

Iminster Avenue E-ACT Academy

Iminster Avenue, Knowle West, Avon, Bristol BS4 1BX

Inspection dates

25–26 June 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, including trust leaders, are effective and ambitious for pupils and for their school. They are rightly proud of the good progress that pupils make during their time at the school.
- Strong progress in key stage 2, alongside rich experiences, such as residential trips and taking part in music groups, help to cultivate confident, self-assured pupils.
- Leaders target additional funding for disadvantaged pupils well. Consequently, these pupils make good gains in their learning.
- Leaders, supported robustly by the trust, keep a close eye on the quality of teaching. Following some disappointing outcomes in early years and key stage 1, improvements to teaching and learning are starting to prepare pupils better for learning in Year 3.
- Outcomes, particularly for the most able pupils, still need to improve further in the early years and key stage 1.
- New approaches to the organisation of phonics teaching in Years 1 and 2 have yet to make a sufficiently positive impact on raising standards.
- Recent work by leaders to review the curriculum has led to a well-structured plan. Most pupils benefit from carefully planned lessons that develop and deepen their knowledge over time.
- Pupils respond well to the high expectations for behaviour. Exclusions have considerably reduced.
- Clear strategies for teaching writing and mathematics are evident in the good progress seen in pupils' books. Expectations are equally high in subjects covered in 'topic'.
- School leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), are reflective and accurate in their appraisal of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This ensures that the school continues to move forward at a good pace.
- Leaders accurately identify that learning during lessons for some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), needs to be more closely matched to their next steps.
- Leaders have high expectations for attendance. As a result, it is steadily improving. However, there is more to do to ensure that pupils attend school well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - teachers identify the precise next steps for pupils with SEND and use this to inform their planning of learning for these pupils.
- Continue to raise expectations and to improve the quality of teaching and learning so that:
 - outcomes in the early years continue to rise, particularly for the most able children, so that more exceed the expectations for their age and more are better prepared for learning in Year 1
 - more pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 develop strong phonics knowledge and early reading skills
 - the improvements seen in key stage 1 continue, so that by Year 3 more pupils, including the most able, have the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to thrive.
- Continue to improve attendance so that more pupils attend school regularly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders, including those from the trust, form a strong partnership that works cohesively and effectively to continue to drive the school forward. Their determined efforts ensure that through the well-planned curriculum and extra activities, pupils have access to a wealth of positive learning experiences. Pupils have every chance to learn new skills, to grow in confidence and to have an awareness of the world around them. This helps pupils to be well prepared for their futures.
- Leaders are relentless in championing the need to broaden pupils' horizons beyond the core subjects of reading, writing and mathematics. Residential trips, for example to explore outdoor activities on the Isle of Wight for pupils in Year 5, extend pupils' experiences. Pupils benefit from using their E-ACT passport to guide them towards challenges that build across year groups and aim to help pupils to 'think big' and 'show team spirit'. The passports outline possible life skill challenges for pupils to complete, sometimes within everyday lessons and sometimes beyond school.
- Leaders invest curriculum time to develop pupils' interests and skills. Music education is a strength of the school. Specialist teachers deliver a well-planned music curriculum that builds pupils' learning in music from Reception through to Year 6 by playing instruments and singing. Whole class lessons encourage teamwork and confidence as well as developing music skills, such as reading music and performing.
- Leaders ensure that teaching and learning continues to improve. There is a strong sense of team work. All staff, who expressed a view, agreed that leaders provide them with valuable training that encourages, challenges and supports them in their roles.
- Leaders, including subject leaders, have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas to develop. This is supported effectively by the trust's focus on continual review and improvement. Frequent 'raising-achievement boards' provide the focus for checking the quality of education and identifying next priorities. Determined efforts this year to raise expectations in the early years and key stage 1 have made a positive difference to the quality of teaching provided.
- The pupil premium is used well to support disadvantaged pupils. Leaders invest in providing extra skilled teaching. For example, targeted programmes inspire pupils who have fallen behind to start to read. Improvements this year to the teaching of phonics in key stage 1 included a reorganisation of teaching groups to support disadvantaged pupils. These smaller groups have enabled teaching to match pupils' learning needs closely. Through these approaches, disadvantaged pupils achieve well over their time at the school.
- The PE and sport premium is used efficiently to ensure that pupils engage in sports. Strong links with local providers, such as Bristol City Football Club and local secondary schools, broaden sporting opportunities. As a result, most pupils in the school take part in extra sporting activities. This includes pupils with SEND, who are encouraged to take part alongside their peers. Sports coaches also work alongside teachers to ensure that staff gain the confidence and skills to teach physical education lessons well.
- Small group sessions and individual teaching help pupils with SEND to learn how to

manage personal challenges, and to adapt to the world around them. Additional expertise, such as for autism spectrum disorder and speech and language, ensure that staff have ongoing advice. The SENCo keeps a close check on how individual pupils make progress to ensure that the targeted approaches benefit them well. She is accurate in her evaluation that, at times, teachers do not adapt learning well enough for pupils with SEND. In addition, individual targets for these pupils are often too broad to be useful in measuring their successes or accelerating their progress.

- The rich curriculum includes a strong emphasis on promoting the school's values and encourages pupils to be aware of the importance of mental health for themselves and others. Mindfulness is included in weekly lessons. Pupils talk positively of how these, alongside other personal, health and social education lessons, help them to understand the views of others. This deliberate approach to support pupils' mental and emotional well-being contributes well to pupils' positive attitudes towards school, and towards their learning.

Governance of the school

- The regional director is highly ambitious for the school. Regular raising-achievement board meetings review progress against agreed priorities and provide support and challenge for leaders.
- Leaders, with support from the trust, are determined to secure higher expectations in early years and key stage 1, so that pupils secure important skills and knowledge as soon as possible. This work started in earnest this year and is already showing some improvements in the progress that pupils make in their first years at the school.
- The advisory ambassadorial group makes a positive contribution to leaders' understanding about the school's effectiveness. This group collects pupils' and parents' views and ensures that these views are taken into account when decisions are made. For example, following views from pupils, the group led a drive to improve healthy eating approaches. A 'snack shack' helps pupils to choose healthy snacks at playtimes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The designated leader for safeguarding ensures that safeguarding is kept high on the agenda for all staff. Staff weekly briefings include safeguarding top tips. Staff contribute to the strong culture of safeguarding by becoming 'mini leads'. These staff develop knowledge about specific aspects of safeguarding, such as children missing in education, preventing radicalisation and female genital mutilation.
- Training for staff is well organised. Leaders check how well staff have understood key safeguarding messages by carrying out spot checks. They talk to staff about different scenarios to make sure that everyone is clear about their responsibilities. As a result, staff are confident about the signs of abuse that they need to be aware of and how to report any concerns they have.
- Trust leaders keep a strong oversight of safeguarding procedures and policies. Regular audits make sure that nothing is left to chance. Recruitment procedures are secure.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is effective across the school. Subject leaders ensure that agreed strategies to teach reading, writing and mathematics are applied by staff and that good practice is shared.
- Teachers generally plan well-constructed lessons that build pupils' knowledge over sequences of lessons. They form strong routines and make lessons interesting. As a result, pupils understand what they are learning and how their learning helps them to build their knowledge and understanding. This improves their motivation to complete tasks and take pride in their work.
- Pupils respond well to the high expectations in key stage 2 and the increasingly high expectations in key stage 1. A typical comment from a pupil was, 'Teachers help us understand what we are doing, they also allow us to have a bit of fun and humour.'
- Improvements to the teaching of mathematics have ensured that teachers have sound subject knowledge to enable them to plan effective lessons. Lessons include problem-solving challenges, which help most pupils to develop their mathematical skills well. Challenges are not always sufficient to extend thinking for the most able pupils in key stage 1.
- Pupils enjoy writing because teachers plan lessons that link writing to interesting, relevant themes and high-quality books. Teachers develop pupils' vocabulary well, ensuring that new words are explored and understood before pupils use them in reading and writing.
- Pupils develop their mastery of writing by writing at length for a range of audiences and purposes. Their handwriting is generally good because this has been a recent focus of the school. Pupils are encouraged to learn from their mistakes and to edit their work. However, at times, pupils with SEND do not have tasks adapted well enough to allow them to work independently.
- Teachers have a solid understanding of how to teach early reading. The teaching of phonics has improved recently. The leader for reading ensures that every chance is taken to develop reading skills throughout the curriculum, and at each part of the day. For example, the quiet reading after lunch session is currently being adapted so that more pupils are fully supported to develop their reading skills.
- In a range of subjects, teaching is good, supported by a well-designed curriculum plan. Learning in subjects such as design and technology helps pupils to build the skills and knowledge they need to design and make products successfully.
- Teaching in music is a strength. Pupils enjoy their lessons and develop skills that allow all to take part in whole-class orchestras, performing in school and at outside events. Pupils who show the interest, skills and aptitudes for playing musical instruments are identified and have extra lessons to help them develop and extend their talents.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils, particularly in key stage 2, develop a strong understanding of how to be a successful learner. Higher expectations in key stage 1 are now helping pupils to develop stronger attitudes, such as working with resilience and independence, from an early age. Some pupils with SEND do not develop successful strategies towards independence, as work in lessons is occasionally not adapted well enough to match their individual needs.
- Teaching pupils about keeping safe is threaded through the curriculum and pupils show a keen understanding of key issues, such as how to keep safe while online.
- Some parents expressed concerns about how staff respond to their reports of bullying. However, school records show that there are few reported incidents of bullying and, where they occur, staff respond well and deal with issues thoroughly. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and confirm that staff deal with issues quickly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and feel secure at school. Pupils move around the school calmly and play together well during break times. There are few disruptions to pupils' learning, particularly in key stage 2. When disruption does occur, staff respond patiently and effectively to ensure that pupils have the support they need to improve their behaviour.
- Improving attendance is a key priority for the school as attendance remains stubbornly below national averages. However, pupils increasingly attend school well because of leaders' actions. Leaders have a detailed understanding of the reasons for low attendance where it happens. Case studies provided by the school demonstrate how their work with families has led to far fewer pupils this year having very low attendance.
- Leaders' response to the high exclusions that existed in recent years has been effective. A review of the behaviour policy resulted in positive changes, such as the removal of the use of exclusion as an inevitable consequence of poor behaviour. Leaders' actions to secure a deeper understanding of the causes of challenging behaviours, alongside adaptations made for pupils with social and emotional issues, have led to a sharp decrease this year in the number of exclusions and the numbers of pupils excluded.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Many pupils arrive at the school with low starting points. By the end of key stage 2, pupils' attainment, including for disadvantaged pupils, is broadly in line with national averages. This represents good progress and prepares pupils well for their next steps

in education.

- However, school leaders are not at all complacent and recognise that pupils in the early years and key stage 1, particularly the most able pupils, do not make as strong progress as they should. As a result, some pupils are not as ready for learning as they should be when they move into key stage 2.
- Leaders' actions this year to make improvements, particularly to the quality of teaching in key stage 1, have resulted in marked improvements in the progress made for pupils in this part of the school. In addition, outcomes in phonics are also showing encouraging signs and an improving picture across key stage 1. However, still too few pupils reach the expected standards in phonics by the end of Year 1.
- In writing, leaders have ensured that pupils' technical skills, particularly in key stage 2, are developed methodically. Pupils use their handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar skills to write in a range of subjects. In mathematics, pupils' books show that pupils are increasingly adept at using their numeracy skills to solve complex problems.
- The culture of reading is good. Reading is promoted well across all parts of the school. Pupils who need extra help to read frequently receive additional reading time with adults.
- The progress for pupils with SEND is generally good and parents were overwhelmingly positive about the extra help their children receive. Some pupils, particularly those who do not receive additional external support, do not make quite as good progress. Pupils' targets are sometimes not specific enough and, as a result, their work is not adapted well in lessons to match their needs closely.

Early years provision

Good

- Teaching is good because staff have a sound knowledge of how to develop learning. Teachers plan interesting activities, which ensure that children enjoy learning. For example, in mathematics, as part of a topic about dinosaurs, children were keen to use counters to estimate the size of a dinosaur's footprints. In a music lesson, all children took part as they followed the conductor, read musical notation and played a variety of percussion instruments to perform a whole-class musical piece.
- Children share resources and equipment and cooperate with each other well. Staff use questioning to develop curiosity and wonder, encouraging children to be inquisitive. Well-organised environments help children to make decisions in their learning and their play in an increasingly capable way. Because of the good quality of education provided, children develop good attitudes to learning and behave very well.
- Staff use their knowledge of what children know, can do and understand to plan next steps. They spot weaker areas of learning and make appropriate changes. For example, to improve understanding about health and self-care, staff invited a dentist in to talk about oral health. In addition, close checking of how well children are learning phonics skills enables staff to adapt phonics sessions so that children gain new early reading skills quickly and thoroughly.
- Improvements to leadership and teaching in early years have resulted in improved progress. More children this year than in previous recent years are equipped and ready for learning in Year 1; this represents good progress from their starting points. However, very few have reached higher standards. Leaders are accurate in their view that this is a further area for

improvement.

- As seen across the school, safeguarding and welfare practices are secure. Staff ensure that children are safe and that any concerns are looked into quickly.
- Parents, including those who have children with SEND, say they are included well in communications about their children's progress.

School details

Unique reference number	137700
Local authority	Bristol City
Inspection number	10086897

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	308
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Michael Wemms
Headteacher	Hilary Dunford
Telephone number	0117 903 0261
Website	www.ilminsteravenue.org.uk
Email address	receptionILM@e-act.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	29-30 January 2014

Information about this school

- Ilminster Avenue E-ACT Academy opened in January 2012. The E-ACT board of trustees is accountable for the school, supported by an executive leadership team. Regional directors hold school leaders to account at raising-achievement board meetings, which are held at the school every six weeks. An ambassadorial advisory group, which includes parent representatives, works with leaders to focus on 'the four Cs' of communication, celebration, complaints and community.
- The academy is of average size for a primary school. It is located in an area of high deprivation.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is also well above the national average, being in the top 20% for all schools.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across a wide range of subjects and all age groups and scrutinised a wide range of pupils' written work. Observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors heard groups of pupils read and talked to them about their learning and experiences at school.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including minutes of the raising-achievement board, development plans, analysis of pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour data, safeguarding documents and the school's review of its own performance.
- Meetings were held with trust leaders including the national and regional director for education. There was also a meeting with a representative from the ambassadorial advisory group. Meetings took place with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, other members of staff and pupils, including the pupil leadership group.
- Inspectors took account of the 27 responses, including text messages, to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Additional views from parents were gathered at the start of the day and during a meeting in school with a parent. Inspectors also took into account the 27 responses to the staff questionnaire and to the nine pupil questionnaire responses.

Inspection team

Tonwen Empson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Susan Horsnell	Ofsted Inspector
Emma Jelley	Ofsted Inspector

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