

Cranberry Academy

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

Inspection dates

19–20 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The Principal, very ably supported by the Vice-Principal and other leaders and governors, provides excellent leadership and management. The skill and determination shown by all leaders and staff have led to significant improvements in both the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement since the academy opened.
- From starting points which are broadly typical, pupils achieve well. They make consistently good and sometimes very rapid progress across the school. In 2014, pupils' attainment was above that found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children get off to a good start and quickly develop an enjoyment of school in the early years. They are confident and happy because the staff plan activities which interest and engage them.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Staff provide well-planned lessons which pupils find interesting and enable them to learn well.
- Targeted support for different groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, ensures that they make at least good progress and any gaps are closing rapidly.
- Teachers and teaching assistants know pupils very well. This is because information on how well pupils are doing is very thorough and regularly checked by teachers and leaders.
- Governors are extremely knowledgeable. They rigorously challenge and hold leaders to account for the performance of pupils and other aspects of the school.
- Middle leaders have a thorough understanding of their subjects and are fully involved in checking on how well pupils are doing. Collaborative working between leaders has ensured that the needs of the new curriculum are being very well met.
- Primary school sport funding is used very well to promote different sports and the importance of healthy lifestyles.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and at times exemplary. Pupils say they feel safe in school and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Attendance is above average.
- Partnerships with the St Bart's multi-academy trust and other groups of schools are strong. They provide high-quality professional development for staff and opportunities to share best practice.

It is not yet an outstanding school because.

- In a few lessons, teaching does not move pupils on quickly enough to more challenging tasks.
- Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to use their knowledge in mathematics to solve practical problems in real-life contexts.
- Teachers do not always check that pupils have responded to the advice given in marking so they can learn from their mistakes or improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons or parts of lessons and also looked at pupils’ work.
- The inspectors listened to pupils from four different year groups reading and talked with them and other groups of pupils about their lessons and school life.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, senior and middle leaders, representatives of the governing body and representatives of the St Bart’s multi-academy trust.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and scrutinised documentation relating to pupils’ progress and to school management, including the arrangements to ensure pupils are kept safe.
- The inspectors spoke to parents and took account of the 54 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). They also took account of the 25 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Vanessa MacDonald, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Faheem Chishti

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cranberry Academy is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported by the pupil premium, is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The early years is comprised of morning and afternoon Nursery sessions, and a full-time Reception class.
- Cranberry Academy became an academy on 1 November 2013 and is sponsored by The St Bart's Academy Trust.
- The school works in partnership with Britannia Teaching Schools Alliance and Alsager Community Trust.
- There is a private provider of extended school provision on site. This is subject to separate inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that pupils reach higher standards and make even faster progress by:
 - checking pupils' learning regularly so that pupils move on to more challenging work as soon as they are ready
 - providing pupils with more regular opportunities to solve problems and undertake investigations in real-life contexts to develop their mathematical skills further
 - ensuring teachers consistently check pupils follow up on the advice given in their marking.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The outstanding leadership by the Principal, who is very ably supported by the Vice-Principal and other leaders, has resulted in rising standards. As a result, pupils' attainment and progress are above average and the quality of teaching is consistently good. Attendance is above average and is carefully checked.
- The leadership team and governors have the skills not only to sustain what has been achieved in the short space of time since the school became an academy but also to improve the school even further. There is a strong culture of high expectations and firm resolve to continue to improve the outcomes for pupils. Typical comments include: 'I am proud to be a member of staff,' and 'Everyone shares the passion to make the school a successful place to learn.'
- The school tracks the progress of all pupils meticulously and, if any pupils are falling behind, immediate help is given to ensure that they catch up quickly. This reflects the school's strong commitment to equality of opportunity. Discrimination is not tolerated. The provision for disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those supported by the pupil premium funding is managed very well to the benefit of those pupils. Pupil premium funding is used to provide additional staff and targeted support.
- The leadership of teaching is very strong. The management of staff performance is rigorous, challenging and consistently checked. Staff have an excellent understanding of the expectations of their performance and this has been a key factor in the on-going improvements made to the quality of teaching throughout the school. Staff training makes sure that there is a relentless focus on improving standards.
- The Principal has provided the necessary training and support for middle leaders, some of whom are relatively new to their roles. They are highly effective in their monitoring of pupils' progress in different subjects and in ensuring that all pupils are achieving well. They work collaboratively and have a shared drive and ambition to improve further the standards in their subjects.
- Pupils benefit from a well-planned curriculum with subjects carefully planned around a topic. Leaders' review and plan topics, such as 'Superheroes', to interest the boys. The skills for each subject have been very carefully planned by middle leaders so that pupils develop throughout the year. Outdoor learning is used successfully to teach pupils science skills, as well as providing other opportunities beyond the usual curriculum. Pupils say they thoroughly enjoy these sessions, particularly learning how to light fires.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to develop their cultural and artistic skills. The choir has been successful this year, winning a local authority-wide competition, and pupils recently performed a traditional street play in the local community. Themed weeks such as One World Week and regular visitors to talk about different faiths, including for example, missionary work in Peru, raise pupils' awareness and celebrate different cultures. Relationships are a strength of the school and good relations are positively fostered.
- The school promotes and celebrates British values well. Pupils have opportunities to discuss current affairs topics and more recently how the polling system works and its purpose. There are democratic elections held for team captains and school councillors. Assembly themes promote values, such as respect and tolerance, and include speakers from different organisations, such as UNICEF. This prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The primary school sports funding is used very effectively, enabling more pupils to take part in sport and to help them benefit from a wider range of sports. The increase in additional after-school clubs has meant that more than three quarters of pupils have attended at least one club. An expert sports coach is working effectively with staff and pupils to develop skills in sports teaching. Some pupils have also attended a club which has taught them about the importance of healthy life styles.
- The partnership with the vast majority of parents is very good. The parents' forum provides parents with an opportunity to discuss key aspects of the school's work, such as homework. Parents have received detailed information on the changes to the new curriculum and the assessment system. They receive half termly assessment profiles for their children.
- St Bart's Trust provides the school and its leaders with regular opportunities to meet with other schools and to share good practice. Staff have benefited from high quality training and support. Newly-qualified teachers and those early in their careers speak highly of the training they receive and the support offered by the school.
- In addition, the school works in partnership with the Britannia Teaching Schools Alliance and the Alsager Community Trust. This provides staff and leaders with further opportunities to share their practice and benefit from training opportunities.
- Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements and are highly effective. Regular meetings between governors and leaders ensure that training is up to date and best practice is

disseminated.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are outstanding in the way in which they carry out their duties in challenging and supporting the school. They hold special responsibilities, including links to curriculum subjects. Governors have an excellent understanding of the performance of the school, including data. Their monitoring of the school is highly effective.
- Governors attend half-termly pupil progress meetings and have regular meetings about pupil premium expenditure and its effectiveness. They have a very good overview of the quality of teaching in the school through first hand checking on this by looking at books and observing sessions.
- Governors are rigorous in holding leaders, including middle leaders, to account and challenge and support very effectively. Governors make sure that the school's finances are used well and receive detailed information about different funding streams. They ensure the pupil premium and primary sports funding are used for the purposes intended.
- Governors ensure the systems to check on the performance of teachers are thorough. They ensure that the performance management of staff is linked to the main school priorities and seek assurance that any salary increases are linked to performance. Governors attend regular training to develop their skills further and ensure they are up to date with the latest requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. At times it is exemplary. Pupils behave well in and around school. They play well together during playtimes and are courteous and polite to each other and adults. Very positive relationships are a strength of the school and pupils appreciate the help and support which they receive. If they are feeling a bit upset, they can go to 'drop-in' where an adult will look after them and sort out any problems.
- Pupils' good attitudes to behaviour make a significant contribution to the calm environment and the quality of their learning. Pupils fully understand the behaviour system and the importance of being 'good to be green'. They say that pupils rarely move to 'red' and that the vast majority of pupils behave well all of the time. Older pupils say that behaviour has improved over time and that there are few incidents of poor behaviour.
- Pupils try hard in their lessons and enjoy working in small groups as well as on their own. They are able to concentrate well on different tasks which interest and engage them. On occasion, however, some pupils become distracted because the activities they are doing are too easy or too hard and they lose interest.
- Behaviour records are kept well and any incidents are carefully followed up. A very small minority of pupils find managing their own behaviour difficult. The school has put in to place effective strategies to help these pupils to improve their behaviour over time.
- The majority of parents are positive about pupils' behaviour and the extent to which their children feel safe and are looked after well.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe and have a very good understanding of how keep themselves safe on the internet, explaining the importance of having different passwords and 'whistle-blowing' if they see something on-line they should not.
- Pupils' understanding of the different forms of bullying is good, particularly cyber-bullying. Their understanding of prejudice-based bullying is less well developed, however. They say there is no bullying and very few incidences of derogatory language; they comment that these have reduced since the school became an academy.
- Pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe in the home and on the road through visits from the fire brigade, police and local firms. They are taught how to be safe during outdoor sessions when building dens, lighting fires and using different equipment.
- Pupils take on their different roles and responsibilities with pride. School councillors are involved in making decisions, such as choosing new equipment for the playground. Play leaders support lunchtime play activities and librarians are involved in selecting new books for the school library.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is apparent in their above-average attendance. Because of the school's work to promote good attendance, it has continued to improve over the last year, as has the punctuality of pupils arriving at school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils and usually provide them with work which is matched well to their different needs. Teachers plan interesting and engaging activities so that pupils enjoy learning and gain new knowledge and skills quickly. Work in pupils' books demonstrates the good and sometimes better progress pupils make in literacy and mathematics because of the consistently good teaching they receive.
- Pupils enjoy reading and read with expression to give meaning to the text. Younger pupils use their understanding of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) to read unfamiliar words. Older pupils organise the school library and support younger pupils in choosing books at lunchtimes.
- The approach to the teaching of guided reading and the detailed assessments of how well pupils are learning reading skills, such as deduction and inference, is consistent. This ensures that pupils make at least good and sometimes outstanding progress over time.
- Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to write at length and for different purposes. A weekly writing focus in all classes enables pupils to practise the skills they have been taught during the week and to build on their previous learning. As a result, pupils' writing skills are developing strongly and pupils' books show that standards are improving quickly.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils develop their spelling, grammar and punctuation skills very well because these basic skills are regularly taught and built upon. Pupils are able to apply these with increasing confidence to their written work. In Year 6, pupils were excitedly writing high quality similes for how they would feel when they participated in activities such as climbing on the residential trip to Wales the following day.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Teachers have a good knowledge of how to teach mathematics and of the requirements of the new curriculum because of effective support and training. As a result of the teacher's effective questioning, pupils in a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson were able to explain and provide reasons for their answers using their knowledge of number calculations and percentages well.
- However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their mathematical skills to solve problems or undertake investigations in real life contexts.
- Marking is of a good quality and of a consistently high standard across the school. Teachers regularly provide pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their work. Nevertheless, teachers do not always check that pupils respond to any advice given so they can learn from their mistakes.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together to ensure that all pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well in lessons and in small groups.
- In a few lessons, teaching does not always move pupils on to more challenging work quickly enough when they have grasped an idea or understood how to do something.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The achievement of pupils is good. Pupils' progress is improving rapidly; almost all pupils make at least good progress from starting points that are broadly typical overall, although some pupils' skills in reading, writing and numeracy are below expected levels.
- In 2014, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was similar to that seen nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportions reaching higher levels of attainment were lower than those found nationally in writing and mathematics. From their starting points, the majority of pupils in Year 2 in 2014 made at least expected progress over time. However, their progress during their time in Year 2 was good. Inspection evidence, based on observations and school records, shows that increasing numbers of pupils currently in Year 2 are on track to reach average and above average levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- As a result of the good teaching of phonics, pupils learn the letters and sounds they make quickly and are able to read confidently and accurately. In the Year 1 phonics check in 2014, an average proportion of pupils reached the expected level. Current school information shows that an increasing proportion of pupils are expected to achieve the standard this year. This is because of a consistent approach to phonics teaching across Key Stage 1 where pupils are taught according to their level of understanding.
- Pupils continue to make at least good progress as they move through the school. By the end of Year 6 in 2014, the vast majority of pupils reached average levels in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels was above that found nationally in reading, mathematics and spelling, punctuation and grammar. Almost all pupils made expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportions making more-than-expected progress were above that found nationally in

reading and mathematics and similar in writing. Progress in reading for last year's Year 6 was outstanding. Inspection evidence shows that the current Year 6 are on course to make similar good and better rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics which are at least in line with the national picture.

- The emphasis given to opportunities for pupils to produce extended pieces of writing for different purposes and in different subjects, and also to apply their grammar, punctuation and spellings skills, is contributing to the rapid improvement in pupils' writing skills. The introduction of opportunities for pupils to talk about the focus of their writing, to use drama to act out their ideas, and the increased use of the outdoors environment have supported pupils' development well.
- Pupils' mathematical skills are good and the detailed planning of the school's mathematics curriculum is ensuring that pupils are able to apply their knowledge to solve problems in mathematics. However, leaders recognise that there are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply these skills consistently in other situations.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and the small number who speak English as an additional language make similar good rates of progress. Their different needs are well met through careful checking on these and of their ongoing progress. Teaching assistants provide well-matched and appropriate support for them in small groups and individually.
- In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was behind that of other pupils in the school in reading by two terms, in mathematics by four and a half terms, and in writing by three terms. A number of the pupils eligible for this funding in Year 6 also had special educational needs. In relation to other pupils nationally, they were in line in reading and three terms behind in writing and in mathematics. All disadvantaged pupils make expected rates of progress in reading and writing, and almost all of them make the expected rate of progress in mathematics. The proportion making more than expected progress was above that found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. School evidence shows that gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils in the academy are closing rapidly. Disadvantaged pupils are making good and sometimes better rates of progress from their different starting points.
- The most-able pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2014, the proportions attaining the higher levels were better than those found nationally in reading, mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling in Key Stage 2. Additional sessions to develop and challenge their skills further, including taking part in sessions at the local high school, have been successful. Pupils feel that these have been beneficial to them.

Early years provision

is good

- Good quality teaching results in children making good progress from starting points which are broadly typical for their age but below in areas such as children's early reading, writing and mathematical skills. Because of the good teaching, an above average proportion of children reached a good level of development in 2014 and at least a similar proportion is expected in the current year. Children are very well prepared for starting Year 1.
- The early years is led and managed well. Careful planning and regular assessment of children's different needs by staff across both Nursery and Reception classes make sure children's different needs are met well. Children who need additional support and those who are most able are quickly identified, and support and tasks are planned to meet their different needs.
- Learning journeys, which are records of children's achievements, clearly show the good progress they make. Other records show that the progress children are making is continuing to improve and expectations are high.
- The teaching of phonics is good and children quickly learn how to recognise the different letters and the sounds they make. They are able to use this knowledge to write with increased confidence and independence. For example, in the Nursery class children showed delight at being able to write about the recent trip to a farm and how the pig had jumped up and frightened the teacher. Careful questioning and prompting by the teacher ensured that children used their knowledge well and with success.
- Children enjoy the activities both indoors and outside and are able to choose from a variety of different resources to support their learning. Good links are made to different topics. For example, children were enjoying being chefs, making cakes and confidently counting candles, while others were making plates of food in their role play area.
- Adults support children's learning through asking questions to extend their thinking, such as how to join a number of blocks together. However, on occasion opportunities are missed to challenge children, particularly those who are the most able, to move their learning on at a faster pace.
- Children feel safe and their behaviour is good. Children are taught to take turns and share equipment. In

the Nursery class, children were encouraged to resolve their own differences over sharing a piece of equipment, for example. They did this successfully and continued to play happily together.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	139910
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	450241

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Lewis
Headteacher	Helen Morris
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
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