

Mansfield Green E-ACT Academy

Albert Road, Aston, Birmingham B6 5NH

Inspection dates

8–9 March 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Across the school, many pupils' attainment is lower than expected for their age. Pupils still have gaps in their learning that stem from weaknesses in teaching in the past. Few pupils attain highly.
- The gap between the attainment of pupils who have special educational needs or disability and other pupils in the school is wide.
- Not all teaching is strong enough to make sure that pupils close the gaps rapidly on the expectations for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school's recently adopted approach to teaching the wider curriculum has not yet had a strong impact on pupils' learning in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Arrangements for assessing pupils' progress in subjects other than mathematics and English are at an early stage of development.
- There are weaknesses in the way children's progress and attainment are assessed in the early years.
- Pupils' attendance is below average, but is improving over time.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is improving rapidly because of the Principal's strong and tenacious leadership. Staff at all levels share the ambition to make sure that pupils do as well as they can.
- Leaders and governors have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to be done next.
- The quality of teaching is improving quickly as a result of leaders' actions. The progress of all groups of pupils is speeding up as a result, especially in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils' achievement matches that of other pupils in the school.
- The learning environment has been improved immensely.
- Pupils work hard and behave well. They feel safe at school and understand how to keep themselves safe.
- Leaders and governors pay close attention to making sure that safeguarding arrangements are effective and understood by everyone.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics continues to accelerate and that the proportion of pupils reaching and exceeding the attainment that is expected for their age increases, by:
 - providing coaching and support for individual teachers that is fine-tuned to their needs, so that their practice meets leaders' expectations and matches the best in the school
 - as part of the regular reviews and discussions of the progress of different groups of pupils, including a separate check on the progress of more-able pupils, to be sure that they are suitably challenged over time and attain highly
 - reviewing and adapting where necessary the support and interventions for pupils who have special educational needs or disability, so that their attainment moves closer to that of other pupils.
- Make sure that pupils make good progress in subjects in the wider curriculum by:
 - providing training to support teachers in implementing the school's agreed approach and in assessing how well pupils are learning
 - strengthening teachers' subject knowledge and understanding of how to teach the requirements of the national curriculum so that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are deepened and extended
 - ensuring that monitoring activities carried out by senior and middle leaders include checks on how well pupils are doing in subjects across the whole of the curriculum, over time.
- Improve the systems for assessing and recording children's attainment and progress and for identifying the next steps in learning in the early years, in order to maximise children's progress, by:
 - collecting evidence across the areas of learning in a way that enables gaps to be spotted quickly
 - making sure that observations and evidence recorded in children's learning journeys are specific to the individual child
 - making sure that judgements about children's attainment and progress are supported by sufficient evidence, and are accurate
 - identifying next steps that are appropriate, easy to implement and that help children develop their knowledge and skills.
- Strive to maintain the rate of improvement in attendance and reduction in the number of pupils who are away from school too often, by:
 - redoubling efforts to engage with families that are harder to reach
 - checking that incentives for pupils are having an impact, and amending them if necessary
 - seeking examples of effective practice from other academies in the trust.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The Principal's strong and tenacious leadership has been a key factor in Mansfield Green's transformation. She has built on existing strengths and has taken decisive and effective action to deal with the long-entrenched, low ambition of both staff and pupils. Her determination to do the best for the pupils is infectious, but also uncompromising. There is a 'buzz' about the school now; leaders, staff and pupils are enthusiastic, have high expectations and a growing sense of pride in the school.
- The wider leadership team now plays a strong part in driving improvement and in evaluating the success of initiatives. Recently appointed middle leaders have quickly got to grips with what they have to do and are beginning to have an impact on teaching and learning. 'Change teams' involving leaders and staff at all levels are responsible for leading improvement in important aspects of the school's work. Their efforts have led to a high degree of consistency in how writing and mathematics are taught, for example.
- Leadership of special educational needs has improved. Pupils' needs are carefully and accurately assessed and support provided to make sure that they do not fall further behind their classmates. More work is needed to identify what needs to be done to help them make faster progress and narrow the gap on the attainment of other pupils.
- The school's self-evaluation is honest and accurate. Plans for improvement are based on the important things that need to be done next.
- Staff are held closely to account. The system for managing teachers' performance is rigorous, and based clearly in the national teachers' standards. Teachers know exactly the standards they must reach. Underperformance is challenged, and additional support provided to help teachers improve their skills and the impact they have on pupils' progress. Teaching is improving strongly as a result.
- The Principal's weekly newsletters to staff make sure that everyone knows what is going on each week. They reaffirm the school's approaches, and include timely reminders and feedback on the outcomes of monitoring activities. This means that there are no excuses for not knowing what is expected.
- The school's recently adopted wider curriculum links subjects in an imaginative way. It includes activities designed to capture pupils' imaginations and opportunities for visits and other activities that enrich and extend their experiences. Visits to places of worship and cultural importance, for example, develop pupils' understanding about life in Britain today within and beyond the local community. The curriculum, together with a planned programme of assemblies, makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school has not yet had the opportunity to evaluate the impact of the new curriculum.
- Additional funding that the school receives to support the learning and progress of disadvantaged pupils is spent well. The impact of the spending shows in pupils' outcomes; there is little difference between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others in the school. Similarly, the primary sports funding has been used to employ specialist sports coaches and to extend the range of after-school clubs and activities. This has led to more pupils being involved in and enjoying vigorous activity.
- Staff have worked successfully to increase the ways in which parents can become involved in the school. Parents and carers are invited to workshops that show them how they can support their children's learning at home, for example. A substantial number of parents were keen to organise and help out at the summer fair.
- The school's sponsor has provided support that has contributed to the pace of improvement. More recently, the support from the Principal of Merrits Brook Academy has been particularly helpful, because it has affirmed and complemented the direction the Principal has taken. The sponsor has also given the Principal scope to seek support from outside the trust. This has led to strong improvement in the teaching of mathematics, and teachers' understanding of the national curriculum requirements for that subject.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance has improved a good deal. Members of the 'raising achievement board' play a strong part in making sure that effective action is being taken to tackle weaknesses and to improve provision and outcomes for the pupils. They receive regular reports from the school's leaders, and make sure to check the accuracy of the information, including by visiting classrooms, looking at pupils' books and talking to staff and pupils. They check the school's policies, procedures and systems, including for the safe recruitment of staff and for making sure pupils are safeguarded. The raising achievement board produces regular reports of its own that show that there is a good understanding of what is working well and where further work is needed.

- Governors understand how additional funding such as the pupil premium and primary sports funding is spent, and check that the impact has been as intended. They also check the school’s arrangements for the performance management of staff and are involved in agreeing where pay rises should be awarded.
- Currently, links between the school’s governing body and parents are not well developed. The imminent recruitment of ‘academy ambassadors’ from the parent group, part of the restructuring of governance for all of E-ACT’s academies, will give parents a stronger voice in the school.
- The governing body has not made sure that the school’s website includes a link to the school’s funding agreement.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Making sure that pupils are safe and protected is one of the school’s key priorities. Checks on prospective staff are rigorous and meticulously recorded. Leaders are well aware of the potential risks that children may face in inner-city Birmingham. They make sure that there is frequent training for staff, for example, so that they know what to look out for that may indicate a child is at risk of exploitation or radicalisation. Staff work closely with the local authority and other agencies to support potentially vulnerable pupils and their families. If a pupil leaves the school, staff make absolutely sure that the child is safe before he or she is removed from the school’s roll. The school’s sponsor makes regular checks on safeguarding arrangements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Not all teaching is of the consistently high standard that the school expects. This shows in the school’s assessment information, which indicates that pupils’ progress in reading, writing and mathematics is stronger in some classes and year groups than others.
- Teaching is improving quickly. All teachers and teaching assistants are implementing the school’s agreed approaches to the teaching of writing, mathematics and reading, and to how work will be marked and feedback given to pupils, although their skill in doing this varies. Leaders check frequently that the school’s policies are being followed and that the impact shows in the pupils’ work.
- Variations in pupils’ progress arise because not all teachers are equally skilled at using questions to probe pupils’ understanding and to require them to explain their thoughts and ideas. This means that misconceptions are sometimes missed, or that pupils are puzzled as they try to find the answer that the teacher is expecting of them.
- The teaching of reading is improving. The profile of reading has been raised through the new library and the creation of attractive reading areas in each year group. Guided reading sessions have been reorganised to make sure all activities are purposeful and well matched to pupils’ reading abilities. Reading records for older pupils show that some have not read widely and often until recently.
- Teaching assistants work very well with class teachers. They take a proactive approach in lessons, working in partnership with the teacher, and leading the teaching for groups of pupils. Their work is contributing well to the better progress that pupils are making.
- Teachers make sure that pupils who are in the early stages of learning English have the support they need to be able to take part in the lesson. Pupils who speak English well are asked to work with them, for example.
- Teachers are following the school’s recently introduced approach to the wider curriculum. Work remains to be done to determine how pupils’ progress within each topic will be assessed, and to make sure that teachers all have the depth of subject knowledge to teach with accuracy and precision.
- The environment for learning has greatly improved. Classroom walls are festooned with examples of work in progress and prompts that help pupils work towards the final product. Resources such as dictionaries and mathematics equipment are available for pupils to help themselves when needed. Displays in areas outside the classrooms are bright and attractive and illustrate the growing breadth and richness of the curriculum.
- Teachers assess pupils’ attainment and progress every half term. They discuss the outcomes with senior leaders and highlight where interventions are needed. This helps to make sure that no pupil or group of pupils falls behind.
- Pupils say that they like their lessons, because their teachers help them to learn, and they know what they need to do next. Some older pupils said that they enjoyed the fact that lessons are more challenging and make them think and work hard.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Staff at all levels understand pupils' particular needs and work closely with families and other agencies when the need arises. Staff are vigilant and make sure that any concerns are quickly followed up, in line with the school's procedures.
- The curriculum for personal, social and health education teaches pupils about potential risks they may face, including when using the internet and in the local community. Assemblies, religious education lessons, visitors such as community support officers and the school nurse and visits to places of worship all make a positive contribution to pupils' learning about respect for themselves and others, the values that underpin British life, and to developing their understanding of cultures and faiths that are different from their own.
- An increase in the number of after-school and holiday clubs and activities has led to a greater number of pupils involved in sport and physical activity.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school and they trust the staff to look out for them. They know who to turn to if they have a problem. They reported that there are very few instances of bullying or name calling, and they are not worried by the behaviour of others. They are confident that staff will deal quickly with any incidents. Parents who spoke to inspectors confirmed that they have no worries about their children's safety at school.
- Pupils have the chance to take responsibility and to make a positive contribution. Volunteer librarians look after the library at lunchtimes, for example, and older pupils listen to younger pupils reading. Pupils understand the importance of learning. For example, the school council recently voted to replace 'Golden Time' (half an hour each week set aside for special activities, as a reward for those who behave well) with extra time for the 'buddy' reading scheme.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are typically polite and well mannered, interested in their work and in other people. They greet visitors respectfully and hold doors open for adults and each other. They take pride in their work and their school.
- The school's records show that instances of inappropriate behaviour are few, and usually arise because of the particular circumstances that a few pupils face in their lives. Learning mentors work well with these pupils to help them manage their feelings better. The school's records also show that there are hundreds of 'good news' incidents each week.
- Pupils are responding well to the recently introduced 'learning passports' that reward good learning behaviours and attitudes, and the house point system, which is engendering some healthy competition. Some pupils were very keen to point out just how many points they had earned in a short space of time.
- In lessons, pupils typically work hard and concentrate on what they are doing. They take care to present their work neatly. There are a few occasions when their attention slips or when noise levels rise, but pupils respond quickly to looks or reminders from teachers and teaching assistants.
- Attendance has risen steadily over time and has moved closer to the national figure for primary schools. School staff continually seek ways to re-emphasise to families the need for children to attend as frequently as possible and to deter extended holidays during term time. Good attendance is frequently celebrated and rewarded.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- The school's assessments show that pupils' attainment, although improving, is still low. The proportion working within the expectations for their age in reading, writing and mathematics varies from two thirds to around one half in each year group. The attainment of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is lower than that of other pupils. Few pupils are attaining highly.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 1 last year who reached the expected standard in the national phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) screening check improved on the previous year and moved closer to the national figure.
- The proportion of pupils who reached the expected Level 2 at the end of Year 2 last year in reading, writing and mathematics improved slightly, but was well below that seen nationally. Similarly, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 at the end of Year 6 was well below the national figure.

- Leaders, teachers and support staff went to great lengths to try to boost the achievement of last year's Year 6, in order to help them catch up and to prepare them for secondary school. Assessments and evidence from the work in pupils' books showed that most pupils made good, and sometimes excellent, progress over their last year at Mansfield Green. Despite making up a lot of ground, too few pupils made the progress expected of them over the whole of their four years in Key Stage 2.
- Currently, as a result of improvements in teaching, pupils in all year groups are making at least the progress that the school expects and are catching up on the attainment that is expected for their age. Progress in some year groups is better than others. In Year 6, for example, pupils are making particularly strong progress as a result of numerous well-focused interventions, supplementary lessons, smaller teaching groups and the provision of tablet computers to help them with homework. The results of national tests this year are predicted to be much better than those of 2015. Pupils have undertaken standardised tests in reading and mathematics that confirm the accuracy of teachers' assessments.
- No group of pupils is making noticeably less progress than others. Disadvantaged pupils are achieving in line with, or above, others in the school. Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are also making progress that is at least as good as others, but because other pupils are also making faster progress, the attainment gap is not narrowing substantially. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are also making good or better progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school does not track separately the progress of the few more-able pupils, but has the information readily available. It shows that across Key Stage 2, pupils who were higher attainers at the age of seven are making good or better progress from their starting points.
- The school has rightly prioritised the need to boost pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. The assessment of pupils' learning and progress in other subjects is now receiving attention, but this is at an early stage of development. Although pupils' books show that they have studied topics in history, geography and science, for example, the impact of this on pupils' knowledge and understanding has not yet been evaluated.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- Many children's skills in speaking, listening and communicating their ideas and needs are underdeveloped when they start in the Reception classes. Some lack confidence and are not used to playing and socialising with others.
- Teachers and teaching assistants take care to get to know the children and their families well, in order to ease the transition from home or childcare into school and make sure that children settle in quickly and begin to learn. This works well; several parents said that their children are happy at school, are learning new things and that they are confident that the staff look after them well.
- Once settled, children make progress, particularly in developing their social skills and in their listening and understanding. However, they do not make the rapid progress that is needed to help them narrow the gap on what is expected for their age, and outcomes at the end of Reception are well below national figures. The proportion of children who reached a good level of development at the end of Reception last year and who were well prepared to start Year 1 improved on the previous year, but remained well below the proportion seen nationally.
- There were no differences between the overall achievement of disadvantaged children and others, and the gap between girls' and boys' achievement was much smaller than the national figure.
- One of the reasons that children do not make rapid progress is that they sometimes do not fully understand exactly what they are expected to do, because adults' questions and demonstrations are not sufficiently clear or precise.
- The school's assessments suggest that many children are making good progress. However, some of the judgements are made on the basis of limited evidence, and so the accuracy is not assured. Records of observations and assessments are kept in chronological order, which makes it difficult to see whether there is sufficient evidence of what children know, understand and can do across all of the areas of learning – gaps are difficult to spot. Some of the information in children's individual 'learning journeys' is not specific to that child. In addition, some of the 'next steps' that are identified for children do not help staff to know exactly what they need to plan for the child in order to take learning on.
- There is a positive, happy ethos in the Reception classes. Relationships between adults and children and their families are good. As a result, children behave well and are keen to take part in activities alongside others. The environment is bright and well organised. Outdoor activities link well with what children have

been learning indoors. For example, children used their knowledge of letters and sounds to try to write words about the story of *The Little Red Hen*, using coloured chalks on the ground.

- Staff make sure that the environment is safe, indoors and out. They are also well aware of the need to make sure children are protected and kept safe. The early years leader is one of the school's designated lead teachers for safeguarding, and, along with all other members of staff in the school, Reception staff have received recent and relevant training in safeguarding.
- The early years leader is enthusiastic and keen to improve provision. Her work with external consultants has led to improvements in the way the environment is organised to support learning.

School details

Unique reference number	138998
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10008305

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	Michael Wemms
Principal	Karen Horne
Telephone number	0121 4646590
Website	www.mgeact.org
Email address	enquiries@mgeact.org
Date of previous inspection	2–3 December 2014

Information about this school

- Mansfield Green is one of the E-ACT chain of academies.
- The school is larger than the average primary school. Almost all of its pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. The largest groups are those of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and African heritage. About three quarters of the pupils speak English as an additional language and in total about 50 different languages and dialects are spoken.
- Mobility is high; many pupils join or leave the school at different points throughout the school year.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and eligible for support through pupil premium funding is much higher than that seen nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average.
- The school's results at the end of Year 6 in 2015 did not meet the government's floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Currently, children in the early years attend full-time in two Reception classes. The school shares its site with a nursery for two- and three-year-olds. The nursery provision is in the process of becoming part of the school. The nursery was not included as part of this inspection.
- When the school was inspected in December 2014, it was judged to require special measures. Subsequently, it was inspected on three occasions. At the previous monitoring inspection, leaders and managers were judged to be taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.
- The Principal took up post in February 2015. The Principal of another E-ACT academy, Merrits Brook, is providing support to Mansfield Green one day a week.
- E-ACT is in the process of reorganising governance for all of its academies. The previous local governing body has been disbanded and elections to the 'academy ambassadorial advisory body' will shortly take place. A raising achievement board, chaired by a regional director of the trust, will continue to monitor the school's effectiveness.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited classrooms to observe teaching and learning in all year groups. They looked at work in pupils' books and on display, and asked pupils to tell them about what they were learning. Four pupils read to an inspector.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school at break and lunchtimes. They looked at the school's records about behaviour and spoke to pupils to gauge their views.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, so inspectors held a brief meeting with a group of parents at the start of the day and spoke informally to some parents as they brought their children to school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the Principal and other members of the school's leadership team, the chief executive officer of E-ACT and E-ACT's regional safeguarding and special educational needs system leader, the Principal of Merrits Brook Academy, the school's team of learning mentors and the teacher who has recently taken on responsibility for provision for pupils who are learning English as an additional language. An inspector met formally with a group of pupils.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement, records of assessments of pupils' achievement, records of the leaders' checks on aspects of the school's work and information about attendance. They also examined documents related to protecting pupils and keeping them safe.

Inspection team

Linda McGill, lead inspector

Dawn White

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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