

Inspection of St Ursula's E-ACT Academy

Brecon Road, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol BS9 4DT

Inspection dates: 25–26 February 2020

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to school. Their high attendance reflects this. Leaders have created a calm and caring environment. Staff go the extra mile to make sure that pupils feel safe in school and are in the right frame of mind to learn. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are keen to meet the school's high expectations of their behaviour. Pupils present themselves and their work with pride.

The breakfast club is a hive of activity. Pupils enjoy activities like yoga and taekwondo. Staff ensure that pupils are set up for the day ahead. After-school clubs are also well attended. Such is the quality, the demand for places is high.

There have been several changes to leadership and staffing. These changes have slowed the school's progress since the previous inspection. The recently appointed headteacher has brought fresh focus and enthusiasm to the school. He knows the school well and is taking steps to make the school even better. He leads a passionate staff team who fully supports his vision for the school.

Leaders are making changes to the school's curriculum. Pupils access a broad and balanced curriculum. However, some foundation subjects, such as art and physical education (PE), are further along than others.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have an accurate evaluation of the school. The recently appointed headteacher has motivated the staff team, while also creating a feel-good factor across the school community. One staff member, whose view reflects those of many, told inspectors, 'We're all in it together.' Staff feel valued and appreciate leaders' efforts to manage their workload.

Leaders and staff provide very strong pastoral support for pupils. They help pupils to be ready to learn, particularly those who may find school difficult at times. From the first minute of the school day to the last, adults are on hand to help. Leaders provide an array of extra-curricular activities for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, to enjoy. The pupil ambassador group represents the school with pride. Members work closely with school leaders to help make improvements.

Mathematics is a strength of the school. The curriculum builds on what pupils already know and teachers have the expertise to develop pupils' mathematical understanding well. Pupils have a strong understanding of basic number principles, which helps them to succeed when reasoning or problem-solving. Pupils recall important learning well. They understand how what they are learning will help them in the future. In the Reception Year, children develop their mathematical understanding in line with the early years framework. They tackle activities with focus. When children need more support, staff provide interventions to help them keep up.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access a meaningful curriculum. Staff keep an eye on pupils' progress and review their targets to make sure that they remain relevant. Leaders use up-to-date information to pinpoint the precise support pupils need. Staff meet as a team to discuss pupils and make sure that resources and support are ready each week.

Leaders recognise the importance of early reading. It is one of the school's improvement priorities. Children in the Reception Year get off to a strong start and keep up with the phonics programme. However, books that children read are not as well matched as elsewhere in the school. They contain some sounds that children do not yet know. In key stage 1, pupils read books that are matched to their reading stage with increasing fluency. During phonics sessions, pupils sometimes struggle to apply the sounds they are learning in their writing accurately. Older pupils enjoy reading and choose books based on their knowledge of the book or author. Leaders have introduced a new method of developing pupils' reading comprehension, and this is taking root. However, some texts lack challenge and do not provide pupils with access to a broad range of fiction and non-fiction texts.

Curriculum leaders are improving curriculum plans for science and the foundation subjects. They support teachers to bring these plans to life. Pupils learn a high-quality curriculum in PE and art. In subjects such as science, history and geography, there is more to do. Curriculum plans have not been in place long. Teachers struggle to break what they want pupils to learn into manageable chunks to build on pupils' prior knowledge. The curriculum does not provide pupils with a deep understanding before moving on. Some pupils need more time to tackle gaps in their knowledge and struggle to recall what they have learned.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff recruitment procedures are robust so that they only appoint adults who are suitable to work with children. Staff undertake a thorough induction, which helps get them up to speed with their safeguarding responsibilities. Ongoing training helps keep staff's knowledge up to date. All staff discuss safeguarding during weekly meetings.

Leaders have clear processes for reporting concerns about pupils' welfare. Staff know they must record concerns they have on the school's electronic system. Leaders consider these when deciding whether to involve external agencies. Leaders waste no time when passing concerns on, especially when pupils are at immediate risk of harm.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In science and foundation subjects, such as history and geography, teachers are still in the early stages of bringing curriculum plans to life. While they are following these plans, they are not routinely sequencing learning to build on pupils' prior knowledge. Leaders need to make sure that teachers can arrange learning into well-sequenced, manageable chunks which build towards clear end points so that pupils retain and recall what they have learned.
- The books that children read in the Reception Year contain some sounds they do not know. This affects their reading fluency. In addition, some pupils in Year 1 do not routinely apply phonics accurately in their writing. This affects their spelling. Leaders need to check that books match sounds that children are learning and make sure that teachers help pupils to apply phonics in their writing.
- Leaders have implemented a new approach to developing pupils' understanding of what they have read. Pupils occasionally read short extracts of texts, which lack challenge, from a limited pool of fiction and non-fiction. Leaders need to make sure that pupils have opportunities to read suitably challenging texts across a range of genres.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	137068
Local authority	Bristol City
Inspection number	10058319
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	589
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Michael Wemms
Headteacher	Jonathan Arthur
Website	https://stursulasacademy.e-act.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	20 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Ursula's E-ACT Academy is part of the E-ACT multi-academy trust. National and regional directors of education provide support and challenge to the school.
- Ofsted previously inspected the school in March 2018 and judged it to be good but there were indications that the school could be improving towards an outstanding judgement.
- St Ursula's E-ACT Academy has three classes per year group.
- The school operates a breakfast club, as well as several after-school clubs.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, geography, science and PE during the inspection. We met with senior leaders and curriculum leaders, considered pupils' workbooks, conducted lesson visits and spoke with teachers and pupils. We also spent some time looking at art and history.

- I met with the special educational needs coordinator. I discussed and looked at how the school supports pupils with SEND.
- I met with the national and regional director of education from the academy trust. I also held a telephone discussion with the chief executive officer and the chair of the academy's ambassador group.
- I met with the designated leader for safeguarding and one of his deputies to discuss and consider their work to keep pupils safe. I also checked the school's single central record.
- A team inspector considered logs of behavioural and bullying incidents. He also considered how well pupils attend school.
- A team inspector met the with school's pupil premium leader to discuss how leaders support disadvantaged pupils.
- A team inspector met with staff who form part of the school's pastoral team to consider how they support pupils' personal development, including social, emotional and mental health.
- We went to the school's breakfast club. We also visited after-school clubs.
- I considered responses to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View. We also spoke with staff and pupils during the inspection, including the pupil ambassador group.

Inspection team

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