

Inspection of Anker Valley Primary Academy

Brooklime Way, Tamworth, Staffordshire B79 0FD

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 January 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The head of school is Natalie Horlor. This school is part of Fierté Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Maria Hamblin, who is also the executive headteacher. It is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Zoe Insley.

What is it like to attend this school?

Anker Valley is a warm, nurturing, successful school. Pupils flourish because they are cared for deeply. Their needs are at the heart of every decision the school makes. The school has created an atmosphere where respect is commonplace. This can be seen clearly in relationships pupils have with each other and with adults. Pupils repeatedly describe all members of staff as 'kind'. This helps them to feel safe and happy in school. They attend eagerly and regularly and are keen to learn.

Pupils are routinely kind to each other. They have beautiful manners. The behaviour they show at all points of the day is praiseworthy. The school has high expectations that everyone should be respectful, show kindness, be courteous, be determined and show care. These are impressively realised. The expectations are modelled for pupils by extremely dedicated, caring and skilful staff in all areas of the school. It is a harmonious place to be, where each pupil is known as an individual and treated as such.

The school has high expectations for the achievement of all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is realised particularly well in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Children get off to an excellent start in the early years. The setting ensures they develop independence and curiosity very well. They show determination and perseverance in the varied and engaging learning opportunities made available for them. There is a strong focus on children developing communication and language skills. They confidently and accurately retell stories and act them out on the purpose-built stage in the well-equipped outdoor area.

Early reading has a high priority. Teachers are skilled in delivering phonics sessions. Staff quickly identify pupils at risk of falling behind. Targeted support is provided for them in additional 'breakfast phonics' sessions. These sessions are effective. Pupils read books that allow them to practise the sounds they know and help them to read new and unfamiliar words with fluency. The beautiful school library is open to the pupils every breaktime and lunchtime so they can enjoy their favourite book. Many pupils choose to do this. Regular story times at the end of each day further support developing a love of books and stories.

A carefully designed curriculum ensures that pupils also achieve well in writing and mathematics. Careful thought has been given to what pupils learn and when they learn it. This allows them to build their skills and knowledge in a logical way. However, in a small number of subjects, the school has not ensured that the curriculum is implemented in a way that allows knowledge to build and deepen. In these subjects, pupils are not given enough opportunities to demonstrate what they have learned and remembered.

The school identifies pupils with SEND without delay. Pupils with SEND are provided with high-quality nurture and care. The school seeks advice and support from external professionals to ensure these pupils receive the support they need. Astro, the much-loved dog, is a valued member of the school, offering alternative support to any pupil who needs it. Guinea pigs, a rabbit and chickens enhance this support further.

The school offers a wide range of exceptional experiences to develop pupils' personal development. There are many exciting opportunities for pupils to enjoy beyond the classroom. These include trips to London and to many places in the local area. This helps pupils gain a deep understanding of their local community and beyond. Pupils are also taught about the wider world in a way that is appropriate for their age and stage of development. They already have a good understanding of the need to care for others and how they can help to make the world a better place. Pupils understand that the expectations, which are very well embedded, are not just for school. They are to help them become well-rounded adults of the future.

Interests and talents are enhanced through many after-school clubs and activities. There really is something for everyone to enjoy. Pupils take up these opportunities readily. All pupils learn to play the keyboard and the ukulele. They also have opportunities to sing as part of the school choir in the local community.

The school receives an exceptional level of support and guidance from the trust. It places great emphasis on staff training and development. This is further complemented by a strong and dedicated local governing board. Staff welcome this support and unanimously describe both the trust and governing board as having a positive influence on their work. Staff feel highly valued, and they are. They are proud members of the Anker Valley family and the Fierté family.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not ensured that the curriculum is implemented in such a way so that pupils achieve its aims in a small number of subjects. This means pupils are not able to build knowledge cumulatively within a topic and across topics. The school should ensure there are effective opportunities for pupils to deepen this learning over time and demonstrate what they have learned.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	148540
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10294725
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	86
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Zoe Insley
Headteacher	Natalie Horlor
Website	https://www.ankervalley.org
Date of previous inspection	25 May 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a free school that opened in 2021.
- The school currently has pupils in Reception to Year 2.
- The school will admit one additional cohort of pupils at the start of each new academic year.
- The school intends to have the full primary-age range of pupils on roll at the start of September 2027.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school has a before-school and an after-school club run by an external company that is linked to the trust.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the head of school, executive headteacher (who is also the CEO) and subject leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and religious education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work in a range of other subjects, including history, science, geography, and art and design.
- The lead inspector spoke with chair of the local governing board and the vice CEO.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons at different times of the day and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They spoke formally with groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The lead inspector reviewed a wide range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans and information on the school's website.
- Inspectors talked informally with pupils and staff to gather general information about school life. In addition, they took account of the responses to Ofsted's surveys of the views of staff, pupils and parents.

Inspection team

Keri Baylis, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Nadeem Bhatti

Ofsted Inspector

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