

Reedswood E-ACT Academy

Bentley Drive, Walsall, WS2 8RX

Inspection dates 29–30 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching is not yet consistently good enough to enable all pupils to make good progress.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2013 was below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Too few pupils attain the higher National Curriculum levels.
- Leaders use of information about pupils' progress and attainment is not sharp enough. As a result, they do not have a precise picture of how different groups of pupils are achieving over time.
- Teachers do not always use their knowledge of what pupils can already do. When this happens pupils complete tasks that are too easy or they repeat work that they have already done. As a result, they do not make sufficient progress in some lessons.
- In some lessons, teachers do not always assess how well pupils are learning. As a result, pupils, particularly the most able, are not moved on to harder work quickly enough.
- The best practice in marking is not consistent throughout the school. Some books show that teachers do not provide precise enough advice to pupils, particularly in writing, to enable the work to be improved.
- When senior leaders check the quality of teaching they do not always provide teachers with detailed guidance on how to improve their classroom practice.
- Targets are not sharply focused enough to enable the principal and the governors to hold staff to account for the improvements in their areas of responsibility.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress.
- The 'Irresistible Learning' motivates pupils and makes a very positive contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Positive relationships between staff and pupils are a strong feature of this academy. Pupils feel safe, behave well and are keen to learn. This is reflected in their above average attendance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons, five of which were seen together with the principal or deputy principal. In addition, inspectors spoke to pupils about their views of the academy, listened to them read and scrutinised the work in their books.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents including the academy’s own evaluation of its performance, plans for improvement, policies and records of pupils’ behaviour and attendance, and information relating to safeguarding.
- Meetings were held with the principal, senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the academy sponsor.
- The 19 responses from parents to the online survey (Parent View) were considered, along with the responses from a parent survey recently conducted by the academy. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the beginning and end of the day.
- Inspectors considered the responses from 19 staff to Ofsted’s questionnaire.
- 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. This 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

Rachel Howie, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Colin Lower

Additional Inspector

Trevor Neate

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average primary academy.
- 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 through a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and pupils with a parent in the armed forces) is almost double the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is very high. The largest ethnic group represented is Pakistani. Similarly, there is a high proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The academy has an increasing number of pupils who join the school unable to speak English.
- The academy meets the current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise the achievement of all groups of pupils by:
 - ensuring that pupils have work that is set at the right level of difficulty for their different needs and abilities, with a particular focus on the most able
 - adjusting learning quickly in lessons, particularly in mathematics, when pupils show that they have understood and are ready to move on to the next step
 - providing pupils with more precise feedback on how to improve their work, particularly in writing, and ensuring that pupils respond to this guidance.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers by ensuring that:
 - teachers are provided with precise guidance on how to improve the quality of their teaching
 - leaders, teachers and teaching assistants are set sufficiently challenging targets that explicitly relate to pupils' progress, so that they can be held to account for improvements in their areas of responsibility
 - monitoring activities have a precise focus, are completed rigorously and accurately and result in clear information about what actions should be taken next
 - leaders at all levels have an accurate understanding of what the academy's tracking data and externally produced information is indicating about the progress made by different groups of pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- From starting points well below those expected, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2013 in reading, writing and mathematics, remained well below the national average. At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013, pupils' attainment rose and in writing was in line with the national average but was below, but not well below, in reading and mathematics. This is, in part, because very few pupils attained levels higher than those nationally expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Achievement is not yet good because evidence from lesson observations and pupils' books shows that the most able pupils are not always provided with sufficiently challenging tasks. This prevents them from making the progress that they should.
- In 2013, the proportion of pupils making the expected progress in writing and mathematics was broadly the same as other pupils nationally. However, the proportions making good progress was less than expected nationally. The rate of progress in reading was below the national average.
- In the most recent phonics check, more Year 1 pupils than the national average reached the expected standard. This is as a result of a sharp focus on the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make). The academy is providing more opportunities for pupils to read and offering them an increasing range of books to choose from.
- The progress of the pupils currently in the academy is variable across classes and subjects, although there is evidence of good and improving progress for some pupils. However, this is not yet consistent in all classes and is insufficient to enable all pupils to catch up with other pupils across the country.
- Nearly all children who join Nursery start with social, language and numeracy development well below that typical for their age. Children currently in the Nursery and Reception classes are making good progress because the staff are skilled at recognising children's needs and planning a range of interesting activities that engage children well.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium are making at least the same progress as, and in some cases better progress than, their classmates. At the end of Year 6 in 2013, pupils eligible for this extra funding were two terms behind other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are given additional help in lessons and in small groups. Progress for these pupils is mixed across the academy with some, but not all, making good progress.
- There are no significant differences between the achievement of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Pupils who join the academy speaking little or no English receive effective support and make rapid progress with the acquisition of the new language.
- The academy successfully fosters a positive attitude to learning and pupils are keen to do their best. They take pride in their work and take care to present it neatly. Their progress is hampered by activities that are not always challenging them enough.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement and is not yet consistently good because it is too variable across Key Stages 1 and 2.
 - Inadequate teaching has been eradicated and more than half the lessons observed by inspectors were judged to be good; however, work in books shows that this is too inconsistent for all pupils to make good progress.
 - The impact of teaching assistants varies across the school. Some are deployed effectively in class and intervention groups, helping pupils to improve their English and mathematics work and also their behaviour and attitudes. Sometimes teachers do not guide these staff sufficiently well and as a result, the pupils they are working with do not make all the progress they could.
 - Most teachers understand the importance of providing different tasks for pupils of different abilities; however, they do not always ensure that these tasks are set at the right level of difficulty from the beginning of the lesson. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson many pupils found the activities, based on symmetrical patterns, too easy. Pupils wasted time completing these tasks before they were allowed to move on to something harder. This slowed their progress.
 - Some teachers fail to check how well pupils are learning during lessons. This results in pupils not being moved on to the next step quickly enough and valuable learning time is wasted. This happens most regularly in mathematics for the most able pupils. These pupils continue to work through activities they understand when they could be moved on to learning something new or applying their skills by solving a word problem.
 - In the best lessons pupils are set challenging work. Teachers and teaching assistants regularly check how well pupils are getting on and move them on to harder work as soon as the pupils are ready. For example, throughout a Year 2 writing lesson about 'The Gruffalo', adults skilfully challenged pupils to improve their sentences. As a result, all pupils made good progress.
 - The teaching of phonics is highly effective and this is helping pupils to make better progress in their reading. Teachers plan fun activities that help pupils to pronounce sounds accurately, read them carefully and then write them in sentences. For example, one teacher used a parachute to help pupils to practise the sounds and words they had been learning.
 - Following the dip in reading standards at the end of 2013 leaders acted quickly to ensure that pupils make better progress. The 'Reciprocal Reading' programme is helping some pupils to gain a wider range of strategies to use when they are reading. However, in some lessons all pupils, regardless of their reading ability, have to read the same text. Some pupils find this too easy and some find it too hard. This is limiting the effectiveness of this new initiative for some pupils.
 - Pupils in Key Stage 1 are benefiting from the additional reading support provided by the lunchtime supervisors. This is most effective where the supervisors have had training in supporting pupils to improve their reading skills. Teachers are providing opportunities for pupils to read in a range of contexts and subjects. For instance in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, a teaching assistant was effectively encouraging a pupil to apply his reading strategies to understand the word problem he needed to solve.
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- Teachers plan a range of exciting and fun activities during the 'Irresistible Learning' lessons. Pupils are motivated by this and enjoy the range of ways they are allowed to present their work. They take great pride in their topic books and talked about them with enthusiasm and this contributes strongly to their positive attitudes to learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are welcoming and friendly to visitors and are keen to talk about their academy. Pupils learn and play together well regardless of age, gender or ethnicity because adults successfully promote and model good relationships and ensure that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- Most parents, staff and pupils agree with inspectors that behaviour is good. The vast majority of pupils behave well in classrooms, corridors and in the playground. Pupils are keen to learn and respond quickly to adults' instructions. A number of parents expressed concerns about the behaviour of some pupils. Inspectors found that the staff deal quickly and appropriately with a small number of pupils who demonstrate challenging behaviour.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to learn new things. They return to lessons after break times and lunchtimes promptly and settle quickly. Even when teaching is less than good pupils remain alert and participate in the lesson, keen to share their ideas and answer questions. Occasional off-task chatting is dealt with quickly and when the teacher issues a warning, pupils respond straight away.
- Pupils show a good understanding of different forms of bullying, including name-calling, physical bullying and cyber bullying. Pupils told inspectors that bullying rarely happens, but when it does they are confident that it will be dealt with by adults straight away.
- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Procedures are rigorous and consistently applied by all staff. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, especially when using the internet or playing near water. Adults provide very good pastoral care for the pupils – this is a strength of the school. The staff know the pupils and their individual circumstances very well and work hard to ensure that they have the right support when it is required. As a result, pupils and parents agree that the academy is a safe place to be.
- The staff are persistent in ensuring that families understand the importance of regular attendance and getting to the academy on time. Lateness and persistent absence have reduced and attendance is above the national average for primary schools and continues to improve.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The principal and senior leaders understand the academy's strengths and weaknesses and are ambitious to improve the academy. However, leadership and management are not yet good because the systems in place to check on the quality of teaching are not used rigorously enough to bring about and secure rapid improvements.
- The regular checks made on the quality of teaching do not result in teachers receiving precise advice about what they need to do to improve their classroom practice. This is preventing all teaching from being consistently good or better. Nonetheless, the principal has been effective in eradicating all inadequate teaching.

- Senior leaders and teachers are not set precise or challenging enough targets in order to improve the quality of teaching. As a result, senior leaders and teachers cannot always be suitably held to account for the improvement for which they are responsible.
 - Leaders do not always monitor the impact of their actions well enough. For example, when checks are made on pupils' books, leaders are not always clear about precisely what they are looking for and do not look in sufficient detail. This means that improvements are not always reported accurately or in enough detail to enable improvements to be identified and weaknesses diagnosed.
 - The principal has recognised the need to improve the way in which information about pupils' progress is used. An external consultant has produced an effective system for presenting the information clearly and succinctly; however, school leaders are not yet confident in using this and other information to gain an accurate understanding of how well groups of pupils are progressing.
 - The recently appointed Early Years Foundation Stage leader has made a very positive start in her role and, working alongside external consultants, has improved the provision for and the progress of children in the Nursery and Reception classes.
 - The academy works very effectively to involve parents and received the Leading Parents' Partnership Award in March 2013 in recognition of this. The vast majority of parents spoken to said that the staff are approachable and respond to their concerns quickly.
 - The 'Irresistible Learning' approach to the curriculum has been successful in exciting and involving pupils and it makes a strong contribution to pupils' positive attitudes to learning. It is well led and managed. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on the ideas of famous leaders from around the world, discuss moral issues and work together in teams. This, together with regular trips and visitors to the school, contributes very well to their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
 - The extra sport funding (provided by the government to all primary schools) is being used to provide specialist sport coaches to improve teachers' skills in teaching physical education and improving pupils' physical well-being and skill level. Additional lunchtime and after-school clubs provided by these coaches are enabling more pupils to take part in sporting activities.
 - Pupil premium funding is used appropriately to provide eligible pupils with a wide range of additional support. Eligible pupils make at least as good progress as their classmates. However, they do not all reach the same levels as their classmates by the end of Year 6.
 - The academy sponsor has provided some support that has had a positive impact on the academy, for example providing support to strengthen governance. A review of the academy was commissioned in November 2013. The review accurately identified many of the areas that require improvement but it was less effective in taking full account of the academy's published information and evidence of progress in pupils' books. As a result, the academy leaders and members of the governing body consider the school's overall effectiveness to be better than it is.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - There have been significant changes within the governing body in the last 12 months. The recently appointed Chair brings a high level of professional expertise to the role and is
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knowledgeable about all relevant aspects of the academy including the quality of teaching, the academy's overall performance and how it compares with similar institutions and how pupil premium funding is being used to provide additional support for pupils. His work is ensuring that the governing body is becoming more effective. He is responding quickly to the outcomes of a recent review of governance. A programme of training and coaching is in place to ensure that all governors are able to offer an improved level of challenge to academy leaders and have a greater understanding of their responsibilities. Governors manage the academy's finances appropriately and understand that promotion and pay awards for teachers are based on the progress that pupils make. Governors ensure that the procedures to keep pupils safe meet requirements.

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	138452
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	426890

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

Type of school	Academy Sponsor Led
School category	Primary
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	440
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Boneham
Principal	Elaine Maher
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01922 721323
Fax number	01922 612907
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