

Inspection of a good school: Cranberry Academy

Cranberry Lane, Alsager, Stoke-on-Trent, Cheshire ST7 2LE

Inspection dates: 1–2 October 2019

Outcome

Cranberry Academy continues to be a good school.

However, I have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Cranberry Academy is expanding. The number of pupils increases almost weekly. The building work has finished, and the classrooms are lovely spaces in which to learn. Reading corners are inviting. Pupils are happy as they play and run around the very spacious grounds. The Royal Horticultural Society identified talent at the school and gave pupils a gardening award.

Most pupils behave well. They are friendly, well-mannered and polite. I saw pupils take advantage of the autumn sunshine at lunchtime as they sat eating their lunches, chatting happily. Pupils listen and respond well to adults' instructions and requests most of the time. They were slow, at the end of physical education (PE) lessons, to line up. Some ignored the teacher's request to form a straight line in silence. Incidents of bullying are rare and resolved quickly by leaders and staff.

Leaders make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn the full range of subjects. The staff's expectations for pupils' reading are not high enough. Leaders have not ensured that staff have the necessary expertise to teach reading well. Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as they should in reading and mathematics.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The younger children, in Nursery and Reception, are happy, confident and settled. They behave well and respond positively to adults. One teacher captivated the children at the end of the day with a beautifully read story. However, teachers use two different systems to teach children how to read. This approach risks confusing the children. In mathematics, children have a good understanding of counting. Around the classrooms, they use the resources to count and order numbers. They also use the language of size when comparing bears. Staff do not do enough to correct pupils' poor language or vocabulary.

I have recommended that the school receives a full inspection soon. This is because there are some weaknesses in the teaching of reading. Some of the older pupils cannot read their reading books because the books are too difficult. This means that some pupils cannot read fluently or with expression. Disadvantaged pupils and some of those with SEND do not read as well as they should. Teachers do not have enough knowledge of teaching pupils to read. Some teachers do not pronounce the sounds of letters well. Some introduce incorrect rules for reading. Over three-quarters of pupils met the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1. This is lower than it should be. Some adults have weak spoken standard English and grammar. This comes out in their teaching.

Mathematics is a stronger subject. The subject is led skilfully, and the curriculum is well planned and structured. Some pupils struggle to remember what they have learned about shapes and measures, but they are good at calculating with numbers and solving problems. Those with SEND achieve well. Pupils explain their answers clearly and accurately. They become more confident in using and applying number as they get older. A few staff use some incorrect mathematical terms when explaining work to pupils.

PE is also a strong subject. It is led well and staff have good subject knowledge. The school has received a gold award for the quality of its PE curriculum. Pupils enjoy this subject. They get the chance to assess how well they are doing and to improve their own performance. Pupils with SEND perform well. Pupils learn important skills of resilience, fairness and how to learn from mistakes. Some staff do not model correct standard English when they teach.

Pupils are keen to learn. They are eager and concentrate well. Disadvantaged pupils do not make the progress that they should. Leaders have not been precise in finding out what each pupil needs to help them to reach a high standard in reading, writing and mathematics. This is another reason why I have recommended a full inspection soon.

Leaders make sure that the school does not become focused only on academic results. For instance, pupils in Year 6 continue to study the full curriculum throughout their final year at the school.

Staff develop pupils' social skills. They develop pupils' awareness of right and wrong and the wonders of the world. They do this through, for example, outdoor education in the school's woods.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are well-trained and knowledgeable about the issues that can affect pupils' lives. They update staff properly about local and national developments in protecting pupils from harm. Leaders and staff discuss and consider some real-life safeguarding cases to help them think about their own responses to issues. Staff track incidents and link them together well to get a fuller picture of whether a child or family needs help. The school works well with specialists such as health professionals. This means that pupils have access to the support they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff do not have the subject knowledge that they need to teach reading well. Some pronounce the sounds of letters incorrectly; some use incorrect grammar and some teach pupils incorrect rules for reading. Some lack the ability to read to pupils in a way that would captivate and develop pupils' love of reading. In key stage 2, the books that some pupils read do not match their reading ability. Pupils do not develop the fluency and the expression that they need. Leaders should make certain that staff have the knowledge and ability they need to teach all pupils to read with skill, confidence and ease.
- Disadvantaged pupils have not made the progress that they should in key stage 2. Some staff have not precisely spotted what each pupil needs to attain a high or expected standard by the end of Year 6. The school needs to improve quickly the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Too many staff make errors in their standard spoken English when they teach. In some cases, this means that they model bad habits or teach incorrect grammar. Leaders should make sure that all staff, when they teach, use correct standard English. Leaders need to ensure consistency to avoid confusing the children. Staff need to do more to correct pupils' poor language or vocabulary.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Cranberry Academy to be good on 19 May 2015.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	139910
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10087702
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	273
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chief executive officer	Chris Brislen
Principal	Jill Robertson (Interim executive principal), Jan North (Acting head of school)
Website	www.cranberryacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 May 2015

Information about this school

- The principal left the school at the end of the summer term. As an interim measure, the vice-principal, from September, became the acting head of school. The trust has organised for one of its headteachers to act as an interim executive principal from September for half of each week until a substantive principal is appointed.

Information about this inspection

- I spoke with the subject leaders for PE, French, science, mathematics and reading. I also met with a range of staff to talk about the curriculum.
- I met with four members of the local governing committee and trustees. I also met the chief executive officer and the deputy director for standards and effectiveness from the trust.
- I considered the views of parents who completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I also took account of the views of staff who completed an online Ofsted survey.
- Although no pupils completed Ofsted's online survey, I met with pupils to talk about PE and mathematics. I heard some pupils read from Years 3, 4 and 5. I also met some pupils at breaktime.

- I looked in depth at reading, mathematics and PE. I also looked at French and science.
- I looked at the information about attendance and exclusions. Also, in inspecting safeguarding, I met with a range of staff and the local governing committee.

Inspection team

Allan Torr, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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