Mansfield Green E-ACT Academy
Albert Road, Aston, Birmingham, B6 5NH

Inspection dates
2–3 December 2014

Overall effectiveness
Previous inspection: Not previously inspected
This inspection: Inadequate

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Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- The sponsor has not secured adequate leadership of the academy. Governance has not been sufficiently focused and there has been no substantive senior leadership in the academy for over a year.
- Interim leadership arrangements have been inadequate and have not secured good teaching and good pupil achievement.
- Leaders have not kept a close enough check on the quality of teaching and have only recently begun to provide training and support to help it improve.
- Teachers do not know how to identify the skills pupils need to learn. This means that lessons are not focused on helping pupils to make enough progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants do not always speak and write using standard English, so pupils who struggle to communicate, or who are new to learning English, find it hard to learn and improve their language skills. Therefore, pupils do not have the skills they need to move on to the next stage of their education.
- In lessons and when marking pupils’ work, teachers do not take sufficient account of what pupils show they can or cannot do. Consequently, teachers do not help pupils to know how to improve their work.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 underachieve in reading, writing and mathematics because they are not adequately taught the skills they need, such as how to recognise letters and the sounds they make (phonics). Pupils are not given opportunities to practise and deepen their understanding.

The school has the following strengths

- Recent support from the sponsor has led to notable improvement in the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result, teaching in the Reception classes is improving and children are developing better skills.
- Interim leaders have ensured pupils’ behaviour has improved and is no longer inadequate. Pupils feel safe and safeguarding procedures meet requirements.
- The academy provides well for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It helps pupils to develop tolerance, respect and a genuine interest in the lives of people from different cultures or with different religious beliefs. In this way, the academy helps prepare pupils well for life in modern democratic Britain.
Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils’ learning by visiting lessons in each class and through a series of walks around the academy. While visiting lessons, inspectors looked at the work in pupils’ books and talked to pupils about their learning. Inspectors heard some pupils read.
- Inspectors observed playtime and lunchtime activities and watched an assembly.
- Meetings were held with: the executive Principal and interim vice Principal; other senior staff; the ‘system leader’ (an officer providing support and challenge) from the academy sponsor; a representative of the academy sponsor’s senior team; external consultants providing support for special educational needs co-ordination, early years provision and the quality of teaching; the Chair of the Local Governing Body; a group of teachers; support staff; and groups of pupils.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to allow inspectors to view the results. Inspectors considered the results of the academy’s own questionnaire to parents and spoke informally to parents as they brought their children to school.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, which included: the academy’s checks on how well it is doing and plans for improvement; evidence about how teachers are set targets to improve pupils’ achievement; records of the academy’s checks on the quality of teaching and of the work in pupils’ books; minutes of meetings of the local governing body and raising achievement board; reports on the academy’s effectiveness by the sponsor and external consultants; information about pupils’ progress over time; and records relating to behaviour, attendance, punctuality and safeguarding.

Inspection team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sandra Hayes, Lead inspector</th>
<th>Her Majesty’s Inspector</th>
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<tr>
<td>Robin Lacey</td>
<td>Additional Inspector</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lynda Townsend</td>
<td>Additional Inspector</td>
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</table>
Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- Mansfield Green is part of a chain of academies sponsored by E-ACT. It opened on 1 January 2013. It is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- About one-in-five pupils is disabled, or has special educational needs. This proportion is above average.
- More than half of the pupils are disadvantaged and eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority). This is well above the national average.
- Most pupils are of Bangladeshi, African or Pakistani origin. Just over three quarters speak English as an additional language.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of two full-time Reception classes.
- The academy does not meet the government’s current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils’ attainment and progress.
- The previous Principal left the academy in October 2013. The sponsor deployed senior staff from Heartlands E-ACT secondary academy as executive Principal, interim Principal and vice Principal. The interim Principal has now left the academy. The interim vice Principal continues to manage the academy, but is due to leave at the end of December. A new executive Principal took up his post the day before this inspection. He has been appointed as executive Principal for both Mansfield Green and Nechells E-ACT Primary academies. Both academies require special measures.
- The academy is governed by a Local Governing Body (LGB), which oversees the work of this academy, Nechells Primary Academy and Heartlands Secondary. It is proposed that this structure be changed so that the LGB becomes responsible for the two primary academies only.
- Since October 2014, two vice Principals from a successful E-ACT academy have been providing support to Mansfield Green. One is supporting the Early Years Foundation Stage leader. The other is leading a programme of training and development for teachers to improve the quality of classroom practice. An external consultant has been overseeing the co-ordination of provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of leaders and managers on pupils’ achievement by:
  - establishing, as a matter of urgency, leadership structures that ensure the academy has strong and stable senior leadership and governance
  - setting performance targets that reflect high expectations for pupils’ achievement and require all teachers to meet the government’s Teachers’ Standards
  - providing training to help teachers meet the Teachers’ Standards
  - ensuring senior leaders frequently check the quality of teaching and hold teachers rigorously to account for its impact on pupils’ achievement
  - enabling other leaders to contribute effectively to improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils’ achievement.

- Improve the quality of teaching by making sure teachers:
  - know what standards pupils should be working at for their age and expect pupils to achieve these
  - have a detailed understanding of what pupils can do and what skills each pupil needs to learn next
  - plan lessons that focus on teaching the skills pupils need to develop, rather than on merely completing a task
  - plan tasks that match pupils’ abilities so that work is not too easy for some pupils and too hard for others
  - make good use of teaching assistants’ time so that they consistently support pupils to make good progress
– use questions to probe pupils’ understanding, or to challenge them to extend their thinking
– check how well pupils are learning in lessons and modify the lesson accordingly to ensure progress is swift
– give quality feedback in lessons and when marking pupils’ work, to help address pupils’ misunderstandings and help them improve further.

Ensure pupils achieve well in reading, writing, spoken communication and mathematics, so they can succeed in the next stage of their education by:
– identifying accurately gaps in pupils’ knowledge in phonics, mathematics and writing skills
– building pupils’ phonic knowledge systematically and swiftly across Years 1 and 2
– ensuring Key Stage 2 pupils who are unable to use phonics effectively acquire these skills quickly
– helping pupils to understand and enjoy many different types of books
– provide structured opportunities for pupils to learn how to communicate confidently and clearly using spoken language
– ensuring that teachers and teaching assistants model high quality spoken and written English to pupils at all times
– giving pupils plenty of opportunities to practise and apply writing skills in English lessons and in different subjects
– helping pupils to master mathematical understanding by applying knowledge about numbers to different situations in mathematics lessons and in other subjects.

Ensure disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well by ensuring that:
– pupils’ specific needs are identified accurately
– teachers understand pupils’ needs and use appropriate strategies to support them in lessons
– additional support given through small group or individual teaching helps pupils overcome their difficulties and does not merely focus on repeating work they have already struggled with.

An external review of governance and an external review of the school’s use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.
Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- The academy sponsor has not done enough to secure effective leadership. From the time the previous Principal left in October 2013 until September 2014, the sponsor did little to support the interim leadership, or to check whether improvements in the quality of teaching and in pupils’ achievement were being made. Although a permanent executive Principal has now been appointed, the leadership of this academy is combined with another local academy, which also requires special measures. This does not provide the capacity for sustained improvement.

- Following the 2014 national Key Stage 2 tests, which showed the academy remained below the floor standard, the sponsor set up a Raising Achievement Board (RAB) to oversee the impact of improvement planning. The sponsor revised its support and challenge structures in the summer term 2014, which led to the appointment of a system leader, who has worked with the academy since September to provide support for leadership. The system leader brokered support from within the academy chain to urgently address serious shortcomings in the quality of teaching and in the early years provision. While this support has begun to lead to improvements in some aspects, the quality of teaching and pupils’ achievement remain inadequate.

- Leadership of the academy at all levels has not promoted high expectations for what pupils can and should achieve. Teachers have not been ambitious enough when planning lessons, when teaching pupils, or when marking work. Leaders have not ensured that teachers provide good role models for pupils when speaking or writing English. As a result, pupils’ communication skills have not improved from the very low base at which many join the school.

- Targets set for teachers perpetuate the culture of low ambition because they validate the expectation that many pupils will not make the minimum progress expected nationally. The performance of many teachers does not meet the government’s Teachers’ Standards.

- Some staff have recently been appointed as ‘Phase Leaders’, to be responsible for the quality of teaching in particular classes. These leaders do not have the necessary skills to hold teachers to account for pupils’ achievement.

- Senior leaders have not checked the quality of teaching closely enough. Consequently, it has remained inadequate, even after the RAB identified that this was the case in April 2014. Some subject leaders have looked at the work in pupils’ books and identified weaknesses. However, they did not share this information with senior leaders, so teaching did not improve as a result.

- The academy has recently introduced a new approach to teaching subjects by organising them into themes. The themes promote pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, so help to prepare them for life in modern democratic Britain. Nevertheless, since the academy opened, the curriculum has failed to ensure pupils acquire basic skills. For example, poor literacy skills are not being taught effectively enough in Years 1 to 6 and pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use reading, writing and mathematical skills in different subjects to ensure they practise and achieve competence.

- Following their appointment in October 2013, the interim Principal and vice Principal identified serious concerns about the academy’s work to keep pupils safe and secure. As a result of their actions, safeguarding procedures now meet requirements. Similarly, the interim senior leaders implemented a consistent strategy for staff to follow when managing pupils’ behaviour. As a result, pupils’ behaviour is no longer inadequate.

- The interim leadership team has used some of the pupil premium funding effectively to increase attendance rates of disadvantaged pupils. The funding has not been used effectively to improve the achievement of eligible pupils. All the pupils who failed to make the minimum expected progress across Key Stage 2 in 2014 were disadvantaged. Therefore leaders have failed to ensure equality of opportunity for these pupils.
The primary school sports premium has been used to provide specialist teaching for physical education and to purchase equipment for pupils to use during lunch times. This has contributed to the improvement in behaviour, because pupils now have structured activities available to keep them busy in the playground. However not all pupils are purposefully engaged in physical activity at break times and their behaviour at these times requires improvement.

Inspectors strongly recommend that the academy should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

The governance of the school:

- The local governing body (LGB) is insufficiently involved in making decisions about the work of the academy. Meetings of the LGB focus on all three academies, which dilutes the focus on each one. Also, there is insufficient communication on key issues between academy leaders and governors.
- Governors have not provided effective support and challenge to the academy. Minutes of meetings show that governors were aware that the academy was likely to be judged inadequate and that staff morale was low, yet little action has been taken to address these concerns.
- Minutes show that the LGB discusses published performance data about pupils’ achievement, but does not use the academy’s ongoing records to challenge underperformance. The LGB was ‘disappointed’ that the Key Stage 2 results in 2014 were below the government’s floor standard, but had not been proactive in predicting this, or in trying to prevent it.
- Governors are aware of the requirements of performance and pay policies, yet they have not ensured that good underperformance is tackled and that good teaching is rewarded.
- The Chair of the LGB is knowledgeable about the use of the pupil premium, but governors have not evaluated the impact of spending decisions on pupils’ achievement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

Behaviour

The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. When teaching fails to capture their imagination, or when tasks are too easy or too challenging, pupils lose focus. Sometimes they switch off and their attention wanders. Occasionally, when this happens, they become fidgety and distract others. On the whole, pupils display positive attitudes to learning and approach lessons enthusiastically.

- Sometimes pupils are too boisterous between lessons or on their way to and from the playground. This tends to happen when they are not directly supervised.

- Some less-experienced members of staff are not confident in implementing the behaviour management system, which is why pupils do not behave well in some lessons. The academy’s analysis of records show that incidents of unacceptable behaviour have reduced significantly since the academy opened. There are far fewer exclusions this year. Staff, pupils and parents agree that behaviour has improved considerably in the past year.

- A pupil council helps to make decisions about some aspects of academy life. Some older pupils told inspectors that the pupil council and academy leaders do not always listen to their views.

- Pupils are polite and appropriately friendly to adults. Pupils wear their uniforms with pride. They look after equipment and help to keep the academy tidy.

- Pupils generally get on well with each other, treating each other with respect. Pupils know the difference between bullying and falling out. They acknowledge that bullying does happen in the academy. Nevertheless, pupils report that any issues are taken seriously and dealt with effectively. Pupils say there is no discriminatory language used. This is because pupils are genuinely interested in and respect different ways of life.

Safety

The academy’s work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. It is not good because, while the academy helps pupils know about some risks, such as those related to social media or road safety, it
does not help them to develop a balanced view of how to keep themselves safe in certain situations. For example, a group of pupils had very mixed views about what they would do if they got separated from an adult while visiting the city centre.

- Similarly, while the academy promotes tolerance and respect well, the lack of stable leadership means there is no agreed strategy for how the academy would respond to extremist or discriminatory behaviour, should it occur.

- The academy has rigorous systems for checking the identity and suitability of staff and visitors. Parents are confident that their children are safe in the academy.

- The academy’s efforts to improve attendance are making a difference. Attendance is rising year on year and is now almost in line with the national figure. Fewer pupils are now persistently absent. Changes to the time of opening and the start of the school day have enabled more pupils to arrive on time. Nevertheless, a few families still bring their children to school late.

The quality of teaching is inadequate

- Teachers do not know what pupils should be able to do in relation to their ages. This means teachers’ expectations for the standards pupils should achieve in lessons and over time are too low.

- Teachers do not have sufficiently detailed understanding of what pupils can already do and what skills they need to learn next. Consequently, teachers do not plan tasks that match pupils’ abilities. Work is often too easy for middle- and higher-ability pupils and too hard for those who find learning more difficult and for pupils with special educational needs.

- Adults do not model good quality English to pupils, or expect pupils to use language correctly. This inhibits pupils’ learning, particularly those who have speech, language and communication difficulties, or those who speak English as an additional language. Some of the comments written in pupils’ books by teachers are grammatically incorrect or misspelled.

- Teachers do not always make good use of teaching assistants’ time. Teachers do not give enough guidance to teaching assistants to help them challenge pupils who have finished their work. As a result, pupils often sit waiting for others in the group to finish a task.

- Teachers’ questioning is often superficial. Teachers ask what pupils know, but do not probe further to check understanding or to challenge pupils to apply skills and extend their thinking. Some teaching assistants are skilled at helping pupils overcome difficulties through effective questioning.

- Teachers have recently been trained in how to explain to pupils what they are expected to learn in each lesson. Most are now following agreed practices. However, lessons are not sufficiently focused on the skills pupils need to develop. Instead, the focus is often about completing a task. This limits pupils’ learning and slows their progress.

- Teachers map out what they call ‘Steps to Success’, which show pupils how they can achieve the intended learning. Teachers do not use these effectively to show pupils how well they are doing throughout the lesson. Some teachers pause lessons from time to time, asking pupils to reflect on how well they think they are doing, but do not address pupils’ misunderstandings or add additional challenge for the most able pupils.

- Teachers’ marking gives pupils little guidance on how to improve. It does not challenge pupils to take care over their work. As a result, pupils continue to make basic errors in spelling and punctuation and the presentation of their work is sometimes untidy.

- Pupils do not write for long periods of time or in different subjects, so do not practise and improve their writing skills. Teachers do not teach reading or mathematics skills systematically or expect pupils to use
these skills in different ways to deepen their understanding.

- Pupils make accelerated progress when teachers use good subject knowledge and accurate assessment of what pupils can do to challenge pupils effectively. Some teachers make good use of cross-curricular links to help pupils apply, develop and master basic writing skills. In a few books, teachers’ comments have focused pupils on how to improve specific aspects of their writing. Pupils have acted on this advice and the quality of their work has improved. Nonetheless, this is not yet common practice across the academy.

The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- Since the academy opened, pupils’ attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 has been well below that of pupils in other schools. There was a slight increase in 2014, but pupils’ attainment was still a long way behind national averages in Year 2 and Year 6.

- The academy’s information about pupil’s achievement indicates the relative improvements seen in 2014 were the result of additional intervention work by teachers and teaching assistants in Year 6, rather than improvements in the quality of teaching throughout the academy. Therefore these slight gains are not replicated for pupils currently throughout the academy. Inspection evidence, including the academy’s own data and the work in pupils’ books, indicates that most pupils are currently working at levels that are well below those expected for their age.

- In the Year 6 national tests, disadvantaged pupils’ scores were almost a year behind other pupils in the academy in mathematics and around two terms behind in reading. There was little difference in writing. Compared to other pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils in the academy were around a year behind in writing and close to a year-and-a-half behind in reading and mathematics.

- The Key Stage 2 national test results in 2014 showed that too few pupils made the progress expected of them from the beginning of Year 3 to the end of Year 6. Disadvantaged pupils made less progress across Key Stage 2 in 2014 than other pupils in mathematics and reading.

- The academy’s records of achievement, work in pupils’ books and evidence from lesson observations show that many pupils currently in Years 1 to 6 are not making enough progress in reading, writing or mathematics. There is no difference in the progress made by different ethnic groups, such as Pakistani, Bangladeshi or African pupils or those who speak English as an additional language. All groups underachieve. Disadvantaged pupils are making slower progress than most other pupils.

- The needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have not been properly assessed. Therefore the additional support they receive and the extra help given in class is not accurately tailored to help them overcome their difficulties. This is why they make inadequate progress.

- The most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged in lessons and are given too few opportunities to master skills by applying knowledge to challenging tasks. This is why they make the minimum rate of expected progress and not the faster rates of which they are capable.

- Until recently, assessment of children’s skills when they enter the Reception class has been inaccurate, so judgements about progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage prior to Easter 2014 cannot be verified. Observations during this inspection indicate that children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are low for their age, particularly in relation to speaking, listening, reading and writing. Children’s points scores at the end of the Reception Year in 2014 showed that progress since Easter had been swift and that children were almost ready to start learning the National Curriculum. Children of all abilities currently in the Reception classes are making steady progress in all areas of learning. Inspection evidence indicates this is speeding up.

- Achievement in reading is inadequate because teachers do not teach basic skills well enough and do not expect pupils to read widely and often. Pupils do not know about different types of books or different authors. Pupils in Key Stage 1 and lower-attaining pupils in Key Stage 2 cannot use phonics (the sounds that letters make) to read and spell new words confidently. Phonics lessons do not build pupils’ skills
systematically. In addition, adults do not model correct pronunciation of phonics skills and they do not expect pupils to acquire skills quickly.

- Pupils’ achievement in writing is inadequate because teachers do not expect pupils to write often enough and of high enough quality. Pupils say they feel frustrated because teachers do not give them enough time to apply their skills in longer pieces of writing, or to practise writing in different subjects.

- Many pupils enter the school with speech and language difficulties. The clear focus in the Early Years Foundation Stage on developing these skills helps pupils begin to communicate more confidently. In Years 1 to 6, pupils do not have enough opportunities to hear and practise using good quality language, so their skills remain weak.

- Insufficient identification of gaps in pupils’ mathematical knowledge, low expectations from teachers and lack of opportunities to use and apply skills lead to pupils' weak understanding in mathematics. Consequently their achievement in mathematics is inadequate.

The early years provision requires improvement

- The early years provision in the Reception classes is improving, but there is still a way to go if children are to achieve a good level of development before they start Year 1. Prior to Easter 2014, assessment of children’s skills was weak, so teachers did not know whether children were making adequate progress.

- Provision has improved. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is not good at this point because improvement is still heavily dependent on external support.

- Following the appointment of a new Early Years Foundation Stage leader, teachers have accurately identified what children can and cannot do. It is now clear that children enter the school with speaking, listening, reading and writing skills that are well below the levels expected for their age.

- Assessments are now regularly updated and carried out in partnership with parents. This information is used to track children’s progress and make adjustments to the provision for individuals so they do not fall behind. Evidence examined relating to children from different groups indicates this approach is working and no groups are underachieving.

- Children willingly participate in tasks that are sometimes led by adults and, at other times, chosen by themselves. These tasks are well planned and, as a result, children are developing the key skills they will need to help them be ready for the next stage in their education.

- There is a happy atmosphere in the Reception classes. Children behave well. Staff have high expectations of manners and courtesy, which they model for the children. As a result, children learn and play together well.

- Children are happy and safe in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Procedures for safeguarding are effective.
### School inspection judgements mean

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Judgement</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>Requires improvement</td>
<td>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.</td>
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| Grade 4 | Inadequate                | 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.  
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. |
This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

**School details**

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<td>Local authority</td>
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<td>Inspection number</td>
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**Type of school** | Primary
**School category** | Academy sponsor-led
**Age range of pupils** | 4–11
**Gender of pupils** | Mixed
**Number of pupils on the school roll** | 420
**Appropriate authority**  | The governing body
**Chair**                  | Noran Flynn
**Executive Principal**    | Matthew Wynne
**Date of previous school inspection** | Not previously inspected
**Telephone number**        | 0121 4646590
**Email address**           | enquiries@mansfieldgreene-actacademy.org.uk
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