inspires writing. During an observation, several children, both boys and girls, chose to write at length in these books during child-initiated time.
- Leaders' clear rationale for curriculum and adult organisation means that adults are deeply aware of each individual child's learning journey. They skilfully prompt and question children to further enhance their learning. Assessment is integral to practice. Inspectors evidenced at first hand the positive impact that the swift and succinct cycle of observe, assess, identify next step and intervene has on children's progress.
- Once again, the 'East Park 8' values shone through. Children demonstrated collaboration, perseverance, respect, creativity and independence across a range of areas in the setting. Honesty was also challenged through play. Children immersed in a shopping activity noted a shopping basket leaving the shop without it having been paid for. Sensitive adult intervention helped them to consider and find a resolution.
- As is the case throughout the school, leaders make no decision without a well thought out reason and purpose. Snack time across the early years is held in high regard. Children take and manage risks as they use real cutlery to prepare their own snack. Adults and children sit down, share and have conversations. Even the very youngest children meet these expectations. The pleasure of enjoying each other's company and conversing in a mutually respectful environment is plain for all to see.

School details

Unique reference number	143152
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	10092167

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	696
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	David Coles
Headteacher	Hayley Guest
Telephone number	01902 558 899
Website	www.eastparkacademy.com
Email address	info@eastparkacademy.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy

Information about this school

- East Park Academy is a larger than the average-sized primary school.
- East Park Academy converted to become an academy on 1 December 2016.
- East Park Academy is one of seven primary schools in Manor MAT. The board of trustees has overall legal responsibility for each school. They are also responsible for the quality of education provided by the school, its governance and its finance. The board delegates some areas of responsibility to the local governing body, such as the curriculum, appointing teachers and support staff and the monitoring of pupil premium and the primary school PE and sports premium.
- The school is led by a headteacher, supported by the chief executive officer from the MAT and a deputy head. There have been considerable changes in other staff, including leaders and teachers, since the previous inspection.
- The school has a resourced provision for pupils with hearing impairments.

- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is just below the national average. The proportion of pupils supported with an education, health and care plan is just above the national average.
- Just over half of pupils are White British. Other pupils are from a range of different ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The school provides part-time places for children in the Nursery class, supplemented by a further 15 hours of nursery provision in Little Parkers.
- The school runs extended provision before and after school as well as a holiday club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in the majority of classes, including within the resource base. All observations were carried out with a senior leader.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and members of staff with leadership responsibilities. Discussions were held with members of the governing body and directors of the trust, including the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors took account of the 27 responses to Parent View and their free-text responses. Comments made by parents as they brought their children to school were also considered together with the school's own survey responses from parents.
- Staff views were evaluated through the 57 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire, together with those shared by 13 staff through a meeting with an inspector.
- Pupils' views were collected by talking to pupils during the school day, informally at breaktimes and lunchtimes, as well as through meetings with them and evaluations of the 57 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire. Inspectors also spent time discussing their work in their books with them.
- Inspectors listened to a selection of pupils read and reviewed the work in their books with senior leaders.
- Inspectors visited breakfast and after-school clubs, sat in on an assembly led by pupils and undertook a learning walk with the head boy and head girl.
- A number of documents were reviewed, including: the school's own self-evaluation; the school development plan; the school's data on pupils' attainment and progress; behaviour logs; minutes of governors' meetings; and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. The school's website was also looked at.

Inspection team

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