

Inspection of Emerson Park Academy

Wych Elm Road, Hornchurch, Essex RM11 3AD

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 June 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and governors have high expectations for pupils. Pupils study an ambitious curriculum. This includes studying all the subjects of the national curriculum for at least three years. Pupils typically achieve well and enjoy their learning.

There is a positive school culture in which staff and pupils respect each other. Recently, leaders have been rightly focused on improving pupils' behaviour. Staff said that this has made a positive difference. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is typically calm.

Pupils are happy and safe. The personal, social, and health education (PSHE) programme is valued by pupils. It teaches them that everyone is equal and has the right to be accepted without exception. Derogatory language or bullying are not tolerated by pupils or staff. If any bullying does take place, it is taken seriously and dealt with.

The school's extra-curricular programme is returning to normal after the impact of COVID-19. This programme includes a wide range of activities such as sign language, science club and many different sports. Pupils also take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and the Volunteer Police Cadets.

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

Leaders have established a well-ordered curriculum that is at least as ambitious as the national curriculum. This ensures that knowledge introduced in one year is built upon in subsequent years. For example, in geography, pupils' understanding of grid references becomes increasingly sophisticated as they revisit and deepen their knowledge of this skill.

The percentage of pupils in Years 10 and 11 who study a modern foreign language is low. Leaders are taking effective steps to address this. For example, this year the proportion of Year 9 pupils wanting to study a language at GCSE has increased. This, together with other work, is ensuring that the number of pupils studying the English Baccalaureate qualification in Years 10 and 11 increases. Currently, this is below the national average.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) follow the same curriculum as their peers. These pupils receive specific support that is well matched to their identified needs. Pupils who need additional help with reading are identified early. They are well supported to catch up with their peers through a tailored curriculum that prioritises reading. Leaders have confirmed plans are in place to develop this support further from September 2022.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge and present new information clearly. Assessment is used well by some teachers to check what pupils know and

remember. However, sometimes, assessment is not used to inform teaching or help pupils to improve. In a few classes, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve.

The behaviour of pupils is typically calm. When this is not the case, heads of department, supported by senior leaders, help staff to address it. The rates of persistent absence in the school are high. Leaders are working hard to tackle this and are taking appropriate steps to address it.

Leaders have established a carefully thought-through programme that teaches pupils about relationships and sex education and health education. This programme revisits important concepts, such as consent, each year in an age-appropriate way. Leaders provide a comprehensive careers programme that offers pupils unbiased careers advice, work experience and contact with employers.

Leaders have overseen a significant building project to improve the school's facilities. However, there has been less focus on some aspects that underpin the quality of education in the school. For example, leaders have not given sufficient thought to how they improve all teachers' subject-specific knowledge to enhance the delivery of the curriculum.

Governors have played a key role in ensuring the financial stability of the school and that resources are managed well. However, they have not provided leaders with sufficient support and challenge in relation to the quality of education. This means that governors have an overly positive view of the school in some areas.

Staff feel well supported by leaders, especially by their heads of department. Leaders act on the views of staff and are considerate of their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe and are well cared for by staff. They know who to contact if they have any worries. There are appropriate systems in place for staff to report any safeguarding concerns. Records are accurate and show that concerns are followed up quickly with external agencies, if necessary.

Leaders ensure that in-school counselling, mentoring and medical support is available to pupils if they need additional help. The PSHE curriculum is refined by leaders to take account of any specific safeguarding risks that they become aware of.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is no coordinated plan to systematically develop teachers' subject and pedagogical knowledge. This means that teachers do not have sufficient opportunity to develop their expertise in implementing the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that there is a clear plan to develop teachers' knowledge in order to enhance the teaching of the curriculum and the effective use of assessment.
- Governors do not hold leaders to account sufficiently well for the quality of education. This is because they do not have sufficient knowledge and oversight of this area to challenge leaders effectively. Governors should ensure that they have the necessary information and expertise to hold senior leaders to account for all aspects of quality of education.
- The rates of persistent absence in the school are high. This means that some pupils do not attend school frequently enough and so miss out on important learning. Leaders are currently addressing this through a range of appropriate actions. It is critical that governors and leaders carefully monitor the impact of these actions so that they can be refined and updated if necessary.

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	137414
Local authority	Havering
Inspection number	10227781
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,036
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trustees	John Luff
Headteacher	Scott McGuinness
Website	www.emersonparkacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	21 September 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses five registered providers of alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, directors and the chair of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: physical education, science, mathematics, history and geography. Each deep dive involved discussing the curriculum with subject leaders, visiting a sample of lessons, reviewing samples of pupils' work and speaking with teachers and pupils from the lessons they visited.

- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator to find out how the school supports pupils with SEND to learn the curriculum. This involved reviewing documentation to see how pupils with SEND were being supported.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during breaktimes and lesson changeovers to gather evidence about the behaviour and attitudes of pupils in the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders responsible for the school's safeguarding arrangements. They looked at safeguarding records, including pre-employment checks for staff.
- Inspectors spoke to staff about their well-being and workload. They considered responses to Ofsted's online staff survey. They also met with early career teachers.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of pupils from different year groups. They considered the pupils' responses to Ofsted's online pupils' survey.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online Ofsted Parent View survey.

Inspection team

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