

Brine Leas School

Audlem Road, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 7DY

Inspection dates

20–21 April 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has created an inclusive ethos where differences are celebrated. Alongside other senior leaders, he is passionate about improving the life chances of pupils.
- Governors are fully committed to the school. They use their wide range of skills to challenge leaders to improve the school even further.
- In 2016, the progress that Year 11 pupils made across a range of subjects was broadly in line with national averages. The progress of current pupils is improving in a wide range of subjects.
- The differences in outcomes between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally are diminishing. Disadvantaged pupils are making good progress, especially in English and mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers use their good subject knowledge well when planning lessons.
- Not all pupils, especially the most able, are sufficiently stretched in lessons because some teachers are not setting work that is challenging enough.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Students' progress is outstanding as a result of highly effective teaching which promotes rapid progress in almost all subjects.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils value the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided for them.
- The arrangements for pupils' personal development and welfare are outstanding. The safety and well-being of all pupils is a high priority for all staff. The house system successfully develops pupils' self-confidence and loyalty.
- Pupils behave well. They are polite, articulate and take pride in their school.
- Most pupils show positive attitudes towards their learning. Pupils benefit from strong relationships with their teachers and other adults in the school.
- Pupils' overall attendance is broadly in line with the national average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving. However, absence rates for these pupils remain higher than the national average.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further by ensuring that teachers set consistently challenging work for all pupils, including the most able.
- Further diminish the difference between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally.
- Continue to improve the attendance rates of disadvantaged pupils and of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has ensured that there is a culture of ambition and high aspiration throughout the school community. He is well supported by senior leaders, governors and staff. Together they have helped to create a cohesive learning community. Staff morale is high.
- Leaders have responded positively to a dip in examination results in 2016. They have developed a strong system to track the progress of pupils and identify those who need additional help. Pupils' progress is now improving across most subjects.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is strong because leaders use rigorous performance management and training to address underperformance. Leaders have an accurate understanding of what is working well and what is required for the school to become even more successful. Teachers value the professional development opportunities that the school offers. Newly qualified teachers are very well supported.
- Leaders monitor the use of pupil premium funding more closely than they did in recent years. They now ensure that this funding is used effectively for a range of interventions, including individual and group tutoring. As a result, the difference between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils nationally is reducing.
- Leaders use additional funding effectively to support pupils who join the school in Year 7. This leads to reading, writing and mathematics skills being well developed across the school.
- Pupils enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum in all key stages. Leaders keep the curriculum under review to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils. For example, leaders are planning to introduce more vocational subjects at key stage 4.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils' understanding of British values is very well planned through assemblies on democracy, respect and tolerance. Pupils learn about other cultures and beliefs, for example through visits to a local mosque during curriculum enrichment week.
- Pupils benefit from a range of extra-curricular activities such as inter-house dance, drama, music and sport competitions. A typical comment from pupils is: 'There is something for everyone.' Pupils are also involved in charity work and have the opportunity to participate in expeditions to different countries. Other opportunities include the baking club, model railway club and singing group.
- The leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. Additional funding has been used effectively to provide specific and targeted support for this group of pupils, such as providing specialist support for pupils with autism.
- Parents' views of the school are very positive. The overwhelming majority of those completing Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, would recommend the school to others.

Governance of the school

- Governors are passionate about the school. They have taken advantage of opportunities for training to ensure that they can be highly effective.
- Governors visit the school regularly, holding discussions with leaders with whom they are linked, and challenge them on a regular basis. This has led to the greater accountability of leaders and improved pupils' progress across most subjects.
- Governors have a secure understanding of how the funding for disadvantaged pupils is spent and closely check that its impact is effective.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have created a culture in which safeguarding is seen as highly important. Checks on the suitability of staff are sound. The governor responsible for safeguarding visits the school termly to check that the appropriate systems are in place and up to date. All staff and governors have completed training in safeguarding. They receive frequent updates and all have read the most recent government guidelines. Staff are aware of the signs of abuse and risks associated with extremism. They know what to do if they have any concern about a pupil's welfare or safety. Leaders liaise effectively and in a timely manner with parents and outside agencies that support pupils' welfare.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to explain ideas and concepts to pupils clearly and generate enthusiasm during lessons. Relationships between teaching staff and pupils are positive and encouraging. As a result, pupils' achievement is improving in most subjects.
- In many lessons, teachers use questioning effectively to target pupils of different abilities and to probe and deepen pupils' understanding.
- Teachers within the English and mathematics departments have made every attempt to ensure the accuracy of assessments for new courses, by internal moderation and consultation with other local schools and those further afield.
- Most teachers use assessment information well to plan interesting and engaging activities. However, not all teachers provide pupils with enough challenge. As a result, not all pupils, especially the most able, deepen their understanding and knowledge as quickly as they should.
- Teachers encourage pupils to read well. Year 7 pupils, who read to an inspector, said that they enjoy reading.
- Experienced teaching assistants help pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to understand their work and to make good progress by working with them individually and in small groups.
- Homework is set regularly across most subjects and is used effectively to consolidate and extend learning. Pupils appreciate the support that they receive from staff after

school that helps them to make swift progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The ethos of the school is inclusive, caring and aspirational. Pupils feel well cared for and safe. They understand the risks associated with social media and know whom to go to should they feel unsafe.
- The personal, social, health and economic education programme is comprehensive and well led. Pupils are encouraged to think about a range of issues such as the importance of a healthy lifestyle and emotional and mental health. This enhances their personal development and well-being.
- Leaders encourage pupils to value diversity. For example, leaders have collaborated with the student body to create the 'lionhearts group', whose members lead assemblies to promote awareness of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender matters.
- Pupils told inspectors that bullying is rare and this is confirmed by the school's records. Pupils are confident that should bullying occur it is dealt with effectively.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills such as 'youth parliament' representatives, house captains, safeguarding ambassadors, prefects, head boy or girl, or as sports leaders.
- Teachers make visits to pupils' primary schools prior to them joining in Year 7 in order to make the move to secondary school as smooth as possible. Year 7 pupils enjoy an annual residential trip to the Menai Straits, which helps them to gain in confidence and make friends quickly.
- Leaders ensure that the small number of pupils in part-time alternative provision are well supported. The school checks and monitors the quality of provision and receives daily attendance information.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and enjoy school. They arrive to lessons on time and bring the right equipment with them and generally present their books neatly. They wear their uniform well, showing pride in their school. Pupils show respect for others during form periods and social times.
- At lesson changeover times, staff are at their classroom doors, welcoming pupils to their lesson. This adds to the calm atmosphere in the school.
- Pupils report that learning is disrupted only rarely, and inspection evidence confirmed this. When learning does not engage pupils' interests, some boys become a little inattentive but respond well to the teachers' request to get back on track. Most pupils

behave sensibly and maturely in lessons.

- The school's behaviour policy is understood by pupils. Records show that fixed-term exclusions and removals to the internal exclusion room have decreased over time.
- Pupils' overall attendance is in line with the national average. Persistent absence has decreased as a result of staff working more effectively with parents. However, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities still do not attend as regularly as they should.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2016, pupils' progress was broadly in line with national averages across a wide range of subjects. Pupils made particularly strong progress in history, religious studies, textiles, physical education and core and additional science. However, pupils did not make good enough progress in languages, information and communication technology and further additional science.
- School data, observation in lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work show that pupil progress is improving in most subjects, particularly in English.
- The large majority of pupils study a modern foreign language to GCSE level. Historically, outcomes in languages have been weaker than in other subjects. Inspection evidence shows that current pupils' progress in this area is improving.
- The difference between the progress of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, and that of other pupils nationally is diminishing.
- Progress for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was below the national average in 2016 across a range of subjects. Pupils' progress is improving because of targeted support from teachers and other adults.
- The most able pupils are making faster progress. It is still not as rapid as that of other pupils.
- Pupils who enter the school below age-related expectations in English and mathematics catch up by the time they leave due to well-targeted spending of the funds available to support these pupils.
- The small number of pupils who attend alternative provision make good progress because they have access to a range of interesting courses, including communication at work, healthy eating and health and safety. Pupils gain an accredited qualification which offers a clear progression through to apprenticeships. Leaders ensure close liaison between school staff and providers.
- School leaders go 'above and beyond' to ensure that all pupils have access to impartial careers advice. Pupils have access to a coherent programme to build their knowledge, skills and competencies. Pupils take part in an annual work experience week in Year 11 which helps to develop their work-related skills.

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- Strong leadership and excellent quality of teaching in the sixth form ensure that

students achieve outstanding outcomes.

- Leaders' high aspirations and determination have improved the quality of the sixth form since it opened in 2010. The current head of sixth form has continued to drive up standards of teaching.
- The sixth-form centre provides an excellent environment to study. Classrooms are bright and stimulating. Break-out spaces are heavily populated with computers and work areas. Students' work is celebrated through excellent displays. The café area provides a pleasant place in which students can socialise.
- Leaders have created an excellent culture within the sixth-form centre. The sixth form provides an ideal stepping stone between school and higher education or employment. Students are expected to take responsibility for their learning and development.
- There are excellent systems in place to monitor and support students' progress. Leaders and teachers check carefully how well students are doing and intervene swiftly and effectively if they are falling behind.
- Students say that for them the most significant feature is the excellent relationships they have with their teachers. They say that teachers know them well from the beginning of Year 12. They appreciate how hard teachers work to support their studies. Students are entirely comfortable about asking for support.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge across the sixth form. Leaders accurately monitor the quality of teaching. Teachers give excellent guidance to students on how to improve the quality of their work. Over time the achievement of students has got better and better. Students are on course to gain outstanding outcomes.
- Students have excellent attitudes to their learning. They participate enthusiastically in lessons and produce high-quality work. They are cared for very well.
- Staff are sensitive to students' individual needs, and support for their emotional and physical well-being is excellent.
- Attendance is very high because students enjoy coming to school. There are robust procedures for monitoring absence and supporting individuals whose attendance drops.
- Students are well informed about the world of work, including participating in work experience. They receive very good careers guidance and support. Almost all of them go on to degree courses and apprenticeships. A large proportion progress to top universities.
- The school is very successful in helping those students who start the sixth form without a good grade in English or mathematics to achieve a good pass by the end of Year 12.
- Students are expected to develop a wide range of skills that will help them in the future. Students learn early on how to become successful learners. Their personal development is also promoted well through an individualised programme of enrichment.
- Most students continue their studies from Year 12 into Year 13. This is because students are guided very well onto appropriate courses that meet their needs and they benefit from outstanding teaching.

School details

Unique reference number	136279
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10032818

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,372
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	264
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Su Turner
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Cliffe
Telephone number	01270 625663
Website	http://brineleas.co.uk/
Email address	head@brineleas.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Brine Leas School converted to become an academy on 2 September 2010. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be outstanding. Brine Leas School became a member of the Brine Multi Academy Trust on 29 July 2016.

- Brine Leas School is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is broadly in line with national average.
- A small number of pupils attend part-time alternative provision at Safe Opportunities.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning across all year groups and a wide range of subjects. Some of these were joint observations with school leaders.
- Meetings were held with pupils from all year groups, and inspectors talked to pupils in lessons and around the school. Inspectors listened to a group of Year 7 pupils read.
- Pupils' work in lessons was scrutinised by inspectors. They also looked at a sample of pupils' books to evaluate their learning over time in different subjects.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents, taking into account 61 responses to the online Ofsted parent questionnaire, Parent View.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and senior leaders, groups of middle leaders, teachers, the chair and members of the local governing body and the chair of the multi-academy trust. Inspectors also held telephone conversations with a representative from an alternative provider and the school's improvement adviser.
- The inspection team scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including: records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, safeguarding information, minutes of governing body meetings, information on the progress made by pupils, training arrangements for teachers and other staff, checks on the quality of teaching, external reviews by consultants, the school's self-evaluation and the school improvement plan.

Inspection team

Ahmed Marikar, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Woodhouse	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Bailey	Ofsted Inspector
Bernard Robinson	Ofsted Inspector
Helen O'Neill	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Roberts	Ofsted Inspector
Neil Mackenzie	Her Majesty's Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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