

Nantwich Primary Academy

Manor Road, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 5LX

Inspection dates

4–5 December 2018

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Nantwich Primary Academy is a rapidly improving school. With the full support of the governing body and senior leaders from St Bart's multi-academy trust (the trust), the school has gone from strength to strength over the last two years. The principal is ambitious, well organised and uncompromising in her aim to ensure that pupils enjoy learning and realise their potential.
- Together with the highly motivated senior leadership team, the principal ensures that the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are good. Governors are highly skilled. They bring much experience and knowledge to the school, which is helping to secure continuous improvements.
- Staff morale is high. Teachers are appreciative of the highly effective, and readily available, training and support available to them.
- Pupils benefit from an excellent curriculum which develops their reading, writing and mathematical skills well. However, pupils, especially the most able, are not fully challenged in their learning. Some do not attain the standards of which they are capable.
- Phonics teaching is good. The proportion of pupils in Year 1 attaining the expected standard in the national phonics screening check has been above average for the last three years.
- Pupils' knowledge of different authors and writing styles is not as comprehensive as it should be. Opportunities to read for pleasure are limited.
- At the end of Year 6 in 2018, pupils' attainment and progress in writing were good. Their progress in reading and mathematics was below average. Current pupils in key stage 2, including disadvantaged pupils, are making strong progress in a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils in key stage 1 make good progress in all subjects. A higher-than-average proportion attained at greater depth in writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 in 2018. The leadership and management of all aspects of the early years provision are good. This ensures children's good progress and readiness for learning in Year 1.
- The school's work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their appreciation of British values is good.
- Pupils' attendance is above average. Pupils attend regularly because they find learning 'awesome'. Pupils say they feel safe and there is no bullying at the school.
- Parents and carers describe the school as 'transformed'. They are of the view that their children are happy, safe and making good progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, and thus further enhance pupils' progress in reading and mathematics, by ensuring that:
 - pupils, especially those in key stage 2, read for pleasure and explore the work of a range of different authors
 - key stage 2 pupils, particularly the most able, are consistently challenged in these subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal – ably supported by the senior leadership team, governors and leaders from the trust – has been uncompromising in her aim of ensuring that the school caters well for pupils’ educational, social and emotional needs. Leaders are achieving this, while simultaneously securing high staff morale and pupils’ effective involvement in their learning.
- Nantwich Primary Academy has been transformed since its inception – from the fabric of the building to the content of the curriculum – to create a calm, purposeful and exciting school where pupils make good progress and feel safe.
- Since the school was founded in October 2015, it has gone from strength to strength. Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school’s strengths and weaknesses and know exactly what needs to be done to move the school forward. Leaders are not afraid to try new approaches to teaching and learning. They are quick to abandon initiatives if they are not in the best interest of the pupils.
- Middle leaders are fully involved in improving the quality of teaching and learning. All have monitoring schedules, which include looking at work in pupils’ books, ‘planning surgeries’ and observing teachers’ practice. Leaders are especially active in talking with pupils about their learning and collecting information on pupils’ curriculum ‘likes’ and ‘dislikes’. Leaders in subjects including English, mathematics, art, science and music ensure that they are fully up to date with developments in their respective areas. The high level of expertise among leaders and the ‘open’ culture of the school ensure a positive impact on improving teaching and learning.
- Staff morale is exceptionally high. All staff completed the inspection survey. They are proud to work at the school, which they say has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Staff are particularly appreciative of the many professional development opportunities available to them, most of which are offered through the Britannia Teaching School Alliance (BTSA), which works closely with the trust. Such training helps teachers to meet pupils’ educational needs and secure their interest in learning.
- Senior leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to support disadvantaged pupils’ emotional and social development. Funding is also used to diminish the differences between the performance of these pupils and that of other pupils nationally. At the end of Year 6 in 2018, pupils’ progress was average in writing and below average in reading and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are making strong progress in a wide range of subjects in all classes.
- The physical education and sport funding is well spent to develop the skills of staff in teaching various sporting activities, including gymnastics. Partnership with other schools in the trust and the Crewe and Nantwich partnership is helping to increase pupils’ engagement in competitive sports. Funding is used to train play leaders and lunchtime supervisors who run various sporting activities during lunchtimes and after school. Pupils enjoy swimming, boccia, multi-skills, football and running the ‘golden mile’.

- Pupils benefit from an exciting and carefully planned curriculum. Because the curriculum emphasises the links between subjects, pupils know that no subject exists in isolation. Teachers are careful to make connections between the skills pupils gain in school and their application to the outside world. For example, pupils plan projects, write persuasive sales brochures and market and sell products for charity. Such activities and skills prepare pupils well for the next stage of their learning in high school and beyond. Activities also enable pupils to develop their writing and mathematical skills across the curriculum. Pupils' reading skills are not as well developed.
- Senior leaders' work to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are very empathetic and have a selfless approach to their work to support good causes. During the inspection, pupils set up their stalls in the hall, displaying the wares they had made, including snowmen made from beanbags and Christmas trees made from single pine cones. Pupils demonstrated excellent marketing skills and powers of persuasion as they sold their various items to parents, pupils and anyone else able to contribute to their charitable cause, which was a local hospice.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have a good understanding and appreciation of British values. For example, they know that it is important to be fair, respectful to others and obey the law. They also know about law-making and have met with the Mayor of Stoke and visited the Houses of Parliament.
- Teachers and specialists network and share ideas with their opposite numbers in other trust schools in areas such as special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and the use of the pupil premium funding. In addition, specialist training programmes are available through the BTSA. Senior leaders and teachers were disappointed in pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 this year. As a result, training has been focused on areas in need of improvement, the effect of which is evident in the stronger progress made by pupils this year.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school well. Many – including the chair of the governing body – have an in-depth knowledge of schools and education. This ensures that governors are well placed to challenge and support the school.
- Governors have a good understanding of what the school needs to do to improve. They receive comprehensive reports from the principal. In addition, they regularly receive reports from subject leaders and senior leaders on their areas of work.
- Governors know there is more work to do to improve pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics, particularly in key stage 2. They come into school to talk with pupils about their learning and have conversations with teachers.
- Governors are highly trained. They have had various online training, developed by the BTSA, including in-depth safeguarding training. Governors have also had 'Prevent' duty training, linked to the government's agenda for tackling radicalisation and extremism.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, and there is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. The single central record is well maintained and regularly updated. All staff have been subject to relevant checks to ensure their suitability to work with children. Such checks are an integral part of the school's recruitment and selection procedures.
- All staff – including volunteers and other adults who regularly come into the school – have completed safeguarding awareness training. They have also taken 'Prevent' duty training and are aware of the government's agenda to combat radicalisation and extremism. Senior leaders – including the principal, the vice-principal, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and the school mentor – have completed higher-level training suitable to their roles.
- All staff have a good knowledge and understanding of safeguarding matters. They know precisely what to do if a pupil approaches them with a concern relating to their safety or welfare. There is a positive culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders work effectively with parents and outside agencies to keep pupils safe and secure.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and teaching assistants work together well to ensure that pupils enjoy learning and make good progress in a wide range of subjects. Together, they ensure that the quality of teaching is good and improving.
- Teachers are proud of their recently refurbished classrooms, which are stimulating and conducive to effective learning. Areas of classrooms are dedicated to reading and aspects of the curriculum, including the Vikings, the Egyptians and aspects of the First and Second World Wars.
- Phonics is taught well. Typically, pupils in Year 1 are eager to participate in activities which help them to sound out new words. Effective one-to-one and small-group support is available to those who find reading difficult, including those still developing their language and communication skills. Good teaching in this area has helped to ensure that, for the last three years, an above-average proportion of Year 1 pupils have been secure in their phonics skills and knowledge in the national phonics screening check.
- Teachers encourage pupils to use their debating skills. This was evident in Year 4, where pupils were considering the actions of the main character in a book they are currently reading, 'There's A Viking in My Bed'. Using the 'wand of wonder' microphone, pupils were asked to debate whether Sigurd should stay in the hotel he had commandeered after falling off his longboat and landing in Flotby. They did this skilfully, reading back through the book for information to support their arguments.
- Teachers make sure that pupils present their work accurately. This is evident in mathematics, where pupils are reminded to write numbers clearly, and in English, where they are taught to use punctuation such as commas and inverted commas correctly.
- Teachers successfully develop pupils' creative skills. This was evident in Year 2, where they were preparing for a performance of nativity songs. Pupils were alert to the teacher's instructions and enjoyed participating in singing. They performed actions

enthusiastically and thoroughly enjoyed reciting the songs with their peers. Similarly, in Year 5, pupils diligently practised playing various notes on different brass instruments. They carefully followed their teacher's cues and demonstrated their good ability to produce notes – including on the trombone – which they sustained for extended periods.

- Mathematics teachers have good subject knowledge. This was evident in a class where pupils were asked to rank different fractions in order of size, for example $\frac{3}{12}$, $\frac{4}{7}$ and $\frac{2}{3}$. Most pupils were able to solve these problems. Some pupils knew that mixed fractions could be simplified and reduced. Those who found activities difficult were supported effectively. The most able moved on to more calculations, which helped to develop their fluency in reducing and ordering fractions.
- Teachers develop pupils' practical skills well. This is evident in food technology, where pupils made 'Viking' and 'Stone Age' bread, linked to history and English topics. Key stage 2 pupils' design and technology skills are good, as evident in the objects they produce and in the careful rationale they use when planning to make items, such as chairs and Tudor houses. Pupils' information and communication technology skills are applied well. Pupils enjoy producing various line and bar graphs to track their peers' access to online reading and mathematics learning programmes.
- Evidence in pupils' workbooks indicates that they are making good progress in improving their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills. Teachers' consistent approach to checking pupils' skills in these areas – in line with the school's feedback and assessment policy – supports pupils well in developing their vocabulary and use of adventurous words in their writing. Mathematics books show that work is mostly challenging, with problem-solving activities evident in the books of both key stage 1 and 2 pupils. However, the same books reveal that tasks set in English, mathematics and other subjects – such as science – are sometimes the same for all pupils, regardless of their ability. Activities for the most able are not as challenging as they could be, with the result that too few pupils attain the higher standards in key stage 2.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors – including those in key stage 1 – talked about the importance of mindfulness, which they explained was linked to trying hard and never giving up. Some pupils' resilience and confidence in working independently and trying difficult work are developing.
- Pupils like school and enjoy socialising with their friends. Younger pupils say that 'There is always something exciting to do.' All pupils agree that, at school, people are kind to each other.
- Pupils know how to stay safe when online. They regularly read safety information available in the computer suite and report any 'suspicious' activities to adults. They are fully aware of cyber bullying and know how to avoid it. They are aware of risks to their safety and receive regular visits from firefighters and police officers.

- Pupils know the importance of staying fit – both mentally and physically – and eating healthily. They learn about healthy foods and nutrition in science and how to plan a balanced diet. Pupils eat healthily at school, particularly those who eat school lunches.
- Pupils take on their responsibilities enthusiastically and enjoy having a real say about what happens in the school. They act in earnest as ambassadors, safety officers, members of the school council, the recycling team and head girl and head boy.
- Older pupils enjoy the responsibilities afforded to them as members of the pupils' parliament. They enjoy their debating sessions with pupils in other trust schools. Pupil parliamentarians have been instrumental in enhancing the outdoor environment, including the installation of an external music system which supports their singing and dancing during lunch and breaktimes.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors indicated that bullying is rare. Younger pupils said that, if bullying happens, it is always 'sorted out'. Pupils know what racism is. They say it never happens in school. They stated, 'We are all different and unique.' Pupils' understanding of homophobic bullying is not as strong as it could be.
- Pupils enjoy attending the breakfast club, where they can catch up with their friends and use computers to access educational programmes, as well as games. The club provides pupils with a good start to the day.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that behaviour is good most of the time, but that 'Sometimes a few people let us down... but we always turn it around.'
- All parents who spoke with inspectors or submitted texts during the inspection were eager to say that behaviour is good and continually improving. Parents have no concerns about bullying. The overwhelming majority are of the view that their children are safe. The school's own surveys of parents' views complement these findings, as do the views of staff and governors.
- A small number of pupils who find it difficult to manage their own behaviour are well supported. The school's 'relaxation station' and 'reflection room' provide opportunities for pupils to reflect or discuss any matters with staff. Inspection evidence indicates that the school deals effectively with incidents of poor behaviour. Disruptions to learning are minor and dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- Nantwich Primary Academy is a calm and orderly school where pupils are interested in learning and discovering new things. All pupils and the children in the Nursery and Reception classes wear their uniforms with pride and are very respectful towards staff, each other and visitors. Pupils' behaviour was outstanding as they listened carefully to the road safety presentation given by Year 6 pupils during the inspection.
- Pupils behave sensibly when moving around the school between lessons, and play safely during break and lunchtimes. Pupils' attendance has been above average for the last two years and continues to be good this year. The school's success in this area is

linked to the importance the school places on regular attendance. This is reflected in the awards and prizes available for good attendance, and the effective family and community work carried out by the learning mentor. In addition, pupils attend regularly because they do not want to miss out on learning at school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In Nantwich Primary Academy, standards have improved each year since the school's inception, and continue to do so this year. Senior leaders understand there is more work to do to raise standards in key stage 2, particularly in reading and mathematics. Their partnership with other schools and the extensive training and support available for teachers have provided a powerful impetus and desire to help pupils achieve their full potential.
- Senior leaders and teachers use reliable systems to monitor pupils' progress across the school in various subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics. Pupil progress meetings are held regularly. These enable senior leaders to identify any groups of pupils who may be falling behind. Support is provided for such pupils, allowing them to catch up with their peers and develop the skills and knowledge appropriate for their age. Progress meetings are less effective in identifying the most able pupils who are not making the progress they should.
- In 2018, at the end of Year 6, pupils' progress in reading and mathematics was below average and their attainment was low. Pupils' performance in writing was much better. In this subject, their overall progress was securely average and the proportion attaining at the higher standard was above average.
- At the end of Year 6 in 2018, disadvantaged pupils' progress in mathematics and reading was below average. Few attained the higher standards in any subject. These pupils' progress in writing and grammar, punctuation and spelling was much stronger. Disadvantaged pupils' attainment was not as good as that of other pupils nationally. However, performance differences are diminishing. Currently, most pupils in this group are making the same strong progress as their peers in a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 has been strong for the last two years. At the end of Year 2 in 2018, an average proportion of pupils attained the expected standard for their age and an above-average proportion attained at greater depth in reading. Their performance in writing and mathematics was especially strong, above average at both the expected standard for age and at greater depth. Pupils also performed well in spelling and science.
- Pupils enjoy reading. Their reading records indicate that they do so frequently, both in school and at home. Pupils read with good expression. Those who find it difficult to read use their phonics skills and knowledge well to sound out and read unfamiliar words. Pupils have limited exposure to different styles of writing and too few opportunities in school to read for pleasure. As a result, some pupils are not making the good progress of which they are capable in reading.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge in mathematics is helping to develop pupils' calculation and problem-solving skills well. Teachers are trained well and the lead

teacher for mathematics makes sure that teachers are aware of the latest developments in teaching mathematics. Teachers' focus on fluency and providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their calculation skills is supporting pupils' current good progress in mathematics. However, activities could be more difficult for the most able in key stage 2, who sometimes find work too easy and thus make less than the best possible progress.

- Writing has a very high priority. This is evident in the many examples of thought-provoking extended writing displayed around the school. Pupils' workbooks show many examples of well-written descriptive and persuasive writing. Most pupils make strong progress in developing their writing skills because teachers make learning interesting and are precise about their expectation of both the content and presentation of pupils' written work.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress. The SENCo is experienced and trained well. The school works with a wide range of partners. For example, the services of autism spectrum disorder and speech and language specialists are called on as necessary. In addition, the SENCo benefits from the knowledge and experience of specialists in other trust schools.
- Pupils make good progress in a wide range of additional subjects, including art, design and technology, computing and food technology. Work in heraldry demonstrates pupils' accuracy and creativity in designing shields and creating mottos.
- The school's own data indicates that attainment is rising in most classes. Some pupils are already attaining greater depth in key stage 1. A few are attaining at the higher standards in key stage 2. However, too few pupils are attaining highly because they are not always challenged. Work in class and in pupils' books indicates that, too often, teachers do not cater for the different skills and abilities of pupils. This limits the progress of some, particularly the most able.

Early years provision

Good

- All aspects of the leadership and management of the early years provision – including teaching, learning and the assessment of children's skills and abilities – are good. Highly effective support from senior leaders is helping to ensure that provision remains good. For the last three years, outcomes for children have continually improved.
- Children learn in well-organised and stimulating indoor rooms, with dedicated areas clearly linked to early years learning. Children benefit from a stimulating curriculum. They look forward to visits from firefighters and police officers, and they regularly explore other faiths and celebrate festivals, including Diwali and Chinese New Year.
- The outdoor learning and play area has been completely redeveloped. It now includes a large canopy, a water-play area, a forest area and mud kitchen, a gardening area, a gravel pit, a mathematics zone and physical development exploration areas. All of these make a good contribution towards children's physical development and understanding of the world.

- Typically, children are highly motivated, eager to learn and willing to participate in learning. In the Reception class, children are used to routines. They readily engage in singing songs such as '1, 2, 3, It's good to be me', which provide a positive start to teaching and learning activities.
- During the inspection, children were eager to handle wrapped presents and guess their contents. This activity was linked to the 'Dear Santa' book they were reading. The teacher skilfully developed children's phonics skills and encouraged them to complete the end of sentences. Children quickly responded by filling in the pauses with accurate guesses. Children of different abilities were challenged during the session, which resulted in all extending their language, reading and phonics skills.
- In the Nursery class, activities are organised to encourage learning and cooperative play. Children settle quickly into activities, most of which they choose for themselves. Staff intervene to extend and develop children's reading, writing and mathematics skills.
- Staff routinely use electronic tablets to capture and record children's learning. For example, in the Nursery class, staff were quick to capture children's new learning in mathematics and record children counting to nine. All such information is collated in children's workbooks and shared with parents. In turn, most parents are eager to document their children's learning at home, which is captured on the 'wow leaf tree'. Parents' knowledge and recording of their children's learning help staff to build a detailed picture of most children's skills and abilities.
- Regular assessments of the different abilities and needs of children – especially those with SEND and disadvantaged children – lead to different well-planned activities which help to ensure that such children make the same good progress as their peers.
- Children's behaviour is exemplary. Children behave sensibly and safely and are very respectful towards adults and each other. Their attitudes to learning are positive and they are exceptionally inquisitive. This enables children to focus on their learning and extend their knowledge and understanding of the world around them.
- The school's own records show that children's knowledge and understanding on entering the Reception class are below those typically found for their age. Their skills are particularly weak in literacy. In 2018, a below-average proportion of children attained a good level of development. However, most made good progress and were ready for their learning in key stage 1.
- Staff are trained well. They share good practice with other schools in the trust and benefit from specialist training and development offered through the BTSA. Staff develop strong bonds with children and have a secure understanding of how young children learn.
- All parents who spoke with inspectors were highly positive about all aspects of the early years provision. Typically, they say that their children are safe and looked after well.
- Staff look after children well, making sure that all welfare requirements are met. Safeguarding is effective. The same well-established procedures in operation in key stages 1 and 2 are reflected in the early years.

- While the proportion of children attaining a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year is rising each year, it is below average. Leaders have correctly identified this as a key area for development.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 142037 |
| Local authority | Cheshire East |
| Inspection number | 10053424 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Sponsor-led academy |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 147 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of governors | Glyn Lowe |
| Principal | Susan Spence |
| Telephone number | 01270 685 000 |
| Website | nantwichprimaryacademy.co.uk |
| Email address | admin@nantwichprimaryacademy.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- In October 2015, Nantwich Primary Academy became part of the St Bart's Multi-Academy Trust, joining 15 other academies. The school has its own governing committee, and members of the trust are represented on the committee. The principal is ultimately accountable to the trust.
- The school works in close partnership with BTSA, which provides professional development and support to all schools in the trust.
- Nantwich Primary Academy is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is well above average.
- The principal took up post in January 2017, becoming substantive principal in May 2017. Recently, several staff have joined the school, including the vice-principal and early years teacher. The senior leadership team has been reorganised, as has the governing body.

- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. A small but increasing proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is well above average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is below average.
- All children in the Reception class attend full-time. Children attend the Nursery class on a full- or part-time basis.
- In the last two years, extensive internal and external refurbishments have taken place, including the complete replacement of all roofing areas. The early years outdoor provision has been extended and upgraded. Additional teaching space has been created to deliver targeted support. New facilities include a pupils' kitchen, a dedicated art space, a relaxation station, a reflection room and a music space.
- The school runs a breakfast club which is managed by the board of trustees.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons in all year groups, as well as the teaching of small groups of pupils and sessions aimed at helping pupils learn to read. Three observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and held discussions with pupils from across the school. Pupils' work in books was scrutinised in class and separately.
- Inspectors read eight text responses submitted by parents during the inspection and met formally with parents. Inspectors considered 10 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Responses to the inspection questionnaires completed by 22 members of staff and 46 pupils were also considered.
- Meetings were held with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. Meetings were held with the chief executive officer and the vice-chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors met with various school leaders, including those responsible for English, mathematics and science. Meetings were also held with leaders responsible for the early years provision and provision for pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. A meeting was held with the learning mentor.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents. These included the school's checks on the quality of teaching and reviews of its own performance, development plans, information about pupils' progress, records of pupils' attendance and behaviour, and safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Julie Morley

Ofsted Inspector

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