

St Ursula's E-ACT Academy

Brecon Road, Bristol, BS9 4DT

Inspection dates

14–15 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The principal is extremely ambitious for the school. She is very well supported by the executive principal and other leaders. Staff morale is high and all are committed to raising standards. Together, they have succeeded in guiding marked improvement in all aspects of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Governors support and challenge the school in equal measure. They are knowledgeable and track the work of the school closely.
- Well-planned actions, including rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and additional training and support, have secured at least good teaching across the school, with some examples of outstanding practice.
- Pupils make good progress in their learning and standards in English and mathematics are rising well.
- All groups of pupils, including the most able, disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, achieve well.
- Behaviour in school is good. Pupils are polite, welcoming and friendly. They feel very safe at school and have confidence in staff to help solve any problems they may have.
- Attendance has improved and is now above average.
- The effective management and stimulating learning environment in the early years ensures that children get off to a good start, become confident learners and are well prepared for Year 1.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is not yet outstanding and does not result in outstanding achievement for pupils.
- Some middle leaders are not fully involved in checking the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility in order to ensure that pupils make at least good progress.
- The impact of teaching assistants to support learning and help pupils make progress is sometimes variable.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons. Two of these were observed jointly with the principal and deputy principal. Inspectors also observed two assemblies.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the executive principal, the principal, other staff with leadership responsibilities, members of the governing body and a representative of the sponsor.
- Inspectors discussed teaching and pupils' progress with class teachers. Pupils' books and records of their progress were examined.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading and talked with them about their reading experiences.
- There were 128 responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire for parents. Inspectors also examined responses from the parents to the academy's own survey of their views and they spoke to a number of parents in the playground. The inspectors considered the 15 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- A range of documentation was examined, including the academy's self-evaluation and development plan, and analysis of pupils' achievement and progress. Safeguarding arrangements, school policies, and records of checks made by leaders on the quality of teaching were also examined.

Inspection team

Carol Warrant, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Neil Swait

Additional Inspector

Ken Bryan

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- St Ursula's E-ACT Academy became an academy in September 2011, sponsored by E-ACT.
- The academy's policy is to grow rapidly 'from below' and older year groups remain deliberately small. There are three Reception classes, three Year 1 classes, three Year 2 classes, two Year 3 classes, one Year 4 class, a mixed Year 4/5 class and one small Year 6 class. Children in the Reception classes attend full time.
- The academy operates in part of the extensive buildings on the historic old site. Plans are in place for an extensive new build on the site.
- In addition to the appointment of the principal and executive principal, the school has experienced significant changes in both staff and governors since the previous inspection.
- The academy has a well-established partnership with two other E-ACT academies in Bristol.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is below average and fewer pupils than average speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is lower than that found in most schools.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. This is additional government funding provided for children who are looked after by the local authority or known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school has a higher than average turnover of pupils leaving at times other than the end of Key Stage 2. In particular, a significant number of pupils leave the school in Year 4 to move to local independent schools.
- The academy meets the current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The academy provides a breakfast club and a number of before- and after-school activities.
- After-school care is privately managed and did not form part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further by:
 - continuing to share the best practice that already exists in the school and in the partner academies
 - ensuring that work is planned well so that all pupils make the progress they should
 - providing, where appropriate, additional training and guidance for teaching assistants so that all are better able to help pupils make good progress
 - increasing the involvement of middle leaders in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning across the school to raise pupils' achievement.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The principal, supported by the executive principal, senior and middle leaders and governors, provides the school with strong, effective leadership and clear direction. There is a shared understanding of what is needed in order to raise achievement further. Staff morale is high and everyone shares the principal's high expectations and ambition.
- The school's view of how well it is doing is accurate. Senior leaders check the quality of teaching and pupils' progress throughout the year in regular pupil progress meetings.
- Middle leaders have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. They lead their areas well both by example and in working collaboratively with colleagues. However, some do not yet regularly check the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility to check that planned actions are having a positive impact on pupils' achievement.
- Pupils' progress is checked carefully and regularly by senior leaders. This information is used to set targets for pupils and ensure that pupils are provided with challenge and support that are matched well to their needs.
- Teachers have annual targets related to pupils' progress and school improvements, which link to salary progression.
- The school's lively, rich curriculum engages pupils' interests well. Pupils agree that 'learning is fun!'
- The school is committed to ensuring that every pupil has an equal opportunity to succeed. This can be seen in the good levels of progress being made across the school.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is strong. Pupils take part in assemblies which provide opportunities for reflection. Music and artwork allow pupils to express themselves through the arts. The subjects taught promote the study of other countries and the customs and beliefs of other cultures.
- The school promotes tolerance and respect for all through class and whole-school assemblies and the curriculum, ensuring there is no discrimination. British values of democracy and responsibility are encouraged in many ways such as pupils acting as Digital Leaders, the promotion of rights and responsibilities, and charitable fundraising events. The school has earned the Rights Respecting Schools Award. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Funding available through the pupil premium is used carefully to finance additional support and resources which help eligible pupils make at least similar progress to their classmates.
- Additional funding from the government to promote sport and increase physical activity is being used to employ professional coaches and to develop the expertise of staff. As a result, more pupils are taking part in a wide variety of sporting activities. The range of before- and after-school clubs has increased and pupils have more opportunities to participate in competitions. This is helping pupils to lead healthier lifestyles and to understand the value of good teamwork.
- The Academy Trust has provided very effective and highly valued support to the academy's development. In particular, the executive principal is constantly on hand to offer guidance, as well as setting leaders a demanding pace for academy improvement. The close working partnership with the two other local E-ACT academies has provided many opportunities for the sharing of good practice, at all levels, across the three schools. This partnership working has resulted in rapid improvements in many areas of the academy's work, including the quality of teaching and pupil achievement.
- Almost all the parents who responded to Parent View or who spoke to inspectors were confident that the school is being led and managed well. They recognise and appreciate the significant improvements that have been secured over the last year and consider that their children are well taught and cared for.
- Breakfast Club provides a very positive start to the day for the many pupils who attend.
- **The governance of the school:**
The governing body is instrumental in supporting senior leaders in their drive to improve the quality of teaching and secure improvements in pupils' achievement. Governors know the school well and are actively involved in all aspects of the school's work. They do all they can to immerse themselves in the daily life of the school through regular visits to classes, discussions with subject leaders and attendance at school events. Their understanding of the school's performance data gives them an appropriate awareness of pupils' progress. Governors undertake the performance management of the principal and understand how the performance of other staff links to salary progression. They receive regular reports on the quality of teaching and consequently ensure that good teaching is rewarded appropriately. The governing body is committed to providing the best possible education for all pupils. Governors review the school's finances to ensure the budget is managed effectively. They make close checks to ensure that grants such as the pupil

premium and the additional funding for sport are well used and having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. Governors understand their role regarding the safeguarding of pupils and ensure this fully meets requirements, so that pupils are very safe and secure while in school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The majority of pupils show enthusiasm for learning. They are quick to participate and keen to do their best. However, occasionally, when teaching does not fully match their needs, pupils lose concentration and consequently they do not make the progress that they should.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards adults. They are polite and respectful. Older pupils pride themselves on being good role models for younger children and pupils.
- Pupils are aware of the school's behaviour policy and were able to explain the systems clearly to inspectors. They understand the high expectations of staff and, as a result, the atmosphere around school is happy and welcoming. Pupils arrive at lessons promptly and most are ready to learn.
- Pupils willingly and enthusiastically take on various responsibilities in school such as acting as Digital Leaders.
- The school is vigilant in following up absence from school. It works closely with parents to reinforce the importance of their children attending school regularly. This has led to improvements in attendance, which is now above average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils, together with their parents, feel very strongly that the school is a safe place where everyone is valued.
- Pupils say they are very well looked after, and older pupils in particular have an excellent understanding of the different types of bullying. All pupils spoken to confirmed that bullying was not an issue at the school.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep safe. Pupils recognise the potential dangers when using the internet and talk knowledgeably about how to avoid these problems.
- The challenging school site is managed extremely well to ensure that all pupils are safe at all times.
- Residential visits allow pupils to be adventurous and take risks in carefully controlled, safe situations.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching throughout the school is good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers have clear expectations and well-established routines in their classrooms. Work is well planned to meet the needs of most pupils to help them to achieve well, in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils are keen to get on with their work and enjoy the challenges set for them. For example, during a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils rose to the challenge of solving problems involving ratios with relish, giving detailed explanations of their answers and methods of working using the appropriate mathematical vocabulary accurately.
- Teachers exhibit good subject knowledge and ask questions skilfully and in ways that give some pupils opportunities to extend their knowledge and others to share any misunderstandings they might have. Positive relationships give pupils the confidence to have a go and sometimes surprise themselves with their answers.
- Occasionally, some pupils lose concentration when teaching does not fully match their needs and, consequently, they do not make the progress that they should.
- Overall, teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils and enable them to make good progress. However, there are occasions when teaching assistants miss opportunities to support or extend learning for some pupils they are working with and, when this happens, these pupils do not make the progress they could.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs learn well because the support they receive is matched to their needs. Disadvantaged pupils also benefit from targeted support tailored to their needs.
- The most-able pupils are appropriately challenged to reach their full potential.
- The school has a clear marking policy which is followed diligently across the school. Teachers mark work

regularly. Helpful comments in English and mathematics books consistently identify what pupils have done well and how they can improve. Pupils routinely respond to their teachers' guidance to improve their work.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Overall, from their individual starting points, pupils make good progress during their time in school and are well prepared for the next stages in their education.
- Pupils currently in the Reception and Key Stage 1 classes started school with skills in reading, writing and mathematics that are broadly typical for their age. During their time in early years, children achieve well and are well prepared for Year 1. School data show that, as a result of good teaching, in 2014, the proportion of pupils starting Year 1 having reached a good level of development was above that found nationally.
- Cohorts are very small in Key Stage 2 and some pupils join the school at points other than at the start of the Reception Year, many with no previous assessments. This makes published data difficult to compare with national standards.
- In 2014, at the end of Year 6, all pupils made the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics, which is above that found nationally. The proportion of those doing better than expected was well above the national average in writing and mathematics and similar to the national average in reading.
- However, this good progress did not make up for previous underachievement and standards at the end of Year 6, in reading and writing, were broadly average. Standards in mathematics were below average with the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in mathematics being well below average. These results showed improvement on standards at the time of the previous inspection.
- Standards by the end of Year 2, in reading, writing and mathematics, are above average and pupils have made at least the progress expected of them from their starting points. Results in national tests in 2014 were particularly strong in reading and mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 has been higher than that found nationally for the last two years.
- Work in pupils' books, and the school's own checks and inspection findings, show that progress in reading, writing and mathematics, in all classes, is at least as expected and often better. Most pupils are now reaching standards at or above those expected for their age in all three subjects.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and disadvantaged pupils, varies from class to class, as does the complexity of their needs. The school rigorously tracks their achievement as individuals, and consequently, most make progress similar to their classmates.
- As a result of the effective use of pupil premium funding, disadvantaged pupils also make levels of progress similar to other pupils in the school in reading, writing and mathematics. The very small number of disadvantaged pupils in the 2014 Year 6 cohort means that it is difficult to make meaningful comparisons between their performance and that of other pupils in the school or nationally. However, any gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of their classmates are closing across the school.
- The most-able pupils make good progress due to expectations that challenge them to reach their full potential.
- Pupils' knowledge of phonics (the sounds letters make) is better than indicated by the Year 1 check in 2014, which dipped to below average from above average in 2013. Most Year 2 pupils read fluently and at levels above those of pupils of a similar age by recognising whole words and sounding them out. Older pupils read widely and talk confidently and revealingly about their favourite authors and themes.

The early years provision

is good

- Learning in the early years is typically good. The classroom and outdoor environments are spacious and have been creatively developed. Activities challenge children well and engage their enthusiasm for learning, so that they make good progress.
- The early years provision is well led and managed. Staff are knowledgeable and well trained. They work well together, meeting regularly in order to discuss what is going to be taught and how children are doing. Consequently, planned activities and learning opportunities develop children's knowledge and understanding well, in all areas of learning.
- Children work and play in a happy, safe and secure environment. Staff ensure that children have many opportunities to develop good social skills. Consequently, children's behaviour is good. They learn to follow

instructions from staff and are generally able to concentrate on activities, happily sharing equipment and discussing what they are learning with their friends.

- Teaching in the early years is good. Children enjoy a wide range of exciting indoor and outdoor experiences. Learning activities are particularly well thought out and closely follow the interests of children, inspiring them to learn more. Staff encourage children to develop their skills and understanding through exploration and experimentation.
 - Children make good progress during their time in the early years. By the time they join Year 1, an above average proportion have reached a good level of development, which is what is typically expected for children of this age. Children acquire good speaking and listening and social skills and develop basic reading, writing and number skills and understanding well. Disabled children and those with special educational needs also make good progress because their needs are quickly identified and they receive well-targeted support from staff. There are also well-planned opportunities for the most able to achieve well.
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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	137068
Local authority	City of Bristol
Inspection number	453747

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	390
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Harry Darby
Executive Principal	Stephen Luke
Principal	Tracy French
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 January 2013
Telephone number	0117 962 2616
Fax number	0117 962 2616
Email address	office@stursulase-actacademy.org.uk

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