

# Stockport Academy

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135262
<b>Local Authority</b>	Stockport
<b>Inspection number</b>	360711
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 June 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Bernard Campbell HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Academy
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	706
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	76
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr David Robinson
<b>Principal</b>	Mr Ben Dunne
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 February 2010
<b>School address</b>	Heathbank Road Cheadle Heath, Stockport Cheshire SK3 0UP
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 33 lessons taught by 33 teachers, and held meetings with representatives of the local governing board and the sponsor, staff, and groups of students. They observed the academy's work, and looked at improvement plans, monitoring records and safeguarding documentation. They also took account of questionnaires from 98 parents and carers, 107 students and 78 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the academy's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Has the improved attainment and progress of 2010 been sustained in 2011. Is achievement now satisfactory?
- Are teaching and assessment satisfactorily promoting progress in all years and subjects?
- What is the impact of leaders at all levels in using self-evaluation and precisely targeted actions to drive improvement?

## Information about the school

Stockport Academy is a smaller-than-average-size secondary school which opened in September 2007. The academy is a member of the United Learning Trust. The sixth form opened in September 2008. A new principal was appointed in 2011. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is below average. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above average. The academy has specialisms in business and enterprise, and science.

When the academy was inspected in February 2010, it was given a notice to improve because it was performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could be reasonably expected to perform.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires a notice to improve.

The Principal, the local governing board and sponsor provide a clear vision and strong direction for school improvement. Over the last year significant changes in staffing and well-targeted staff development have led to much improved teaching and learning. Rigorous systems of target setting and assessment have raised expectations of staff and students, and results have improved. Stockport is now a satisfactory and improving academy.

Attainment is broadly average. GCSE results in English, mathematics and science improved significantly in 2010 and indications are that this is being sustained in 2011. A few subjects where GCSE results were weaker are showing marked improvement this year, for example, in art and geography. Students make satisfactory progress overall in the number and level of qualifications gained. The progress they make in gaining five GCSEs at grade C or above, including English and mathematics is good. Over the last year, the progress students make at Key Stage 3 has improved markedly as indicated by teacher assessments in all subjects.

Attendance remains low. It was rising steadily but has dipped a little this year. The number of students who are persistently absent has decreased year-on-year but is still above average. Punctuality has improved significantly. Behaviour is satisfactory and has improved as a result of better teaching, reduced use of supply teachers and improved pastoral systems. The academy has recently recognised weaknesses in its procedures for identifying and meeting the needs of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory.

Teaching and the use of assessment are satisfactory and improving at a good pace. There is very little inadequate practice remaining and there is an increasing proportion of outstanding teaching, particularly in English. The curriculum provides sound opportunities for students to achieve. There are some extra-curricular activities but opportunities to enrich students' enjoyment of learning are limited.

Students are keen to take on responsibilities. New opportunities are emerging but the range is limited and the student council is ineffective. Many initiatives to engage parents and carers more in the academy are at an early stage. Changes to the organisation of the academy are not communicated clearly to the whole parent body and their confidence in the academy is not growing as quickly as it might.

The sixth form is satisfactory. In lessons seen, students were usually making good progress and showed enthusiasm for their studies. On occasion, students' thinking was not challenged sufficiently and discussion and analysis lacked depth.

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Many features of leadership and management are good. Self-evaluation, action planning and review are rigorous at all levels and have successfully brought about significant improvements in teaching, learning and behaviour. However, a few roles have temporary additional support and a few leaders are new or yet to take up post. The academy has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise attainment and progress by:
  - increasing the proportion of good and outstanding teaching
  - improving the identification and support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities
  - applying successful strategies to increase the attendance of more students.
- Increase engagement and enjoyment in the main school and sixth form by:
  - increasing students' contribution to the life of the academy and their involvement in enrichment activities.
  - improving communication with parents and carers, and their engagement with the academy.
- Improve the effectiveness of the sixth form by increasing expectations and the intellectual challenge in lessons.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

<b>3</b>
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Students enter the academy with below average attainment. The overall number and level of qualifications gained is below average but has improved significantly and is on track for further improvement in 2011. In 2010, the proportion of students that gained five GCSEs at A\*-C, including English and mathematics was average. They make good progress in English and satisfactory progress in mathematics. The progress made by students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory. The recently improved identification of students' special educational needs is reflected in improved measures of their progress.

Students are keen and willing to learn. They are more engaged in their learning as a result of improved teaching. They are motivated by the clear expectations and the frequent information on their progress. They express satisfactory levels of enjoyment in their learning. The majority of students behave well in lessons and around the school. However, there is some low level disturbance when students are not effectively engaged by the activities. The number of exclusions increased as a result of a whole-school focus on improving behaviour. However, exclusions and referrals are now decreasing. Bullying occurs occasionally and it is usually dealt with effectively. Students usually feel safe and their parents and carers agree. Students are aware of how to keep safe on the internet and of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. Targeted students have improved their attendance and these effective actions need to be applied to more students.

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Students satisfactorily develop their basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). They develop skills in enterprise and an understanding of the next steps in education or training. Opportunities to work in primary schools are popular and there has been a positive response to the new role of student ambassador. Charity work attracts good support but students have limited responsibility for organising it or to be involved in taking on roles and responsibilities. Students are willing to engage in reflective thinking and show a genuine interest in ethical and spiritual issues that are raised in lessons and assemblies. They show respect for the opinions and feeling of others and take their views seriously. In an inspiring assembly led by the chaplain, students gave rapt attention to the messages being given. Students are prepared to be challenged but, in spiritual matters especially, often lack the vocabulary or the experiences to do justice to the quality of their thinking and to enable them to explore issues independently.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

**How effective is the provision?**

Overall, teaching is satisfactory. A large majority of teaching is good or better as a result of recent improvements. The proportion of good and outstanding teaching has increased but has not been in place for long enough to secure good progress overall. Teachers have a good grasp of students' needs. This informs the level at which teaching is pitched and helps teachers make checks once the lesson is underway. Lesson planning is often good and is becoming more consistent. The sequence of tasks keeps students actively engaged

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so that no-one can take a back seat. In the best teaching, links between activities are managed with great fluency and highly effective use is made of students' responses to build the learning and assess progress. This is enhanced by the students texting their responses to the interactive whiteboard. In some lessons, there is too much dependence on the use of criteria so that learning becomes mechanical and enthusiasm for new learning is lost. Questioning sometimes lacks depth and does not challenge students to articulate their thinking. The starting point of tasks for more-able students does not always recognise their prior knowledge and so they do not encounter sufficiently challenging activities until the lesson is well underway.

The curriculum has been adapted well to meet the needs of different groups. For example, keen Year 10 students take GCSE French in one year and the top mathematics set in Year 9 has taken GCSE early. The programme to boost literacy has had variable impact and is being re-focused. External learning mentors help build students' confidence and skills with reading. Personal, social, health and citizenship, and religious education have been audited and plans are in place to strengthen this provision. At Key Stage 4, appropriate provision is made for students to follow courses at the college. Additional vocational courses for next year are already thoroughly planned. Some extra-curricular activities take place. Occasionally, timetabled activities do not take place and the academy is unsure of the extent of student participation in out-of-hours learning. Plans to extend the enrichment of the curriculum in the main school and the sixth form are at an early stage of development.

Induction arrangements for transition from primary school into the academy are effective for most students. The academy has plans to provide more individualised support for Year 6 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A robust plan is in place to improve the identification and support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with literacy and behavioural difficulties. Guidance for Year 9 students and their parents and carers has improved as the options have extended. Year 11 students receive appropriate information advice and guidance. However, they do not have sufficient opportunity to learn directly from sixth formers about post-16 courses. The monitoring of students' progress results in programmes to support those who are struggling or underachieving. This will be further developed as additional year leaders take up post. In collaboration with external agencies, the academy has provided good support for individuals to overcome difficult episodes in their lives and achieve success. Pastoral strategies have been effective in improving behaviour and in reducing persistent absence.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>3</b>

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## How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders have successfully accomplished a major process of change, over the last year, which is almost complete. Priorities for continued improvement in the quality of leadership and management were accurately identified and decisive action was taken. As a result of changed leadership roles, and with the support of the sponsor, a few senior responsibilities have temporarily added capacity. As a result of staff changes, a high proportion of middle managers are relatively new to their role and a few are yet to take up post. Senior and middle leaders share a strong commitment and enthusiasm for bringing about further improvement.

Middle leaders have taken increased responsibility for bringing about improvement in the performance of staff and students. Evidence from assessment, lesson observations and patterns of students' behaviour is used effectively to review the performance of students and staff and to monitor the equal opportunities of different groups. The frequent reporting of progress to students and parents and carers is a strong driver for improvement. However some parents, carers and students have insufficient explanation of the data and of the actions needed to tackle underachievement.

Professional development is well targeted and tailored to meet the needs of individual members of staff. Performance management procedures have also been used effectively to tackle inadequate teaching. These strategies have resulted in more good and outstanding teaching. Difficulties of recruitment in mathematics have been resolved recently. Improved management arrangements have resulted in improved behaviour. Plans are in place to further strengthen these procedures.

The local governing board and the sponsor play a strong role in shaping the direction of the school. They have a wide range of expertise, are well informed, and provide a high level of professional challenge. They are rigorous in ensuring that actions are carried out and evaluated. They and the school leadership were slow to identify weaknesses in the provision for safeguarding and special educational needs. Once identified, they acted quickly to rectify deficiencies. Arrangements for safeguarding are appropriate and relevant training is provided for all staff. Risk assessment procedures are in the process of further development.

Partnerships are satisfactory, with appropriate links with other course providers. Senior personnel in business and commerce help to set a positive tone with regard to enterprise and effort. The school has taken an imaginative approach to an analysis of its local community by involving Year 11 students. This has helped the school to prioritise the aspirations of young people in developing business partnerships locally. The recent licensing of a chaplain to the academy has opened up opportunities to make links with faith groups and academies further afield. The Faith Room is underused as a resource to engage adults and students in activities to deepen their understanding of the community in which they live.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Sixth form

Sixth form students make satisfactory progress. Some students are not strong in literacy or general learning skills when they start their course and they receive positive support. Students have achieved well in psychology and ICT. Attendance has risen and a higher proportion stays on from Year 12 to Year 13. Some take up opportunities for community involvement and for sports.

A suitable range of academic and vocational courses is offered, though on some courses numbers are low. The curriculum generally meets current students' needs and aspirations. However, the academy plans to extend the curriculum with Level 2 courses to cater for those who find advanced courses too challenging. Teaching was generally good in the lessons seen. However, it has resulted in satisfactory progress over time. On occasion, the quality of questioning and dialogue does not present a high enough intellectual challenge. Students are well advised about the standard of their work and how to improve. However, they say they would have valued clearer guidance on some aspects of course selection and career routes at an earlier stage; the academy has now strengthened this guidance. Pastoral support for students is well established and valued by students. Leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory. Quality assurance of provision and the management of students' progress are increasingly effective.

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*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

## Views of parents and carers

Approximately 14% of parents and carers returned the parental questionnaire which is lower than average. Most parents and carers say that their child enjoys the academy and that they are well-informed about their child's progress. Parents and carers are not as positive about the quality of teaching and behaviour. Comments showed that a few parents and carers were dissatisfied with the quality of teaching and behaviour in lessons taught by supply staff. The inspection found that that the quality of teaching has improved significantly in the last year and that the use of supply teachers has reduced considerably in the last term. A small minority of parents and carers do not think that their child's particular needs are being met well enough. The inspection found that the academy is in the early stages of improving its identification and support for students' special educational needs. A few parents and carers wrote comments expressing their confidence in the new principal and his actions to bring about improvement.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stockport Academy to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 98 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 706 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	22	62	63	6	6	4	4
The school keeps my child safe	28	29	59	60	7	7	3	3
My school informs me about my child's progress	39	40	45	46	9	9	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	34	42	43	19	19	3	3
The teaching is good at this school	22	22	49	50	16	16	4	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	21	47	48	24	24	4	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	16	56	57	15	15	4	4
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	24	24	51	52	12	12	3	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	27	45	46	20	20	3	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	20	44	45	20	20	8	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	19	55	56	11	11	7	7
The school is led and managed effectively	30	31	46	47	10	10	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	34	44	45	12	12	6	6

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



10 June 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Stockport Academy, Stockport, SK3 0UP**

Thank you for being so welcoming when we came to inspect your academy. We enjoyed meeting you very much indeed. We judged that yours is a satisfactory academy and no longer requires a notice to improve. In the questionnaire that you completed the large majority of you said that the Principal and senior staff do a good job, you know how well you are doing and you are well prepared for the future.

These were the things we liked most about your academy.

- Your achievement has improved and you make good progress in English.
- Teaching has improved and you are enjoying lessons more.
- Behaviour has improved and almost all students are now arriving on time.
- The Principal and other leaders are doing a good job to improve the academy.

To help the academy to improve, we have said that senior leaders should do three things.

- Further raise attainment and progress by:
  - further increasing the proportion of good and outstanding teaching
  - improving the identification and support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities
  - applying successful strategies to increase the attendance of more students.
- Increase engagement and enjoyment in the main school and sixth form by:
  - increasing students' contribution to the life of the academy and their involvement in enrichment activities
  - improving communication with parents and their engagement with the academy.
- Improve the effectiveness of the sixth form by increasing expectations and the intellectual challenge in lessons.

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Campbell

Her Majesty's Inspector

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