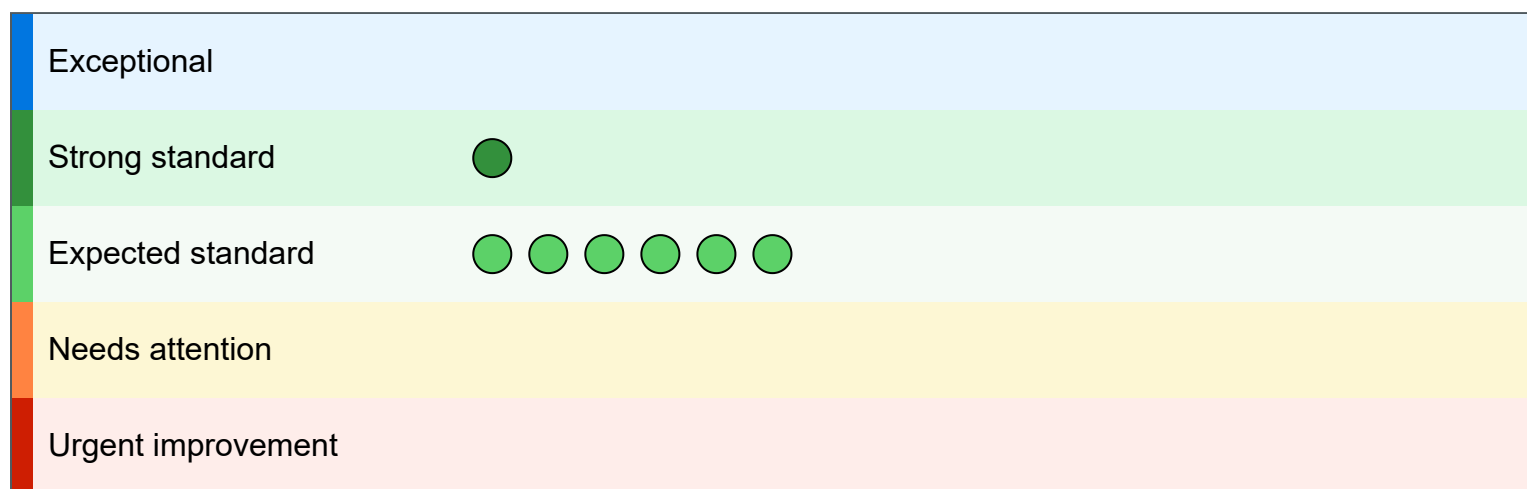


Cranberry Academy

Address: Cranberry Lane, Alsager, Cranberry Academy, Cheshire, ST7 2LE

Unique reference number (URN): 139910

Inspection report: 2 June 2026



✔ **Safeguarding standards met**

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Personal development and wellbeing is a significant strength of the school. Leaders have established a carefully planned programme that promotes pupils' development beyond academic study and ensures that they are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. Fundamental British values are woven throughout the curriculum and wider school experiences. This enables pupils to develop a secure understanding of democracy, respect and tolerance. Pupils are reflective, behave with integrity and demonstrate genuine respect for others.

The school's curriculum for personal, social and health education is well sequenced, age-appropriate and responsive to pupils' needs. Pupils demonstrate a mature and detailed knowledge of healthy relationships, discrimination and equality. They show a sophisticated understanding of how to stay safe both online and offline. This includes an awareness of privacy settings, online manipulation and the impact of emerging technologies.

Leaders ensure that personal development opportunities are inclusive. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) participate fully because any barriers are removed. Support includes the provision of uniform, outdoor clothing and access to all trips and visitors. A multitude of clubs are on offer every term and participation is high. This includes pupils who are disadvantaged or have SEND. Personalised invitations to clubs, targeted swimming provision and direct engagement with parents and carers ensure that all pupils benefit from the extensive offer.

Pastoral support is highly effective and caring with high aspiration for all pupils. Positive relationships are evident throughout the school and pupils feel safe, valued and supported. A rich programme of leadership opportunities, sporting events, assemblies, trips and visitors broadens pupils' horizons. The school's well-considered outdoor education provision and strong focus on sustainability further enrich learning. This develops pupils' resilience, environmental awareness and sense of responsibility towards the wider world.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Most pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education. They generally achieve close to the national average in national assessments. In some areas, such as writing and the multiplication check, pupils achieve much better than the national average. However, this is not the case for some disadvantaged pupils who do not achieve as well as disadvantaged pupils nationally.

The published data reflects achievement in lessons, where most pupils achieve well across most subjects. For instance, most pupils build the knowledge they need over time in phonics, mathematics, art and design and physical education. However, some pupils who need extra help in reading and writing do not get enough practice to improve as quickly as

they could. For some pupils in a small number of subjects, learning is hampered because teaching is not consistently well matched to pupils' needs, particularly those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders keep a close eye on attendance and take effective action to improve it when necessary. If pupils are absent, leaders find out why and respond quickly. They work well with parents and carers to remove any barriers. Leaders involve other professionals when this support is needed. Leaders' recent work with pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding has had a positive impact to ensure that these pupils attend more regularly. Systems to monitor and analyse attendance are clear and used consistently. As a result, attendance overall is in line with the national average.

Pupils behave well in lessons and at breaktimes. They listen carefully, follow instructions and focus on their work. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and want to do well. Bullying and unkind behaviour are not accepted. If an issue arises, staff deal with it quickly and effectively. Pupils trust staff and say they feel safe. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. Staff use clear rules and routines. They help pupils to manage their behaviour in a calm way so that lessons are rarely disrupted and learning continues.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have made sure that the curriculum in each subject is ambitious and sequenced to build on what pupils have learned before. Leaders identify what is working well and what needs to improve. This helps leaders and the trust to make sure that staff get the training they need in key aspects of curriculum and teaching. Important areas of the school's work, such as improving reading and writing, are a current focus.

Teachers typically match learning appropriately to pupils' needs. This includes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In most subjects, teachers explain new learning clearly. Since the last inspection, leaders have developed the use of assessment strategies. Staff use this information to adapt activities and to provide extra support to those pupils who need it. In most subjects, staff check pupils' understanding regularly and ensure that any errors are addressed.

In a small number of subjects, teachers do not consistently build on what pupils already know or ensure that misconceptions are addressed. This means that, in these subjects, some pupils, including some with SEND and some who are disadvantaged, do not benefit from teaching that matches their needs.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders have clear oversight of early years. They understand the strengths of the provision and identify where further improvement is needed. The curriculum is well designed to ensure that children in the Reception class build on what they have learned in the Nursery class. Staff use resources thoughtfully to support children's progress across all areas of

learning. The environment is welcoming and well organised. It encourages children to explore and learn both indoors and outdoors.

Children are happy, settled and very eager to learn. They engage well in activities and show high levels of concentration. They listen to staff and follow routines with confidence. Positive relationships help children to feel safe and secure. Staff support children's language effectively through talk and questioning. This helps children to build their understanding and express their ideas.

Staff provide activities that develop early reading, number and social skills. However, the teaching of writing sometimes lacks precision and children do not have sufficient opportunity to practise letter formation. As a result, some children do not develop writing as well as they could. Overall, across all of the areas of learning, most children leave the Reception class well prepared for Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard ●

Leaders make sure that staff identify pupils' needs quickly. Early assessment helps staff understand pupils' individual needs and put support in place. Leaders recognise that some pupils need a more tailored approach, including small-group teaching. They have created The Oasis, where some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) spend part of the day. Here, skilled staff deliver a carefully planned curriculum that supports pupils' social and academic development.

Pupils who join the school mid-year, including those from other countries, receive effective support to settle in and continue learning. Staff know pupils well and quickly spot if they need extra help, including support for their wellbeing. The most vulnerable pupils, including those known to social care, receive support from staff and external professionals. Leaders use additional funding for disadvantaged pupils to provide targeted support in reading, writing and mathematics.

Pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged make progress from their starting points. Leaders use alternative provision appropriately and carry out the necessary safeguarding checks. However, some pupils are not as well prepared for the next stage of education as they could be. Inconsistencies in teaching in some subjects particularly impact some pupils who have SEND or who are disadvantaged.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard ●

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, know the school's strengths and identify the right priorities for improvement. They have established a positive culture where pupils are well supported and staff feel valued. Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school and speak positively about the care, education and opportunities their children receive. Staff appreciate the consideration given to their wellbeing and workload and recognise the steps leaders take to support them professionally and personally.

Trustees and members of the local governing committee fulfil their statutory responsibilities. They engage regularly with school leaders and provide effective support and challenge. Leaders benefit from the expertise and quality assurance provided by the trust. This

contributes to the identification of areas of school improvement. Staff access a comprehensive programme of professional development and training. This enables them to develop their practice and leadership skills.

Leaders are outward facing and actively engage with the local community. They share expertise with other schools and professionals and take part in trust initiatives that benefit pupils and staff alike.

Monitoring and evaluation systems provide leaders with useful information about the school's performance. However, these processes have not always been as precise as they could be. As a result, leaders' evaluation of some aspects of the school's effectiveness is occasionally more positive than the evidence fully supports. At times, this limits the effectiveness of the trust and local governors in their quality assurance of aspects of the school's work.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils at Cranberry Academy come to school each morning with a smile. They are happy to greet their friends and receive a warm welcome from caring staff who know them well. Pupils, including children in early years, feel safe and cared for. Across the school, pupils settle quickly into daily routines. Staff nurture qualities such as respect and responsibility. This helps pupils to enjoy learning and to make sensible choices. Pupils behave well and any incidents of bullying are rare and dealt with effectively. Pupils attend well and leaders ensure that when they do not, effective action is taken.

Pupils benefit from a range of learning activities that engage them. Technology and outdoor learning in the woodland area spark interest and encourage curiosity, one of the school's key values. Pupils take pride in their work and are keen to know how they can improve. Most pupils achieve well. They learn to be confident in reading, writing and mathematics. In national tests, pupils achieve close to the national average or better. Most pupils leave the school prepared for their secondary education. However, some disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Pupils benefit from taking on roles of responsibility. School councillors, playleaders, eco-warriors and house captains wear their badges with pride. They feel valued because of the contribution they make to the smooth day-to-day running of the school.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of opportunities beyond the classroom. Many join clubs such as street dance, cricket, batique and choir. This includes children in the early years who enjoy extending their school day with activities such as colouring, puzzle club and the Nursery book club. Pupils are proud to represent the school in sports such as dodgeball, cross-country and hockey. These rich experiences help pupils to grow in confidence and feel proud to be part of the school community.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that pupils at the early stages of reading and writing, including some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and some pupils who are disadvantaged, receive the precise teaching and sufficient practise time that they need to become fluent and accurate readers and writers.
 - In a small number of subjects, leaders should ensure that staff match teaching consistently to the needs of pupils, ensuring that checks on learning are used to correct errors so that pupils' learning builds securely on what they already know.
 - Leaders should continue to develop all areas of the early years provision to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve well so that they are better prepared for Year 1.
 - Those responsible for governance, including the trust, should strengthen their quality assurance in specific aspects of the school's development work so that their oversight, support and challenge are consistently robust across all areas.
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About this inspection

This school is part of St Bart's 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, Lisa Sarikaya, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Johnny Anderson.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMI.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other leaders during the inspection. They also spoke to members of the trust board and local governing committee, including the chairs of both of these.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently makes use of 3 alternative provisions, including 2 that are unregistered.

Principal: Lucie Smith

Lead inspector:

Frith Murphy, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:


Lisa Littler, Ofsted Inspector

Lise Houldsworth, Ofsted Inspector

Darren McCann, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 2 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

451

Well above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

446

Above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

11.90%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

2.66%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

10.64%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	65%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	58%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	65%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	71%	60%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	75%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	67%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	78%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	81%	73%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	82%	72%	Above
2024/25 (final)	78%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	85%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	83%	71%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	77%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	72%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	78%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	81%	73%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	32%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	27%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	27%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	45%	44%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	49%	62%	Below
2024/25 (final)	27%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	53%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	64%	60%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	62%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	55%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	53%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	82%	58%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	51%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	64%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	40%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	55%	59%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	32%	68%	-35 pp
2024/25 (final)	27%	69%	-42 pp
2023/24 (final)	27%	67%	-41 pp
2022/23 (final)	45%	66%	-21 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	49%	80%	-31 pp
2024/25 (final)	27%	81%	-54 pp
2023/24 (final)	53%	80%	-26 pp
2022/23 (final)	64%	78%	-15 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	62%	78%	-16 pp
2024/25 (final)	55%	78%	-24 pp
2023/24 (final)	53%	78%	-24 pp
2022/23 (final)	82%	77%	4 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	51%	80%	-28 pp
2024/25 (final)	64%	81%	-17 pp
2023/24 (final)	40%	79%	-39 pp
2022/23 (final)	55%	79%	-25 pp

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	3.4%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.6%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.3%	5.9%	Below

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	5.5%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	12.5%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	10.4%	16.2%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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