

Camulos Academy

Whitmore Drive, Via Urbis Romanae, Colchester, Essex CO4 6AL

Inspection dates

2 to 3 July 2019

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
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Camulos Academy opened in 2016. It has grown substantially over the last three years. Current leaders, with the excellent support provided by the multi-academy trust (MAT) leaders, have created a school with high standards, where pupils achieve well.
- Leaders, both in school and from the MAT, have successfully taken the school through a period of instability in leadership, creating a staff team with a strong sense of teamwork and strong morale.
- Governors have been effective in supporting the school. They have recruited a skilled leadership team that is moving the school forward. A comprehensive professional development programme for leaders and other staff is not in place currently.
- Many teachers in the school are new to teaching. Where they have been well supported by peers, they have made a strong start to their careers.
- Across the school, teachers make consistent use of leaders' chosen mathematics and writing schemes. The structured approach has enabled pupils to make good progress.
- The wider curriculum is engaging, and pupils achieve well, particularly in science and physical education (PE). Leaders are currently reviewing the curriculum to enable pupils to build on and apply their knowledge and vocabulary more.
- Teachers model skills and good examples to pupils throughout the curriculum. However, sometimes not enough demonstration is done and what is shown does not usually encourage stretch and challenge for the most able pupils.
- Pupils behave well. They enjoy school, feel safe and are able to seek help with any worries.
- Pupils read well. A large majority meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Even so, there is a lack of emphasis on pupils using their knowledge and skills in phonics to spell and write new words.
- Pupils' writing is often poorly presented, and this does not help them to spot errors in their own work. There is not currently enough of an early focus on correct letter formation and on developing good writing styles from the start.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - continuing to develop the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation, including in the early years
 - having higher expectations of all staff to follow the school's chosen phonics programme consistently and ensure that pupils practise using their phonics knowledge and skills to spell and write new words
 - making sure that where teachers model skills to pupils, this is of high quality across all classes and subjects and allows for further challenge of the most able pupils.
- Continue to support leaders in their new roles to sustain continuous school improvement and to develop a high-quality staff training and development programme.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Camulos Academy opened in September 2016. In the last three years, it has grown substantially, from initially two classes of Reception children, to 10 classes covering the entire primary-age range. The current headteacher was deputy headteacher at the start, then acting headteacher, and has provided a stable leadership presence through this rapid growth.
- There has been significant leadership instability in the last year, but the new headteacher has been supported extremely well by leaders from the MAT. A large proportion of the teachers are either newly qualified or in training over the last year, and this has provided further challenge to support them with the reduced leadership capacity. The headteacher, together with an acting assistant headteacher and skilled teachers from the MAT have enabled most new teachers to make a strong start to their careers and allow pupils to achieve well.
- The MAT and governors have worked together closely to ensure that a secure and sustainable structure for leadership is in place. A new deputy headteacher has been appointed from September and the leadership team is being expanded to include a special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and a family support worker. The MAT is in the process of reorganising its regional support structures, which will further enhance ongoing coaching and development for all school leaders as they become more established in their new roles.
- Leaders responsible for English and mathematics have ensured that there is consistency across the school in the approaches used in teaching and learning. They have worked with the newer teachers to develop their teaching and, as a consequence, pupils across the school have achieved well.
- Staff have access to a wide variety of professional development through the MAT. Leaders receive external coaching and other teachers attend subject and year group meetings with colleagues from other schools. Staff are clear that these opportunities have enhanced their skills and expertise.
- The headteacher is currently SENCo and is highly knowledgeable about what pupils with different special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) need in order to make progress. As a consequence, provision for pupils with SEND is of good quality and they make strong progress.
- The pupil premium funding is used well. A large proportion successfully supports those pupils who have moved into the school with additional emotional needs or academic gaps.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is used very well. Many pupils take part in extra-curricular sports, both at lunchtimes and after school. PE teaching is of a high standard.
- Leaders ensure that British values are taught explicitly through assemblies and personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons and through a clear emphasis on behaviour expectations that pupils should respect each other. Pupils are highly

supportive of each other and demonstrate these positive moral values.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is effective in its work.
- They are well aware of the school's current strengths and areas for further development. They keep themselves informed through regular meetings with senior leaders and visits to the school when in session.
- Governors have worked closely with MAT leaders throughout this year to ensure that there is stability in the leadership team, now and in planning for the future, so that the school has a larger leadership team for September, to provide capacity for more in-school development of teaching and learning.
- Governors carefully monitor the use of additional funding for pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and for sport and PE. They challenge school leaders to check on its effective use.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff are highly aware of their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. Leaders provide both annual training and updates during the year. The headteacher checks on staff's understanding through fun quizzes and provides additional information as needed as a result.
- As designated safeguarding lead, the headteacher has established particularly positive working relationships with parents. Those families who require additional help and guidance receive this in a friendly, supportive way and now work closely with the school to the benefit of their children.
- Parents are clear that their children are safe in school.
- Governors make sure that all appropriate checks are made on adults who are regularly in the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have high expectations of the pupils in their classes. They insist on good behaviour, and develop strong, positive relationships with the pupils, which develops their confidence and resilience.
- The teaching of writing has been a high focus this academic year. The quality of what pupils are writing has improved, with a clear structure to teaching writing that is used consistently throughout the school. Pupils have many opportunities to write at length and they are engaged in the texts that are used as a stimulus. However, pupils do not take sufficient care in the presentation of their work and in the quality of their handwriting and, for some, this makes it hard for them to edit and improve their work.
- The teaching of phonics enables pupils to read accurately, which is evidenced by the large majority of Year 1 who reach the expected standard in the phonics screening

check. However, the school's chosen phonics scheme is not used consistently through the school and, as a consequence, opportunities for pupils to practise using their phonics knowledge and skills to write new words and develop strong letter formation are not followed through.

- Mathematics teaching has a high emphasis on developing fluency with number or the topic being covered and then applying this. Pupils show confidence from an early age in being able to use the word 'because' when explaining why something is the case.
- Pupils are supported well in their mathematical understanding through their access to and use of practical equipment to help them to work things out.
- Science is taught well, and pupils take part in a wide range of practical activities. They write and draw about their findings to a good standard.
- Teaching of the wider curriculum subjects captures pupils' interest and curiosity. The topics they study begin with 'stunning starts', lead to 'marvellous middles' and end with 'fabulous finishes'. These can be visitors or participation in a focused production, such as when Year 1 parents joined their children in a 'Rio carnival'. Learning is sequenced well and pupils gain strong knowledge about what is studied.
- The teaching of PE is a strength of the school. There is a strong skill focus, together with having fun. Pupils enjoy their PE lessons. Many pupils take part in PE activities beyond the standard school day.
- Support staff work well with pupils with SEND to enable them to access the same learning as their peers. Where this would not meet their needs well enough, they make good use of time in carefully planned interventions.
- Teachers demonstrate skills they want pupils to learn in many lessons. Sometimes there is not enough of this, yet at other times there is too much done for the pupils, leaving the most able unchallenged.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- There is rapid movement into the school, with nearly half the number on roll having entered at a non-standard point of entry. The induction of new pupils is a strength and they are quickly welcomed in by peers. Staff undertake assessments of both academic and any emotional needs on entry to be able to rapidly provide any additional support needed.
- Pupils are extremely accepting of and value the differences between them. Pupils volunteer to talk to others about their own lives out of school, for example two Muslim pupils led an assembly about Ramadan.
- The school's curriculum is enhanced by many visitors into school, for example a 'dinosaur' linked to a topic and the more usual firemen and paramedics as part of learning about 'people who help us'. As part of the review of the curriculum, leaders and teachers are planning for a greater number of visits out of the school.
- Pupils demonstrate key British values in their daily respect for others and

understanding of differences between each other. They value the rewards they receive for good effort and work, for example having the chance to sit at a special table for lunch.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils play well together in the spacious and well-resourced site. When moving around in corridors or in the lunch hall, they are quiet and sensible.
- In classes, pupils can be lively due to excitement about their learning, but they listen quickly when brought to attention by the adults. Pupils work hard and have good attitudes towards school.
- Pupils stated that there is not any bullying now. There is a perception from some parents that bullying incidents are not always dealt with correctly. However, evidence on inspection indicated that any perceived bullying is dealt with in a sensible way, with all those involved kept well informed. Some parents particularly mentioned the positive approach from the new headteacher.
- Attendance is in line with national averages. Staff are proactive in supporting families to encourage good attendance. As a consequence, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has fallen.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- All pupils in key stage 2 have moved from other schools and the strong teaching they have received has enabled them to continue to make progress and attain well.
- They leave the school well prepared for secondary school. They can write at length, have strong number fluency and reasoning skills. Their knowledge of topics covered in history, geography and science is strong. There is clear progression of skills as pupils move up through the school.
- Pupils in key stage 1 have made consistently good progress as they have moved through the school in reading and mathematics, attaining well in these subjects and science. Writing is of a weaker standard across Year 2; it has been a whole-school focus this year and pupils are now making stronger progress.
- Pupils across the school are confident readers as a result of the early focus on systematically learning phonics. They read with enthusiasm and show interest in the books. Reading is emphasised with light and airy libraries at the centre of both floors of the school.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enjoy coming to Reception class. Parents are positive about how their children have made a strong start to their school lives.
- Adults make learning enjoyable yet with clear purpose. Children both work with adults on writing and choose to write independently. They were able to draw on their own knowledge of what they had learned about plastic waste to write rules about rubbish

on the beach.

- Most children achieve a good level of development. Teachers are well aware of what each child needs to learn next and they plan specific activities which enable them to make strong progress.
- Teachers use practical materials to support the learning of mathematics and emphasise key vocabulary.
- The outside provision provides for a wide range of interesting activities linked into the theme for the term. Children enjoy finding hidden beach 'rubbish' in the sandpit using a metal detector and considering what shape of tinfoil boats would hold the most beads. There are opportunities for children to take controlled risks on the climbing wall and slope that is part of the area.
- Children develop confidence and independence skills as a result of the teaching and support. Most are able to plan their time to take part in various challenges during each day, wanting to earn points towards accessing special reward activities.
- In common with the rest of the school, there is inconsistency in how the school's chosen phonics scheme is delivered and, as a result, some children do not have the opportunities to practise writing new words with correct letter formation.
- Children's welfare is key. They are kept very safe and know how to keep themselves safe when using the various resources around the early years area.

School details

Unique reference number	141950
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10087465

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	261
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governors	Grant Chinyuku
Chair of trustees	Roger Pryce
Headteacher	Lisa Frith-Sly
Telephone number	01206 588 588
Website	www.camulosacademy.co.uk
Email address	office@camulosacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Camulos Academy opened in September 2016. It was built to serve a new housing estate on the outskirts of Colchester.
- The school is sponsored by Reach2 MAT. At the time of the inspection, the leadership of the school was being supported by a consultant executive headteacher from the MAT.
- The school has a local governing body that reports to a regional board, which then in turn reports to the board of trustees.
- The school has grown extremely rapidly in its first three years, now with over four times the number of pupils as on opening. On request of the local authority to provide school places, they opened up classes in older year groups. All current key stage 2 pupils have moved from other schools, and these make up nearly half the school roll.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching and learning in every class. Some of these observations were undertaken alongside members of the senior leadership team.
- A wide range of pupils' workbooks were looked at by the inspection team.
- The inspection team met with representatives from the governing body and the MAT. They met with senior leaders, middle leaders and other teachers and also considered the responses to the staff survey.
- A group of pupils met with an inspector. Inspectors also spoke to pupils informally in lessons and at playtimes.
- The inspection team scrutinised the school's website and a range of documents, including the school's own self-evaluation.
- Pupils read to inspectors and talked about their reading preferences.
- The 97 responses made by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered. The inspection team also spoke to some parents before school.

Inspection team

Tessa Holledge, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Rachael Judd	Ofsted Inspector
Heather Hann	Ofsted Inspector

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