

# Inspection of Willenhall E-ACT Academy

Furzebank Way, Willenhall, West Midlands WV12 4BD

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Inspection dates:	13 and 14 May, and 1 July 2025
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this academy is Tim Marston. This academy is part of E-ACT 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' best interests are truly at the heart of this school. They benefit from an ambitious curriculum designed to meet their aspirations. The school has focused intently on raising pupils' achievement. Pupils appreciate the improvements to the quality of education that they receive. Many pupils say that they now have something to come to school for. This is evident by the increase in their attendance rates. Typically, pupils enjoy their learning and demonstrate positive attitudes in lessons.

Pupils are proud to be part of this school. They readily meet the school's high expectations for their behaviour. Social times are calm and well ordered. Pupils who find it more difficult to manage their behaviour and emotions receive effective, individualised support.

Pupils are respectful and supportive of each other. Equally, they cherish the positive relationships that they have with staff. Strong pastoral care helps pupils to feel happy and safe. They know who to talk with if they have worries or concerns.

The school's work to develop pupils' resilience and self-belief is impressive. There are numerous opportunities for pupils to enjoy new experiences that give them a taste of life beyond Willenhall. Pupils have embraced the school's vision of 'Willenhall then the world'. They are excited about their future possibilities.

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

The school and the trust have an unwavering determination to provide a high-quality education for all pupils. Since the last inspection, the school has overhauled the curriculum and considerably raised the bar for pupils' success. Rapid improvement in the quality of education is closing the gaps in older pupils' knowledge. Current pupils are learning well. However, this is not reflected in the 2024 published data. This is because pupils who sat examinations in 2024 did not benefit from these positive changes.

The school's curriculum identifies what pupils need to know. This, coupled with improved curriculum delivery, has had a positive impact on how well pupils learn. In classrooms, pupils' thirst for learning is palpable. This sets them up well for future success.

Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to present new concepts clearly. Pupils are well versed in the classroom routines that support them to practise and apply their learning. Teachers are equipped with a range of strategies to check that pupils have understood important content. However, on occasion, teachers do not check sufficiently well that pupils' knowledge is secure before moving on. This prevents some pupils from building on prior learning as successfully as they could.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. It ensures that staff use a range of well-thought-out strategies to adapt the delivery of the curriculum successfully when needed. This helps pupils with SEND progress well and move on to appropriate post-16 destinations.

Pupils who are not yet fluent in reading are quickly identified. They receive effective targeted support. This has had a positive impact on pupils in key stage 3. The school is helping these pupils to close the gaps in their reading knowledge at pace. Despite this, some older pupils have deficits in their reading knowledge that were not identified or addressed early enough due to previous weaknesses in the quality of education. This has hampered their achievement across the wider curriculum.

The school is committed to removing pupils' barriers to education. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their ambitions for the future. Their aspirations are nurtured through a comprehensive careers programme that inspires them to consider a range of opportunities. For example, pupils take part in workshops at Oxford University. All pupils in the 2025 Year 11 cohort have secured places in further education or training.

The school ensures that pupils are taught about staying safe and what constitutes a healthy relationship. Pupils develop important life skills through activities such as food deliveries to local elderly residents, the school ambassadors' programme and ski trips.

The school has created a positive culture of success where all pupils can thrive. The trust and leaders have a solid understanding of the school's strengths and areas for ongoing improvement.

Staff feel empowered and valued. They recognise the steps that the school has taken to look after their workload and well-being during this time of rapid change. Parents, carers and the wider community welcome the improvements that have taken place at the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- On occasion, teachers do not check that pupils' knowledge is secure before introducing new concepts and ideas. This makes it more difficult for pupils to build successfully on what they know already. The school should ensure that teachers are equipped to accurately assess pupils' understanding and remedy any gaps in knowledge before moving on to new learning.
- Some older pupils have gaps in their reading knowledge that remain unaddressed. This prevents these pupils from fully accessing the curriculum and hampers their achievement. The school should ensure that the gaps in these pupils' reading knowledge are identified and addressed swiftly so that they become confident and fluent readers.

## 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>	137706
<b>Local authority</b>	Walsall
<b>Inspection number</b>	10378253
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,009
<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>	Tim Marston
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://willenhallacademy.e-act.org.uk">willenhallacademy.e-act.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 June 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

## Information about this school

- The headteacher took up the post in December 2023.
- The academy is part of the E-ACT Trust.
- The school makes use of six registered and two unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school’s education provision.
- The inspection started on 13 May 2025. Inspectors returned on 1 July 2025 to gather additional evidence in line with [Ofsted inspections and visits: Deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence](#) policy.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers and other leaders. The lead inspector held meetings with the CEO and trust leaders, as well as trust education directors. Inspectors also met with a range of curriculum leaders and staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, science, art and design, English and religious education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors 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’ interests first.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They also observed pupils’ behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the minutes of local governing body meetings, the school’s self-evaluation documents and development plan and records relating to pupils’ behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted’s online staff surveys.

### Inspection team

Rachel Goodwin, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
David Gibson	His Majesty’s Inspector
Andrew Washbourne	His Majesty’s Inspector
Huw Bishop	Ofsted Inspector
Jacqui Swindlehurst	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Onyon	Ofsted Inspector

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