

# Inspection of The Berkeley Academy

Laidon Avenue, Wistaston, Crewe, Cheshire CW2 6RU

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Inspection dates: 22–23 October 2019

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

This is a caring and welcoming school. The school's motto of 'all about doing our best' is evident in pupils' work and in their behaviour. Staff have high expectations of all pupils. Teachers encourage pupils to work hard. Pupils are very polite and well mannered. Their attitude to learning is exemplary.

Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that behaviour is excellent and bullying is rare. Should any pupils fall out, they said that they can usually sort things out for themselves. If not, they know that staff will deal with any issues. Pupils say that there is always someone to talk to if they have any concerns. Playtimes are calm and well supervised by staff.

Pupils told inspectors that they like coming to school. This is reflected in high levels of attendance. Pupils enjoy their lessons and the many after-school clubs. They particularly enjoy sports clubs such as athletics and dancing.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development. They give pupils positions of responsibility. For example, many are members of 'Berkeley Young Leaders'. This helps them to understand how they can make a positive contribution to society in the future. Pupils are especially proud of their work with the local guide dog association.

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

There has been a period of unavoidable turbulence in staffing over recent months. This contributed to a decline in pupils' achievement in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2019. Leaders have acted quickly to ensure that this dip in outcomes is not repeated. They have also continued to strengthen the curriculum across the school, including in English and mathematics. These improvements can be seen in the good-quality work that pupils are now producing in these subjects. Overall, pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their education.

Across all subjects, teachers have strong subject knowledge and plan learning effectively. Current pupils are achieving well across the school. At key stage 1, for example, the proportion of pupils achieving at greater depth in writing continues to be above the national average and in the highest 20% of schools.

The headteacher gives reading a high priority. Specialist training makes sure that staff teach phonics well. The proportion of Year 1 pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check has been at least in line with the national average for several years. Teachers introduce pupils to a wide range of authors. Older pupils are enthusiastic about the books that they read. Pupils develop into fluent, highly skilled readers.

Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to practise what they already know

before they learn new things. They use the information that they have about pupils' prior learning effectively to plan the next stages of pupils' learning. Subject leaders identify the skills that they want pupils to know and remember in each term across a range of subjects. For example, in history the knowledge and skills that pupils need to build upon from the Nursery class to Year 6 are clear in teachers' planning. Pupils show exceptional attitudes to learning.

The curriculums in art and design and design and technology are not as well planned as in other subjects. Although pupils achieve well in these subjects, some teachers have not given enough thought to the order in which pupils learn new knowledge. Pupils do not develop their knowledge as quickly as they do in other subjects.

In the early years, parents and carers are happy with how well their children settle into school. Teachers ensure that parents are involved in their children's learning. In the Nursery and Reception classes, children's early mathematics, language and communication skills develop well. Teachers plan activities which meet children's needs. Children progress well. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development in 2019 was above the national average. They are ready for Year 1.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the full curriculum and achieve well. Leaders put effective support in place. This support matches their individual needs.

Governors are clear about their roles. They provide effective challenge and support for leaders. Staff told inspectors how proud they are to be part of the school. They also said that leaders provide support if needed. Staff appreciate how senior leaders consider their workload and well-being.

Parents who spoke to inspectors commented on the many strengths of the school. They appreciate the focus that leaders give to pupils' personal development. Bullying is rare in this school. Pupils enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities and clubs, such as French and drama. They are successful in sporting competitions in the region.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders respond to concerns quickly, referring pupils to other agencies, such as children's services, when required. Leaders make sure that all safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and are adapted precisely to the needs of the pupils. The culture of safeguarding in the school is strong. Staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding procedures. They are fully aware of the various signs of abuse. Pupils feel safe in the school. They are taught how to stay safe, including when they are using the internet. Governors oversee the school's safeguarding procedures effectively.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

## **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Learning in art and design and design and technology is not as strong as other subjects. This is because some learning is not well sequenced. Consequently, pupils are not secure in their knowledge and skills. Leaders must make sure that learning is carefully planned and that the curriculum is well taught. This is to ensure that pupils are able to know more and do more in these subjects.

### **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're 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	142235
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire East
<b>Inspection number</b>	10087748
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	469
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Craig Dobson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Carolyn Brown
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.theberkeleycheshire.co.uk">www.theberkeleycheshire.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	24 July 2018

## Information about this school

- Over the last 12 months there have been unavoidable disruptions to staffing at all levels.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Meetings were also held with those responsible for governance. We spoke with pupils, both formally and informally. We also spoke with parents before school started.
- As part of this inspection, the following subjects were considered: reading, mathematics, writing, and art and design. For each of these subjects, inspectors undertook the following: discussions with senior leaders and subject leaders; visits to lessons; discussions with pupils about their experience of learning; and scrutiny of the work in pupils' books.
- An inspector heard pupils read and talked with pupils about how the school teaches reading.
- We considered 168 responses to Ofsted Parent View and 96 free-text comments. We also considered 33 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to

the pupil survey.

- We spoke to staff, governors and pupils about how the school keeps pupils safe. An inspector examined the single central record of the checks undertaken to make sure that staff are suitable to work in a school. He also reviewed the school's safeguarding policy.

### **Inspection team**

Simon Hunter, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lynne Ryder

Ofsted Inspector

Gary Kelly

Ofsted Inspector

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