

Inspection of a good school: E-Act Crest Academy

Crest Road, Neasden, London NW2 7SN

Inspection dates:

9 and 10 November 2021

Outcome

E-Act Crest Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are positive about the recent changes to their school. They worked with staff to come up with the 'Ready, Respectful, Safe' mantra. Pupils use this in and out of the classroom. Pupils appreciate staff being outside of school before and after the school day. They said it makes them feel safe. Pupils said that bullying rarely happens. They know who to talk to if there is a problem.

Leaders have reviewed and updated the curriculum. Pupils now spend more time studying a wide range of subjects. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), study the same broad curriculum. Leaders work hard to raise the ambitions and achievements for all.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and conduct. Pupils confirmed that the positive behaviour seen by inspectors was typical. Pupils respond to teachers' instructions and act on their guidance and feedback. However, staff do not always communicate effectively with pupils. Some pupils reported that staff do not always give them important information in good time or respond to them in the right way.

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

The headteacher and his team have brought their vision of 'Establishing habits to achieve your dreams' to the school. They ensure that all pupils study a wide range of subjects from Year 7 to Year 9. This ambition continues when pupils choose their GCSE subjects. Many pupils choose courses in Year 10 that are part of the English Baccalaureate range of subjects. As a result, leaders have increased the range of subjects on offer in the sixth form. These courses suit the needs and aspirations of students. The number of students continuing into the sixth form has more than trebled since the previous inspection.

Subject leaders have reviewed and updated the order in which subject content is taught. They have thought about how pupils can know more and remember more. Lessons start by pupils recalling prior learning. For example, pupils refer to the 'Learning Journey' and

complete 'do now' tasks. Pupils build their knowledge year-on-year. For example, in geography, pupils in Year 8 learn about ecosystems and rainforests. In Year 9, they apply this knowledge to climate change. This learning is enriched by discussions of current affairs, such as COP26, and work on the school garden.

Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects. They are proactive about their own learning. Pupils said that they like the new whole-class feedback sheets. They can see links between previous ideas and new concepts. Teachers use the information to address gaps in knowledge and skills.

New strategies to help pupils readily recall their prior learning are not fully embedded across the school. This is notable in Years 8 and 9. Pupils need to develop and secure their skills to remember more. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are confident about their learning. They can recall essential knowledge to help them with more complex work. This is also evident in the sixth form. Staff are skilled in helping pupils to extend their learning. For example, in physics, careful questioning enabled students to build in-depth knowledge on waves.

Leaders have thought carefully about how they prepare pupils for life after school. They have reviewed their personal development provision to better meet pupils' needs. This includes career guidance. Leaders have identified different areas for each year group to focus on. For example, pupils in Year 7 learn about how to take charge of their own learning. Students in Year 13 work on academic learning skills for post-18 study.

Pupils can access a range of experiences and opportunities beyond the classroom. For instance, staff offer sporting activities, such as basketball, before and after school. Trips to enrich and extend the curriculum have restarted following the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, Year 10 have recently completed a geography field trip.

Pupils with SEND study the full range of subjects. Teachers adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of these pupils. Leaders make appropriate decisions to support pupils with SEND and their learning. For example, the well-attended Year 6 to 7 summer school supports the transition process. Reading is built into lessons. Leaders have effective systems to identify and support pupils with their reading.

Leaders, including trustees, know the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use termly 'governance review days' to speak with staff and pupils. This feeds into leaders' evaluation of the school. Many staff said that they appreciate the new vision and team spirit. Some staff reported concerns about workload and communication with leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Trust leaders work closely with school leaders. They support and oversee the school's safeguarding processes and practice. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and complete online training throughout the year. Staff know and use the procedures for reporting concerns.

Leaders work closely with other professionals and outside agencies to keep pupils safe. Concerns and any subsequent referrals are dealt with. Pupils are taught about healthy relationships and respectful behaviours.

Leaders review their practice to strengthen safeguarding arrangements. Leaders follow clear procedures when pupils leave the school or are absent from school. These include home visits.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff and pupils reported communication problems within the school. Staff raised concerns about updates to the school's timetable and the impact on their workload and well-being. Pupils do not always feel that staff respond appropriately or pass on information in a timely way. Leaders should review their processes and systems to ensure that communication is more effective.
- Pupils need to develop and secure their skills to remember more. In a few instances, 'Do now' tasks and assessments are not as helpful as they could be. Some pupils, particularly in Years 8 and 9, struggle to recall their prior learning. Leaders should continue to support the professional development of staff on strategies for helping pupils to know more and remember more.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2018.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	135973
Local authority	Brent
Inspection number	10200249
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1022
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	132
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lord Knight
Headteacher	Likhon Muhammad
Website	https://crestacademy.e-act.org.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 July 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses two registered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and their response to it since the full-time return to school in March 21.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, four deputy headteachers and other senior leaders. Inspectors also met with two trust leaders.

- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: English, science, geography and citizenship. They visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work, met with pupils to discuss their learning and met with subject leaders and teachers. Other subjects were also considered.
- Through discussions with leaders, trustees, pupils and staff, inspectors considered how effectively pupils are safeguarded. They also looked at records related to safeguarding, including records of pre-employment checks carried out before staff are appointed and risk assessments.
- Inspectors spoke to staff, including trainee teachers and newly qualified teachers, about behaviour and their workload in school.
- Inspectors considered the three parents' responses to Ofsted's online survey. There were no responses to the Ofsted survey for staff and the pupils' survey. Inspectors also reviewed leaders' surveys on the views of pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Hayley Follett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Aruna Sharma

Ofsted Inspector

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