

Inspection of a good school: Eden Park Academy

Eden Park Academy, Forches Avenue, Barnstaple, Devon EX32 8EF

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 June 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are safe and happy at this school and their parents and carers wholeheartedly agree. This is because pupils and parents trust the staff. Pupils are very clear that there is always an adult to help them if they have a problem, including if they are worried about bullying. Adults will always encourage them to work hard so that they achieve the best they can.

The school is at the heart of the local estate and many parents attended the school themselves. They have fond memories of the care they received. This caring atmosphere is still in place now for their children. New leaders are determined to maintain this ethos. In addition, they want to ensure that pupils receive a high-quality education in an atmosphere of high aspiration. Due to leaders' work, pupils receive systematic teaching of early reading. Pupils are learning more in subjects such as mathematics, science, geography and history. The school is a calm and purposeful. There is more to be done to make sure that the curriculum and expectations are consistent through the school so that pupils systematically develop the knowledge they need.

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

When the new co-headteachers arrived at the school, there was a great deal to do to make sure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. They have raised expectations and aspirations. They have improved the curriculum. They have made sure that pupils who are at risk of underachieving get the help they need.

Leaders have introduced a new systematic approach to early reading. All staff have been trained. Leaders teach groups themselves so that pupils receive support from adults who have expert knowledge. It is early days. In some groups, pupils are engaged and enthused. They are systematically developing their knowledge of sounds and blends. In

other groups, pupils are not challenged enough and their misconceptions are not picked up. Pupils in the school read regularly. They can discuss the books they have read in class. However, there is lack of rigour in how books are chosen. This means that in some classes, teachers challenge pupils to read a rich variety of literature. In others, there is less challenge.

Leaders quickly recognised that many pupils were struggling with reading. Staff now provide well-targeted interventions. These pupils are catching up.

Leaders have clarified the expectations for each year group in the curriculum. Teachers have greater understanding of the expected outcomes in different subjects. Pupils are learning and remembering more about the subjects that they have studied recently. It is not yet clear how the curriculum coherently builds the knowledge and skills pupils need. Pupils have gaps in their knowledge due to weaknesses in the previous curriculum. Assessment is at an early stage.

Staff have high aspirations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders are creative in their use of resources and approaches to meet complex needs. There are many examples of pupils with SEND doing well.

Many children enter the school at a very early stage of development. This means that staff carefully teach some of the earliest behaviour and language that children need. Staff are caring and nurturing. They make sure that children learn to sit, attend, share and work and play with other children. Leaders have ensured that the expectations of the early years curriculum are covered. However, the curriculum and approaches to language development, reading, writing and mathematics are not systematically developed from the early years through the whole school.

Pupils behave well. They want to learn. If pupils need support to improve their behaviour, staff provide this. Pupils enjoy a wide variety of activities, for example in sport or rock music, to broaden their outlook. Staff work hard to help pupils develop a strong sense of self-worth, self-respect and respect of others. Teachers help pupils form their opinions and listen to them. Consequently, pupils can reflect and make good choices.

Even though there have been several changes recently, staff morale is high. There is a team approach to making things better. Staff are proud to work at the school. There is work still to be done to develop leadership capacity in the school to ensure ongoing development. The Tarka Learning Partnership has played an important part in improving the school. Trustees and governors recognised that change was necessary. Systems are in place to ensure that improvement is maintained.

In discussion with the headteachers, the inspector agreed that the consistency of the implementation of the curriculum and the development of leadership may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is a high priority for staff at Eden Park. Many pupils and families need additional support. The school ensures that effective training, systems and procedures are in place. In addition, all staff are very vigilant. They have established strong relationships with pupils and their families, which means they are trusted and can support them. Leaders ensure that their work with pupils takes account of pupils' own experiences. They work with pupils, for example, on keeping themselves safe, the use of social media and understanding relationships and expectations in a very close community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The changes to the curriculum are very recent. Currently, the curriculum is not sequenced so that pupils build the knowledge and skills they need. Leaders should continue to clarify the overall intent of subjects in line with the aspirations and ambition of the school. They should determine what pupils should know, understand and achieve by the time they leave. They should design a curriculum and an assessment process to meet these expectations.
- Currently, there are inconsistencies in the quality of education that pupils receive. This means that pupils are not developing skills and knowledge systematically. Leaders should continue to clarify the key expectations across the school from early years to Year 6 so that pupils learn effectively.
- Many of the current improvements are led by senior leaders or resources from other schools. Leadership from staff within the school is underdeveloped. Senior leaders should ensure that appropriate staff have the skills and knowledge to contribute to ongoing school development, including the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the curriculum.

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

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Forches Cross Community Primary School, to be good in June 2015.

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	146096
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10240144
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	158
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Graham Cockell
Headteacher	Samantha Warner (Executive Co-headteacher) Richard Blunt (Executive Co-headteacher)
Website	www.eden-park.academy
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Eden Park Academy was previously known as Forches Cross Community Primary School.
- Eden Park academy joined the Tarka Learning Partnership in September 2018.
- Since September 2021, the school has been led by two executive co-headteachers. The executive co-headteachers also lead another school in the multi-academy trust.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and the proportion of pupils with SEND at the school are well above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation.
- The inspector met with the executive co-headteachers, the deputy headteacher, the chair of the local governing body, the chief executive officer (CEO), deputy CEO and the director of inclusion and safeguarding from the Tarka Learning Partnership.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, science and geography and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work and listened to pupils read to a familiar adult. The inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects and met with the special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspector looked at the policies and procedures used to keep pupils safe. He reviewed the checks carried out by leaders on the suitability of adults who work in the school.
- The inspector spoke with parents at the start of the school day. There were no responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including no free-text responses. The inspector considered responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Stephen McShane, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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