

# East Point Academy

Kirkley Run, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 0UQ

## Inspection dates

11–12 October 2016

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leadership is outstanding. The principal and the senior team have transformed the culture of the school. Consequently, against a backdrop of tremendous challenges, leaders have embedded an ethos of hard work, sharply focused improvement, high aspiration and enthusiasm.
- Senior and middle leaders are the driving force of the school. They work collectively to ensure that teaching, intervention and support goes to correctly identified pupils at the right time.
- Governors and trustees are committed and highly effective. The sharp challenge given by the local governing body and the precise support of the Inspiration Trust have been pivotal to the improvements.
- Leaders have tackled historic underperformance relentlessly. Achievement at key stage 4 has improved rapidly across a number of subjects.
- From low starting points, pupils in Year 11 in 2016 made progress that was greater than the national average. They achieved well in a number of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils, especially those from middle or low starting points, make good progress by the end of key stage 4 in a range of subjects.
- Pupils are well cared for. Vulnerable pupils, such as those who are children looked after, are particularly well supported so that they have the confidence to be themselves, and experience success.
- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. This is because of high-quality support and monitoring provided by leaders.
- Teaching of the most able pupils, especially boys from disadvantaged backgrounds, does not yet ensure that they attain the highest grades.
- Leaders have been thorough in creating a curriculum that is tailored to the needs of East Point's pupils. Pupils are increasingly ready to access their next stage in learning.
- Science, although now improving steadily because of effective leadership, still lags behind other subjects.
- Although attendance is improving, especially for disadvantaged pupils, the overall attendance of pupils at the school is not yet at the national average.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching, learning and achievement outstanding by:
  - raising standards in science
  - using the good teaching in the school to improve the small amount of weaker teaching
  - providing more opportunities for the most able pupils, especially boys from disadvantaged backgrounds, to make rapid progress.
- Improve the quality of personal development, behaviour and well-being by:
  - improving attendance to at least the national average
  - developing strategies to support the few pupils who still exhibit some poor behaviour
  - developing opportunities to reward pupils who continually meet the school's expectations for behaviour and effort.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- The tenacious principal has led staff to overcome a culture of historic and entrenched underperformance. Years of poor attendance, low aspiration, inferior academic outcomes, staff instability and bad behaviour are things of the past, for the first time in this school's history. Under the firm leadership of the principal, all staff have worked collectively and consistently to embed an ethos of mutual respect and high achievement. East Point is now a school that is unrecognisable from what has gone before it. Consequently, pupils, parents and staff are almost unanimous in their praise for the 'transformation' in the school, over a short space of time.
- The principal ensures that leadership is delegated very effectively. He is rightly dogmatic about the importance of the school having a sustainable leadership, given its turbulent history. Leaders work alongside one another to make sure that they cover pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils are now very well supported academically and personally, from just before they start at the school, to when they finish in Year 11.
- The Inspiration Trust has provided highly valuable support to raise standards. Trustees challenge leaders thoroughly about pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour. Governors and leaders also use these opportunities to hold the trust to account regarding its role in school improvement. Consequently, trustees not only know the school well, but are very proactive and successful in helping to secure improvements.
- Leaders are rigorous in their use of assessment. The vice-principal and assistant principal are sharp in their evaluations of performance, and about where they still have to improve. Almost all middle leaders are now highly effective in securing swift improvements in their respective areas. They ensure that pupils are monitored very well and intervention is timely. Consequently, academic standards have risen quickly and many pupils now make rapid progress.
- Despite considerable challenges to recruit teachers, leaders have improved teaching rapidly so that it is now typically good, with some that is outstanding. Leaders maintain detailed records about the quality of teaching, using an array of information about pupils' achievement and the quality of pupils' work. Leaders have worked firmly, but fairly with teachers when performance has not been good enough. Training has been precisely personalised and has improved teaching.
- Leaders have skilfully designed a curriculum that now enables all pupils to succeed. Leaders have worked briskly, but sensibly, to overcome the restrictions of the curriculum that they inherited. They have avoided 'quick fixes' appropriately and focused on raising standards through long-term changes to the curriculum.
- The least able pupils are now fully able to develop basic skills properly before they access their GCSE options.
- There is a strong extra-curricular programme, including trips and visits overseas. Pupils speak highly of their archery sessions, their music tuition, their role in the drama production, and the STEM club (science, technology, engineering and mathematics).
- Pupils, often from very vulnerable backgrounds, are being prepared very well to be responsible citizens of modern Britain. There is a well-considered citizenship and

assembly programme which focuses on pupils' safety, as well as the importance of respect and equality in society. Consequently, pupils treat one other with courtesy, respect and kindness, and celebrate each other's differences. This is a remarkable improvement and the atmosphere is friendly and welcoming.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governance is outstanding and provides high levels of support and challenge that have contributed to the school's considerable progress.
- The local governing body and the trust have high aspirations and expectations for the pupils in the community. They have a clear strategic plan that identifies accurately the many strengths, and the specific weaknesses, in the school's provision. Governors use this understanding to provide insightful challenge to leaders. They meet with senior and middle leaders regularly to hold them to account for the quality of education. Where they are not satisfied, they do not accept excuses, and set challenging targets for improvement.
- Governors are rigorous in their management of the performance of the principal, and in their review of the performance-related pay for the staff.
- The governors review pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour thoroughly, especially for those who are disadvantaged, or those who need to catch up. They oversee how the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and Year 7 catch-up is used. They routinely evaluate the information they receive and seek to ensure that as many pupils as possible benefit from this funding, both academically and socially. They have identified that the most able pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged, should be a key focus of their spending following the 2016 GCSE results.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The single central record of checks on staff is appropriate and is routinely quality assured by members of the trust. Staff files are well maintained. The appointments of staff meet all statutory requirements.
- The work of the designated safeguarding leader, who is also the designated teacher for children looked after, is precise, careful and tenacious. Referrals within school and to the local authority are timely, effective and followed up conscientiously. Pupils' files are maintained well so that there are accurate records of the most vulnerable pupils' experiences.
- Staff are well trained on the signs of abuse and the most up-to-date guidance around safeguarding pupils. Staff have utter confidence in the work of the safeguarding leader, who always feeds back to them following their referrals. However, they are also clear that, if required, they pursue support until pupils' needs are met.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good, with some that is outstanding. Teachers make good use of resources, including textbooks. They use their good subject knowledge to explain content and tasks to pupils clearly.

- Teachers know pupils' misconceptions and provide help to overcome them. For example, in a Year 11 mathematics lesson, lower-ability pupils explained how the teacher had supported them to understand why they had made mistakes in the past. Pupils then showed the inspector how they could now answer questions without making the same mistakes. This was having a particularly positive impact on the enthusiasm and confidence of girls in the lesson.
- Teachers ask questions that prompt pupils to think more about their answers and explanations. In a Year 8 geography lesson, pupils were eager to use their prior knowledge about China to widen their discussion about pollution. The teacher skilfully used each pupils' answer to develop the debate around the room. Consequently, pupils developed a deeper understanding of the topic.
- Staff have worked extensively with other schools on cross-school marking and moderation. This means that they have an accurate picture of pupils' starting points and can plan appropriately. This ensures that predictions and assessment are accurate in almost all subjects and year groups.
- Staff who are new to teaching are very well supported. They appreciate the high-quality mentoring and support. Furthermore, the guidance they receive to implement the behaviour systems gives them greater confidence to teach successfully.
- Reading is central to the curriculum. Pupils read every day. They are tested regularly and their improvements are monitored. Pupils read with confidence and enthusiasm. Pupils of all abilities talk proudly about how their reading scores are improving and how this helps them in all of their subjects.
- Most teaching meets the needs of a range of pupils well. The lower- and middle-attaining pupils are supported well by feedback that guides them to make sustained improvements. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported to ensure that their needs are identified and met in the classroom, including the deployment of additional adults. Disadvantaged pupils are given particular support both in lessons and through interventions, to ensure that they make good progress from their starting points.
- Some teaching does not routinely ensure that the most able pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, are challenged to extend their answers or improve the quality of their written responses sufficiently.
- Despite the best efforts of leaders to recruit and train skilled teachers, the lack of consistent staffing in some subjects such as science has resulted in temporary appointments, which has not facilitated good progress for some pupils. Although effective leadership has led to improvements in 2016 key stage 4 results, leaders acknowledge that there is still more work to do.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils develop into confident, articulate and enthusiastic young people, who aspire to achieve the best that they can. They wear their uniform proudly. They enjoy school,

value the support of their teachers and staff, and appreciate the improvements brought about by the principal who has, in their words, 'bought into them'.

- Pupils are taught how to stay safe in school and within their community. Pupils discuss e-safety, fire safety, drugs awareness, healthy relationships, and much more. Pupils say that they have confidence in staff to deal with any issues that they take to them. Pupils also say that staff do not tolerate any form of discrimination or bullying. Consequently, pupils feel that they are highly valued as individuals.
- Pupils feel confident when they first arrive from primary school. Leaders ensure that pupils, especially those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, get many opportunities to visit and get used to the school, before the start of Year 7. Year 11 pupils visit local primary schools to talk to younger pupils and answer their questions about what 'big school' is like.
- Heads of year and student support leaders work very effectively to meet the welfare needs of pupils. The support for pupils from a variety of backgrounds, and for those facing different experiences and challenges, is exemplary. For example, the care and support for children looked after ensures that they feel confident to make friends, take part in lessons, and aspire to achieve well. Pupils, parents and staff praise pastoral staff for 'always being there to help'.
- Pupils have good opportunities to express their views. Year councils and the new principal's council are able to list a variety of things that they have improved. Pupils also meet in small groups with visiting trustees and governors, to say what they think about their education.
- Parents are supported to take an active role in their children's education, through the recently appointed parental advisory board (PAB). This board is already beginning to challenge the trust and leaders to further broaden its communication with parents through social media.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Despite the challenges of maintaining the aging building, the school is a welcoming environment, awash with displays of pupils' work and boards that highlight the achievements of pupils, past and present. Year 7 pupils spoke to inspectors about the Year 11 100% attendance board that they look at every day when they come into school, and they aspire to get their name on the board.
- Behaviour has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Staff talked to inspectors about the consistent approach that has been established to ensure that no poor behaviour is either excused or missed. For staff and pupils this is a transformation. Consequently, the need for fixed-term exclusions reduced in 2015/16, especially for disadvantaged pupils. However, there is a small core of pupils who, on occasion, become disengaged and disrupt learning.
- Monitoring and thorough work with pupils and their families have ensured that attendance for almost all groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, improved in 2015/16. However, despite genuine improvements in attendance, attendance is unlikely to be at national levels for 2015/16.

- Pupils and parents are effusive in their praise for the principal, his leaders and the staff team. Pupils and parents spoke of the transformation of the school under the current leadership. They stressed the improved teaching, higher expectations of behaviour, and the successes that pupils now experience because of these changes. However, some pupils would like to see a greater emphasis on rewards for those pupils who consistently apply themselves to their learning.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils enter the school with attainment that is significantly lower than the national average. In 2016, from these low starting points, pupils made progress in a range of subjects that was better than that of other pupils nationally. The percentage of pupils who achieved a good pass in English and mathematics rose by over 20%.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress in a number of subjects, and this is improving year on year. Their attainment, often from very low starting points, is increasing. The differences between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally from the same starting point are diminishing over time. Many more pupils are now accessing highly academic post-16 pathways because they achieve better grades than ever before. Money is well allocated to timely intervention and additional tuition, which allows pupils to achieve more.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress overall, with some exceptional progress in English. Their needs are accurately identified and funding is used appropriately to ensure that any additional support they require is put in place. Governors and leaders place great emphasis on these pupils and challenge one another to improve their provision. Staff ensure that the pupils do not leave their lessons without having understood the work, or without the additional help they need having been identified.
- In subjects such as media studies, sociology, physical education and sport, pupils achieved well in 2016. Results in history and geography improved in 2016 and more pupils took the examinations. There was increased attainment in modern foreign languages. There is additional time for these subjects at key stage 3 to ensure that lower-attaining pupils are better prepared for the areas that the examination covers, and to ensure that more pupils opt for them.
- Published information about science highlights continued underperformance in 2015. As a result of successful leadership, results in 2016 improved for those pupils sitting core, additional and triple science. However, difficulties in recruiting science specialist teachers have meant that improvements have been slow and further work is required to ensure that pupils achieve well.
- Despite swift improvements in many subject areas and for many pupils, the most able pupils are not yet consistently making rapid progress. The most able boys from disadvantaged backgrounds in particular do not attain the highest grades by the end of key stage 4.
- Valuable advice and guidance, together with improved achievement, are securing better destinations for pupils when they leave school. The number of pupils who access higher-level post-16 qualifications is rising considerably, including those who are disadvantaged.

The trust partially funds some post-16 education for disadvantaged pupils.

- Pupils access a greater range of post-16 provision than ever before, including apprenticeships. Increasing numbers of pupils are, for the first time in their family history, accessing post-16 academic courses, and plan to apply to top-performing universities. Consequently, pupils are very well prepared for their next stages in education, training or employment.

## School details

Unique reference number	137134
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10021244

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

Type of school	Other secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	547
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sir Theodore Agnew
Principal	Kevin Blakey
Telephone number	01502 525 300
Website	<a href="http://www.inspirationtrust.org/our_schools/east_point_academy/">http://www.inspirationtrust.org/our_schools/east_point_academy/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:contactus@eastpointacademy.org">contactus@eastpointacademy.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	3–4 March 2013

## Information about this school

- The school complies with DfE guidance on what academies should publish on their website.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This is a smaller than average secondary school.
- Since December 2014, the school has been sponsored by the Inspiration Trust.
- The numbers of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for additional funding (pupil premium) is well above the national average.
- The numbers of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average.

- The school currently uses one alternative provider, The Attic.
- In 2015, the school met the current government floor standards.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 34 parts of lessons, two tutor periods and an assembly. Some lessons were observed jointly with the principal and other leaders. Inspectors listened to some pupils in key stage 3 and 4 read, and talked to pupils about their reading experience.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, senior leaders, middle leaders, and representatives from the local governing body and the trust. Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation, including that related to safeguarding, achievement, attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors looked at 29 parental responses on Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire. They also met with a member of the parental advisory board.
- While inspectors reviewed the information from Ofsted’s online survey of staff, these numbers were not sufficient to make a full analysis of staff’s views. A number of staff were unable to access Ofsted’s online questionnaire owing to a technical error, and so sought to meet with inspectors throughout the inspection. These views were also taken into account.
- Although no pupils completed the Ofsted’s pupil questionnaire, inspectors spoke to a large proportion of pupils, both formally and informally. This included some of the most vulnerable pupils in the school.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ arrival to the school and their conduct at break and lunch, as well as between lessons.
- Inspectors undertook a work scrutiny in science, mathematics, history and geography.

## Inspection team

Kim Pigram, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Susan Aykin	Her Majesty’s Inspector
John Wilson	Ofsted Inspector
Diana Fletcher	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](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

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