

Inspection of E-ACT Blackley Academy

Victoria Avenue, Blackley, Manchester M9 0RD

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 March 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is James Hughes. This school is part of 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, Tom Campbell, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Lord Jim Knight.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy the friendly and welcoming atmosphere in the school. Staff build positive relationships with pupils. This helps pupils to feel happy and safe.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement. Pupils know that they must listen carefully and try hard in lessons. This helps to ensure that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learn well in many subjects.

Pupils respect and follow the school's rules. They learn to be kind to each other. The early establishment of routines, particularly for children in the Nursery and Reception classes, ensures a smooth transition to school.

Promoting pupils' personal development sits at the heart of the school's work. Pupils are very well prepared for life outside school. They learn how to keep themselves and others safe from the risks that they may face. The school supports pupils to have high aspirations for their future. Pupils learn about different careers and how their own skills can develop to support their individual ambitions.

The school offers pupils a range of opportunities to develop their talents and interests. Pupils enjoy attending activities such as boxing, debating and cheerleading clubs. In addition, pupil leaders make valuable contributions to the school community. For example, the well-being champions help to promote the school's positive ethos.

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

The school has prioritised the teaching of reading. When children start in the Nursery class, they learn about sounds, stories and language. This sets them up well for when they begin the phonics programme in the Reception class. Teachers have been well trained, and they deliver the phonics programme consistently well. Appropriate strategies are in place to identify and support pupils who struggle to keep up with the programme. Pupils benefit from reading books that contain the sounds that they have been taught. By the end of Year 2, most pupils can read confidently and fluently.

The curriculum is ambitious. It sets out what children in the early years and pupils in Years 1 to 6 should learn in a logical way. This helps pupils to build on what they already know.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. They deliver the curriculum with confidence and expertise. They explain new learning clearly, and they provide pupils with appropriate activities to practise new skills. Teachers generally use assessment strategies well to identify if pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Teachers then take effective action to address these gaps. However, sometimes, pupils do not receive

the help that they need to remember the most important information that they will need to build on in the future.

Typically, children in the early years are well prepared for key stage 1, and other pupils are ready for the next stage of their learning. However, in 2023, the published data shows that the attainment of Year 6 pupils in reading was significantly below the national average. The school has acted quickly to address these results. It has made improvements to the reading curriculum and the teaching of reading across key stage 2. However, there are a small number of pupils who have not received the support that they need to read fluently enough to access the school's rich curriculum.

The school has effective procedures for identifying pupils with SEND. It works well with parents, carers and external agencies to ensure that these pupils receive the support that they need. This helps pupils with SEND to follow the same curriculum as their peers.

Pupils behave well in lessons and at lunchtimes. Pupils enjoy the rewards that the school provides to celebrate their positive behaviour. There is a calm and orderly environment in classrooms and around the school.

The school promotes pupils' regular attendance. This is having a positive impact on most pupils, including those with SEND. The school identifies those pupils whose absence levels are high. It also ensures that there are a wide range of strategies in place to overcome any barriers to pupils' attending school.

Pupils benefit from an exceptionally rich offer that enhances their social, emotional and personal development. Pupils know the importance of understanding equality and diversity. Their learning is enhanced by a wide range of visitors to the school who talk about their own knowledge and experience. This helps pupils to value and respect each other, regardless of any differences in their appearance, their faith or their culture. Pupils learn how to spot the signs of unhealthy relationships, and they are supported well to look after their mental health. Pupils gain a deep understanding of fundamental British values and what these mean to their everyday lives. In the early years, children are supported particularly well to develop their confidence and independence.

The school forges strong relationships with families and the local community. This enables it to provide families with the help they need through the community hub. This includes workshops on mental health and well-being and providing access to food packages. This support helps to ensure that pupils can attend school and engage in learning.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They said that leaders take a proactive approach to reducing workload. Trustees understand their statutory duties. They work collaboratively with the wider trust team to provide the school with effective challenge and support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, pupils are not supported to remember the most important information that they will need to access learning in the future. This means that sometimes pupils are not building their knowledge over time as well as they could. The school should implement strategies in these subjects to support pupils to remember what they have learned over time.
- A small number of pupils do not read as fluently as they should. This is because they have not received the support that they need to develop their reading fluency. This can sometimes hinder them from accessing the curriculum with increasing independence. The school should ensure that these pupils are supported to become confident and fluent readers so that they can access all that the school's curriculum has to offer.

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

Unique reference number	137689
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10294363
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	435
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lord Jim Knight
CEO of trust	Tom Campbell
Headteacher	James Hughes
Website	blackleyacademy.e-act.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 June 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the E-ACT academy trust.
- There has been a change of headteacher since the last inspection.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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 inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors met with the headteacher, other leaders, staff, a member of the trust executive leadership team and a member of the trust board.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, history, art and design, and science. For each deep dive, the 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. The inspectors also listened to some pupils read.
- 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.
- The inspectors talked with pupils in meetings and around the school at lunchtime.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. The inspectors also reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- The inspectors looked at the documentation provided by leaders, including the school self-evaluation and a range of documentation relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Collette Mather, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
John Hanley	Ofsted Inspector
Elaine Jackson	Ofsted Inspector

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