

Inspection of Acresfield Academy

Acres Lane, Upton By Chester, Chester, Cheshire CH2 1LJ

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 July 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected Acresfield Academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Acresfield Community Primary School to be outstanding, before it opened as Acresfield Academy as a result of conversion to academy status.

The headteacher of this school is Mike Dixon. This school is part of North West Academies Trust Limited, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Steve Docking OBE, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Nayland Southorn.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school thrive in an environment where they are inspired to be the very best that they can be. They are proud of their school. Relationships between adults and pupils are exceptionally strong. Pupils are very well cared for. They know that staff do all that they can to ensure that pupils are happy and can focus on their learning. Pupils know that there are always adults ready to help them if they need support.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. From an early age, pupils are taught to be independent and resilient. This enables children in the Nursery class to choose their own play equipment with their friends. It also means that pupils in other classes do not give up when they come across activities that make them think hard.

The school has high expectations of pupils' achievement. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve very highly. Pupils leave remarkably well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Pupils who hold leadership roles make an important contribution to the life of the school. Pupil parliamentarians, junior road safety officers and sports ambassadors all fulfil their responsibilities with extreme care and diligence. They are excellent role models for other pupils in the school.

Pupils understand how to care for the environment. They take care of their school and its grounds. In addition, pupils organise local litter-picking events and they are keen to recycle. Pupils are taught to be both community-spirited and globally aware. For instance, they said why the development of renewable energy sources is so important.

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

Reading is prioritised from the moment that children start in the early years. In the Nursery class, staff spark children's interest and imagination by sharing familiar books during story time. They enjoy retelling these stories with their friends. For example, by building a bridge for the 'billy goats' outdoors. In the Reception Year and key stage 1, well-trained staff teach children and pupils to quickly learn the sounds and letters that they need in order to read. Those pupils who struggle to read, receive the additional support that they need to help them to catch up quickly.

Pupils develop a love of reading. They use their reading knowledge to make the most of what the curriculum has to offer. By the time that pupils leave Year 6 for secondary school, they are accomplished readers with a rich knowledge of books and authors.

The extremely ambitious curriculum is very well established from the early years to Year 6. Each subject has been tailored to enable pupils to learn about their local and

wider community. The school has meticulously set out its expectations for the small steps of knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember. This allows staff to seamlessly build new concepts on what pupils have already learned.

Staff have strong subject knowledge. This enables them to carefully select resources and activities to ensure that pupils learn all that they should. Pupils take great pride in their work and they achieve very well. By the end of key stage 2, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is significantly above the national average.

Teachers ensure that pupils have mastered the foundations in their learning before moving on to more difficult concepts. Pupils have regular opportunities to revisit what they have already learned. Staff correct errors or misconceptions straight away in lessons. In addition, assessment information is used to identify those pupils who may need additional support. This helps pupils to keep up with the content of the ambitious curriculum.

Across school, pupils with SEND are identified swiftly. Pupils with SEND benefit from the exceptionally high expectations that staff have of them. Staff are highly skilled at adapting activities to allow pupils with SEND to benefit from the same excellent curriculum as their peers. In the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision), activities are expertly tailored to enable pupils to progress well through the curriculum.

The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' personal development. This allows pupils to develop their knowledge of important concepts, such as democracy and respect. Pupils benefit from a vast array of clubs, such as football, handbells, fine motor skills and dance. In the early years, children benefit from the buddy support that they receive from older pupils. This helps children in the early years to become confident members of the school. The Acres Award encourages pupils to be active and give time to the local community. Pupils work towards their bronze, silver, gold and platinum awards with pride.

Pupils' behaviour is impeccable, including pupils in the specially resourced provision. Pupils are polite and courteous. They demonstrate great respect towards one another and to the adults that they meet. In lessons, pupils listen exceptionally well to their teachers. This means that not a moment of learning time is lost. Pupils are taught that making a mistake is an important part of learning. Attendance has a high priority. Pupils attend school as often as they should.

Trustees and members of the local governing body ably support and challenge the school. They have a high regard for staff's workload and do all that they can to give staff the time that they need to complete additional tasks. As a result, staff feel valued. They are incredibly proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 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	147489
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10348371
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	242
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
CEO of the trust	Steve Docking OBE
Chair of trust	Nayland Southorn
Headteacher	Mike Dixon
Website	www.acresfield.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Acresfield Academy converted to become an academy in October 2019. When its predecessor school, Acresfield Community Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school hosts a local authority commissioned specially resourced provision for up to seven pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Currently, there are 11 pupils attending this provision who all have an educational, health and care plan. This includes children from the Reception Year through to pupils in Year 6.
- The school offers a breakfast club and after-school provision each day.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

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.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors 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 inspectors carried out deep dives in English, including early reading, mathematics, history and science. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, looked at a sample of pupils' work, spoke with teachers and talked with pupils about their learning.
- An inspector observed pupils from key stages 1 and 2 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other areas. This included talking with pupils and scrutinising curriculum documentation.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other leaders. They also met with the CEO, the chair of the trust and members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors.
- An inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour as they arrived at school and during lessons and breaktimes. They also spoke with pupils about their views of school life.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. In addition, an inspector also spoke to a number of parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- The inspectors considered the views of staff and pupils who responded to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Frith Murphy, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Olivia Barnes	Ofsted Inspector
Sally Aspinwall	Ofsted Inspector

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