

# Parkwood E-ACT Academy

Longley Avenue West, Sheffield, S5 8UL

<b>Inspection dates</b>		29–30 January 2014	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The academy has improved its effectiveness significantly since the previous inspection and now provides students with a good quality of education. This has been achieved through the combined efforts of: effective leaders, governors and sponsors; committed and capable staff and the students own positive attitudes to learning.
- Students' achievement, the quality of teaching and behaviour and safety have all improved from satisfactory to good over the past 20 months. Elements, such as senior leadership are outstanding.
- The academy's latest academic tracking data indicates that the rising trend in students' attainments and achievements apparent over the past three years is set to continue.
- Key areas for improvement highlighted at the previous inspection, have been effectively addressed. For example, there has been a major improvement in students' achievement in mathematics and the provision for students new to the English language.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively promoted.
- Students with special educational needs and those who are supported by the pupil premium, and the different groups of students from minority ethnic heritages, invariably make progress that is better than their peers in other schools nationally.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Inconsistencies in the effectiveness of some subjects and rates of progress of groups of students remain.
- Students' attainments in mathematics and English, and the progress made by the most able students, for example, require improvement.
- The progress made by students in subjects, such as geography, drama and technology, has been too inconsistent.
- The academy needs to narrow the in-school gap between the attainment and progress of students eligible for the pupil premium and other students in the academy, particularly in mathematics and English.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 41 lessons taught by 41 teachers in 17 different subjects at the academy. Three of the 41 lessons seen were joint lesson observations with the academy’s senior leaders.
- Inspectors listened to students read, evaluated the quality of work in a range of their books and visited different areas of the academy site, such as the Parkwood Inclusion Centre, which works with students at risk of being excluded. Inspectors also visited: tutorial sessions; sessions to develop the literacy skills of students at the very early stages of learning English; and a nurture group designed to boost the numeracy skills of students with special educational needs.
- Meetings or discussions were held with four governors, a representative from the academy’s sponsor, and a number of senior and middle leaders including the executive principal, the head of school and assistant principals, heads of subjects and the special educational needs coordinator. Inspectors also spoke to three groups of students and talked to a group of new teachers.
- Inspectors evaluated questionnaire responses from 37 academy staff. Inspectors also took account of the 57 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspection team examined a range of school documentation including: safeguarding and child protection arrangements; improvement strategies; records of lesson monitoring and checks on students’ learning and progress; and the minutes of meetings, including those of the governing body. Inspectors also looked at records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- The inspectors considered the academy’s arrangements for making best use of the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, those whose parents are in the armed forces and students known to be eligible for free school meals.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the academy’s view of the impact and effectiveness of the multi-academy trust’s services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess how well the support provided by the multi-academy trust is helping to improve the academies for which it is responsible.

## Inspection team

John Young, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Victoria Beer

Additional Inspector

Stephen Beverley

Additional Inspector

Keith Worrall

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Parkwood Academy is a smaller than average-sized secondary school. It converted to become an academy in September 2009. It is sponsored by E-ACT.
- Students at the academy originate from a range of ethnic heritages. There has been a big influx of Roma-Slovak students in recent years. The proportion of students who are believed to speak English as an additional language is well above the national average for secondary schools.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding to support those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those whose parents are in the armed forces and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportions of students supported at school action, school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs are much higher than in most schools nationally. Their needs range from speech, language and communication needs, physical disability and visual impairment to autistic spectrum disorder and behaviour, emotional and social difficulties.
- Student mobility is high and the proportion of students joining and leaving the academy other than at the usual times is much higher than average.
- Six Year 10 and Year 11 students attend alternative provision at a range of local providers including: Sheffield College, In2Change, Sheaf, dimensional hair salon, Doncaster group training association and a local authority provision. They offer accredited courses, such as motor vehicle maintenance, hair and beauty, life skills and social and emotional development. Generally, students attend these courses twice a week and are taught in the academy the rest of the time.
- The academy provides extended services such as adult learning classes, study support and community access to its facilities. The academy also runs a breakfast club.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress at the end of Key Stage 4.
- The executive principal of this academy also has leadership responsibility for Trent Valley Academy in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire and splits his time between the two sites. Each academy has a head of school, who assume day-to-day responsibility in the executive principal's absence.

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

- Ensure the impact of teaching on students' learning is outstanding by the time of the next inspection by:
  - eliminating the small amount of mediocre and less effective teaching that exists and embedding first-class as the norm throughout the academy
  - eradicating the remaining inconsistencies that persist in the quality of marking and feedback to students so that they all have a clear idea of exactly what they must do to improve their work
  - making certain teaching assistants receive high-quality training, advice and guidance so that they are all well equipped and confident enough to support students' learning consistently well and have clear and specific roles and responsibilities that they understand and can fulfil.
- Ensure all groups of students' achievement is outstanding by:
  - improving all students' progress, especially those groups that are not yet making consistently good or outstanding progress, such as the most able students and school action plus students
  - further raising students' attainment in those subjects where standards are not yet high when compared with national averages, such as English, mathematics and geography

- closing the gap that exists between the proportions of students gaining five A\*-C grades at GCSE with English and mathematics who are eligible for the pupil premium and those who are not.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- From low starting points on entry, most students make fast, effective and sustained progress in a range of subjects and their overall achievement is at least good by the time they leave, for some it is exceptional. This is reflected by a value-added score which places the academy in the top five percent of secondary schools in the country for student progress, which is a real feather in their cap. This effective progress applies to almost all of the groups in the academy.
- The progress of students receiving alternative provision is closely monitored and they also achieve well, including gaining suitable English and mathematics qualifications alongside work-related and personal development training. Similarly, those students entered early for GCSE mathematics and English achieve well and in 2013, 99% of them reached or exceeded their target grade.
- Students' achievement in mathematics was flagged as an area for improvement at the previous inspection and this has been effectively addressed. In 2013, the proportion of students exceeding expected levels of progress was higher than the national average.
- Although students' attainment is not yet comparable with national averages for the proportions of students gaining five A\* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, they are closing the gap and their rate of improvement is faster than that seen nationally over a sustained period.
- The work in students' books, the lessons observed, and scrutiny of the academy's latest progress data which has been moderated, all indicate that students in the academy now are making good or better progress towards their respective challenging targets and predictions for 2014 examinations results indicate further improvement in all areas.
- Students' achievement is not yet outstanding because there remain variations in the performance of some groups of students and subjects. For example, the achievements of the small number of most-able students, and school action plus students are not securely good. Similarly, subjects such as geography and technology have not provided good value for money over time.
- In order to secure outstanding achievement for all students' attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and high-entry subjects like geography and religious studies must rise higher and more students must exceed expected levels of progress in all subjects. Also, the deficit between the proportions of students gaining five A\* to C grades at GCSE with English and mathematics who are eligible for the pupil premium and those who are not must close.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Most teaching is good with a small amount that is outstanding. This mirrors the good and outstanding progress most students make. A small amount of mediocre and weaker teaching exists which the academy must eliminate if the quality and impact of teaching is to improve to outstanding overall.
- Staff are hard-working and have grasped the opportunities given to them to develop their teaching skills and increase their effectiveness. Students say, *'they really push us to do our best'*.
- Typically, lessons are well planned with clear learning aims, and skilful questioning that enables students to demonstrate or deepen their knowledge skills and understanding and to indicate to the teacher, as a result of what students show they know, the next appropriate step in learning. Teachers expertly gauge when it is appropriate to really stretch and challenge students and when further consolidation and support is necessary to *'concrete in'* the learning.
- Rigorous and regular assessment, target setting and reviews of students' progress help to ensure that staff can identify and respond quickly to aid any students that are at risk of underperforming.
- Effective support for students eligible for pupil premium funding, most disabled students and those with special educational needs, students who speak English as an additional language and students with low literacy levels, has allowed them to make faster progress and reach higher

standards than their peers in other schools nationally. However, the most able students and school action plus students do not always make the same very fast progress.

- Students' attainment and progress in reading is also rising, thanks to an effective strategy to develop students' oracy and comprehension skills and build their confidence in reading in all subjects. The academy is successfully boosting the reading ages and literacy skills of less-able and Roma-Slovak students using strategies, such as reading mentors and multi-lingual staff.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding because of the inconsistencies in the impact it has on students' learning in different subjects and for certain groups. The quality of marking and feedback also fluctuates and students do not always know what to do to improve their work, which slows their learning. Similarly, the deployment and effectiveness of teaching assistants is too variable. The academy's challenge is to ensure there is first-class teaching in every classroom day-in-day out.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The academy has created a vibrant climate for learning and a positive ethos with excellent relationships between staff and students and among the different groups of students. This promotes the sense of harmony and a strong work ethic which inspectors saw in classrooms.
- Students' behaviour is good. Most, including the different groups of minority ethnic students, disabled students and those who have special educational needs, take pride in their appearance, are well prepared for lessons with the correct equipment and behave equally well in classrooms and at social times. Students say mistreatment or persecution, such as racist, homophobic or cyber-bullying, are rare and nipped in the bud when it occurs, so that events do not escalate.
- The large majority of parent and staff, who responded to the Ofsted questionnaires, agree that behaviour is good and well managed. Students say it has improved immeasurably over time. This rang true during inspectors' scrutiny of the academy's incidents logs which show a big reduction in exclusion rates and inappropriate behaviour. This is a credit to the effective pastoral system in place and the more specialist guidance for students with particular behavioural, social and emotional difficulties given by the Parkwood Inclusion Centre.
- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students and their parents share this view and point to the effective and reassuring procedures the academy has established to ensure students are safe in the academy and at alternative provision placements. Students say they know how to keep themselves and others safe and inspectors saw this during their observations of science experiments. The support for students deemed more vulnerable is noteworthy and these students feel particularly secure in the nurturing environment the academy provides.
- Attendance is improving and is now broadly in line with the national average. Persistent absence rates have also improved but remain higher than average. Students' punctuality is too variable.
- Behaviour and safety are not yet outstanding because of the inconsistencies apparent in the extent to which students show a thirst for knowledge, behave impeccably and show fantastic attitudes to learning by attending regularly. Students' behaviour is tightly managed by staff and whilst this works, the academy is not yet at the stage where students can be relied upon to consistently manage their own behaviour effectively.

### The leadership and management are good

- Highly-effective senior leadership, supported by capable middle leaders, has secured significant improvements in the quality of education the academy has provided since the previous inspection. Clear direction and developing a shared ambition among staff and students have created a culture of success and belief. This was epitomised by the high expectations of staff and the growing

aspirations and confidence of students witnessed by inspectors.

- Effective planning and implementation together with rigorous monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the academy's work, especially the quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum through training, mentoring and challenging underperformance, have helped to raise standards and improve efficiency.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and all aspects of the academy's work are regularly monitored and evaluated to identify any refinements required. Leaders' ability to increase the academy's effectiveness from satisfactory to good since the previous inspection demonstrates their impact.
- Relationships with parents have improved and 100% of those that responded to the Ofsted questionnaire said they would recommend the academy to other parents. A parent forum, regular newsletters and updates on their children's progress, as well as invitations to celebration events have all helped to secure parents' satisfaction.
- Performance management is rigorous and there is evidence that leaders reward the 'high flyers' but also hold to account robustly those who are underperforming. On occasion, this has included blocking staff from progressing up the pay ladder and/or disciplinary action.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and well matched to the differing needs and interests of students and prepares them well for the next stage of their education, training or employment. A traditional range of courses is supplemented by more vocational opportunities and specialist and alternative provision for those in need of it. Students benefit from a host of visits, visitors and additional experiences designed to increase awareness of life beyond Sheffield, raise their aspirations and increase their independence and self-confidence.
- The opportunities students have to assume leadership, participate in music, sporting and drama events, and to volunteer and fund raise for charity, promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively. Underpinning this effective curriculum is first-class care, guidance and support which students appreciate and helps them to thrive, including those deemed more vulnerable than others and those new to the English language. A conscious drive to promote community cohesion by celebrating the cultural diversity in the academy is fostering good relations and tackling discrimination.
- Pupil premium funding has been used effectively to: support the targeted students' academic achievement; extend the curriculum opportunities available; aid their personal development and to help parents to better support their children to flourish. Behaviour and attendance are much improved and the alternative curriculum options are proving beneficial. Students targeted for the Year 7 catch-up programme are making effective progress.
- Provision for the small numbers of students who access off-site alternative provision is effective and enables them to acquire a range of appropriate qualifications and skills.
- Safeguarding and child protection procedures are sound and systems for the safe recruitment of staff, assessing risk and site security are rigorous. Designated staff are well trained.
- The sponsor is exerting a very effective strategic influence over the academy, which is supporting its continued improvement. The skilled educational consultant attached to the academy is pivotal in this assuming the role of *'critical friend'*, facilitating training for staff and governors, reviewing the academy's progress against key indicators and targets for achievement, behaviour and attendance and assessing the impact of leadership. The sponsor also brokers school-to-school support from other academy's in the chain. The sponsor undertakes due diligence and compliance checks, in relation to finance and safeguarding and provide human resource, legal and business management support services.
- The academy has retained a strong link with the local authority which is mutually beneficial.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are committed to their roles and discharge their statutory duties effectively. They have an accurate view of the relative strengths and flaws in teaching, students' achievement, behaviour and safety and the academy's leadership. They are aware of the impact the pupil premium is having in raising standards, and the management of financial resources is sound.
  - Governors have a range of expertise in key areas of the academy and have accessed training that allows them to scratch beneath the surface of the information they are presented with and

- to assess more shrewdly the extent to which the academy's key priorities are being achieved.
- Minutes of governing body meetings show that governors are balanced in the challenge and support they exert when holding leaders to account. They ask searching questions but also back leaders who have made 'forthright' but accurate decisions about staff performance or salary progression.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135934
<b>Local authority</b>	Sheffield
<b>Inspection number</b>	430928

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	751
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dr Stephen Hopkins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mike Westerdale
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 May 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0114 231 0221
<b>Fax number</b>	0114 232 6751
<b>Email address</b>	info@parkwoodacademy.org.uk

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