

Eastcourt Independent School

1 Eastwood Road, Goodmayes, Ilford, Essex IG3 8UW

Inspection dates

6–8 February 2018

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leadership and management are inadequate. Leaders have not ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- The arrangements for fire safety are not fit for purpose. Pupils' safety is compromised.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are inadequate. Leaders do not ensure that pupils are appropriately cared for when they are unwell.
- The roles of proprietor, headteacher and chair of governors are all undertaken by the same person. This arrangement has led to a lack of challenge and lapses in some standards.
- Leaders have not accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Therefore, appropriate action is not taken to improve the school.
- Pupils do not make consistently good progress because work is not challenging for the most able. Pupils often revisit work that has been done before.
- The early years provision is inadequate. Leaders have not ensured that all of the statutory requirements for early years are met. As a result, the safety of children is not secure.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to produce different kinds of writing. Plans are too stringently followed; teachers are not flexible enough to allow pupils to pause, reflect on their work and make improvements in their writing.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is not consistently accurate. This includes in the teaching of phonics. As a result, misconceptions are not corrected and pupils repeat mistakes.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have positive working relationships with pupils and their parents and carers. They know the families and the community well.
- Pupils are polite, well mannered and feel proud to attend their school.
- Pupils are keen to succeed. They attend school regularly and behave well.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management to ensure that:
 - all the independent school standards are met
 - there is capacity to make the necessary improvements
 - the strengths and weaknesses of the school are accurately evaluated, with key issues for improvement identified
 - good-quality teaching practice is shared, enabling all pupils to make good progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching and thereby improve pupils' outcomes by:
 - ensuring that lessons are appropriately challenging and meet the needs of all pupils, especially those who are the most able, so that they can make at least good progress
 - implementing a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics
 - ensuring that teachers use accurate and appropriate language when teaching.
- Make sure that the most able pupils reach their full potential by:
 - providing work that is suitably matched to their needs, with an appropriate level of challenge
 - ensuring that questions asked by teachers challenge their thinking.
- Improve pupils' progress in writing by:
 - providing frequent opportunities for pupils to develop skills in different kinds of writing
 - ensuring that children in early years have regular opportunities to develop their own writing skills.
- Ensure that the statutory requirements for the early years foundation stage are met.
- Meet the independent school standards, as set out in the annex of this report.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders have not ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- The school's fire risk assessment is not implemented effectively. Regular fire practice evacuations are not undertaken. This puts pupils at risk.
- Pupils are not well cared for when they are ill. The designated medical room is not used, and pupils have to sit in the busy office instead. Parents are not routinely informed when their children have been unwell. Sometimes pupils are collected, but they are not signed out of the school building. First-aid logs and records lack relevant detail and are not fit for purpose.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school is inaccurate. Their judgements are too positive and do not reflect the quality of provision.
- Leaders have positive working relationships with pupils, staff and parents. They promote high aspirations and the importance of academic success. Pupils are clear about what they need to do to achieve well in tests.
- The school's curriculum meets requirements. A broad range of subjects is covered. Pupils said that they enjoy working with specialist teachers, for example in art, which they say is 'inspiring'.
- Pupils are very well prepared for life in British society and demonstrate a clear understanding of British values. They show tolerance and respect for others. Pupils spoke confidently about people with protected characteristics and how all people should be treated fairly.
- Leaders have developed checks on staff performance and encourage staff to attend training pertinent to their needs. This is often effective. Staff recognise the support that leaders give them. Teachers welcome the visits made to monitor teaching and learning, and respond well to feedback given.
- Parental engagement is a strength of the school. In all year groups, parents are involved in their child's learning. Workshops support parents and inform them about the curriculum.
- Parents are supportive of the school. They say that they value the open-door policy and believe that the headteacher will deal with any concerns they raise. Parents see the school as an extension of their family.

Governance

- Governance is inadequate.
- The headteacher, who is also the proprietor, has sole responsibility for governance. She has not ensured that all the independent standards are met. Because she is not held to account by other governors, this has not been challenged.
- The headteacher receives advice from an independent external adviser. This has included help in improving the arrangements for checking on the performance of staff.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Although leaders have ensured that pupils feel safe and concerns are quickly dealt with by staff, pupils are potentially unsafe. This is due to routine fire checks not being completed and poor implementation of risk assessments.
- The single central record of pre-employment checks on staff meets requirements. Minor administration errors were swiftly rectified during the inspection.
- Staff receive regular training on how to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse. They can talk about what they would do if they had any concerns. Training has included face-to-face and online training, for example on the 'Prevent' duty.
- Leaders work effectively with external agencies to ensure that, when required, pupils and their families get the support they need. This is evident in pupils' files. Leaders and staff are accessible and parents can speak with staff at any time. This means that concerns are shared at the earliest opportunity.
- Pupils learn how to be safe, including online. Parents agree, and said that they believe their children are safe in school and know how to be safe.
- The safeguarding policy is available on the school's website and meets statutory requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers do not consistently plan teaching that meets pupils' needs. In some cases, teachers do not build on pupils' strengths and therefore pupils do not get the chance to develop their learning.
- In some classes, teachers' questioning of pupils is not effective. Questions are not used to assess whether pupils have understood their work. Some teachers lack the confidence to adapt lessons in response to what the pupils already know or to deal with misconceptions.
- Pupils' writing is mainly descriptive. They are not given opportunities to develop skills in different writing styles.
- The level of challenge for pupils, particularly the most able, is not evident across all year groups. Many pupils said that work is too easy. In some classes, pupils have to work through a number of simple questions before they are challenged.
- The school uses a variety of phonics schemes and the approach is varied. In some classes, phonics is not well taught. Teachers do not use phonics accurately and, as a result, pupils cannot recognise different sounds and letters in order to read difficult words.
- Pupils are tested regularly in many subject areas, including in spelling and mathematics. These results are collated and analysed to inform what needs to be learned in preparation for the next test.
- Homework supports learning in class and activities are varied. It is clear to see where an activity is an extension of learning covered in class. Parents and pupils spoke positively about the high expectations of homework.

- Pupils are articulate. They use appropriate vocabulary and demonstrate their knowledge. They are keen to talk about what they know and they want to be successful.
- In some classes, teachers show pupils clearly what they need to do and how this can be achieved. When this happens, progress is good and pupils enjoy the challenge.
- When pupils are challenged appropriately, progress is also strong. For example, when teachers direct questions effectively in mathematics, pupils are encouraged to explain their working-out. This helps them to clarify their own thinking, but it also supports those who have not understood.
- Teachers have higher expectations in key stage 1 than in key stage 2.
- Parents know how well their child is doing in school. Regular comments from parents are evident in mathematics and English books. All parents who spoke with inspectors said that communication between leaders and parents is a regular occurrence.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. This is because of the potential impact that the non-use of the medical room and the lack of fire safety measures has on the safety and well-being of pupils.
- Pupils are not signed out of school when they are unwell and taken home by their parents. Parents are not routinely informed if their child has been ill. Leaders cannot guarantee that pupils receive the care that they need.
- Recording of first-aid incidents is not detailed enough. Minor incidents are logged, but it is not apparent how they happened or who was informed. Records are not analysed and therefore leaders cannot respond to regular concerns. For example, there are too many accidents at lunchtime when there are too many pupils on the playground.
- Aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are evident across all year groups. In Year 5, for example, pupils discussed moral dilemmas sensitively. During this session, pupils showed respect for each other's views. Pupils learn about different religions. They said that having friends from different religions supported their learning, because they are able to talk about them. Pupils recognise that we are all different and confidently referred to respecting people and treating them fairly.
- Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong, and have debated whether all laws are good laws. They respond swiftly to teachers' instructions. Pupils appreciate the importance of making the right choices and know how to be successful learners. They understand how this will affect their future.
- Pupils spoke about the need to take part in exercise in order to maintain a healthy heart. Pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and the need for a balanced diet. They also explained how a dentist had been into school to teach them about the importance of dental hygiene.

- Pupils talked about friendships in school and how pupils would not always get along together. They explained that teachers had taught them how to find resolutions independently. They would try to resolve issues, but knew that a teacher would support them if needed.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Attendance is above the national average. Pupils attend well because they like their school. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about how much their children enjoy school.
- Pupils are confident, well mannered and polite. They take great pride in their school and wanted to talk about it to inspectors.
- Pupils are clear about the high expectations for their behaviour. One pupil said, 'Discipline is a strength of the school.' Pupils respond swiftly to teachers' instructions and know the consequences of making the wrong choices.
- Regular routines and expectations are evident in the sensible way that pupils move around the school. Positive behaviour continues on the playground, where pupils play well together.
- In a small number of classes, pupils lose interest and behaviour is not as positive. When pupils are not challenged, they sometimes choose inappropriate behaviours.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is too varied. Pupils have high starting points and in some cases the work is not well matched to their abilities. This results in weak levels of progress.
- Pupils in key stage 2 are producing work appropriate to their age; nevertheless, this is too easy, given what they were capable of in key stage 1. Pupils are not challenged.
- Work produced by pupils does not always reflect their ability. Expectations are often too low and they are capable of achieving more.
- Pupils in Year 1 are working at levels beyond those expected for their age. Expectations are high, and pupils respond well to the challenge. For example, pupils are already learning about different fractions in mathematics, including quarters of shapes.
- Pupils are expected to read regularly at home and this is recorded in their home-school diaries. All pupils who read with inspectors demonstrated strong word recognition and an understanding of the text. Pupils said that they enjoy reading new books and read often. They have access to a breadth of reading material. This was evident in the articulate way that pupils discussed different authors and their preferences.
- In some classes, pupils make positive progress. They reflect on their learning with the teacher and share their ideas. Work produced at these times is of a high standard. This is evident in English and mathematics, but also across the curriculum in subjects such as science and geography.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their learning. They develop good study habits. Staff ensure that pupils have the necessary skills and knowledge to do well in tests. Many pupils in Year 6 achieve scholarships or pass the relevant exams to be able to

enter their secondary school of choice.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- The provision for early years is inadequate because not all of the statutory requirements are met. The safety and welfare concerns apply to children in early years and this includes fire safety. Therefore, safeguarding is not effective.
- Leaders do not take appropriate action if children are ill. Leaders do not routinely log accidents and administration of first aid. Parents are not routinely informed if a child has an accident or is unwell.
- Additional adults are not effective when supporting learning in the early years provision. They check that children know what they are doing, but they do not develop learning.
- Many children can write when they come into school; others quickly develop their writing skills. When children start school, opportunities for them to write creatively and develop their own style are limited. As a result, children do not make as much progress as they should.
- Staff maintain effective links with parents through the home–school diary. Gaps in learning are identified in homework books so that parents can support their children. Parents said that they are kept well informed and value the regular workshops they are invited to attend.
- Parents said that their children are very happy in school. This view is reflected in the high levels of attendance in early years.
- Behaviour is well managed. Clear systems and procedures are in place and children respond swiftly to teachers' instructions. This good behaviour also applies to outdoor learning, where children are engaged in appropriate activities.
- Children have the opportunity to access outdoor play every day. When they do, they engage well and show good levels of concentration. They play well together and are learning how to share.
- Progress in learning is evident during lessons. For example, children were particularly well engaged in a drama activity where they were learning how to perform on stage. They practised projecting their voices, while responding swiftly to instruction from the teacher.
- Staff assess children's learning regularly and parents are kept well informed of how well their child achieves. Leaders have established an assessment system to monitor children's progress and how well they perform in tests. This information is used to provide intervention work and additional homework.
- Children make good progress in literacy and numeracy from their typically high starting points. Children produce work of a high standard. Children achieve well at the end of early years and are well prepared for Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	102869
DfE registration number	317/6055
Inspection number	10041396

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	310
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Eastcourt Independent School Ltd
Chair	n/a
Headteacher	Christine Redgrave
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,200
Telephone number	020 8590 5472
Website	www.eastcourtschool.org.uk
Email address	eastcourtschool@talk21.com
Date of previous inspection	10–12 February 2015

Information about this school

- Eastcourt Independent School is a selective day school. The headteacher is the proprietor and has sole responsibility for governance.
- The leadership team consists of the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Early years consists of two Reception classes. All children attend the Reception classes full time. There are two classes in each of the year groups from Year 1 to Year 6.
- The majority of pupils are from Asian and African Caribbean heritages.
- There are currently no pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

- There are a number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. However, there are no pupils at the early stages of learning English.
- The school's last inspection was a full standard inspection in February 2015, when its overall effectiveness was judged to be good.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 22 lessons. None of these was a joint observation, due to the teaching commitments of leaders.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and attitudes in classrooms, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes.
- Individual pupils and different groups of pupils spoke with inspectors to discuss their learning and views of the school. Inspectors listened to pupils read and discussed their reading with them. The inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work across subjects and year groups.
- Inspectors held meetings with school staff. Inspectors also met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher to discuss governance.
- A range of documents was considered, including the school's improvement plan, self-evaluation documentation, information about pupils' progress and attendance, risk assessments and safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors took account of the views expressed in the 31 responses to Ofsted's Parent View online questionnaire, and contributions from parents who contacted Ofsted directly. They also gathered the views of several parents during informal meetings at the school.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 22 staff in response to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Donna Chambers, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Janet Hallett

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must meet the following independent school standards

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 [12].
- 13 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that first aid is administered in a timely and competent manner by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written first aid policy.
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
 - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 24(2) The accommodation provided under sub-paragraphs (1)(a) and (b) may be used for other purposes (apart from teaching) provided it is always readily available to be used for the purposes set out in sub-paragraphs (1)(a) and (b).

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school—
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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