

Ilminster Avenue E-ACT Academy

Ilminster Avenue, Knowle West, Bristol, BS4 1BX

Inspection dates 29–30 January 2014

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.

- Pupils' achievement has improved markedly since the opening of the academy. All groups of pupils now make good progress and achieve well.
- When pupils start at school their skills are much lower than normally expected. By the time they leave they have caught up considerably and standards are average.
- Pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes in lessons make a strong contribution to their achievement. Pupils are proud of their work.
- Teaching is good overall and some is outstanding. In the best lessons, teachers react skilfully to pupils' responses to questions. This means that their learning is matched well to their ability and understanding.
- Pupils are well managed. They act and feel safe in the academy.
- Pupils get off to a good start in Reception. Adults provide them with good levels of support.
- Decisive action by the executive principal and head of school has brought about dramatic improvements to teaching, pupils' achievement and behaviour since the academy started.
- Senior leaders and the governing body promote an ambitious vision for the academy.
- The care for pupils, particularly for those at risk of not doing as well, is effective and helps them prepare well for learning.
- Adaptations to planned activities over time are meeting the academic needs of pupils well.
- Learning support assistants contribute strongly to the academy's success. They support pupils who need extra help in lessons and around the academy skilfully.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the academy. They provide a good level of support while continually checking its performance.
- Parents know the academy is improving for the better. They are pleased that their children can now concentrate on their learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small minority of teaching still requires improvement.
- Some middle leaders are not playing a full part in driving improvements at the academy and checking that planned actions are working.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 26 lessons or part lessons. Every teacher was observed. Some observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders at the academy.
- Meetings and discussions were held with the executive principal, head of school, middle leaders, staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the academy sponsor, E-ACT.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils to discuss their work and explore their views about behaviour at the academy. An inspector heard some Year 1 pupils reading.
- The views of parents were gained from talking to the parent forum group and analysing 35 responses to the academy's own questionnaires given out to parents.
- A range of documents were looked at, including the academy's plans for improvement, records of lesson observations, information on pupils' progress, lesson plans, work in pupils' books and reports of behaviour incidents and attendance.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the academy's view of the impact and effectiveness of the multi-academy trust's services to support school improvement. The information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess how well the support provided by the multi-academy trust is helping to improve the academies for which it is responsible.

Inspection team

Richard Light, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jan Edwards

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ilminster Avenue E-ACT Academy opened in January 2012. It is federated with Greenfield E-ACT Primary Academy and St. Ursula's E-ACT Academy. An executive principal leads all three schools. A single governing body serves Greenfield and Ilminster Academies whilst St. Ursula's Academy retains its' own governing body.
- The academy is of average size for a primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is also well above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is well above average. This is additional government funding provided to schools to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and those with a parent in the armed services.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' standards and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching and raise pupils' achievement further by making sure lessons:
 - develop pupils' ability to solve mathematical problems
 - enable younger pupils to apply their phonic knowledge in different activities and subjects
 - help pupils in Years 3 to 6 make accurate word choices when writing and understand the impact this has on the reader.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - increasing the involvement of middle leaders in driving improvements and monitoring the effectiveness of actions taken.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the academy with skills well below those expected for their age group. They make good progress during Reception because of the high quality teaching and personal support they receive. Despite good levels of support, last year, children entered Year 1 with reading, writing and number skills lower than other children at the same stage of their schooling.
- Changes made this year to the content of lessons to provide a sharper focus on reading, writing and number work in Reception have resulted in rapid improvement to children's achievement. Already, a third of the year group has achieved the levels of development expected by the end of the year.
- Standards achieved by the end of Year 2 remain below average, but are improving quickly. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are benefiting well from a careful use of finances, allowing them to be taught in smaller classes than normally found. The new nurture group and art therapy provision are helping pupils overcome emotional and social worries and be better prepared for their learning in lessons.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 have improved dramatically. In 2012, 47% of pupils reached the expected level in reading. This rose to 89% in 2013. Lesson observations and work in pupils' books show this good level of performance continues.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium achieve well. Standards achieved by pupils in Year 6 when measured using average point scores in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly equal to all pupils nationally and above that of their peers in school. They make good, and improving, progress from their different starting points.
- The small number of more able pupils achieve well. Lessons are adapted effectively to extend their thinking and enable pupils to be challenged and work at a brisk pace.
- Pupils achieve well in reading. The systematic and structured approach to the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) in Year 1 has been successful and raised pupils' achievements to above average in reading. High quality texts stimulate pupils' enthusiasm and enjoyment of reading; the pupils would like to use the library even more than they do now!
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs benefit from specifically tailored programmes that meet their individual needs well. Learning support assistants are skilled at delivering individual programmes of support and ensuring these pupils do as much as they can for themselves.
- The inclusive ethos of the school enables all pupils to develop good personal qualities. They are open, honest, welcoming and polite, and appreciate the help and support they receive.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good because teachers have high expectations and good subject knowledge. They receive accurate feedback from senior leaders on how to improve their practice. Teachers, therefore, have a clear understanding of what good teaching is and what is expected of them.
- The teaching of writing is good. In Years 4 to 6, teachers probe pupils' thinking and 'get inside their heads' to generate good ideas for stories. Teachers are skilled at helping pupils structure and organise their thoughts. Occasionally, teachers fail to fully explain the impact of the choice of a certain word on the reader. This limits pupils' better understanding of the impact of effective word choices when writing for different purposes and audiences.
- In reading sessions, older pupils respond well to teachers' use of humour. Texts that allow pupils to play with words and language engage them and stimulate vibrant discussions. This develops their speaking skills well. The academy is aware that such an approach could also enable younger pupils to apply their phonic knowledge in other subjects.
- Training on the teaching of mathematical calculations has had a positive impact. For example,

Year 6 pupils talk with confidence about the different strategies they can use to multiply decimals. Approaches to teach pupils how to systematically solve mathematical problems are less strong.

- Throughout the school, targeted group work is successfully raising pupils' achievement. In the best lessons, teachers skilfully listen to pupils' responses to questions and follow these up precisely to deepen pupils' understanding. Teachers' daily planning carefully identifies next steps in pupils' learning and lessons are adapted accordingly. Where teaching requires improvement, this level of precision and expertise is not as evident and results in pupils' weaker performance.
- Learning support assistants are deployed well in lessons. Careful planning and checking on pupils' learning during intervention activities or one-to-one sessions are helping pupils quickly acquire the core skills that they need in English and mathematics.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their positive attitudes to learning contribute strongly to their good academic and personal development.
- Pupils enjoy lessons and respond keenly to their teachers' questions and prompts. They work thoughtfully during group work, carefully considering each other's views and ideas.
- Behaviour is well managed throughout the academy. Pupils have a good understanding of the sanctions and like the gold reward certificates they receive in assemblies. The systems for recording behaviour incidents are used well to analyse any patterns that occur. Pupils know that any incidents will be followed up and 'sorted out'.
- The academy has successfully improved pupils' attendance and reduced the number of exclusions considerably. A number of strategies have contributed to this success, including improved communication from staff to parents, breakfast club provision and help received from family support workers.
- Pupils move around the academy safely. They play physically, but sensibly, outdoors. Pupils use the range of organised activities and apparatus responsibly during their playtimes.
- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have a good grasp of what it means to say they feel safe. They act safely around the school and parents agree that the academy is a safe place.
- Pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of how to keep themselves safe online. They know who to tell if someone sent them hurtful messages or asked for their personal details and can describe the risks of posting inappropriate content on the internet.

The leadership and management are good

- The ambition of the executive principal and head of school has resulted in dramatic improvements to teaching, pupils' achievement and behaviour since the academy opened. Parents, pupils and staff that contributed to the inspection were unanimous in their praise for the advances that have been made.
- Effective team working between senior leaders has been instrumental to the developments achieved. Their very acute understanding of their different roles and complementary skills strengthen the overall leadership of the academy considerably.
- The academy improvement plan is effective. Priorities, based on accurate, realistic and manageable self-evaluation findings, are explicitly linked to individual training plans for staff.
- Performance management procedures are used well to hold staff to account for their performance and also to support their development. Robust systems and training are in place for any teachers not yet consistently good.
- Senior leaders have ensured that there is a consistency of approach in the work of the academy. This has resulted in staff knowing what is expected of them, in pupils understanding what

acceptable behaviour is and in parents developing a greater trust in the school.

- Senior leaders have used their academy flexibilities and freedoms well to re-deploy an outstanding teacher from within the multi-academy trust. This is meeting the needs of pupils with high levels of need exceptionally well.
 - Funding to develop pupils' ability and participation in physical education (PE) has had a good impact. Specialist sports coaches deliver high quality teaching for all pupils and model their practice to teachers within the academy. This is building quickly teachers' skills and confidence in their own practice.
 - Planned activities are meeting the needs of pupils well. Focusing on the basic skills of English and mathematics is having a positive effect on raising pupils' achievement. In particular, work to improve pupils' writing in other subjects is proving successful.
 - Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported when, for example, pupils explore moral and social issues about a character during English lessons. Pupils' self-esteem is raised well through the many opportunities to take on positions of responsibility, such as looking after younger pupils during lunchtimes.
 - Some middle leaders are yet to play a full part in driving forward improvements at the academy. The school acknowledges that it has been necessary to have initiatives led by senior leaders up to now. Plans are in place to enable middle leaders to take a greater role in monitoring and leading in their areas of expertise.
 - External support provided by the academy chain is effective. In the last year, support to address compliance issues has freed senior leaders to successfully focus on improving teaching and pupils' achievement. Good opportunities to visit local schools through the Malago Partnership are enabling teachers to learn from best practice.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is highly ambitious for the academy. The governors have a good and accurate understanding of the academy's performance in relation to other schools nationally through undertaking regular visits to classes. Governors are very knowledgeable about the academy's improving performance and oversee the performance management of senior leaders closely. They are aware of the impact of pupil premium funding on pupils' achievements, as well as the link between teachers' performance and pay. Governors receive high quality information and use this to challenge and support senior leaders robustly. Where necessary they broker additional support from the sponsor to meet the needs of the pupils. Governors have not shied away from taking difficult decisions for the benefit of the pupils at the school. Their robust monitoring programme ensures that all statutory requirements are met, including those for safeguarding.
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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	137700
Local authority	City of Bristol
Inspection number	399895

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Harry Darby
Executive Principal	Stephen Luke
Date of previous school inspection	NA
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