

Inspection of E-ACT Heartlands Academy

Great Francis Street, Nechells, Birmingham, West Midlands B7 4QR

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 March 2025

The quality of education **Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade Outstanding

The headteacher is Sophia Haughton. This school is part of the E-ACT trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Tom Campbell, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Lord Jim Knight.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since February 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school. They know that when they walk through the school gates they are safe and surrounded by people who want them to succeed and be happy. Pupils understand the school's expectations of their behaviour and meet these, as they want to play their part in the school's harmonious culture. They show respect, and often kindness, in their interactions with peers and staff.

Pupils are encouraged to become academically and personally ambitious through the school's mission to 'empower dreams'. They value learning and are keen to make the most of their lessons. They work hard on the tasks they are given and take pride in producing work of a high standard. They achieve very well and have high aspirations for the future.

The school has a single break in the middle of the day. Pupils appreciate this extended break, for example to socialise with friends or play football. Many make the most of the extra activities and clubs that are on offer, including rap club and drones club. Many pupils contribute actively to the school community through different leadership roles, including as academy ambassadors, librarians and sports leaders. Some support other pupils through their work as safeguarding ambassadors.

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

The school has a clear commitment to academic excellence and equips pupils with the knowledge and skills they need for future success. This is realised through its ambitious curriculum, which is accessed successfully by all pupils. Pupils achieve strong outcomes. For example, impressively high numbers of pupils secure the English and mathematics qualifications they need for their future learning. Disadvantaged pupils achieve as highly as their peers.

The school leaves nothing to chance. When pupils arrive in Year 7, there is focused work to close any knowledge gaps that pupils may have. As they progress through the curriculum, the school checks carefully how well pupils can remember and apply their learning. The curriculum is adapted to enable key learning to be retaught if needed. There is a highly effective programme of support for those pupils who are not yet confident, fluent readers. This responsiveness means that pupils secure the foundational knowledge and skills they need for future learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs precisely identified. Through its 'SEND first' approach, the school ensures that the curriculum is adapted appropriately to help these pupils learn well.

The school has identified shared approaches for staff to use when delivering the curriculum. These are used consistently well by staff. Teachers demonstrate their strong subject knowledge through clear explanations and thoughtful modelling of thinking. Pupils also understand how these techniques help them to become better learners.

The school's joined-up management of safeguarding, behaviour and attendance is excellent and helps pupils to thrive. High-quality conversations take place about pupils'

needs and any barriers they face which might impact on their learning or well-being. The school works very effectively with pupils, families and external agencies to reduce these. The strength of this work can be seen in how often pupils attend school. Attendance is high. Pupils behave very well and know that any poor behaviour will be dealt with fairly and consistently by the school.

Through the school's well-designed personal development programme and highly inclusive culture, pupils develop an impressive sense of personal moral responsibility. They gain a deep understanding of the different faiths and cultures that make up wider society and are keen to celebrate their own, such as on 'culture days'. Pupils are given helpful careers support in deciding on their post-16 choices.

Trust and school leaders are committed to making staff's workload manageable, including through the innovative use of technology. Staff feel cared for and enjoy working at the school. The trust ensures that leaders are well supported in moving the school forwards. There is much that is exemplary about Heartlands and leaders at all levels strive to make the school even better for its pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	135907
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10343941
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	838
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lord Jim Knight
CEO of the trust	Tom Campbell
Headteacher	Sophia Haughton
Website	heartlandsacademy.e-act.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 February 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 20025

Information about this school

- The headteacher has been in post since May 2023.
- The school does not currently offer post-16 education. There are no sixth-form students on roll.
- The school uses six registered and two unregistered providers of alternative provision for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form

provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school’s education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, French and physical education. 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other school leaders and staff. They also met with the CEO, other trust leaders and the chair of the trust board.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors considered key documentation, including the school improvement plan.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Inspectors met with school leaders to discuss and review how they respond to behaviour incidents and pupils’ attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted’s staff survey. They considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including parents’ free-text comments.

Inspection team

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Huw Bishop	Ofsted Inspector

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