

Pathways E-Act Primary Academy

Raisen Hall Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S5 7NA

Inspection dates

6–7 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and the trust have not been fully effective in ensuring good outcomes at the end of key stage 2. Improvements to the quality of teaching have not been consistent.
- Not all teachers have the same high expectations of what pupils could achieve. Disadvantaged pupils and the most able are not making sufficient progress.
- Teachers do not consistently pitch work at the right level, particularly in mathematics. Pupils' misconceptions are not addressed quickly enough.
- The teaching of reading and the monitoring of pupils' reading books are not sufficiently rigorous.
- The correction of pupils' spelling is not consistent. As a result, improvement in pupils' spelling is slow and this affects the quality of their writing.
- Pupils in some classes do not routinely develop a deep understanding in subjects such as geography and science.
- Pupils sometimes lack the vocabulary to give a clear explanation. In some subjects, teachers are not equipping pupils with the technical words they need to use in their work.
- Pupils' attendance has improved and is now the same as the national average, but there are a small minority of pupils who are regularly absent.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is effective in supporting the welfare of its pupils and their families and follows correct procedures to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as those pupils who join the school with little or no English, is good. This ensures that these pupils make good progress.
- The provision in the early years gets the children off to a good start and prepares them well for key stage 1.
- Pupils are keen to achieve and have good attitudes to their work. They behave well in lessons and respond quickly when the staff apply the school's behaviour policy.
- The school places a great emphasis on tolerance and respect for each other and those from different backgrounds. Pupils have a good understanding of different cultures and religions. This develops their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness effectively.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, particularly in key stage 2, so it is consistently good to accelerate progress and raise achievement for all pupils by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils, including the most able pupils and disadvantaged pupils, can achieve
 - providing challenging work pitched at the right level in mathematics
 - planning and teaching lessons which deepen pupils' understanding across all subjects
 - addressing pupils' misunderstandings during lessons
 - improving pupils' spelling
 - developing pupils' reading skills so they can read fluently and understand what they are reading
 - helping pupils acquire a wider vocabulary so they can articulate their views and use technical language in lessons such as science and geography.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - monitoring and evaluating how well disadvantaged pupils are doing when compared to others nationally
 - ensuring the school's behaviour management policy is consistently used
 - further improving pupil attendance and reducing the amount of persistent absence
 - regularly updating the school website so it contains current and relevant information.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The headteacher and senior leaders have established a positive climate for learning for pupils and staff. The headteacher has been relentless in his pursuit of good teaching; however, this has resulted in some staff turnover. This loss of continuity has impeded pupils' rates of progress and new and temporary staff have not always been well briefed in applying the school's behaviour policy.
- Although the school development plan sets out a path to improvement with ambitious but realistic targets for pupils' achievement, leaders have not been successful in ensuring that pupils reach the government's minimum standards of attainment at the end of key stage 2. Too little attention has been paid to comparing how pupils are doing in relation to others nationally.
- Leaders have addressed the points for improvement following the last inspection. The good quality of learning in the early years has been maintained, teaching in key stage 1 has improved and there have also been improvements in pupils' behaviour and attendance. Despite this, there is still work to do in helping pupils catch up after a legacy of weak teaching. This is more evident in key stage 2, where progress is variable because teaching is not consistently good.
- The quality of teaching is regularly evaluated by the academy's regional director of education. This ensures that issues in teaching and outcomes are quickly identified and changes swiftly made to improve the quality of learning for pupils. This, for example, has resulted in some rapid progress for Year 6 pupils. Even so, too many pupils in key stage 2 lag behind in mathematics and reading and the most able pupils are not doing as well as they could.
- Leaders ensure that there is effective support and intervention for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Efficient and effective leadership ensures that funding for this group of pupils is well used. The deployment of teaching assistants is sharply focused. They are well trained to deliver high-quality support.
- Senior leaders have brought about significant improvements to pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. There are clear structures of support and sanctions which the pupils fully understand. As a result, pupils' attitudes to learning are typically good and they respond well when teachers consistently apply the school's behaviour policy.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding to provide additional learning support and extra-curricular activities for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, this group of pupils enjoy equal opportunities alongside their peers. Small teaching groups taught by well-qualified teaching assistants and senior staff are now helping this group to catch up. However, their varying rates of progress in key stage 2 reflect the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching they receive.
- Recommendations about pay increases are clearly linked to the achievement of targets based on how well pupils do in each class. Awards have been given where teaching is good and withheld where teaching has not improved.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils are given strong opportunities to consider and debate current issues. When asked what

they would do if they were the prime minister, pupils in Year 5 showed considerable empathy for the disabled who they felt were marginalised from society.

- The school promotes a positive culture of tolerance and respect, reflecting its diverse school community with pupils from a range of backgrounds. British values are embedded in pupils' understanding of what it is to be a good citizen. Pupils uphold these principles, creating a good climate for learning.
- The use of primary school sports and physical education funding is effective. Pupils understand about the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and how exercise contributes to this. The school makes effective use of sports coaches to provide high-quality teaching. There is a selection of new sporting opportunities to develop various kinds of dance and learn basketball, as well as play seasonal sports this term such as athletics, cricket and rounders.

Governance of the school

- Trustee representatives are well informed about the quality of teaching and learning and understand that standards are not good enough. The school receives effective support through the multi-academy trust in providing high-quality training to improve the quality of teaching.
- The regional educational director has been effective in holding the school to account and challenging the school to improve outcomes for pupils, reporting regularly to the raising achievement board. The board meets regularly to discuss the quality of teaching and learning. They have not been fully effective in speeding up the rate of school improvements so that pupils' progress accelerates and they reach age-related expectations at the end of key stage 2.
- Trustee representatives ensure that pupil progress should be the main driver when awarding pay increases as well as challenging and supporting the headteacher through appraisal.
- Trustee representatives are fully conversant with their statutory duties for safeguarding, ensuring that staff are recruited with careful consideration and equal opportunities.
- Although the school's website was updated during the two-day inspection, trustee representatives had not been robust in ensuring that information relating to the curriculum was up to date.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and staff follow correct procedures to ensure pupils are safe. They take appropriate action when necessary. They refer to and communicate with outside agencies and follow up concerns.
- Teachers are aware of the school's procedures for safeguarding. All members of staff are checked for their suitability to work with children. Accurate and up-to-date records of these checks are maintained.
- Pupils say they feel safe. The school keeps a range of risk assessments to keep both

pupils and staff safe.

- The school is robust in following up pupils who go missing or who return from holiday and may have been subject to radicalisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Over time, teaching has not been good enough to ensure that pupils make good progress or reach the expected standards of attainment by the end of Year 6. Frequent changes of teachers have hampered progress, especially in mathematics. While teaching is now improving, particularly in key stage 1, teaching is not consistently strong enough to enable pupils to quickly make up for lost ground. Teaching in Year 6 is strong but too many pupils in other key stage 2 classes are not achieving as well as they should, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils. These pupils do not do as well as they should. Too few achieve the higher standards as a result. Teachers do not plan lessons well enough to challenge and extend pupils' learning.
- Assessments of what pupils already know and can do are not used well by teachers to plan learning. Sometimes, work lacks challenge, particularly in mathematics. When this happens, some pupils lose interest in their work.
- Over time, the teaching of mathematics has not been effective. Some pupils have not grasped basic mathematical skills and so currently in key stage 2, some have gaps in their knowledge. Improvements in teaching mean that now more emphasis is placed on making sure pupils apply their mathematical skills to solve problems and master the subject at higher levels. Although improvements are starting to pay off, there is still much more catching up to do.
- The teaching of reading is inconsistent and, despite some improvements following a recent review, is still not good enough, especially in key stage 2. Teaching does not ensure that pupils apply the skills they are being taught in comprehension lessons to retrieve information and infer meaning when reading their books. Teachers do not check pupils' choice of reading book so that sometimes pupils choose books that are too difficult. Too little attention has been given to ensure pupils experience a wide range of reading genres, including non-fiction and types of literature.
- In writing, pupils are given good opportunities to write for a range of audiences and for different purposes. Teachers encourage pupils to use adventurous vocabulary in their writing with confidence. Pupils develop a good handwriting style, and when teachers' expectations are high, present their written work neatly. However, pupils' spelling skills in key stage 2 are weak because there is an inconsistent approach to correcting spelling errors.
- Other curriculum subjects are taught through topic work but this too is variable in quality. Some pupils' books show little work of high quality or depth of learning. Teaching does not ensure that pupils use the appropriate technical language in their explanations, such as in geography and science.
- The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective. Provision is well organised with specific programmes of learning matched well

to pupils' learning needs. The Willows, a small group to support pupils in key stage 1 with specific behaviour and emotional difficulties is well run, ensuring pupils are well equipped with the social skills to function effectively in the classroom.

- The support and teaching for pupils new to school with limited or no English is good. These pupils develop a thirst for learning and quickly acquire the skills to read and write in English. As a result, these pupils often make rapid progress from sometimes very low starting points.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The needs of pupils and families are identified early and support provided where necessary. The breakfast club is well attended by both pupils and parents, who appreciate the opportunity to discuss any concerns or difficulties.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. Pupils understand how to manage risk and where to go for help. They made some insightful comments about who they might trust. They understand the risks of using the internet and social media. This is reflected in a good understanding on how and why they should keep personal information private.
- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying, including bullying related to race and gender. They know there are consequences to bullying because the school has an anti-bullying code. Clear, well-used and effective systems are in place to support pupils to resolve any conflict and sort out any friendship difficulties to prevent them escalating.
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to take on roles of responsibility such as school councillors. They have participated in a business project, raising £5000 for a local charity. Pupils are keen to achieve awards and the class trophy for good attendance.
- The school's ethos promotes effective reflection on faith, culture and personal choices. Pupils' thoughtful consideration of different beliefs and life choices reflects the school's diverse community. They demonstrate a good understanding of British values, which prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a marked improvement in pupils' behaviour. There is a comprehensive and effective system for monitoring pupils' behaviour. The expectation that pupils take responsibility for their own learning has resulted in most pupils having positive attitudes. However, a small minority lose concentration when teaching is less engaging.
- The school's provision in supporting pupils to manage their own behaviour is effective. The 'Think it through' room enables pupils to reflect on their decisions. Pupils are clear about the school's expectations and the importance of making the 'right choices' and

the consequences if they do not.

- Pupils are proud of their school. They are courteous, well-mannered and confident to engage in conversation. They listen well to adults and to their peers, and show respect for the views of others. They play cooperatively in the playground and move around the school in an orderly way.
- The school's drive to improve attendance has been effective. The celebration and reward system for good attendance has been successful in conveying the importance of attendance and punctuality to pupils. Attendance has improved and is now equivalent to the national average. However, a small proportion of pupils are regularly absent.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Standards by the end of Year 6 are too low. In 2016, the government's minimum standards were not met. In reading and writing, standards were below average and in mathematics were significantly below average. These pupils did not make good progress from their previous starting points. Inspection evidence shows that the progress of pupils currently in key stage 2 is variable and overall outcomes require improvement.
- Although children in the early years get off to a good start, achievement in key stage 1 has not been as strong. In Year 2 in 2016, standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science were all well below average. However, because of improved teaching in key stage 1, current pupils are making better progress and standards are rising. In Year 2 for example, many more pupils are working at levels appropriate for their age. They can solve simple problems and show their mathematical reasoning. They apply their phonics well to read words and spell in their writing.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been broadly average for the last three years. The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) is securely established in key stage 1 and so pupils are making better progress in reading.
- The achievement of older pupils in reading, however, is inconsistent. Although pupils enjoy reading, some lack confidence to use their phonic skills to read an unfamiliar word. Often, pupils do not know what a word means. Some are unable to express an opinion about different authors. Pupils' limited vocabulary sometimes prevents them from reading fluently and with understanding.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is not consistently good. Some are doing better than others. Additional teaching groups are successfully helping disadvantaged pupils to catch up. However, teaching in the classroom does not always back up this effective additional learning support and this hampers their progress.
- In Year 6 in 2016, pupils who had special educational needs and/or disabilities did not do well. Many pupils in this year group had specific language difficulties and were not effectively supported by high-quality teaching in the classroom.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter the early years with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age in speech and language and knowledge and understanding of the wider world. Children who join school in the Nursery get off to a flying start because adults equip them with good communication skills and provide opportunities to explore and experiment.
- Children make good progress in the early years. In recent years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been consistently in line with the national average. Inspection evidence and school evidence shows that similar proportions are on track to achieve a good level of development this year.
- Children have good relationships with adults as well as with each other. Routines are established from the start and children are keen to learn. They behave well in the classroom and outside area. They develop confidence to communicate because staff place an emphasis on developing this skill in speaking as well as in writing. Children initiate conversation with visitors and converse with their peers as they play. The teaching of phonics is effective. A child proudly demonstrated their phonic skills by spelling out the inspector's name.
- Parents are very positive about the early years provision. They feel involved in their children's learning. Parents who speak limited English benefit from the guidance and support provided by staff. Parents contribute to their child's learning journeys and this information is used well by staff to plan suitable activities for children's next steps in learning. Assessment is well used to pick up children whose progress is slowing and quickly address this with focused teaching.
- In the classroom, children confidently access the clearly labelled equipment. Adults effectively question children to challenge their thinking and extend learning both indoors and outside. The outside area is well used in the dry weather, although there is no covered area for when it is wet. Even so, learning outdoors is thoughtfully planned. Staff ensure there is a rich variety of activities on offer that build effectively on skills learned in the classroom. For example, staff insisted that children used the correct positional language to explain where 'Spot the dog' was hiding; as a result children made good progress in developing their mathematical and language skills.
- The welfare and safety of the youngest children are given a high priority in the early years. Staff are skilled and responsive to children's individual needs. Good links with external agencies and specialists support children with specific needs so they are motivated learners, able to participate fully in school life. Transition arrangements are good. All health and safety requirements are met; the unit is a safe place for children.
- The leadership in the early years has ensured that the youngest children get a strong start in school. By the time they leave the Reception class, children are well equipped for key stage 1.

School details

Unique reference number	139932
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10031959

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	543
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Michael Wemms
Headteacher	Chris Walton
Telephone number	0114 231 0044
Website	www.e-actpathwaysacademy.org.uk
Email address	principal@e-act.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 June 2015

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average primary school and is sponsored by E-ACT, a charitable trust.
- Children in the early years receive part-time education in the Nursery. In Reception, they receive full-time education.
- The majority of pupils are White British and speak English as their first language. An increasing number of pupils are admitted from Asia and Eastern Europe and many do not speak English when they join the school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average.
- The school runs a breakfast club for pupils and their parents.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the

minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons in classrooms where there were permanent teachers in post, and some together with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors observed small groups of pupils being taught.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work, listened to pupils read and spoke to pupils about their enjoyment of school and their opinions of behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff and trust representatives.
- A wide range of school documents was considered by inspectors. These included the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, behaviour and attendance records, governing body documents and documents relating to the monitoring of teachers' performance.
- Too few parents submitted responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, to generate results. Inspectors spoke informally to parents who attended the school's breakfast club and considered a school survey recently conducted by the school.

Inspection team

Karen Heath, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Soutar	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Cook	Ofsted Inspector

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