

City Heights E-ACT Academy

URN: 137954 | Inspected: 09 December 2025

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.

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

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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.

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,

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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

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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

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.

For detailed performance data including disadvantage gap analysis, historical trends, and comparison tables, visit the school's profile on WhatSchool:

<https://whatschool.ai/en/school/city-heights-e-act-academy-london>