

Aldborough E-ACT Free School

Aldborough Road South, Ilford, London, IG3 8HZ

Inspection dates

6–7 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Most pupils make good progress in their lessons because of the high expectations of teachers and pupils' positive attitudes. Pupils who need extra help with their learning get a good level of support.
- Teaching is good, with effective questioning and interesting activities that motivate pupils.
- Teaching is improving as a result of good support and monitoring from the Principal and Deputy Principal, together with regular reviews from the E-ACT adviser.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and courteous to visitors.
- The school is led and managed well, with effective support and challenge from the governing body. Working in a strong partnership together, senior staff and governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses. This has established firm foundations for the work of the school.
- The vision, drive and commitment of the Principal are at the heart of the improvement at this school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some of the most-able pupils are not always challenged as much as they could be in lessons.
- The progress made by pupils in mathematics is not as strong as in reading and writing.
- Marking is not always used effectively to guide pupils on how to improve their work.
- Attendance is still below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the quality of teaching in 15 lessons, of which five were joint observations with the Principal.
- Meetings were held with pupils, two governors (including the Chair of the Governing Body), and school staff, including the Principal, Deputy Principal, teachers and non-teaching staff. An inspector also listened to some pupils read and held a meeting with the education adviser and data adviser from the Free School Trust sponsor.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents. These included data on pupils' achievement, planning and monitoring documentation used by teachers to check on how well the school is doing, governing body documents, records of behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding. Inspectors also scrutinised pupils' books.
- Inspectors considered the 17 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), which were all made at the time of the inspection. The results of the most recent survey of parents' views, undertaken by the school in October 2012, were also analysed. Inspectors considered 13 questionnaires completed by members of staff.
- At the time of the inspection, extensive building work was being undertaken at the school. This severely restricted the use of the outdoor area by the Reception classes.

Inspection team

Robert Pyner, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Nourredin Khassal

Additional Inspector

Ann Sydney

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Aldborough E-ACT Free School opened in September 2011 with two Reception classes and two Year 1 classes. From September 2012 there were also two Year 2 classes. The school plans to increase in size, with the admission of up to 60 pupils each autumn term until there is a full primary age range. Currently, the school roll is below the average for primary schools.
- The school serves an urban area of the London Borough of Redbridge where there is increasing demand for primary school places. Aldborough has surplus places and this means that parents will take up these if schools in their home area are full. As a consequence, some pupils travel a considerable distance to attend the school. Furthermore, as there are currently only three primary year groups of younger pupils in the school, some families have one child at Aldborough with an older primary-aged sibling at another school. This contributes to the high mobility at the school as some parents will move pupils so that their children attend the same school if a place becomes available.
- Most pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or with a parent serving in the armed forces, is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs and are supported at school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school does not yet have pupils in Year 6 so there are no test results that can be compared with the government's floor standards, which are the minimum levels expected for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is sponsored and maintained by the E-ACT Free School Trust.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to improve teaching from good to outstanding, ensure that teachers in all subjects, but especially mathematics:
 - plan lessons that always extend and fully involve the most-able pupils
 - use marking more effectively to show pupils how to improve their work.
- Improve rates of attendance.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most pupils make good progress from their low starting points. Teachers in the Reception classes and Year 2 are particularly effective in ensuring that pupils who have limited, or indeed no Reception experience make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- School data show that the current Year 2 pupils build strongly on previous learning. The rigorous tracking system indicates that they are on track to meet their challenging targets for reading, writing and mathematics. Given their starting points, this represents good progress for all groups and compares favourably with national figures. However, the progress made by pupils in mathematics, particularly in the application of number, is not as strong as in reading and writing.
- The results of the latest phonics screening check for Year 1 pupils, which measures pupils' understanding of letters and sounds, were above the national average. Girls achieved particularly strong results and all groups, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, attained in line with or above national figures.
- Pupils learn well in lessons because teachers have high expectations and relationships are good. Lessons are lively and engaging. For example, the 'inspirational writing day' took place during the inspection where all the pupils in the school were writing about the discovery of an 'alien egg'.
- All groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, those speaking English as an additional language and those supported through the pupil premium, make similar progress to their peers. The school is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity, and additional support is carefully channelled towards pupils who need extra help. For example, the school provides effective support so that the significant proportion of pupils who join the school part way through the year make rapid progress. Pupil premium funding has been used well to focus on specific needs, for example using personalised support for reading. School data show that the attainment of pupils who receive free school meals is catching up with that of all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils learn to read well in their first years at the school. Staff foster an enjoyment of reading. The school offers good support to those pupils who speak English as an additional language and who struggle with their understanding of letters and sounds.
- Pupils use their skills in reading and writing effectively in other subjects to reinforce learning and apply skills. For example, Year 1 pupils wrote about their visit to the Museum of Childhood and the work was thoughtfully focused on the development of connectives in their writing. As a result, the written work about an enjoyable visit showed significantly improved sentence structure.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and particularly effective in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Parents agree.
- In the best teaching, all groups of pupils, including those who find learning easy or hard, work together on well-managed and challenging activities with a strong focus on reading, writing and mathematics. For example, in an effective lesson in a Reception class, activities were well matched to the abilities of the children and related to the book being used as the class topic. Effective questioning from the teacher enabled the children to develop their understanding of positional language such as 'over', 'under' and 'around' in a range of activities. As a result of this, the children made rapid progress in their understanding of the use of language to describe position.
- However, some teaching does not always challenge the most-able pupils effectively. On these infrequent occasions, where activities are too easy, pupils can become distracted. This slows the progress that they make.
- Teaching assistants generally provide effective support for pupils, particularly those who require

extra support or those who speak English as an additional language.

- Teaching linked to the wider world makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, pupils' displays, which share their knowledge of the different cultures represented at the school, help pupils to understand the cultural heritage in their local community and in Great Britain. Pupils are proud of achieving the Sing Up accreditation mark which recognises the quality of the singing in the school.
- There is a marking policy but it is not used in a systematic way. Work is marked regularly so that pupils know how well they are doing. There is also a traffic light system whereby pupils judge how well they have achieved the objectives of the lesson, which is used consistently. However, teachers' marking does not give pupils consistent guidance on how to improve their work and require them to act upon it.
- Teachers plan interesting themes, often involving visits outside the school, as well as events such as the 'writing day' seen during the inspection. As a result, pupils learn enthusiastically in lessons and are keen to share their work with visitors.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in lessons. They are keen learners and usually show high levels of concentration even in the small number of lessons where the pace of learning drops. Sometimes, where the pupils, particularly the most-able, are given work that is too easy, their attention can wander but they do not disrupt the learning of others.
- Pupils' behaviour when moving around the school is good. Pupils are careful and considerate when moving on the stairs and know the rules about staying safe while building work is taking place at the school. They say that they understand how the simple rules for moving around the school help them to stay safe.
- Pupils work well together. They listen to each other's views and know how to take turns. They are polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors. They say that they know what bullying is and that staff will help them if they are worried or unhappy.
- Most parents and all staff say that behaviour is good. The school's emphasis on respect for all members of the community and the celebration of achievement make a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, particularly in terms of their self-confidence.
- Attendance during the academic year 2011/12 was below average.. The latest data from the school for the period September 2012 to the time of the inspection show a significant improvement as a result of the work from the local authority education welfare service, including planned legal action. There is also a strong focus on good attendance by the school, for example celebrating individual and class attendance records. However, the strategies used are only just beginning to have an impact.

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal leads the school well and has tackled a range of issues with determination and resilience since the school opened. She enjoys the strong support of parents. Staff said that they are proud to be members of the school and knew what the school was trying to achieve. Staff morale is high.
- Senior leaders have accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses of the school. With the effective support of the E-ACT adviser and staff representing the sponsor, leaders have improved the quality of teaching through the accurate checking of teaching and the provision of training and support for staff. These measures have led to pupils making better progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In this small school the leadership of subjects and aspects such as special educational needs and the Early Years Foundation Stage is shared. Leaders are aware that as the school increases in size there are opportunities for more specific leadership roles. This aspect is a feature of the

school's improvement planning and demonstrates a good capacity to improve further and clear preparation for the next stage in the school's development.

- Teachers are expected to teach well and pay increases are only given when their performance justifies it. Specific and personalised targets are set for teachers, which are linked to pupils' achievement as well as improvement in teaching and wider school needs. An extra whole-school target is set and monitored for senior teachers.
- The range of subjects offered to pupils and the after-school activities make a significant contribution to pupils' achievement and enthusiasm for learning. The school has been effective in involving parents in initiatives and improvements. For example, since September 2012 there has been a range of family learning events including activities on reading, attendance and e-safety.
- The E-ACT Free School Trust provides effective support and challenge through a review 'scorecard' six times a year. A focus of each review is the quality of teaching together with the progress data for groups of pupils. Further specific support is developed as a result of these reviews. This focused support and challenge have helped to bring about the improvements seen in the school.
- The school and the local authority have worked well together to ensure parents are aware of the available places at the school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding meet current requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has an excellent vision for the development of the school, based on governors' strong understanding of the needs of the community. This is strengthened by governor representation from the local authority. Governors bring a range of skills and experience including legal and financial expertise, together with elected parent governors. This provides a strong balance which enables effective support and challenge for senior leaders on, for example, the use of the additional funding through the pupil premium. The Principal provides high-quality, comprehensive reports about the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, governors understand the procedures for performance management and the structures for improving the quality of teaching and rewarding teachers. In addition, governors have a strong knowledge of pupils' performance particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	136934
Local authority	Not applicable
Inspection number	400326

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

Type of school	Academy free school
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	160
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Greatrex
Headteacher	Nicola Percy
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 8166 8348
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