

# Stockport Academy

Heathbank Road, Cheadle Heath, Stockport, Cheshire, SK3 0UP

## Inspection dates

6–7 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Measures of students' progress over time are below national expectations. Although rapidly improving, progress is not yet good.
- Students known to be eligible for free school meals, those with disabilities and/or special educational needs, and girls make slower progress than their peers.
- Teaching over time has not been good enough to meet the needs of all students and enable them to make good progress.
- The sixth form requires improvement. Overall retention is in-line with the national average but too many girls leave their studies at the end of Year 12.
- The proportion of students who are persistently absent or are temporarily excluded from school has reduced but is still higher than the national average.
- Senior leadership is good but middle leaders are not yet able to fulfil their roles independently and effectively.
- Governors have failed to tackle successive years of underachievement.

### The school has the following strengths

- Staff value the good work of the recently appointed senior leaders. The Principal and deputy Principal have a clear vision for success and a determination to drive the school forward. This has resulted in improvements in achievement, teaching and behaviour.
- A wide range of lunchtime, after-school, and out-of-school activities contributes well to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- There is a welcoming atmosphere in the academy. Students are polite and friendly and feel safe.
- The students and their parents are very supportive of the academy, particularly the good work of the senior leaders.

## Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, inspectors observed 34 teachers in 34 lessons, including a joint observation with a member of the academy’s senior team. Other aspects of the academy’s work were also seen, including an assembly and tutorial time, and inspectors held meetings with students from all year groups.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the academy sponsor, and academy staff, including senior and middle leaders. Informal discussions also took place with staff and students.
- Inspectors took account of the 12 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) as well as responses to the academy’s own staff, student, and parent questionnaires.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation including minutes of the governing body, the academy’s self-evaluation, and data relating to students’ achievement.

## Inspection team

Janet Palmer, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Chris Griffin

Additional Inspector

Bernard Robinson

Additional Inspector

Helen Gaunt

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Stockport Academy is a smaller than the average sized secondary school.
- The academy opened in 2007. The sixth form opened in 2008.
- The proportion of students that staff have identified as disabled or having special educational needs, therefore requiring extra support through 'school action' is similar to the national average.
- A smaller than average proportion of students have a statement of special educational needs or have extra support because they have been identified as 'school action plus'.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average (the pupil premium is specific, additional funding provided to support the education of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years, children who have been looked after continuously for a period of six months and children whose parents are currently serving in the armed forces).
- Most students are of White British heritage.
- A small number of students attend courses off-site at the Pendlebury and Moat House pupil referral units, and at the Works 4 U training centre.
- The Principal and deputy Principal have been in post since September 2012.
- The Principal provides support as a School Improvement Partner for St Damien's RC Science College, Tameside.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve teaching by:
  - increasing creativity, innovation and independence in lessons so that students are captivated and challenged by their learning.
- Continue to speed up the progress students make by:
  - ensuring that work is set at the right level for all students including those eligible for the pupil premium, those with special educational needs, and girls.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that middle leaders develop the skills they need to fulfil their role effectively and independently
  - improving the ability of governors to hold the school to account by improving their understanding of:
    - student performance data
    - self-evaluation
  - an external evaluation of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.
- Continue to reduce rates of absence and exclusions so they are at least in-line with national averages.
- Improve the staying-on rate of girls in the sixth form by:
  - ensuring that subject options and pastoral systems support their needs and aspirations.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- When students join the academy in Year 7 their attainment is below that of students in most schools across the country.
- By the time students leave in Year 11 they have made progress that is broadly in line with expectations in English, mathematics, science, and languages, but less than expected in humanities and overall.
- In 2012, the difference in attainment between students eligible for the pupil premium and other students in the academy was high at 29 percentage points for English and 12 percentage points for mathematics. As a result of the effective allocation of pupil premium funding to reduce class sizes and fund a 'nurture' class in Year 7, the gap between their attainment and that of all other students is closing, particularly in English.
- In 2012, girls were 6.3% behind boys in their GCSE results. This was recently raised as an area for development by the academy and the attainment gap between girls and boys has decreased.
- For students with disabilities and/or special educational needs, the picture in 2012 was mixed. The progress made overall and in English and mathematics by students supported through 'school action' or with a statement of special educational need was broadly in-line with expectations. However, students identified as 'school action plus' fell below expectations. Efforts by the academy to tackle this underachievement through improved leadership of special educational needs, has resulted in better progress being made in lessons by all groups requiring extra learning support.
- The academy has had a policy of entering students early for some GCSE examinations. This policy is currently being reviewed by the academy because they perceive that it has had a limiting effect on the aspirations of some students to improve their grades, particularly in mathematics.
- Students enter the sixth form with attainment that is below other students nationally. Their results at GCE A level and GCE AS level are lower than the national average although the progress they make is broadly in-line with expectations and improving. Progress is better at GCE AS level than at GCE A level.
- The small numbers of students who are educated off-site are making suitable levels of progress because the provision matches their current needs and interests.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is improving. The majority of teaching seen during the inspection was good and some was outstanding. However, a small core of unexceptional teaching is preventing students from making good progress overall.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching in the academy and know how to bring about further improvements.
- Features of the better teaching observed included planning that took good account of what students had already learned and provided for those who require extra support; high expectations of students' capabilities; exciting and creative activities; and a way of questioning students that enabled the teacher to judge their understanding and challenge them to think more deeply and respond more thoughtfully.
- Where teaching was less effective, the pace of the lesson was too slow because the teacher talked too much, resulting in students losing interest. In these lessons, students were given too few opportunities to think for themselves which limited how much progress they could make. In some lessons, the activities were too easy for some students and too difficult for others, resulting in both lower and higher-ability students achieving less well than they might.
- In some subjects the marking of students' books is very good with students engaging in a

dialogue with their teacher about their work and what they need to do to improve. However, this is not the case for all subjects or teachers, and some students clearly ignore their teachers' comments.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** requires improvement

- Behaviour and safety are not yet good because, although improving, levels of absence and levels of exclusions resulting from poor behaviour are still higher than the national average. However, students were keen to stress how much behaviour and attitudes to learning had improved in recent months. They felt safe and would recommend the academy to others.
- The students spoken to said that there is hardly any bullying and when bullying is reported to an adult it is likely to stop. All were aware of their responsibility to report bullying if they witnessed it happening.
- Through work in personal, social, health and economic education and in assemblies, students are aware of the negative impact of name calling, including using racist, homophobic and disablist language. For example, students' work includes a poster reading, 'sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will break my heart!' However, students say that homophobic language in particular, is still frequently used, despite their teachers' disapproval and actions taken to punish the perpetrators.
- Students value the new merit system and the rewards for attending extra-curricular activities and for good attendance.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Passionate ambition and visionary leadership is bringing about rapid and secure improvements in this academy. The Principal shows great determination to challenge all areas of underperformance and is working hard to enable middle leaders, most of whom are new in post, to similarly challenge underperformance in their own areas of responsibility.
- Plans to improve what students are able to achieve are clearly focused on the quality of teaching. Teachers appreciate the opportunities they now have for further training including observing good practice in their own and other schools. Access to training has already resulted in improvements to teaching and better outcomes for students.
- Senior leaders and governors manage the setting of targets and reward staff suitably through effective procedures for performance management. This is based on teachers' ability to meet targets, and on how well their students are doing. Regular observations by senior and middle leaders of lessons identify the strengths in teaching and the actions for improvement, which are then followed up and supported.
- The Principal values the regular contact and support from the academy sponsor in focusing the academy's long-term aims and day-to-day challenges.
- Procedures are in place to ensure that students in the academy and at off-site provision are properly safeguarded. Keeping safe is also addressed through the curriculum, where students learn how to protect themselves against sexual exploitation and how to stay safe when using social networking sites.
- The curriculum is being revised for Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form to better match the courses to students' interests and abilities. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced by the very many opportunities the academy provides for them to engage in charitable, artistic, sporting and other activities. During the inspection a group of students were in Poland on a trip which included visiting Auschwitz concentration camp.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has a good understanding of the academy's finances, including the allocation of pupil premium funding to appoint additional staff and provide support. Governors

understand and fulfil their responsibilities with regard to keeping students safe and they have a sound knowledge about how good teaching is in the academy. However, the governing body is not as effective as it should be. Their grasp of the significance of data and how to use it to hold the academy to account is not fully developed. Some important points have gone unnoticed such as girls' underachievement. Recent minutes of the governing body indicate an increase in challenge to the academy but it is not yet as robust as it might be.

## What inspection judgements mean

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

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135262
<b>Local authority</b>	Stockport
<b>Inspection number</b>	406595

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy Sponsor Led
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	648
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	69
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Robinson
<b>Principal</b>	Frank McCarron
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 June 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 286 0330
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 286 0331
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