

Eden School

Heys Lane, Blackburn, Lancashire BB2 4NW

Inspection dates

9–10 May 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies across classes and subjects.
- Pupils' attainment is improving from their starting points when they joined the school, but standards remain well below those expected for their age.
- Some strong and effective teaching exists, but is not shared well enough across all teachers. Overall, the training to improve teaching has not been effective.
- Teachers do not plan tasks for pupils carefully enough to make sure that work is neither too easy nor too difficult for them. When teachers get this wrong, valuable learning time is wasted.
- Pupils are not being prepared well enough for the new GCSE in mathematics because they are not taught how to solve problems and they do not explain their answers well.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their skills in communication and mathematics to other subjects. Pupils often write at length in English, but this is rare in history, geography and science, for example.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the progress made by pupils in English and mathematics, but know very little about the progress that pupils make in other subjects.
- The curriculum has been effective because pupil numbers have been small and pupils' time in school has been relatively short. Leaders have not planned a broad enough curriculum to meet all pupils' needs because pupils do not have enough opportunity to develop creatively or to learn about design and technology.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not planned well enough across the school to ensure that learning builds on what has gone before.

The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher quickly identified weaknesses in the school and, together with other leaders, governors and the trust, is improving the school.
- Teachers know pupils exceptionally well. Pupils are very well supported; their social, emotional and mental health needs are well met. Support provided for pupils is highly personalised, with tailored support from outside agencies.
- Pupils are happy at school and feel safe. They are well cared for, attendance is improving and no pupil is persistently absent.
- Parents are very positive about the help given to their children, in particular the successful support provided to improve their behaviour.
- Support provided through the Trust is highly effective. Collaborative work with leaders and teachers from other schools is strong.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and thereby improve progress, particularly for pupils in key stages 2 and 3, by teachers:
 - planning work for pupils which builds on their skills and challenges them to think more deeply, therefore making good use of time, including during form time
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects across the curriculum
 - making sure that in mathematics pupils are taught how to tackle problems and are able to explain their work
 - helping pupils to improve the quality of their work instead of focusing on quantity and effort.
- Leaders use their accurate knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching, learning and assessment in the school to:
 - plan training for teachers to help them to further improve their practice and to evaluate the impact of this support
 - make sure that effective practice is more readily shared across the school.
- Leaders continue their work to improve the curriculum as the school grows in size by:
 - making sure that there is sufficient breadth to meet the needs of all pupils, including providing more opportunities for creativity and design and technology
 - carefully planning opportunities to promote further pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences across the school, which build on pupils' previous experiences and deepen their understanding.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The recently appointed acting headteacher is committed to the belief that all pupils experience nothing but the best education possible. This passion and ambition is shared equally by other leaders, governors and the Trust.
- Leaders have very successfully created a caring and supportive ethos. The highest priority has, rightly, been to support pupils' personal development and their well-being. As a result, pupils settle in quickly, are happy here and are cared for exceptionally well.
- Teachers know pupils exceptionally well, because baseline assessments carried out before and immediately after starting in the school are rigorous and provide a wealth of information on each pupil. Leaders and teachers use this information well to help them to plan support to meet the social, emotional and mental health needs of pupils and to promote their personal development and well-being from the outset. Transition arrangements are therefore excellent and pupils settle in quickly.
- Support for pupils who have a statement of special educational needs, or an education, health and care plan, is highly tailored to pupils' needs, and involves close working relationships and teamwork with families and outside agencies. The coordinator for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities carefully checks that support is helping pupils and is improving their progress, as well as supporting pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs. Funding for these pupils is, therefore, used to very good effect.
- Leaders work closely with parents and families. Parents say that staff are very approachable and always 'on hand' to offer help when it is needed: 'Staff go above and beyond what is expected.' They say that they are kept well informed about their child's progress and particularly enjoy the weekly celebration assemblies when they find out more about their child's achievements.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium is used well for pupils, allowing them to try out activities they would not otherwise have had the opportunity to experience, and to explore new skills. Pupils attain qualifications in cycling proficiency and mountain biking, kayaking, climbing, orienteering and hill walking.
- The pupil premium funding is used successfully to pay for support to help pupils to manage their behaviour and improve their attitudes to learning. A very small number of pupils are eligible for support through the Year 7 catch-up funding. This is used to purchase schemes to help those pupils eligible for this support to improve their reading and comprehension. None of this funding has been spent on tackling low attainment in numeracy, although some of the funding should have been used for this purpose.
- The acting headteacher's action plan has quickly and accurately identified weaker areas of provision and she has already taken decisive action to tackle these issues. For example, the use of staff cars to pick up pupils from home stops at the end of this half term, and plans are already in place to further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leaders use a wide range of information to help to inform judgements on the quality of teaching. This includes using pupils' progress information in English and mathematics.

Targets set for teachers are challenging because they are based upon a minimum expectation for all pupils to reach their expected progress targets.

- Leaders work together as a team with leaders from the adjacent Heights Free School. As a result, specialist teachers are readily available to add breadth to the curriculum for the very small number of pupils who are now in key stage 4. This highly effective collaborative work extends to the sharing of staff training events, and effective safeguarding procedures through the designated safeguarding lead, who rigorously oversees this area across both schools.
- Teachers and support staff value the training provided for them, which contributes to the high quality of support they give to pupils. Staff have recently completed training in a wide range of themes, including safeguarding, behaviour management, positive handling, preventing extremism and radicalisation and promoting e-safety.
- The successful growth of the school has prompted the need for a sharper focus on ensuring that teaching, learning and assessment are consistently strong across all teachers and teaching assistants. Plans are in place to tackle this through training and sharing of effective practice, supported by collaborative work through schools across the trust and beyond.
- Teachers have received support to help them to plan challenging work for pupils and to improve their marking, for example. However, there is little evidence of any impact of this training, not helped by recent staff changes, resulting in two of the six teachers being temporary.
- Leaders have introduced new assessment systems to monitor pupils' progress in English and mathematics. However, assessment in other subjects, such as science, history and geography, has not been introduced, so leaders do not have an accurate understanding of the impact of teaching on learning across the curriculum.
- The previously effective curriculum has met the needs of the small number of pupils in the school. However, as the school grows and the number of pupils increase, the curriculum is not broad enough to meet the needs of all pupils. Although pupils have the opportunity to learn English, mathematics, science, history, geography, computing and PE, there is little opportunity for pupils to learn about creativity or design and technology.
- Leaders do not plan the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural opportunities well enough to ensure coherence across the school with learning building on what has gone before.

Governance of the school

- Governors are effective. They have the necessary knowledge and skills to be able to challenge leaders and hold them to account because they have completed training to improve their knowledge and have suitable experience.
- Management of the headteacher's performance is rigorous, carried out by governors and representatives from the trust. Targets set are directly linked to pupils' progress.
- Governors use reports from external agencies, together with their own knowledge of the school, to help inform their quality-assurance processes and to validate the impact of leaders' work.

- Governors have a good understanding of the areas to improve in the school, such as the curriculum, which they know lacks breadth. Budget constraints, due to the small number of pupils on roll, have had an impact on their work to improve the curriculum.
- Governors carefully check they are receiving value for money from use of the pupil premium, Year 7 catch-up funding and the primary PE/sport premium in addition to the funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pre-employment checks on staff are carried out rigorously and accurate information recorded electronically and in staff personnel files.
- Staff understand their responsibility to keep pupils safe because all have received safeguarding training above the minimum expected level. As a result, they are confident in knowing how to make a referral if they have concerns about a pupil and know how to safely handle pupils, if needed, to prevent them from harming themselves or others. Further training has been completed in a range of other safeguarding concerns, including identifying signs of extremist or radical behaviour, female genital mutilation and child sexual exploitation.
- Risk assessments for pupils are detailed and accurate and make clear to staff any particular procedures to be carried out to keep pupils safe from the time they are picked up from home to when they are returned home at the end of the day.
- Staff involved in transporting pupils all have the necessary insurance for their vehicles and rigorous checks on their documentation have been carried out. However, leaders have identified the potential vulnerability of staff in using them as drivers in their own vehicles. As a result, this practice ends shortly, to be replaced with minibuses or taxis.
- Pupils are well supervised at school, in lessons and during social times. Staff intervene quickly to provide support for pupils to help them to manage their behaviour and to keep pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement because they are not consistently strong across all classes and in all subjects.
- Time is wasted when teachers do not plan activities or tasks appropriate to pupils' needs, or to make them think more deeply about their work. Form time provides the opportunity for pupils to settle down upon arrival to school but lacks purpose. Further 'settling down' time continues at the start of lessons with a simple word search, or simple column addition questions, to keep pupils occupied. Overall, too much learning time is lost because work is too easy for pupils.
- Teachers set tasks in mathematics for pupils in key stage 3 which are overly repetitive, relying on pupils repeating a rule or a step they were told by their teacher. For example, in finding fractions of a quantity, pupils were told to 'multiply by the top and

divide by the bottom', without any understanding as to why they were doing this.

- Teachers' subject knowledge is not uniformly secure. In mathematics in key stage 4, pupils have been taught incorrectly how to complete a Venn diagram. As a result, all their answers were wrong, leading to weak understanding of probability. In food studies in key stage 4, pupils have not been taught about the correct knives to use for particular tasks.
- Pupils, particularly those in key stages 2 and 3, are not being prepared well enough for the new GCSE in mathematics. Pupils have little opportunity to solve problems or to develop their skills and resilience to do this successfully. Reasoning skills are strong in some classes where teachers challenge pupils to explain their answers or insist on pupils showing their working out, but this is not evident in all classes.
- Teaching in literacy in key stages 2 and 3 is effective and pupils express their ideas in writing, including in longer pieces of work. Handwriting is improving and pupils take pride in their work, which is usually presented neatly. This good practice is not evident across all subjects because pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length in history, geography and science, for example.
- Teachers diligently mark work in pupils' books and virtually all work seen by inspectors was ticked. Written comments from teachers praise pupils for the amount of work completed or their effort and behaviour, but pupils are often not told what they need to do to improve the standard of their work.
- Teachers encourage pupils both to read out loud and to read silently, sometimes linked to comprehension tasks. However, a few pupils are not yet confident in using phonics to help them to read unfamiliar words.
- Some teachers carefully plan how best to deploy teaching assistants, and this leads to strong and effective support for pupils.
- Leaders are already seeing the impact of staff training to help pupils to develop their confidence to tackle more-challenging work and to show positive attitudes to learning. This individualised approach to help pupils' personal, social and emotional development is supporting their effective learning.
- Effective support and training for staff to improve teaching is readily available through other schools in the trust, to remove inconsistencies in teachers' practice now being seen as the number of teachers increases.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Trips and visits are used to good effect to reward and inspire pupils, with the cost being met through the use of the pupil premium funding – for example, a trip to London to see the Houses of Parliament and Buckingham Palace, and for pupils to attend a Remembrance Day parade and to meet and talk with veterans.
- Careers advice and guidance for pupils from Year 8 focus mainly on teaching employability skills, including helping pupils to write a curriculum vitae, to fill in an

application form and to acquire interview techniques. Pupils in key stage 4 visit local colleges to find out about the range of courses available to them.

- Pupils say that they feel safe, a view confirmed by parents, who are highly supportive of the work of the school.
- Pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain through the school's spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum, which is an amalgamation of British values, citizenship and personal, social and health education themes. For example, pupils are taught about mental health, self-harm, smoking cessation, healthy relationships, e-safety, healthy eating, diversity, substance abuse and domestic violence. Further improvement is needed in this aspect of the curriculum, which lacks a coherent plan from Year 5 to Year 11 in order to build on previous learning and deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- The school building and the site require further development to make sure that pupils have the same opportunities for physical development and play as pupils in other schools, especially pupils in Years 5 and 6. Currently, there is very little to do outside apart from play football.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils start in the school with very negative attitudes and have often been out of education for some time. Due to the high-quality support pupils receive when they first enter the school, they settle in quickly, their attendance improves and their attitudes to learning change for the better. One parent explained they were initially very reluctant for their child to attend a special school but, 'Knowing what I know now, I needn't have had any worries, life at home is normal again.'
- Parents say that they have noticed a big change in their child's behaviour at home since starting in the school. They talk about their children taking more responsibility at home, being calmer, less aggressive and that violence towards others has stopped. Parents believe that this is due to the support, care and guidance that their child receives from staff at the school.
- Pupils enjoy school, as seen by their improved attendance, which is supporting stronger attainment because they attend school regularly. No pupil is persistently absent. Parents confirm that their children willingly go to school in the morning, which they say is a massive difference to their experience of other schools.
- Pupils say that there is no bullying and they are confident that if they had any concerns, and told a teacher or teaching assistant, something would be done to stop it.
- Records of incidents of poor behaviour show no use of prejudiced behaviour or verbal abuse likely to cause upset to other pupils or staff. A very small number of pupils have been excluded from school for short periods of time, due to incidents of physical assault, such as fights with other pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is not good because it is not yet strong in a wide range of subjects.
- Leaders know that many pupils are making good progress in English and mathematics, based on their starting points, but know very little about progress in other subjects.
- Using leaders' expectation of progress, three quarters of pupils currently in the school are making the progress expected of them in English, with slightly slower progress in mathematics, from when they started in the school. For most pupils, their attainment is still well below the typical standard for their age. However, they are catching up.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress in English and mathematics is improving towards that of other pupils with the same starting points. However, differences remain wide because some pupils have large gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding, which take longer to fill.
- Work in science is not sufficiently challenging to enable pupils to make stronger progress. For example, although pupils in Year 8 have opportunity to carry out scientific experiments, they are unable to write scientific explanations because they are set very low-level tasks, such as filling in missing words in a paragraph, or writing single-word answers.
- Pupils are unable to apply their learning in mathematics to other subjects, such as gathering and presenting information in science, because they are not asked to design their own tables and are rarely asked to draw a graph of their findings or to use it to make conclusions.
- Pupils' work in English shows that they develop and improve their knowledge, skills and understanding over time. Teachers gradually increase opportunities for pupils to write at length and for different audiences and different purposes, with an increasing range of vocabulary used.
- Pupils in Year 10 are developing their understanding of English literature in preparation for their GCSE examination. Their study of 'Macbeth' has been further enhanced through their research on witchcraft, to support them in understanding the historical context of the play.
- Pupils make good progress in reading. Most pupils start in the school with reading ages well below their chronological age. The support given to these pupils to help them to read is effective. One parent told inspectors that her child never used to read at home, but now enjoys reading and will often bring a book home from school to read.

School details

Unique reference number	141016
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10022813

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	8 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	23
Appropriate authority	Local governing body
Chair	Andrew Burton
Acting headteacher	Angela Lazarevic
Telephone number	01254 790241
Website	www.edenschool.org.uk
Email address	enquiries@edenschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened in September 2014 and moved into a new purpose-built building in April 2016. The school is sponsored through Education Partnership Trust and has a local governing body, which it shares with the Heights Free School, which occupies the same site. The acting headteacher took up post in April 2017, following the departure of the previous post-holder early in the spring term.
- The school caters for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities relating to social, emotional and mental health needs; all have a statement of special educational needs and/or disabilities or an education, health and care plan. All pupils are disadvantaged and are White British.
- The school is much smaller than average, being registered to admit 60 pupils from age eight to 16 years. There are currently 23 pupils on roll from Year 5 to Year 10, who are taught in five small, mixed-age classes. Although the school caters for mixed gender, there is just one girl currently on roll.

- No pupils take part in off-site alternative provision or take part in work experience.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- During this inspection, inspectors observed teaching and learning in all five classes and carried out short visits to lessons and to form time. Some observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- A selection of Years 5 to 10 pupils' work was checked, which included work in English, mathematics, science, topic and personal, social and health education.
- Meetings were held with senior and other leaders, and a group of teaching and non-teaching staff.
- An inspector met with two governors, including the chair of the local governing body and two representatives from Education Partnership Trust, including the chief executive officer.
- Behaviour of pupils was observed during lessons and also during social time, such as when pupils arrived for school using transport provided, and during break and lunchtime. An inspector met formally with pupils in Years 9 and 10 to find out their views of the school.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. An inspector met with three parents/carers to gather their views on the quality of support provided for their children.
- There were nine responses to the staff survey and no responses to the pupil survey.
- A wide range of other documentation was reviewed, including information available on the school's website and information on pupils' attainment, progress, attendance and behaviour. The school's self-evaluation summary and development plan were examined, along with external reports and the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe.

Inspection team

Denah Jones, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Claire Hollister

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017