

The E-ACT Leeds East Academy

South Parkway, Seacroft, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS14 6TY

Inspection dates 12–13 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Students' achievement during the academy's first year was not good enough. In particular, they did not make enough progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- Too much teaching remains inadequate or requires improvement and there is not enough good or outstanding teaching to overcome students' past underachievement.
- Teachers do not always get the best out of students because they do not provide them with enough challenge in their learning and work in lessons is not adjusted to meet the needs of students of different abilities.
- Subject leaders vary in how effectively they work to raise achievement and improve teaching.
- Behaviour is inadequate because in too many lessons students' low-level disruption slows the pace of learning. Behaviour policies are not always used robustly enough by all of staff and their expectations of students' conduct in the classroom are not always high enough.
- Too many students have poor attendance and this prevents them from achieving as well as they should.
- The sponsor has not closely monitored the work of the academy and has not provided support where required.
- The sixth form requires improvement because progress in some subjects and courses is still not good enough and retention rates are low.

The school has the following strengths

- Following a long period of major organisational change, the academy now has a leader with a clear vision and strong drive to bring about more rapid improvement.
- Self-evaluation is robust and accurate and leaders have used it effectively to start bringing about essential and urgent improvements.
- Recent improvements in staff professional development have begun to effectively support improvements in teaching.
- Behaviour at social times and as students move from lesson to lesson is generally orderly and calm and students feel safe.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors spent the majority of their time observing 26 lessons, five of which were observed jointly with senior leaders. Lessons were observed in a range of subjects and were taught by teachers across year groups. One inspector also visited a number of classrooms for short periods with a senior leader, to observe the way academy staff support improvements in students' literacy skills.
- Meetings were held with the executive principal, members of the leadership team, middle leaders, the academy's improvement partner, a representative of the academy's sponsors, the Chair and one other member of the Governing Body, and organisers of alternative learning provision.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including the academy's view of its own performance, external reviews of performance and standards, monitoring records, information about students' progress, improvement planning, students' books, minutes of meetings of the governing body, records of behaviour and attendance, and records relating to safeguarding.
- Discussions were held with three groups of students about the quality of their educational experience and the standard of behaviour. Inspectors spoke with other students at social times.
- The inspection team took account of the views of 27 staff who returned inspection questionnaires. There were too few responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to consider.

Inspection team

David Brown, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Phil Smith

Her Majesty's Inspector

Peter William Harrison

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this school

- The academy is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school. It opened as a coeducational academy with a sixth form in September 2011 to replace an all-girls school.
- The academy is sponsored by E-ACT. In April 2013, the academy moved into new and purpose-built premises.
- The percentage of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (which provides the academy with additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and children who are looked after by the local authority) is well above the national average.
- Approximately 60% of the students are White British. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is well above average.
- The proportion of students supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- Alternative provision used by the academy includes Aspire and Achieve, the Beck and the Lazer (Learning Action Zone for Education and Recreation) Revolving Door Project.
- The academy does not meet the government's current floor standard, which sets out the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- There have been considerable recent changes in leadership and staffing at the academy, including a significant reduction in teaching and non-teaching staff. The executive principal, the Principal of another academy in the city, took up post in September 2012 following the unexpected resignation of the previous Principal. The senior leadership team has been completely reorganised and a new head of school and vice-principal were appointed in April 2013. A new head of mathematics is in post and a new head of science, leaders for literacy and numeracy, and a senior leader with responsibility for inclusion have been appointed from September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is always good or better in all parts of the academy, including the sixth form, by ensuring that:
 - inadequate teaching is rapidly dealt with and the proportion of good or better teaching continues to increase
 - all teachers have high expectations of students and use the information they have about their attainment to plan work that is challenging for all abilities
 - students are given clear, regular and helpful feedback on their work, and the level at which they are working, so they understand how to improve
 - all teachers expect the very best of students' behaviour and achievement in lessons and that they apply the academy's policy of sanctions and rewards consistently.
- Raise standards, especially in English, mathematics and science, by consistently setting and meeting targets based on students making at least three levels of progress between Years 7 and 11.

- Improve attendance in all year groups, including in the sixth form, so that it is at least in line with the national average.
- Ensure that leaders at all levels implement the academy’s detailed improvement plans rigorously, and that middle leaders thoroughly monitor and evaluate the impact of their actions on students’ outcomes.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Students enter the academy with standards that are significantly lower than the national average. Learning and progress in all year groups are inadequate and students' attainment remains low at age 16. Standards in English and mathematics are low because students have significant gaps in their knowledge and understanding. As a result, they struggle to make the progress expected of them at Key Stage 4 and are not well prepared for studies in further education.
- Teachers' assessment of students' progress in the academy's first year was inaccurate. This is now improving and sharper assessment is leading to better progress in many subjects. More accurate data indicate that the proportion of Year 11 students making and exceeding expected progress in English and mathematics will be close to the national averages in 2013. There remain, however, large gaps in students' previous learning in science which is the result of low expectations and inadequate teaching over time and this is limiting students' achievement in this subject.
- Currently, students are making better progress because they are experiencing generally better teaching and there are more interventions designed to close gaps in their learning. These interventions are benefiting many students who are supported through the pupil premium. For example, the achievement of students known to be eligible for free school meals is still inadequate but the gap between what they achieve and what other students achieve is closing.
- Better support for students who have weaknesses in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly in Year 7, means that the progress made by students with special educational needs is also improving.
- In some lessons, students make good progress. This is the case where expectations and challenge are high, work is adapted to meet the needs of students at different starting points and good teaching promotes independence and enjoyment.
- The academy enters students for GCSE examinations in English and mathematics before Year 11. However, this policy lacks any clear rationale and has not improved students' achievement.
- The academy has formalised and strengthened links with providers of alternative education and the small number of students who attend elsewhere benefit from this provision. Their progress is monitored regularly and staff ensure that providers meet their needs by offering an appropriate range of subjects.
- Students achieve better in the sixth form than in the main academy because of better teaching. However, the sixth form requires improvement because progress in some subjects and courses is still not good enough and retention rates are low due to a poor match of courses to students' abilities and interests in the past. The current leadership has considerably improved matters.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching over time is inadequate and this has resulted in too many students making inadequate progress. However, there are positive indications of improvements in the quality of teaching and these, together with recent staffing changes, mean that teaching is improving and there is now a better capacity to drive up standards.
- Nonetheless, in lessons that are less than good, teachers do not use their knowledge of students' previous learning to make sure work is set at the right level. While the academy is now able to provide teachers with accurate data about students' attainment this is not always used to plan work that engages and stretches students of all abilities. As a result, too many lessons are based on all students completing the same task rather than in making sure students all make sufficient progress in their learning.
- Too many teachers still have low expectations of what students can achieve. The work set for them is often too easy and does not build successfully on what they already know and can do.

In many lessons, there are too few opportunities for students to plan and take responsibility for their own learning.

- Not all teachers have high enough expectations of students' conduct. Too many lessons are disrupted by a minority of students and staff do not make consistent use of the academy's system of sanctions and rewards. Dealing with poor behaviour takes teachers' time away from teaching those who want to learn and reduces the quality of what they are able to do.
- In better lessons, teachers have high expectations and build quickly on what students already know and can do. They provide a range of activities that capture and sustain students' interest. Students are actively engaged and challenged in their learning through discussion and shared tasks; consequently their progress is accelerated as they learn from each other and respond to the high expectations of the teacher and there is no time for poor behaviour.
- Books are usually marked well and areas for improvement are identified, although at times teachers' feedback lacks detail and teachers do not always check that students respond fully to the comments made.
- Additional accelerated reading support is working well with Key Stage 3 students. However, this is a very new programme and the full impact on students' overall progress has yet to be felt.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate

- Behaviour in lessons is too often inadequate and tends to reflect the quality of teaching. Where teaching is good, students are engrossed in their learning and behaviour is good. However, in lessons where teaching is weaker, persistent low-level disruption slows down the pace of learning.
- There is a significant minority of students who present more challenging behaviour. Some teachers deal with this very effectively but others do not make clear to students what is expected of them. The poor behaviour of a small minority of students who deliberately disrupt learning in lessons means that class teachers spend too much time trying to maintain order.
- Students' behaviour when moving around the academy is better and is well supervised. Students report that they feel safe and show a secure understanding of safety issues, including e-safety. They know about different forms of bullying and say that there is very little bullying in the academy. The majority of students are confident that adults will help to sort out their problems quickly. Students whose circumstances might put them at risk are supported well by adults.
- The academy has worked successfully with many students and their families to encourage better attendance but the overall attendance of students has remained too low. The poor attendance of a significant minority of pupils in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form is holding back improvements to achievement. Academy leaders are taking action to improve attendance and tackle persistent absence but the rate of improvement is not yet quick enough.
- Students who attend regularly are punctual to the academy and to lessons.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The academy's current leaders are taking decisive action to tackle key weaknesses in students' achievement and teaching.
- The new executive principal has a clear vision, focused on creating a positive atmosphere conducive to learning, raising achievement and improving teaching. This is well understood by staff and most students and is supported well by the governing body. However, the implementation of a major staffing restructure and the appointment of a new leadership team, together with the added burden of managing a move to new buildings, have, until more recently, hampered the development of the academy. The executive principal has worked determinedly to make improvements and remove barriers to progress; this work has significantly strengthened senior leadership, the leadership of subjects and the quality of teaching and non-teaching staff.

- Checks by senior and middle leaders on the quality of teaching have improved and senior leaders who jointly observed lessons with inspectors made rigorous and accurate judgements. Staff training is now carefully targeted and coaching has supported improvements for individual staff. Management of staff performance is now rigorous and movement up the salary scale is managed carefully and related to the quality of teaching and its effect on students' progress. The inconsistency in the quality of subject leaders has begun to be tackled. However, middle leaders' contribution to the process of self-evaluation is underdeveloped and some lack the confidence to evaluate teaching and hold staff to account for the performance of students.
- Senior leaders have improved the tracking and monitoring of students' progress and have a much clearer picture of where there is underachievement in the academy. The curriculum, including that of the sixth form, is evolving and the range of academic and vocational courses which is available to students provides sufficient breadth to meet the needs of all. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively across the academy through assemblies, through coaching sessions, and through planned opportunities within the academy curriculum.
- The academy meets the statutory requirements for safeguarding students and training for staff is both appropriate and regular. Records are thorough and comply with requirements.
- The academy's sponsor has not rigorously monitored or supported the academy through a period of significant change.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The current governing body is experienced and brings an appropriate range of skills to their role. Governors are now made fully aware of how the academy is performing and are well informed about students' progress. They know about the quality of teaching and how the checks on teachers' performance are used to reward effective practice and to tackle underperformance. The governing body is determined to continue the pace of improvement already made and is holding leaders more closely to account for the performance of the academy. Governors know how the pupil premium funding is spent and check on the performance of the pupils supported by it.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	136826
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	399853

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Academy Sponsor Led
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	579
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	116
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tom Peryer
Headteacher	Annette Hall (Executive Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0113 273 1964
Fax number	0113 265 1261
Email address	info@leedseastacademy.org.uk

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