

Nechells Primary E-ACT Academy

Eliot Street, Nechells, Birmingham, West Midlands, B7 5LB

Inspection dates

10–11 October 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Provision for pupils with have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is inadequate. Teachers do not understand these pupils' needs and so do not provide the right support to help them learn. As a result, pupils with SEND make little or no progress.
- Teachers do not accurately check pupils' attainment and progress. Because of this they do not plan work which is matched well enough to their abilities. Consequently, pupils make poor progress, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Teachers do not provide challenge for the most able pupils. They have low expectations of what these pupils can achieve, which prevents them from reaching the standards they should.
- Where teaching is ineffective, some learning is disrupted by poor behaviour.
- Currently, there is no accurate overview of how well pupils are achieving across the school.
- Teaching in the early years is ineffective. Staff do not know how to assess children's learning and do not provide suitable activities to help them develop their skills and abilities. Therefore, children make very little progress.
- Teachers do not develop pupils' mathematical skills well enough. Work in pupils' books shows poor presentation, basic mistakes repeated and poor opportunities to develop problem-solving skills, which limits pupils' progress.
- Teachers do not teach the newly implemented curriculum well enough. Pupils make weak progress across a range of subjects.
- Phonics teaching is inconsistent across early years and key stage 1 and does not help pupils to develop their reading skills.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has an accurate understanding of the school's weaknesses. Her decisive and swift actions are already leading to improvements across the school.
- Shared expertise from a school within the multi-academy trust (MAT) is beginning to accelerate the pace of improvements.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social understanding is well developed. Pupils show respect for different beliefs and cultures.
- Pupils' progress in writing has improved.
- Pupils' behaviour has improved considerably over the last year, especially in key stage 2.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- As a matter of urgency, improve the provision to support pupils with SEND, including in the early years.
- Improve progress throughout key stages 1 and 2 in reading and mathematics.
- Rapidly improve the early years provision by ensuring that staff:
 - teach all aspects of the early years curriculum effectively
 - make accurate assessments of what children can do and then plan learning activities which build securely and progressively on previous learning
 - provide children with resources that support their learning, especially pupils with SEND
 - use effective questioning to support and develop children's learning.
- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers:
 - raise expectations and the level of challenge for the most able pupils
 - plan work which meets pupils' needs, especially pupils with SEND
 - address basic errors that pupils make in mathematics and ensure that they are not repeated
 - plan effective opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in problem-solving and reasoning
 - provide high-quality phonics teaching
 - plan work to develop pupils' knowledge and skills across a range of subjects
 - have high expectations of how pupils should present their work
 - consistently address inappropriate behaviour to ensure that no learning is disrupted, especially in key stage 1.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring leaders check carefully that:
 - pupils' attainment and progress are assessed accurately across the curriculum, especially in reading and mathematics
 - teachers use assessment information to plan work at the right level for all pupils, especially pupils with SEND and the most able pupils
 - the curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills across a range of subjects
 - staff consistently apply the behaviour policy.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Following a period of significant turbulence beyond the control of the school, the new headteacher took up her post in June 2018. She has high aspirations and a clear vision for the school which are shared by staff.
- The headteacher has rapidly developed a precise understanding of the key weaknesses within the school and has lost no time in devising clear and accurate plans to tackle these weaknesses. She began to address the most pressing issues, such as the poor quality of teaching and ineffective assessment systems, as soon as she was appointed. This has prevented a further decline in the school's performance and has led to some rapid improvements. For example, some stronger teaching is now evident in key stage 2. There have also been significant improvements in pupils' behaviour. Parents say that they have seen notable improvements in the school since September 2018.
- The headteacher has high expectations of all staff. She has developed a close working partnership with another local school, utilising the expertise of their staff, to support the development of teachers at Nechells. Every teacher has a 'buddy' to work alongside to help improve their teaching. Staff appreciate these professional development opportunities and are engaging positively and enthusiastically with them. However, this support is still at an early stage. Although there is clear evidence that teaching is beginning to improve, the overall quality of teaching remains inadequate.
- Up until this term, teachers did not use the assessment systems correctly. Many of the recorded assessments at the end of 2018 across all year groups do not accurately reflect pupils' achievements. The headteacher has ensured that all teachers now use the school's assessment system consistently. However, while the headteacher and deputy headteacher are currently reviewing the accuracy of these assessments, this process is yet to be completed. As a result, there is no clear overview of pupils' achievements at this time.
- The leadership of the provision for pupils with SEND has been inconsistent over the last two years. The deputy headteacher took responsibility for this role in September 2018. With support provided from the MAT, she has reviewed the SEND policies and procedures and has a clear understanding of what needs to be improved. She has ensured that there are clear plans in place to address the weaknesses in the provision.
- However, the deputy headteacher recognises that the current SEND provision does not meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Assessments do not accurately reflect what these pupils can do. Specialist advice is not included in pupils' plans or acted upon. Staff do not use the information about pupils' needs to support them in class and there has historically been a lack of effective staff training. As a result of this ineffective provision, pupils with SEND make poor progress. While the overhaul of SEND provision has begun, it is still in its infancy and the impact of improvement actions is yet to be seen.
- The school's curriculum has been redeveloped and leaders launched a revised curriculum in September 2018. The curriculum plans are purposeful, broad and balanced. However, teachers' implementation of these plans is weak. Leaders have not yet monitored teaching in subjects other than English and mathematics and are,

therefore, unaware of the poor quality of teaching and learning in subjects such as science, history and geography. As a result, pupils make poor progress in a range of subjects.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is particularly well supported. For example, pupils can talk knowledgeably about different faiths and beliefs, showing a genuine respect for them. They also have an excellent understanding of fundamental British values. The effective teaching of these aspects of the curriculum helps prepare pupils to be responsible citizens in modern Britain and the wider world.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding in a range of ways, including ensuring that disadvantaged pupils receive effective pastoral support. Leaders are very aware of the additional social and emotional needs of these pupils and provide effective support to help them feel fully included in the life of the school.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium for primary schools is used to promote pupils' engagement in a variety of school sports. While leaders do not have a detailed overview of the impact of the funding on individual pupils, pupils say they enjoy sport and have a range of opportunities to develop their skills in PE.

Governance of the school

- The MAT has provided the school with a range of support through some very challenging periods over the last two years. Due to tragic circumstances a high number of staff have left the school over the last 18 months. In addition to this, earlier this year the school roof collapsed. During this time, the MAT secured an interim headteacher prior to the appointment of the new headteacher. The MAT was also able to provide alternative accommodation when the school building became unsafe. The MAT ensured that pupils were able to continue their education during these difficult times.
- Nevertheless, the MAT recognises that during these periods, the quality of education declined. The MAT is providing support through their 'system leaders' to help address the key weaknesses across the school. For example, an academy curriculum has been implemented, and support to develop SEND provision has been provided. Importantly, work with another school within the trust has contributed to the improvements which have been secured.
- Members of the regional team hold leaders to account through the raising achievement board meetings. Detailed action plans are in place to tackle the weaknesses in the school and the regional MAT team monitors progress against these actions carefully. However, some of the actions to address the weaknesses have only recently been implemented and so the impact of them is yet to be seen. Consequently, while it is clear that the MAT and leaders have improved some aspects of the school, the overall quality of education is inadequate.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are kept as safe as possible in school. They provide staff with training and support to ensure that they understand their responsibilities to keep

pupils safe and how to spot if a pupil may be suffering harm. Leaders check carefully that staff understand this training and provide further training where needed.

- Leaders responsible for safeguarding ensure that all concerns are recorded in detail and follow up these concerns to make sure pupils receive the right support to keep them safe. Leaders also work closely with external agencies if pupils need additional help.
- The personal, social, health and economic curriculum is planned and taught well. There is a wide range of topics to help pupils learn about personal safety. For example, pupils learn about the dangers of radicalisation, gun and knife crime and how to protect themselves. In addition to this, pupils know they must not share personal details when using the internet and the potential dangers of doing so. As a result of this effective teaching, pupils show a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teachers do not pay enough attention to what pupils can do when planning work for them in reading, writing and mathematics. This is particularly so for pupils with SEND. Teachers pay little regard to the individual needs of these pupils and do not refer to their personal plans to help them to understand how to plan to meet their requirements. This means that teachers frequently provide these pupils with work that is far too hard and do not provide them with enough support or resources to help them learn. This results in pupils with SEND making little or no progress.
- Additionally, teachers' expectations of what the most able pupils can achieve are far too low. Teachers do not have a clear understanding of these pupils' abilities and, therefore, do not provide sufficient challenge for them. There are few opportunities for the most able pupils to express their own thoughts and ideas, which limits their ability to think more deeply and develop their learning. Consequently, the most able pupils make poor progress and do not reach the standards they should.
- In September 2018, leaders introduced a new approach to the teaching of mathematics. While teachers received training in this new strategy, their implementation of it is ineffective. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in mathematics are too low. Pupils' work in books is poorly presented and teachers do not address basic misconceptions well enough, which leads to pupils repeating mistakes. Teachers also do not provide pupils with effective opportunities to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills. This means that pupils make very little progress in mathematics.
- The teaching of reading is variable across the school. Leaders have had a clear focus on developing the quality of reading. For example, pupils now read regularly in school and pupils say that they must read every day when at home. However, not enough teachers are effective at helping pupils to develop their reading skills. The teaching of phonics is also ineffective, and some teachers do not model the correct letter sounds. This does not help pupils to develop their knowledge of sounds well enough.
- Leaders introduced a new curriculum in September 2018. The curriculum plans are comprehensive and demonstrate leaders' clear intentions to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and engagement in a wide range of subjects. However, the curriculum is poorly

taught across the school. Teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve are too low. For example, in science pupils' work in books shows many examples of pupils just copying out facts with no opportunity to develop their scientific enquiry skills. The quality of pupils' writing in other subjects is also poor. Pupils do not develop their knowledge and skills in science, history or geography.

- Where teaching is weak, especially in key stage 1, pupils become disengaged from learning because the work is either too hard or too easy. This leads to some pupils becoming distracted. Teachers do not address this behaviour, which means that the learning of other pupils is disrupted.
- Leaders have placed a high priority on developing pupils' writing skills. Leaders provided teachers with training in the new approach to the teaching of writing. Teachers also work alongside teachers from other schools within the MAT. This has enabled them to improve their teaching of writing. While the quality of teaching is still variable, pupils' achievements in writing are beginning to improve across the school.
- As a result of the headteacher's drive to improve teaching standards, some teachers have improved their practice well, especially since September 2018. This is particularly evident in key stage 2. In some of these classes, teachers have higher expectations and plan work which is better matched to pupils' abilities. This is because teachers check pupils' progress more carefully. Where these improvements have been made, pupils' work is of a higher quality and shows that they are making stronger progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, due to previous weak teaching and unreliable assessment information, it is still unclear if pupils are achieving as highly as they should, especially those with SEND.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- The school's focus on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has helped pupils to become thoughtful and considerate individuals. For example, they are encouraged to respect one another's views and opinions through debates. This helps pupils to understand the importance of democracy and fair decisions.
- While older pupils have a strong understanding of bullying, younger pupils' knowledge of what bullying is and is not is less well-developed. For example, some younger pupils say that if they have a disagreement with one of their friends they are being bullied. However, all pupils report that bullying is rare; staff are vigilant to issues that arise and help them sort out any problems quickly. Pupils all confirm that staff look after them and that they feel safe in school.
- Outside the classroom, pupils are confident and are very keen to share their thoughts and opinions. However, in class, some pupils, particularly pupils with SEND, are not confident in asking for help with their learning. This is especially so where teaching is weaker, and they do not receive the support they need to help them learn.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The headteacher has placed a high priority on improving behaviour across the school. A new behaviour policy has been introduced, and staff now use it more consistently to address inappropriate behaviour. This has been more successful in key stage 2 than in key stage 1. In key stage 2 there are very few disruptions to pupils' learning. Pupils increasingly show pride in their work and are keen to share their learning with visitors.
- However, where teaching is weaker teachers do not address pupils' behaviour and do not consistently apply the school's behaviour policy. For example, some pupils call out answers rather than putting their hands up or continue to talk to one another when the teachers asks them to stop. This leads to some learning being disrupted, especially in key stage 1.
- During breaktimes, pupils socialise well together and are polite and respectful. Leaders' analysis of the behaviour records shows that there has been a recent significant reduction in the number of recorded behaviour incidents. Parents confirm that they believe that behaviour has improved considerably since September this year.
- During the last academic year, pupils' attendance declined. However, leaders now monitor attendance more closely. Where concerns arise about a pupil's attendance, leaders check the patterns of absence carefully and provide additional support where needed to help pupils attend school more regularly. Leaders work with families to promote the importance of high attendance and reward pupils for coming to school regularly. As a result, rates of attendance have risen in this academic year.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Teachers do not use the school's assessment systems well enough. Prior to the appointment of the headteacher, checks on the accuracy of teachers' assessments were not robust. There are a considerable number of inconsistencies in assessments across the school in all key stages. While leaders are addressing this issue, with the headteacher now moderating and checking teachers' assessments very carefully, the school's information about current pupils' outcomes remains unclear.
- Work in pupils' books demonstrates that current pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are making weak progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. This is especially so for the most able pupils and pupils with SEND.
- In 2016 and 2017, pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2 in reading and mathematics was well below the national average. Pupils' progress in writing was broadly in line with the national average. In 2017, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average.
- In 2018, the Standards and Testing Agency annulled the results of the key stage 2 reading and mathematics tests. In writing, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard at the end of key stage 2 rose.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils at the end of key stage 1 who achieved the expected standard in reading was in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in writing and mathematics was below the national

average. The proportion of pupils who achieved greater depth was below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.

- In 2018, the proportion of pupils at the end of key stage 1 who achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics rose. There was a considerable increase in the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in writing. While the proportion of pupils who achieved greater depth in reading rose, no pupils achieved greater depth in writing and mathematics. However, work in current pupils' books in Year 3 shows that some pupils who achieved the expected standards at the end of last year are now working below the standards they should. This means, if the previous assessments were accurate, that they have regressed in their learning.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved the required standard in the phonics screening check in 2017 was below the national average. This proportion rose considerably in 2018. However, work in Year 2 pupils' books currently shows that pupils do not apply their phonic skills well enough in their writing.
- In 2017, only 10% of children achieved a good level of development at the end of Reception. This rose to 50% in 2018. However, the majority of pupils currently in Year 1 have weak reading, writing and mathematical knowledge and skills. This demonstrates that they have made exceptionally poor progress in their learning.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- The early years provision is ineffective. Staff's understanding of how to effectively teach all aspects of the early years curriculum is weak. They provide children with activities that have little focus on purposeful learning. Additionally, poor-quality resources do not promote children's learning. Staff do not use effective questioning to establish what children know and, therefore, do not know what children need to do next to develop their learning. As a result of these many deficiencies in teaching, children make poor progress in the early years and are not prepared well enough for Year 1.
- Provision for children with SEND is also ineffective. Staff work with external agencies to ensure that these children's needs are identified and receive guidance on how to meet these needs. However, they do not act upon this advice and guidance well enough, which limits the progress of children with SEND.
- As a result of weak teaching, some children quickly become disengaged from their learning. On occasion this leads to inappropriate behaviour which staff do not address. This impedes the learning of other children.
- The headteacher is acutely aware of the inadequacies of the early years provision. She has already developed precise action plans to address the key weaknesses, including tackling the quality of teaching, to improve the provision. However, these plans are at a very early stage, and some are yet to be implemented. As a result, no impact of these plans is evident at this point.
- Prior to starting school, all children receive a home visit from staff and have the opportunity to visit the school with their parents. This helps to familiarise children with the setting and assists them to settle quickly. Even at this early point in the year, children appear happy, confident and settled in school.

- All safeguarding requirements are met and children in the early years are kept as safe as possible.

School details

Unique reference number	138396
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10048285

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	190
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Michael Wemms
Headteacher	Leanne Mahony
Telephone number	0121 4642102
Website	http://nechellsacademy.e-act.org.uk/
Email address	Nechells.Info@E-ACT.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 March 2016

Information about this school

- Over the last two years there has been a significant number of staffing changes, with 14 members of staff leaving the school. A new headteacher was appointed in June 2018.
- Nechells Primary E-ACT Academy is an average-sized school.
- The school is part of E-Act Multi-Academy Trust and is governed by the board of trustees. The Midlands regional team holds the school to account through raising achievement board meetings.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average. There are no pupils who have an education, health and care plan.
- In 2018, the Standards and Testing Agency annulled the results of the key stage 2

reading and mathematics tests.

- The school receives support from another school within the MAT.
- A breakfast club is provided for the pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups. A number of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors met with pupils, heard a selection of pupils read and observed pupils at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. The meetings with these leaders related to provision for pupils with SEND, early years provision, the curriculum, safeguarding, assessment information and the quality of teaching and learning. Inspectors also met with another member of staff to discuss attendance and behaviour.
- The lead inspector met with the regional education director and deputy chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust and the headteacher of another school within the trust.
- A range of pupils' books from all year groups and subjects were looked at.
- A number of documents were reviewed, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. Inspectors also considered information about pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safety.
- There were no responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, or the online pupil questionnaire. No free-text comments were received. Inspectors spoke to a number of parents before school and reviewed the school's own parental surveys. Inspectors considered the 12 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Ann Pritchard, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tim Hill

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2018