

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Chalfont Valley E-ACT Primary Academy

Bell Lane, Little Chalfont, Amersham, Buckinghamshire HP6 6PF

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Inspection dates:

14 and 15 January 2025

## Outcome

Chalfont Valley E-ACT Primary Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Mark Sykes. This school is part of the E-ACT academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Tom Campbell, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Lord Jim Knight.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to school. Their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils rise to the high expectations adults set through 'The Chalfont Valley Way'. The principles of 'being ready, resilient, respectful and responsible' are central to the school's culture. These are reinforced through assemblies, play, and learning times.

Pupils get along well. They understand and demonstrate the school's high expectations for their behaviour in lessons and play. They welcome the many new arrivals and quickly 'buddy-up' to help all fit in. Relationships at all levels are caring and supportive.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), take pride in being selected for pupil leadership roles. 'Safeguarding champions' help other pupils with any worries. One safeguarding champion explained, 'if someone is not feeling happy or safe, we can help them out and talk to adults if needed.' Pupils are confident that adults will deal with worries swiftly, and they do.

The school is ambitious for pupils to achieve well. These ambitions are fully realised. Pupils are keen to share what they have learned and remember this learning well over time.

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

Pupils at the school enjoy learning in a wide range of subjects. The curriculum is underpinned by the school's three curriculum pillars of 'vocabulary and knowledge rich', 'equity and diversity' and 'global citizenship'. The must-know skills and knowledge have been carefully thought through to ensure pupils develop a clear understanding across the curriculum. As a result, pupils achieve well and are prepared for their next steps.

Training from English and mathematics hubs, the trust, and carefully selected subject-specific materials strengthens teachers' subject knowledge. This helps them to present new material clearly. Lessons begin with tasks that help pupils connect new learning with their prior knowledge. Teachers use focused questioning and quizzes to check understanding, providing timely support, especially for pupils with SEND and those who have fallen behind. The quick identification of pupils with SEND ensures they receive the necessary support promptly, helping them to learn alongside their peers.

Pupils enjoy learning mathematics and show noticeable enthusiasm in the classroom. The curriculum is well sequenced, building knowledge step by step and reinforcing prior learning. In the early years, children engage in hands-on activities like grouping coloured bears on a grid and rolling dice to practice addition, reinforcing their understanding of numbers.

The teaching of reading has a high priority, right from the early years, where children hear familiar stories and can retell them with pride. The books which pupils read are well matched to their reading abilities. Class reading sessions and the promotion of texts and books in the environment further engage pupils. Teachers select books to reflect the pupils in this school and to expose them to a diverse range of cultures, perspectives, and experiences.

Adults are experts at teaching phonics. Most pupils have secure decoding and blending skills. Gaps in phonics knowledge are quickly identified, and targeted support is put in place. This means most pupils are able to read confidently and fluently at an age-appropriate level.

In pupils' learning, there is a strong emphasis on learning rich vocabulary, improving pupils' understanding of new words. Most pupils apply their English and mathematics skills across the curriculum well. For example, they create graphs and charts in science and geography. However, some pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged, have gaps in their handwriting, grammar and spelling skills that have not been addressed. This means they make grammatical errors in their writing and handwriting is not always legible.

Pupils, including those with SEND, are well prepared for life beyond school and understand what it means to grow up in multicultural Britain. This is because the school uses a range of approaches, including external speakers, visitors, and assemblies, to help pupils develop an understanding of a diverse world. Trips to places of worship such as a mosque help bring pupils' learning to life.

Learning about keeping safe is a top priority. Pupils learn about staying safe on the road, online, and in everyday life. They also learn about consent and personal boundaries. Mental health and well-being are important parts of their lessons, helping pupils to understand and take care of their feelings.

The school is well supported by the work of the trust's executive and wider leadership teams, who, along with trustees, have a clear understanding of their roles and carry out their statutory responsibilities well. The school has taken steps to reduce teachers' workload, for example through streamlining marking. This enables teachers to spend their time on the most important things.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Some pupils have gaps in their writing skills. This leads to errors with transcription and grammar that are not addressed by adults, hindering academic progress. The school should identify the exact knowledge and skills to be taught and the order they should be taught in so that teachers are able to identify and target specific gaps, ensuring all pupils secure essential knowledge before moving on.

## **Background**

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in October 2019.

## **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.

## **Further information**

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138583
<b>Local authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10341718
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	149
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Lord Jim Knight
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Tom Campbell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Sykes
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.chalfontvalleyacademy.e-act.org.uk">www.chalfontvalleyacademy.e-act.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	2 and 3 October 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This school is part of the E-ACT multi-academy trust.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- There have been changes in leadership since the last inspection. The headteacher has been in their role since September 2024.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, the lead inspector met with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. She met with trust leaders, including the CEO and chair of the board of trustees.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interest first.
- Throughout the inspection, the inspector met with groups of staff. She also considered the opinions expressed through the staff survey.
- The inspector had regard to the views expressed through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

### **Inspection team**

Clare Haines, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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