

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: The Berkeley Academy

Laidon Avenue, Wistaston, Crewe, Cheshire CW2 6RU

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 January 2025

Outcome

The Berkeley Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Louise Gohr. This school is part of the Chancery 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 (CEO), Louise Gohr, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ann Kowalska.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils relish attending this happy and inclusive school. They enthusiastically follow the school's values to 'STRIVE' for excellence in every aspect of their education. Many pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), meet the school's high expectations for their academic and wider achievement.

The school is founded on positive relationships. Pupils blossom from the care and compassion which permeates the environment. Their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are polite and highly considerate of others. They are true advocates for their school. From the very beginning of the early years, children learn to play harmoniously together. Pupils are attentive and extend their friendship towards others. They take great pride in welcoming visitors to their school with kind words and a ready smile.

Pupils benefit from the school's carefully considered offer to enhance their personal development. They show great empathy and tolerance towards others. Pupils learn about important life skills, such as staying safe when they are online and how to stay physically and mentally healthy. Pupils gain valuable experience from the range of exciting visits on offer, such as residential trips. These opportunities develop their teamwork and problem-solving skills. Pupils embrace their roles in positions of responsibility, for example, as school ambassadors or sports champions.

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

The school is centred on ensuring that pupils gain a rich and fulfilling education. It has set out an ambitious and diverse curriculum that starts at the beginning of the early years. Most pupils achieve well and are ready for the next stage of their education.

Reading takes centre stage in the school's curriculum. Pupils across the school speak about their love of books and the joy that they find in reading. The youngest children enjoy sharing stories and hearing rhymes. Staff are highly trained to deliver the school's chosen phonics programme with fidelity. In the Reception Year and Year 1, this helps pupils to learn the phonics code very well. The school ensures that any pupils who struggle to learn to read are spotted quickly and receive support in a timely manner.

In the main, the school has mapped out the curriculum carefully to ensure that pupils can secure knowledge and build on it over time. The school has identified the need for some refinements to the writing curriculum. It is in the process of finalising aspects of the writing curriculum to ensure that it is set out as clearly and progressively as other curriculum subjects.

Staff deliver the learning well and use approaches that help pupils to embed knowledge into their long-term memory. Staff's enthusiasm for learning transfers to pupils' obvious delight in their education. They check that pupils are learning the curriculum content. On occasion, though, information that staff gather from these checks is not transferred into appropriate action. This means that, sometimes, mistakes in pupils' written work remain unaddressed and continue over time. Overall, though, pupils do learn very well. They can articulate their learning and enjoy holding conversations about how their knowledge can be applied to other subjects.

Pupils with SEND are extremely well supported. The school has approaches in place to quickly identify and provide tailored support for those pupils who need it. Skilled staff provide adaptations to help pupils access the full educational and wider school offer. They support pupils with kindness, compassion and dedication.

Pupils are highly articulate and voice their opinions and ideas. They take turns thoughtfully when speaking in groups, building informatively on what others have said. There is an atmosphere of diligence and passion for learning around the school. Classrooms are calm and purposeful environments where staff and pupils alike thrive on learning. Where appropriate, the school supports families well to ensure that pupils attend school regularly.

The school actively promotes pupils' learning beyond the academic curriculum. It enhances pupils' talents and interests through a range of clubs, including board games, boxing and Spanish, as well as through participation in many sporting tournaments. The school is aspirational for all pupils' futures. Pupils visit the local college to take part in activities and learning such as woodwork, geography and sports events. Some pupils participate in community events and visit the local care home. Pupils are helped to be well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Members of the board of trustees and of the governing body are forensic in their analysis of information. They are resolute in their efforts to ensure that pupils in the school are helped to flourish, both academically and socially. This extends to staff who are thoughtfully considered in terms of their workload being manageable. Staff said that they feel valued for the role that they play and are proud to be part of the school.

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 is refining the content of its writing curriculum to ensure that pupils can build their skills in writing for various audiences and purposes. As a result, at present, the quality of some pupils' written work is not as strong as it could be. The school should ensure that staff have the appropriate guidance and develop the necessary expertise to effectively implement the writing curriculum so that pupils consistently achieve high standards.
- Occasionally, the checks that staff carry out are not used effectively to address errors in pupils' writing. This means that, sometimes, misunderstandings go unaddressed, and a small number of pupils' learning is not helped to move on. The school should ensure that it develops staff expertise and understanding of how to use assessment information to maximise the intended impact of helping pupils to achieve well.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in October 2019.

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	142235
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10348320
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	475
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ann Kowalska
CEO of the trust	Louise Gohr
Headteacher	Louise Gohr
Website	www.theberkeleycheshire.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 and 23 October 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher and a new chair of the trust have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school provides educational provision for two-year-old children.
- The school runs an on-site breakfast and after-school club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, who is also the CEO, and deputy headteacher. She spoke with other leaders, staff and pupils.
- The inspector spoke with members of the board of trustees and governing body, including the chair of trustees and chair of governors. She also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. She also considered pupils' responses to Ofsted's online survey.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 inspector met with leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour and pupils' personal development. She observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and throughout the school day.
- The inspector looked at a range of policies and documentation relating to pupils' welfare and education, including SEND. She also looked at records of governing body meetings
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. She took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- The inspector spoke with some parents and carers during the inspection. She also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text comments.

Inspection team

Sheena Clark, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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