

City Heights E-ACT Academy

Address: 33 Abbots Park, SW2 3PW

Unique reference number (URN): 137954

Inspection report: 9 December 2025

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders' work to ensure that pupils attend school regularly is successful. They have created a school that pupils want to attend. The calm learning environment, together with the multitude of enrichment opportunities, has helped to achieve this. Rates of attendance are improving because leaders understand the barriers pupils face, before putting appropriate support in place. Where required, the school works closely with families to improve attendance. The school has been particularly successful in reducing persistent absence over time.

In lessons, most pupils have a positive attitude towards learning and engage well. Pupils arrive punctually to lessons. Typically, staff are fair and consistent when dealing with any behaviour issues. Where pupils find it more difficult to meet expectations, leaders provide well-considered, targeted support. They adapt the behaviour approach as needed for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The recent reduction in suspensions and school consequences reflects the improvements in pupils' behaviour. On occasion, pupils quietly opt out of learning activities, and this is sometimes not identified or challenged quickly enough. Bullying incidents are rare, and the school takes effective action to respond to any reported incidents. Pupils feel safe. Staff take a caring approach when pupils have any concerns.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders, supported by the trust, show a real commitment to ensuring that all pupils are well cared for. The school's context means there is a high proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium grant. In addition, there is a higher than average number of pupils with education, health and care plans. Many pupils join the school at non-standard transition times, and they often will need support with English or have significant gaps in their learning. Leaders ensure that there are effective systems in place to identify pupils' needs swiftly, including those who join mid-year and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders seek advice from external agencies to support pupils' specific needs as appropriate. They ensure that staff are suitably trained. The additional support leaders provide, for example in English, helps these pupils to learn well.

Leaders have a clear strategy for the use of the pupil premium funding. For example, the funding supports a literacy programme, including phonics, as well as increased pastoral support. Other pupils receive support with attendance or additional academic tutoring. Leaders use the pupil premium grant effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils have access to enrichment activities, such as music lessons and educational visits.

Staff know the pupils very well. They consider how different groups of pupils might need specific support. For example, they provide a quiet space at social times for pupils who need it.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders, including trust leaders, are focused on further improving the school. They have high standards and want the very best for all pupils. Leaders understand the school's context and make decisions in the best interests of pupils.

Leaders have accurately identified the areas of the school that need additional attention, and their actions are well focused on these. For example, extra training is in place to support staff to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils. Leaders' focus is on ensuring that pupils acquire deeper knowledge, achieve well and are better prepared for their next steps.

Recent changes leaders have made are only just beginning to bear fruit. Leaders have thought carefully about the appropriate pace of change, so that the improvements that they make can be sustained over the long term. The impact of leaders' work can be seen clearly in the improvements in behaviour and attendance as well as the new and exciting enrichment offer.

The trust provides the school with support when necessary, for example through subject networks and staff training. There is a wide professional learning offer, with high uptake from staff. Teachers appreciate the range of development opportunities available to them.

Staff, including early careers teachers, feel well supported. Staff speak positively about the school's approach to wellbeing and workload and are proud to be part of the school community.

Trustees have a full understanding of the school and fulfil their statutory duties well. Leaders and trustees are committed to ensuring that pupils have the best possible experience at school.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

There is a broad and ambitious personal development programme in place. Leaders ensure that pupils learn about important issues, such as online safety and mental and physical health. They have thought carefully about the topics covered, considering the challenging context of the school. Pupils have an accurate understanding of healthy relationships and how to stay safe. The personal, social and health education curriculum, as well as visiting speakers and engaging workshops, helps to equip pupils to succeed in modern Britain.

The school celebrates diversity. Pupils are proud of the fact that everyone is equal in their school. Pastoral care is of a high quality. Staff understand individual pupils' needs and put additional support in place for those who require it. For example, they provide increased mental health support and mentoring if needed. Particular care is taken to ensure that disadvantaged pupils, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, benefit from the personal development and wellbeing offer.

Leaders are committed to broadening pupils' cultural understanding. An array of trips, including visits to Berlin and Vienna, allow pupils to experience life beyond London. The new enrichment offer is exciting and available to everyone. Clubs such as baking, personal

finance and philosophical debate ensure that pupils develop their talents and interests. Well-established partnerships, including with Dulwich College, further enhance the school's offer. Leaders ensure that these opportunities are available to everyone by breaking down any barriers to attending, including through additional funding.

Leaders prioritise teaching pupils about the careers and opportunities available to them when they leave school. Pupils receive timely advice and guidance about employment, apprenticeships and further education opportunities. Careers events and expert speakers raise pupils' aspirations about their future job prospects. This helps pupils to make well-informed decisions about their futures.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Pupils do not consistently achieve as well as they could. The variable delivery of the curriculum means that some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge that are not routinely addressed. Staff do not consistently embed and consolidate pupils' learning, which leads to some pupils not having the strong foundations required for future success.

Leaders have identified a need to focus on mathematics across the school, and actions are in place to address this. While these actions are appropriate, they are at an early stage. This means that the impact of this work is not yet being seen in pupils' progress and attainment.

Leaders have prioritised reading and English more generally. The impact of this is evident in pupils' achievement in national examinations in English, which is broadly in line with the national averages. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is gradually improving.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

In some subjects, teachers confidently provide clear explanations and ask probing questions. However, in other subjects, there is variation in how the curriculum is delivered. Sometimes, teachers do not choose the most appropriate methods to help pupils understand key knowledge. At other times, teachers do not check carefully that pupils understand previous learning before introducing new content. As a result, some pupils do not remember important information and develop gaps in their learning. Typically, staff do not have high enough expectations of what pupils are able to do. The standard of work accepted from pupils is below what they can produce when suitably challenged.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum is well planned, broad and ambitious. Most teachers have strong subject knowledge. Where this is not the case, leaders provide opportunities for teachers to overcome gaps in their curriculum knowledge. Reading is a priority. Pupils who need additional support follow a well-considered and coherent reading strategy. This ensures that they practise their reading regularly and become fluent.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have clear learning support plans. However, there are inconsistencies in the way staff adapt their teaching for these pupils. Consequently, some pupils with SEND do not access or learn the curriculum as well as they could.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Leaders have created a school where pupils are safe and happy. Pupils know that staff want the best for them. The mutual respect shown between pupils and staff ensures that learning takes place in a supportive and nurturing environment. This encourages pupils to attend school regularly.

The school is calm and orderly. Pupils are well mannered and welcoming to visitors. They conduct themselves well and follow established routines. For example, pupils move from 'line-up' to form time quickly. This supports an orderly start to the day. Clear systems are in place to promote positive behaviour on the rare occasions that any low-level disruption takes place. Pupils say that bullying is rare. They know there are trusted adults they can approach with any concerns.

The school has a curriculum in place that is ambitious. However, pupils learn better in some subjects than in others. This is because the curriculum is not delivered consistently well. Consequently, some pupils' understanding of key knowledge and the foundational learning in reading, writing and mathematics needed for success is not as secure as it should be.

The needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly. These pupils' barriers to learning are known, and clear plans are in place to support them. However, some pupils with SEND do not access the curriculum as well as they could because of inconsistencies in the way staff adapt the learning to meet their needs.

Pupils have access to a range of wider opportunities. For example, pupils enjoy 'Manchester United mentoring', learning sign language and attending culture, coding and barbershop clubs. There is an extensive personal development programme. This helps pupils become well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that strong foundations are secured and embedded in order to ensure that pupils acquire deeper knowledge, achieve well and are better prepared for their next steps.
 - Leaders should ensure that teachers use assessment effectively to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge, build on pupils' prior learning and give pupils opportunities to practise and improve their work.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff are fully equipped to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of all pupils effectively.
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About this inspection

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.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke to the acting headteacher, acting head of school, other senior leaders, trust leaders, subject leaders and members of staff during the inspection.

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.

The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

The headteacher left the school 10 days before the inspection took place. There was an acting head of school in place during the inspection, supported by the director of education for the trust.

Acting head of school: Mrs Felicity Koranteng

Lead inspector:

Sam Johnson, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Annabel Davies, His Majesty's Inspector

Lucy Bruce, Ofsted Inspector

Lisa Smith, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 9 December 2025

School and pupil context

Total pupils

473

Well below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

1,100

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,152

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

60.89%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

5.71%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

24.10%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Well above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25	24.5%	45.2%	Below
2023/24	27.3%	45.9%	Below
2022/23	24.4%	45.3%	Below

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25	40.5	45.9	Below
2023/24	36.7	45.9	Below
2022/23	33.0	46.3	Below

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24	-0.37	-0.03	Below
2022/23	-0.75	-0.03	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25	15.9%	25.6%	Below
2023/24	21.4%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23	21.4%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25	37.0	34.9	Close to average
2023/24	32.8	34.6	Close to average
2022/23	30.2	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24	-0.62	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23	-0.85	-0.57	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25	15.9%	52.8%	-36.9 pp
2023/24	21.4%	53.1%	-31.7 pp
2022/23	21.4%	52.4%	-31.1 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25	37.0	50.3	-13.3
2023/24	32.8	50.0	-17.2
2022/23	30.2	50.3	-20.1

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24	-0.62	0.16	-0.78
2022/23	-0.85	0.17	-1.02

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers	78%	91%	Below
2022 leavers	86%	93%	Below
2021 leavers	92%	94%	Average

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 terms)	8.0%	8.1%	Close to average
2023/24	8.7%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23	11.8%	9.0%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 terms)	27.1%	21.9%	Above
2023/24	28.8%	25.6%	Close to average
2022/23	37.5%	26.5%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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