

Pathways E-ACT Primary Academy

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

Inspection dates 17–18 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils are not making good progress in writing and mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2
- The quality of teaching requires improvement because expectations of what pupils can do are not high enough. Work set does not meet the needs and abilities of all pupils, especially the most able. As a result, achievement in writing and mathematics is not good.
- The marking of pupils' work is variable in quality. Consequently, pupils are not challenged well enough to improve their work to reach a higher standard.
- Pupils' attitudes prevent them learning at a good rate because they lose concentration and do not take sufficient pride in their work.
- Leaders, especially subject leaders, have not held staff sufficiently to account for the quality of pupils' work and progress. As a result, teaching and achievement require improvement.
- Attendance is below average. Disadvantaged pupils are often absent from the academy. This slows their learning and prevents them having a full understanding of how to keep themselves safe in different situations.
- Plans for improvement do not show precisely how the impact of changes will be measured or when they will be checked.
- Over time, leaders and governors have not kept a close enough eye on the quality of teaching, achievement and behaviour to ensure they are good.

The school has the following strengths

- The good teaching of reading helps pupils make good progress and become keen readers.
- Teaching and leadership in the early years are good. Children make good progress and are well prepared for their next stage of education.
- Pupils say they are safe in the academy and are cared for well. Parents and staff agree with this.
- The academy's sponsors have supported leadership well over the past year. As a result, the academy is improving.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of teaching and learning in parts of lessons. Six observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors spoke with two groups of pupils about their learning in lessons and their safety in the school. They also listened to some pupils reading.
- Inspectors held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors. They also held meetings with senior leader and other staff. The lead inspector met with the Chief Executive of the Academy Trust, another representative of the Trust and two local authority representatives.
- Inspectors looked at the school's review of its own performance, its development and improvement plan, school policies and the minutes of the governing body meetings. They also considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- For the first day of the inspection, Year 6 pupils visited an off-site training centre to learn how to assess risks to their safety.
- Inspectors reviewed pupils' work in lessons and analysed samples of pupils' books.
- Inspectors evaluated 18 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also spoke to parents at the end of the school day.
- Inspectors analysed 29 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

James McGrath, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Doreen Davenport	Additional Inspector
Pamela Hemphill	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium, is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. Most pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well above average.
- The academy meets the current government floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The former Principal left the academy in September 2014. A member of the leadership team was appointed temporarily to lead the academy from September 2014 to January 2015. The present interim Principal, a former vice-principal, took up post on 1 January 2015 and will lead the academy until the end of August 2015. A new, experienced Principal is to take up post from 1 September 2015.
- To support the transition in leadership, the governors and sponsors engaged the Principal of E-ACT Blackley Academy, a good school, from 1 September 2014. As Co-Principal she works in partnership with the interim Principal for at least one day each week. Additional support from that academy is used as requested by the interim Principal.
- Children in the early years receive part-time education in the nursery. In reception, they receive full-time education.
- The academy is sponsored by E-ACT, a charitable trust. Pathways E-ACT Primary Academy converted to become an academy on 1 September 2013. When its predecessor school, Longley Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- There have been significant changes in leadership and staff since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 so that it is at least good in order to raise achievement for all groups of pupils in writing and mathematics, by ensuring that:
 - all staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, including of the presentation of their work, particularly in writing
 - work set by teachers closely matches pupils' varying needs and abilities and challenges them to do better, especially the most able
 - all teachers adhere to the academy's marking policy to help pupils improve their work and respond fully to advice given to them
 - teachers' questioning skills are improved so that in all year groups they skilfully check pupils' understanding of what they are learning and challenge their thinking
 - teaching assistants are managed effectively and receive clear guidance on how to support groups of pupils well
 - staff manage pupils' behaviour effectively and ensure that pupils are 'on-task' and productive
 - pupils have more opportunities to write at length and extend their mathematical skills across a wide range of subjects
 - teachers correct quickly errors in pupils' grammar, spelling and punctuation in order to build pupils' confidence in writing.
- Improve the impact of the work of leaders and managers by ensuring that:
 - the quality of teaching in writing and mathematics is good or better so all groups of pupils achieve well
 - plans for improvement are sharply focussed, make clear how actions will improve teaching and achievement and include clear and measurable steps to enable leaders to check how well the academy is improving
 - subject leaders have high expectations and their monitoring skills are developed so they are effective

- and thorough when checking the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in their subjects
- attendance is improved to at least average
 - disadvantaged pupils attend regularly to achieve well and benefit fully from the academy's work, including how to keep themselves safe.

An external review of the academy's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management requires improvement because not enough has been done to raise pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics. The expectations, particularly of subject leaders, have not been high enough and, as a result, the quality of teaching is not consistently good.
- Actions taken by leaders have not made sure that pupils' attendance is at least average and that disadvantaged pupils attend regularly. This prevents disadvantaged pupils taking advantage of all the opportunities the academy provides to enhance their learning and to deepen their understanding of how to keep themselves safe.
- Subject leaders, have not effectively checked on the quality of pupils' work and held staff to account for their work. Analysis of pupils' work and the quality of teaching has not been thorough and expectations have not been high enough. This has led to inconsistent application of the academy's marking policy, variable presentation of work and a lack of challenge for pupils. Consequently, achievement in writing and mathematics is not good.
- Senior leaders have a good grasp of the strengths and areas for improvement across the academy. The interim Principal has the full support of staff in her drive for improvement. However, plans for improvement, including those of subject leaders, do not identify clearly how success will be measured in terms of improving teaching and pupils' achievement. Actions taken are not checked regularly against clear measures of success. Therefore, leaders and governors are not sufficiently well informed of how successful their work has been in improving achievement and the quality of teaching.
- The Co-Principal has supported the work of senior leaders well. Despite several changes in leadership during the past year, the academy has moved forward. Her support has helped the academy to establish effective systems to identify pupils' achievement and to improve the quality of reading.
- Performance management for teachers is used effectively to identify the skills that teachers and leaders need to improve. Professional development needs are identified. There has been a relentless focus by senior leaders to improve the quality of teaching, which has helped to improve pupils' achievement in reading even though there have been many staffing changes throughout the year.
- The interim Principal and Co-Principal have introduced a performance review system for teaching assistants. Teaching assistants, using expertise from the Co-Principal's academy, have been trained in how to support pupils' reading. As a result, reading has improved. The review system is a good example of the academy's commitment to equality of opportunity for all.
- The curriculum is effective in providing a wide range of opportunities for pupils to link visits out of school to work in subjects. For example, visits to Eyam to study the effects of 'The Plague' helped pupils with the study of history. Subject leaders are not regularly checking the quality of teachers' work across all subjects to ensure it is good. An analysis of pupils' work carried out across a wide range of subjects showed that their understanding and skills require improvement.
- The primary school sports funding is spent effectively to extend pupils' sporting skills and many take part in the activities on offer.
- Good relationships fostered between pupils and staff characterise the academy's work, as does a clear understanding of tolerance and respect. Leaders ensure that it is a calm and harmonious community. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- Pupils elect the academy council through a democratic voting system, are visited by local councillors and take part in working with magistrates. They are aware that behaviour rules are necessary to ensure the smooth running of a community. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain and have good opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- There are good arrangements for safeguarding and child protection, which meet statutory requirements. Staff are vigilant and leaders follow up concerns tenaciously. There is good induction training for staff when they join the academy to ensure they know how to keep children safe. Leaders work well with other agencies to ensure the most vulnerable pupils are well cared for and supported. Governors check the effectiveness of the procedures with academy leaders.
- The impact of the additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils is not good. Although it enables disadvantaged pupils to participate in all aspects of academy life, the actions taken to support these pupils, both inside and outside the classroom, are not checked well enough. These pupils are absent too often and gaps in their achievement within the academy and in comparison with other pupils nationally have not closed swiftly, particularly in writing.
- The sponsor has 'stepped in' with good effect to help the academy in its second year of operation. They

have established support for the interim-leadership in the academy, organised a raising of achievement group with governors and are checking the work of the academy well. Governance has improved because they now receive good guidance. Pupils' achievement in the academy is showing signs of improvement in Key Stage 1 and reading throughout the academy. However, governors' actions have not yet ensured that the overall effectiveness of the academy is good. The local authority meets the sponsors' representative regularly to determine what is being done to improve the academy. Academy leaders use local authority networks to support the development of leadership and to check teachers' assessments of pupils' work.

■ The governance of the school:

- Over time, governors have not checked the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and behaviour and safety well enough to ensure they are good. However, governance has improved over the past year and is now effective in checking the work of the academy.
- Governor training and changes to membership of the governing body have assisted governors to become effective. A 'Raising of Achievement Board', established by the sponsors and including governors, has helped governors to be more challenging and supportive to senior leaders. Governors gather first-hand information about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement by visiting lessons and checking pupils' work with senior leaders.
- Governors use their skills well to check the academy's budget. Governors are clear about the arrangements linking teachers' performance and pay. They are clear about the spending of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and for the primary school sports funding. Governors know that further work has to be completed to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve consistently well and attend well.
- Governors have a detailed understanding of pupils' achievement in comparison to national achievement. They know the strengths of the academy and its areas for development. Governors are supporting the academy effectively in its drive for improvement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- When teaching is not good, pupils' attitudes to learning are not consistently good. In lessons, when activities fail to effectively meet pupils' varying needs and abilities, some pupils can lose concentration and are not fully involved in learning. For a few pupils, this means that their behaviour slips and this is not always addressed well by staff.
- Pupils keep the academy tidy and free of litter. They have well-developed social skills and welcome visitors. They are courteous and polite, holding doors open for adults and pleasantly answering questions about their academy.
- Not all pupils take pride in the presentation of their work. Not all pupils are always careful to produce good handwriting and check that their spelling is accurate. This slows the development of their writing skills.
- The academy is a calm, purposeful and harmonious community. Pupils get on well together at break and lunchtimes, where they are very active and enjoy playing games.
- Pupils say that they enjoy sport. Inspectors observed pupils working well together in team games, as well as playing on a 'trim trail', 'tyre park' and climbing wall. Pupils say that 'there are plenty of activities and they are fantastic'.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement.
- Leaders' actions have not ensured attendance is improving quickly and consequently, it remains below average. Disadvantaged pupils are often absent from the academy. This prevents them taking full advantage of the academy's work in helping pupils to stay safe. Consequently, their learning about how to keep safe is inhibited and requires improvement.
- Those pupils present during the inspection told inspectors that they were safe in the academy. They said 'teachers look after us well'.
- The academy provides opportunities in assemblies and lessons for pupils to learn about safety. Contributions, such as visits to training centres and visits from the police and fire brigade, ensure pupils who attend regularly can effectively assess risks to their safety.
- Pupils are clear about what constitutes bullying, including prejudice-based bullying and cyber-bullying.

Bullying is rare and when it happens, pupils are confident that it is dealt with immediately. Pupils understand clearly how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.

- Parents and staff are very confident that children are safe in the academy.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good and varies from class to class. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 have had a number of different teachers over the past two years and this has led to inconsistencies in teaching quality. As a result, pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics is as expected but no better than this.
- Work set does not match the needs and abilities of all pupils well enough. It does not always challenge pupils to help them make good progress and reach average or above average standards. Consequently, some pupils find work too easy, particularly the most able, and others find it too hard. When this happens some pupils lose concentration and teachers do not set them back to work quickly.
- There are good examples of work pitched at the right levels and pupils working hard. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics session, where pupils were working out percentages of amounts, questions were varied and matched well to pupils' abilities and needs with good challenge for all, especially the most able.
- Expectations of the quality of pupils' writing and presentation are not consistently high enough. Untidy handwriting, weak presentation and inaccurate spelling and grammar are not addressed swiftly enough nor are inaccuracies in calculations in mathematics.
- Good teaching in the early years is reflected in effective questioning which helps children to explain their learning and thinking, as well as encouraging them to use correct vocabulary. However, teachers' questioning skills in Key Stages 1 and 2 are inconsistent and vary. When questioning is not good, pupils' understanding of what they are intended to learn is not assessed carefully enough in order to establish how well they are doing or to challenge pupils' thinking to help them achieve better.
- Not all teachers adhere to the academy's agreed marking policy because occasionally, work goes unmarked. At other times, information about what is needed to make good progress is unclear, not challenging enough for pupils to reach higher standards and not responded to in detail by pupils. There is some good quality marking with helpful advice and 'next steps' for improvement that is acted on well by pupils to improve their learning but this is not yet the norm in all lessons.
- There are many good opportunities for pupils to read widely and to develop their reading skills in a wide range of subjects. This is helping them make good progress in reading. An analysis of pupils' work showed that there are good opportunities for pupils to write at length, but they do not develop this skill across a wide range of subjects in their topic work. Also, inspectors found too few opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects. This does not help them to improve their mathematical skills at a faster rate.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning when managed well. Pupils of all abilities respect them for their good work. There are times when teachers do not plan well and so do not manage the work of teaching assistants well and their contribution does not support good learning.
- Good relationships between adults and pupils are a feature in all lessons.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because the progress pupils are making in writing and mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2 is not good. Inconsistent teaching in these subjects leads to pupils making the progress expected of them but no better than that.
- Over time, progress has improved in the early years and is now providing a good foundation for learning in Key Stage 1. This is seen clearly in improved reading by the end of Year 1 and a keenness and readiness to learn in Key Stage 1.
- Throughout Key Stage 1, pupils make the progress expected of them in writing and mathematics to reach broadly average standards at the end of Year 2. They make good progress in reading, from their lower than average starting points, to reach average standards. Pupils are better prepared than in the past to start the next stage of their learning in Key Stage 2.
- This year, the progress made through Key Stage 2 is better than in the first year of the academy's existence. A larger proportion of pupils are making the progress expected of them. Senior leaders, including the Co-Principal, organised an extensive training programme to improve the teaching of reading. As a result, from low starting points at the beginning of Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in

reading and attainment is now close to average. However, this is not the case in writing and mathematics because too few pupils do better than expected and standards remain well below average from low starting points.

- An analysis of pupils' work in writing and mathematics show that throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, achievement requires improvement. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough to drive up standards in writing and mathematics because work is not challenging enough. The quality of pupils' English grammar, punctuation and spelling requires improvement because teachers' expectations are not high enough and mis-spelt words or incorrect grammar and punctuation are not identified well enough for pupils to improve.
- The teaching of reading provides good challenge for the most able pupils to reach the same standards as similar pupils nationally. A lack of challenge for the most able pupils in mathematics and writing leads to less progress than similar pupils nationally. Too few reach the higher standards in writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are given good support to quickly develop the basic skills of spoken and written English. They integrate well into classes and make similar progress to other pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to others in the academy. Despite having additional support they do not do any better than this because work set does not always match their needs well. Additional staff are not always used to greatest effect by teachers and leaders.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress varies across the academy depending on the quality of teaching. Poor attendance for some disadvantaged pupils is slowing their progress. Overall, they make similar progress to others in the academy and the standards they reach depend on their starting points. In 2014, they were two terms behind others in the academy in reading, writing and mathematics. Like others in the academy, their standards were low in comparison to national standards, being on average over four terms behind others nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- This year, disadvantaged pupils are set to close the gap in attainment in reading compared to other pupils nationally and reduce the gap in mathematics but they still remain a year behind in writing.
- The teaching of phonics (linking letters to their sounds) and standards in reading have improved well. This year, for example, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the national phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 has improved to average. Pupils are making good progress in reading and are enjoy reading to adults. Books are well matched to pupils' abilities and interests. They read widely becoming keen and confident readers. Pupils use their library lesson to select a range of different reading materials and books from their favourite authors. Parents regularly listen to children reading both at home and in the academy.

The early years provision

is good

- All children enter the Nursery class with skills below those typical for their age. Children are least skilled in using language, communicating and in their physical development. Children make good progress in nursery because of good routines that help them settle well and grow in confidence.
- Although the vast majority of children enter reception with skills that are still below those typical for their age, they have good attitudes to learning established in nursery. Foundations for learning set in nursery help children make good progress in the Reception class. By the end of the Reception Year there are now a larger proportion of children reaching a good level of development than nationally, with some exceeding that. From starting points that are below those found typically, children make good progress in the early years and are well prepared for their next stage in education.
- Children make better progress in the early years than in Key Stages 1 and 2 because of consistently good teaching and good leadership. Well-planned activities led by adults, or chosen by children, are interesting and match children's varying needs and abilities. Teachers' good questioning skills provide good opportunities for children to develop their communication skills and their confidence.
- The calm, purposeful environment and the interesting work, covering all of the areas of learning, help children to develop good attitudes to learning. Children select purposeful activities for themselves and are well guided and supported by adults. There is a well-equipped outdoor learning area used effectively to support learning. Good use of computers help children develop their reading and mathematical skills well. Children's writing skills develop well. Children were proud to show their good writing and research they had been doing about wild animals in preparation for a visit to a wildlife park.
- Leadership is good. The experienced and highly committed early years leader has a clear overview of the

strengths and areas for development in the early years. She has brought about significant changes to make sure children's skills are assessed thoroughly and accurately. As a result, she ensures that adults are well deployed to support all children in making good progress. Disadvantaged children, make the same good progress as others. Disabled children and those who have special education needs make good progress because of the good teaching and support they receive in the early years.

- Staff receive regular and relevant professional development in order to improve children's skills, such as reading. Parents are very happy with the provision and the way in which staff communicate with them about their child's well-being and achievement.
- The curriculum is rich and exciting with many opportunities for children to investigate and learn for themselves. For example, children enjoy working together making dens and exploring how electrical circuits work. Visitors to the early years combined with a good range of external visits develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world effectively.
- Children are safe and happy because of the secure procedures that exist in the early years for children's welfare and safeguarding. Their behaviour is good because they have positive attitudes to learning and play well together. Adults know the needs of the children well and give them good care and attention. A wide range of activities make a good contribution to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.

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	139932
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	450243

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	573
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Jessop
Headteacher	Amanda Smith
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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