

Denham Green E-ACT Academy

Nightingale Way, Denham Green, UB9 5JL

Inspection dates	13–14 May 2015	
Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1
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 executive principal and principal have the highest aspirations for pupils and have brought about considerable improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement since the academy opened.
- Pupils achieve well. Throughout the academy, pupils are making good and improving progress. Their attainment is much higher in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 than it was in the predecessor school.
- Pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs and those who join the academy speaking limited English are very well supported. They often make rapid progress.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and use questions well to deepen their understanding.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. They enjoy the activities that are provided for them and make good progress in their learning.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite and friendly, behave exceptionally well around the academy and want to learn.
- The arrangements to keep pupils safe and secure are good. As a result, pupils have great confidence in the adults around them and feel very safe.
- All senior and middle leaders play an important role in the improvement of the academy. The leadership of teaching is of high quality and is leading to significant improvement in all areas, including achievement.
- The reformed governing body is very effective. Governors have a very good understanding of the academy's strengths and weaknesses and challenge leaders to make it even better.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is promoted thoroughly and effectively. They are extremely well prepared for life in modern Britain.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Work for the most able is not always hard enough to challenge them to reach the highest levels of attainment by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2.
- While attendance has improved this year, not all pupils attend regularly enough and this has an impact on their achievement.
- The activities in the early years, both inside and outside, do not always challenge the children enough to help them to make rapid progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning throughout the academy. He also made short visits to sessions in Key Stage 1 where phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) was being taught. Most of these observations were conducted jointly with the principal.
- Samples of pupils' work were looked at and the inspector listened to a number of pupils reading.
- The inspector held meetings with the executive principal and principal, deputy headteacher, the inclusion leader and three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. He also met with two groups of pupils and talked to others informally around the academy.
- A range of documentation was considered including the academy's information about pupils' progress, its plans for improvement and policies and procedures related to the safeguarding of children.
- The views of the 24 parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, were considered as well as the outcomes of a recent questionnaire sent out by the academy which attracted a larger response.
- The inspector also considered recent surveys of staff and pupils carried out by the academy.

Inspection team

Graham Lee, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Denham Green E-ACT Primary Academy opened as an academy sponsored by the E-ACT chain in September 2013. Previously the academy had been known as Tilehouse Combined School.
- The academy is led by an executive principal and principal. Both of these leaders undertake the same role at Chalfont Valley E-ACT Primary Academy. However, the principal's main responsibility is for Denham Green. A new deputy headteacher was also appointed in September 2014. Most of the teaching staff have joined since the academy opened. The governing body was revamped in the autumn term with a number of new members appointed.
- The academy is growing in numbers but remains much smaller than the average-sized primary school. There is one class in each year except in Years 5 and 6, where pupils are taught in the same class.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage although about three out of 10 are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils entitled to pupil premium funding is above average. This is additional government funding provided to support, in this academy, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. However, the numbers in some of the smaller year group are often typically less than five, as was the case in Year 6 in 2014 and will be again this year.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below average.
- The academy meets the current government floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- There is a nursery on site but this is independently run and is inspected separately. The academy runs a breakfast club, however, which was part of this inspection.
- There is early years provision in a full-time Reception class.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers always set work that is hard enough so that more of the most able pupils reach the highest levels of attainment by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Work with parents to ensure that all pupils attend regularly and are able, as a result, to achieve as well as they can.
- Ensure that all activities in the Reception class, both inside and outside, challenge the children and enable them to make rapid progress, so that more achieve a good level of development.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The executive principal and principal, supported very effectively by the deputy headteacher, have high aspirations for the academy and its pupils. As a result, since the academy opened the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement have improved markedly and continue to do so. Leaders also set high expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- The leadership of teaching is excellent. Leaders have a very accurate understanding of the quality of teaching over time through their regular observations and checks on the quality of pupils' work in books and teachers' planning. This is underpinned by robust systems to manage the performance of teachers which link pay progression closely to the achievement of pupils.
- Leaders use the information they have about the performance of pupils extremely effectively to check the progress of groups and individuals. This ensures that any potential underperformance is picked up at an early stage with appropriate support put in place where necessary to help pupils to catch up. This also ensures that equality of opportunity is promoted effectively.
- All senior and middle leaders play an important role in driving improvements in their areas. The management of inclusion, for example, is of high quality. This enables disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those new to learning English to make very good progress.
- Leaders have a very clear understanding of the academy's strengths and weaknesses and use this information well to plan for improvement. This is because of the excellent systems in place to check the academy's performance in all areas of its work.
- The curriculum develops pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy well and is planned carefully to enable increasing opportunities for pupils to apply these skills in other subjects. Pupils also have the opportunity to develop their skills and understanding in a wide range of subjects. The curriculum is enhanced considerably by a range of clubs and visits and visitors to the academy.
- The primary sports funding, topped up by the academy, is used to good effect to enable pupils to take part in an increasing range of sports both within and beyond the school day. Most of the money is spent on specialist coaches who provide good quality teaching and also work alongside teachers to develop their skills and confidence in teaching physical education. As a result, participation rates in a range of sports have improved as has the quality of teaching.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development extremely well. Each of these aspects of pupils' personal development is planned for carefully in each subject and the programme of assemblies. At the same time, the promotion of British values has been a priority for the academy in recent times. Each of these fundamental values are considered thoroughly in assemblies and followed up by teachers in a way that is relevant to the age of the pupils so that they have a very good understanding of what they mean. For example, during the inspection pupils were giving careful consideration to the rights of the child. Consequently, pupils are extremely well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The academy uses the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils in a variety of ways to support their learning. For example, it is used effectively to provide smaller classes in Key Stage 2, to support individual pupils with specific needs and to enable eligible pupils to take part in the breakfast club and music tuition. As a result, the gaps between the performance of these pupils and others are closing throughout the academy.
- The safeguarding policies and procedures are exemplary. Comprehensive policies are translated into the everyday life of the academy to ensure the safety of all. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated in the academy.
- The E-Act academy chain provides very good support to the academy and the sharing of leadership and expertise between the two schools, in particular, is mutually supportive. The academy also receives good support from the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust, for example, in the development of the early years.
- The academy engages well with parents and a vast majority are happy with all aspects of the academy's work and would recommend it to others.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The renewed governing body is knowledgeable and representative of a range of professional expertise. Through intensive training governors have very quickly come to terms with their role. They have a very good understanding of the data about the academy's performance and how this compares with the national picture. They are very clear about the quality of teaching and unequivocal in tackling weaker practice through rigorous systems for the management of performance for both teachers and leaders. Leaders at all levels are required to report to the governors at regular intervals and they ask searching questions to ensure that they are continuing to improve the academy. Governors also come into the

academy regularly so they develop a real understanding of the life of the academy. Governors ensure that the academy meets all of its statutory obligations, for example in relation to safeguarding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are extremely welcoming and polite. They are proud of their academy and all that it has to offer and are excellent ambassadors for Denham Green.
- Around the academy, in assemblies and on the playground pupils' conduct is often impeccable. They play happily together and the academy is a very harmonious community. The academy's records show that instances of poor conduct since the academy has opened have been very few and are of a relatively minor nature.
- In lessons, pupils want to learn and they respond well to what their teachers ask them to do. They are keen to answer questions and offer their ideas. Their books show that mostly they take pride in the presentation of their work, although this varies a little from class to class.
- Most pupils are able to sustain concentration when working on their own. They work together well in pairs and groups. Occasionally, the concentration of younger pupils, in particular, wanes when the adults do not get them back on task quickly enough.
- Almost all parents and pupils believe that behaviour in the academy is good.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- The safety of pupils is of paramount importance to everybody in the academy. This is evident in the comprehensive policies and procedures and the daily life of the academy.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, for example when using the internet. Recent visits from police officers and the fire and rescue service have reinforced that understanding.
- Pupils are well informed about different forms of bullying and this has been recently reinforced in the 'anti-bullying' week. However, all the pupils spoken to by the inspector are unanimous in their view that bullying does not happen. This view is supported by almost all parents and the academy's records which show there have been no substantiated instances of bullying since it opened.
- In the first year of the academy, levels of attendance were well below the national average. This is much improved this year as a result of the high profile given to regular attendance, through strategies such as the 'ice cream challenge'. However, despite the academy's work with parents a number of pupils still do not attend regularly enough and this has an adverse impact on their achievement.
- The well-attended breakfast club provides a safe and welcoming start for some pupils at the beginning of day and supports parents well.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved over the time the academy has been open and is now consistently good, enabling pupils to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and a range of other subjects.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and pupils respond well, usually giving of their best. Teachers ensure that no learning time is wasted and set out the purpose of tasks clearly for pupils so that they know what they are expected to learn by the end of lessons. Expectations of the presentation of work, however, remain a little variable.
- Teachers plan well to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. They set different tasks or provide additional support where necessary. Occasionally, the work for the most able pupils is not hard enough or these pupils are expected to complete tasks that are too easy for them before moving on to more demanding work.
- A strong feature of the teaching is the way that teachers use questions to check that pupils have understood and to get them to think more deeply. Teachers also check pupils' progress throughout lessons and readjust tasks if they have not understood well enough.

- Teaching assistants work in close partnership with teachers and make an important contribution to pupils' learning, especially of those who are disabled, with special educational needs and of lower ability.
- Phonics is taught well. In Key Stage 1, pupils are taught in small groups by skilled teachers and teaching assistants who help them to acquire the necessary basic skills quickly. They go on to enjoy reading for pleasure and information and with increasing fluency as they move through the academy.
- The academy has focused on writing this year as this had been a relatively weaker area. Writing is taught well now with teachers providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length for a range of purposes in different subjects.
- The teaching of mathematics is a strength of the academy with pupils encouraged to apply the mathematical skills to different problems. For example in Year 6, pupils were encouraged to use a range of strategies to work out percentage increases and decreases in relation to money problems. In Year 4, pupils were applying their knowledge of addition and subtraction effectively to 'two-step' problems.
- Other subjects are taught in interesting ways that really capture pupils' imagination. For example, in a Year 1 art lesson pupils chose a variety of natural objects from the academy's lovely environment and produced high quality observational drawings following the strong input of the teacher on sketching techniques. In Year 2, there was great excitement as pupils learnt about the function of switches by creating their own circuits. This practical application really deepened their understanding.
- Pupils know where they are in their learning and what they need to improve. Pupils say how much their 'target cards' help them to focus on the next steps in their learning. Teachers' marking is conscientious and supportive and increasingly showing pupils how their work could be improved.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils achieve well and have made good progress since the academy opened. In 2014, the attainment of pupils leaving the academy was much higher than it had been in the predecessor school.
- In 2014, the first year of published results for the academy, standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 were broadly average. They were stronger in mathematics, especially at the end of Key Stage 2, and weaker in writing. Pupils in the current Year 2 are working at similar levels this year. In Year 6, pupils' attainment in writing has improved considerably.
- The academy's own information shows that across the academy pupils have made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and that this progress is improving. Pupils have made rapid progress in Year 6, especially the boys.
- The strength of the academy's teaching of phonics is reflected in the very positive outcomes of the phonic screening check in Year 1 last year. Current Year 1 pupils are reading at higher levels still.
- There were too few disadvantaged pupils in either last year or the current Year 6 to compare their performance with other pupils in the academy or nationally. However, the good support for these pupils is closing attainment gaps across the academy. Although their progress is sometimes mixed, in general the progress of disadvantaged pupils is catching up with others across the academy.
- Pupils with a variety of special educational needs are very well supported and often make rapid progress over time and during the course of short programmes run to boost their learning.
- Similarly, pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported and once they have acquired the necessary skills in the English language, often make rapid progress thereafter.
- As levels of attainment improve, with the exception of mathematics in Year 6 last year, not enough of the most able pupils are reaching the higher levels (Level 3 at the end of Year 2 and Levels 5 or 6 at the end of Year 6). Occasionally, the most able are not challenged sufficiently through the academy to provide the platform for them to reach these higher levels by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2.

The early years provision

is good

- The early years provision is good because it is well led and managed and enables children to achieve well in their first year. They are well prepared for Year 1.
- Children join the Reception class with skills and understanding that are below those that are typical for their age, especially in language and communication and number. They make good progress in Reception. The proportion reaching a good level of development at the end of the year was broadly average in 2014 and there is likely to be a similar outcome this year.

- There have been some unavoidable changes of teacher during the year but the quality of teaching is now good. The teacher and teaching assistant provide a warm and welcoming environment for children to learn.
- There is a good range of activities to promote all areas of children’s learning. Activities led by the adults to support children’s communication and number skills are enabling the children to acquire these basic skills well.
- There has been a focus on promoting children’s writing in the early years, especially that of the boys. The improvements were evident when children, including boys, were thoroughly engrossed in ‘writing letters to the ladybird’. A good range of strategies, such as the portable writing bags, are encouraging early writing skills.
- A good range of activities are provided to develop children’s learning in play situations, both inside and outside. A few children do not sustain concentration well enough in these situations and adults do not always fully extend their learning. Consequently, they are not yet making rapid progress.
- The leadership is good because leaders have ensured that children continue to make good progress in spite of disruptions caused by changes in staff. Good support has led to clear improvements in the quality of teaching.
- Children behave well and enjoy their learning. The arrangements to keep them safe and secure are robust and there is, for example, a comprehensive risk assessment in place covering all eventualities.

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	139679
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	450285

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	133
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Reed
Executive Head Principal	Matthew Flannigan Sarah English
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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