

Inspection of Leighton Academy

Minshull New Road, Crewe, Cheshire CW1 3PP

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 February 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe at school. They know that they can go to a trusted adult if they have any worries or concerns. If there is any bullying or unkindness, leaders and staff deal with it quickly and well.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour. This includes those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils behave well around the school and during breaktimes. They mostly behave well in lessons. Pupils work hard and achieve well.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of after-school activities, such as dance, football, choir and art club. They enjoy the opportunity to perform at the local talent show, when they can showcase their talents and interests to their friends.

Pupils take on extra responsibilities such as safeguarding team leaders, play leaders and sports councillors. They are caring and considerate towards others. Pupils understand the importance of keeping fit and looking after their mental health.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to experience trips and visits. They enrich the curriculum with visits overseas, linked to the modern foreign language that the pupils study.

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

Leaders have designed a purposeful and interesting curriculum. Pupils learn the full range of the national curriculum subjects. Leaders have carefully chosen the content that they want pupils to learn.

Most teachers have the subject knowledge that they need to teach the curriculum well. These teachers devise activities for pupils that build on what they have learned in previous lessons. Teachers explain new learning clearly. This helps pupils to know and remember the important knowledge over time. Most pupils achieve well across the curriculum. However, in a few classes, especially in the early years and key stage 1, including the provision for two-year-olds, teachers sometimes do not design learning that helps pupils to build on their knowledge securely over time.

Most teachers use assessment strategies effectively to check pupils' understanding. This helps teachers to identify gaps in pupils' learning and to spot any misconceptions. Teachers ensure that these pupils receive the support they need so that they know and remember more of the curriculum. Again, in a small number of classes in the early years and key stage 1, teachers do not routinely check pupils' understanding as well as they should. This means that they do not identify and address any gaps or misconceptions in pupils' knowledge.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading. This begins from the children's very first days in the two-year-old provision as they are encouraged to go on listening walks, sing rhymes and join in with traditional tales.

Leaders have ensured that there is a consistent approach to the teaching of early reading. All staff have been well trained to teach phonics. Books are well matched to the sounds that pupils are learning. If pupils struggle with reading, leaders make sure that support is put into place quickly. Pupils across the school are encouraged to read often. Teachers read to pupils regularly.

Leaders work well with staff to ensure that pupils with SEND are identified early. These pupils are taught in class alongside their peers. This enables pupils with SEND to access the full curriculum. Leaders ensure that effective support in class helps children with SEND to achieve well.

Pupils behave well in school. They follow the established routines. Leaders are relentless in their efforts to ensure pupils attend school every day. In turn, pupils understand the importance of coming to school on time, every day.

Leaders' approach to promoting pupils' personal development is well thought out. Pupils are developing an understanding of some of the British values, such as democracy. They also have a good understanding of the differences between people, which they said makes everyone special and unique.

Senior leaders, including the local advisory board and trust members, are clear in their ambition for the school. They have prioritised investment in developing subject leadership and staff's professional development. This has contributed to the improvements in the quality of education. Local advisory board members, as well as trustees, know the school well and hold leaders to account.

Staff appreciate how leaders consider their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a shared culture of safeguarding at Leighton Academy. Leaders ensure that staff know how to keep pupils safe. Staff are trained to be alert to any potential harm that pupils may face. They respond quickly when they are worried about a pupil's welfare. Staff report any concerns about pupils in a timely manner. Leaders follow up any concerns diligently to ensure that pupils and their families get the support that they need.

The curriculum supports pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe. This includes how to keep safe when online and the potential dangers of cyber bullying.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not design learning that helps pupils to build on their knowledge securely over time. This hinders how well pupils learn and remember important knowledge over time. Leaders should support these teachers to deliver new knowledge and skills in a logical sequence so that pupils know and remember more over time.
- In a few classes, teachers do not routinely check on what pupils know and remember. Some pupils have gaps and misconceptions in their knowledge that have not been identified and addressed. Leaders should ensure that all teachers use assessment strategies well so that gaps are spotted and addressed.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	139752
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10266112
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	483
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Clough
Headteacher/Principal/	Samantha Thompson
Website	www.leightonacademy.com
Date of previous inspection	13 May 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- 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.

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff.
- An inspector spoke with representatives of the local advisory board, including the chair of the board.

- An inspector spoke with the chief executive officer of the trust board.
- An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors checked the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. They looked at a range of documentation and spoke to leaders and staff. Inspectors also spoke to pupils about whether they feel safe in school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils. An inspector listened to pupils read with a familiar adult. An inspector also spoke with leaders and pupils about the curriculum in a small number of other subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at social times. They spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors spoke with parents and carers as they dropped their children off at school. They considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text responses.

Inspection team

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