

Cedar Mount Academy

Gorton Education Village, 50 Wembley Road, Gorton, M18 7DT

Inspection dates 29–30 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- The academy's overall effectiveness has declined since its last inspection.
- Students' achievement is inadequate and progress is highly variable across the academy. Students' attainment and progress have not met government expectations since the academy opened. Some students in Year 11 in 2014 left the academy without any GCSE qualifications.
- The quality of teaching is inadequate. Work set does not match students' needs and abilities and expectations are low. This leads to students making inadequate progress.
- Students' behaviour is inadequate. Attendance is low and shows little sign of improvement.
- In lessons, a significant minority of students slow the learning of others and this leads to students' inadequate progress over time.
- The academy's work to keep students safe requires improvement. Some students are often absent from the academy and this potentially affects their safety.
- Leaders' assessment of teaching is overly positive.
- Leaders are not effective in checking on the impact of the academy's work with disadvantaged students. As a result, these students underachieve.
- The curriculum fails to meet the needs of students or prepare them well for the future. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not progressing well.
- Poor skills in reading, writing and mathematics are not tackled systematically across the academy, including in different subjects.
- Governors and sponsors have too readily accepted academy leaders' overly positive assessments of students' progress. This has prevented them holding the academy to account for students' achievement and the quality of teaching. Governors have not ensured that they fulfil all of their statutory duties.
- The academy's ability to improve is not secure. Plans for improvement are weak. Many leaders are new to the academy, including the Principal, and they have not overcome the inadequacies inherent in the academy, particularly in terms of teaching and students' achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- At times, students learn well and behave well when interesting work is set.
- The academy's procedures for the protection of the most vulnerable students are good.
- The new Principal is taking decisive action in an attempt to improve the effectiveness of the academy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of teaching and learning in parts of lessons. Two observations were undertaken jointly with the leaders of the academy.
- Inspectors spoke with two groups of students about their learning in lessons and their safety in the academy. They also spoke informally to other students around the academy and listened to a few students reading.
- Inspectors held meetings with the Chief Executive of the Trust and the Director of Secondary Education for the Trust, with academy staff, including middle and senior leaders. A senior leader from Melland High School joined one meeting. Inspectors had a telephone conversation with the Chair of the Governing Body and an additional discussion, on the telephone, with the Director of Secondary Education for the Trust to clarify issues not covered during their initial meeting.
- Inspectors also looked at the academy’s review of its own performance, its development plan, academy policies and the minutes of governing body meetings. Inspectors also considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors looked at students’ work in lessons and also analysed samples of students’ work in exercise books and files.
- There were too few responses to the on-line questionnaire, Parent View, for inspectors to analyse.

Inspection team

James McGrath, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Judith Tolley

Additional Inspector

Marcia Harding

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- Cedar Mount Academy opened in 2012, sponsored by the Bright Futures Educational Trust.
- The academy is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- There are more boys than girls in the academy.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is high, it is over twice the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Two-fifths of students are White British and approximately one in 10 is from each of Pakistani, African and other White backgrounds. There are several other minority ethnic groups represented in smaller proportions.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is well-above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is well-above average.
- There are two alternative providers of education used by the academy for a small number of students who study for the full week off site. They are the Leo Kelly Hospital School and the Manchester Secondary Pupil Referral Unit (PRU).
- The proportion of students joining or leaving the academy at other than the usual times is well above average.
- The academy does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectation for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- The academy shares a building with Melland High School, which caters for students between the ages of 11 to 19 who have diverse special educational needs. This provision is subject to separate inspection arrangements. Reports of these inspections can be found at www.gov.uk/ofsted.
- The Principal has been appointed since the previous inspection and took up post on 1 September 2014. There have been significant changes in leadership and staffing since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good and enables students to achieve well by ensuring that:
 - work set matches the needs and abilities of all groups of students and is adjusted appropriately if they are not making good progress
 - there are consistently high expectations of what students can achieve
 - all students are engaged in their learning at all times and they are making good progress
 - teachers' marking provides students with subject-specific advice to help them to improve their learning and staff require students to respond to the advice
 - questioning is used skilfully and is appropriately challenging to check the understanding of all students in order to ensure good progress
 - opportunities for students to develop their reading and writing skills in subjects other than English are swiftly developed and students have opportunities to apply their mathematical skills effectively across a range of subjects
 - the work of teaching assistants is checked carefully to ensure they are supporting students in making good progress.
- Improve students' behaviour and safety by developing effective practices to:

- urgently reduce the number of students absent from the academy, including those regularly absent, so their safety is assured and overall attendance across the academy is at least average
 - make sure all students arrive at the academy and to their classes on time
 - eradicate persistent low-level disruption and instances of misbehaviour so that learning improves
 - ensure that all students take pride in their work
 - ensure the academy's procedures for the management of students' behaviour are consistently applied by all staff.
- Rapidly improve the impact of leadership and management at all levels, including governance, by:
- ensuring governors meet all of their statutory duties
 - ensuring there are effective programmes for the development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding that impact well on the behaviour and attitudes of all students
 - eradicating inadequate teaching and improving that which requires improvement
 - ensuring continuity of staffing for all students
 - developing effective plans for improvement that have sharply focused actions with precise measures of success
 - holding teachers and leaders to account through effective performance management
 - ensuring that the impact of actions to help disadvantaged students is checked thoroughly to ensure these students are making good progress in all subjects and attend well
 - ensuring all leaders, especially subject leaders, focus effectively on the progress and behaviour of all groups of students including disabled students and those who have special educational needs
 - making sure all leaders check the quality of teaching accurately and link it securely to students' progress
 - ensuring subject leaders take swift action to ensure there is consistent and effective use of academy policies so that students' behaviour and the quality of teaching improve
 - developing effectively students' skills in reading, writing and mathematics across a wide range of subjects
 - ensuring governors and sponsors hold the academy rigorously to account for the quality of teaching and students' achievement.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the academy's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- The Principal, senior leaders and governors have high expectations and are ambitious for students. However, in the time since the academy opened in 2012, leaders have not delivered the rapid improvements necessary to tackle its inherent weaknesses. Consequently, the overall effectiveness of the academy is inadequate.
- Leaders' evaluation of the academy's performance is overgenerous and does not give a clear picture of the urgency for improvement. Plans for improvement are weak. They do not focus sharply enough on the key actions required to improve the effectiveness of the academy. Measures to judge the success of actions are vague and lack precision. These aspects limit the capacity for the academy to improve.
- Due to a lack of precision and skills, leaders do not consistently judge the quality of teaching accurately and this is shown in academy records. The academy has managed many changes to staffing but lack of continuity in staffing still results in students' slow progress.
- The Principal has taken decisive action to strengthen leadership and has attempted to improve the quality of teaching. Recently, senior leaders and middle leaders have been appointed and there has been a reorganisation of some aspects of leadership. Middle leaders have been appointed to focus on the progress of each year group. The impact of these new appointments and reorganisation is unclear in terms of improvements in teaching, behaviour and achievement.
- Subject leaders are ineffective as they have not successfully tackled inconsistencies in the use of the academy's policies. In particular, marking and behaviour policies are not consistently applied across and within subjects to ensure that the quality of teaching and achievement is improving rapidly. They appreciate opportunities to share best practice with other colleagues in the academy's teaching and learning communities.
- The system for performance management of teachers is not thorough. Targets for improvement lack precision. As a result, it is unclear how teachers and leaders are held to account effectively.
- The curriculum is ineffective. As a result, students, including those who left the academy at the end of Year 11 in 2014, underachieve. Inadequacies in reading, writing and mathematics have not been tackled urgently and systematically by leaders, although work has now started to improve students' reading skills.
- A programme for careers education and guidance is in place for all students. Students receive impartial advice and guidance.
- Leadership has established good systems to link with off-site providers to check on the progress, attendance, behaviour and safety of students.
- Over time, the academy's work to secure students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is ineffective. The academy is developing its work with a focused week on cultural diversity contributing well to students' understanding of different faiths and religions. The academy provides opportunities for students to learn about life in modern Britain and about democracy and the law. Even so, leaders do not check effectively the impact of this work across the academy. The academy has much to do to ensure it is developing good relationships across the academy and tackling discrimination effectively.
- Leaders are not focusing sharply enough on checking the effect of their actions to raise the achievement of disabled students and those who have special educational needs. The academy does not ensure equality of opportunity for these students.
- Over time, the use of additional government funding has not been effective. Disadvantaged students underachieved in 2014 in their external examinations. Leaders have subsequently introduced a new mentoring system alongside other support available for disadvantaged students. The academy's assessment information shows that currently, these students are doing well in English, although not in mathematics. Disadvantaged students are on track to achieve better outcomes by the end of Year 11 in 2015 than their peers in the 2014 cohort.
- Leaders ensure that there are good arrangements for safeguarding and child protection which meet requirements. Staff are vigilant and leaders follow up concerns tenaciously to ensure students' safety.
- Inspectors strongly recommend that the academy should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.
- The Trust has too readily accepted leaders' evaluation of the work of the academy. This has led to underachievement being left unchallenged. Since September 2014, Trust members have taken decisive action to assist the academy to improve. However, these actions have not resulted in rapid improvement in achievement for all students, as the quality of teaching and students' behaviour is highly variable.
- **The governance of the academy:**
 - Governors have not been diligent in holding the academy to account for underachievement. Over time, their work has been ineffective. They have too readily accepted inaccurate information about students'

achievement and this has inhibited their ability to take effective actions to improve the academy's performance. Governors have received training on how to interpret the academy's data and achievement information. Some governors are confident in comparing students' achievement data with local and national achievement measures. Governors link with subject leaders to ascertain the quality of teaching and achievement. They have appointed new leaders to the academy to support the Principal's drive for improvement.

- Governors are clear about how a teacher's performance links to pay and know what is happening to tackle underperformance. Finances are checked effectively. Governors know how the academy is using the additional government funding to support disadvantaged students. However, they are not clear about the impact this funding is having on raising achievement for these students across the academy. Governors do not fulfil their statutory duty to publish the impact of this funding for the previous year on the academy's website. They work well with leaders to ensure that the statutory requirements for safeguarding are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are inadequate

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Students' attendance has dropped since the last inspection and is now low. It is not improving strongly and it is especially low for students in Years 9 and 10. This was reflected in students' overall attendance during the two days of the inspection which was also low.
- Students' attitudes to learning are highly variable. When teaching is not good, students sometimes misbehave and the pace of learning is slowed. Academy records confirm that students' behaviour causes interruptions to lessons and this was also seen by inspectors. When the quality of teaching is good, students behave well and make a good contribution to their learning as they are interested in the work and it is well matched to their needs and abilities.
- Inspectors noted that lessons are interrupted by students arriving late. Students' punctuality to the academy and to classes leads to a loss of learning time.
- Students' presentation of their work is inconsistent. There is some well-presented, accurate work but this is not consistently the case. Students' lack of care with their work slows their progress and is not helping to improve writing skills.
- The new Principal introduced a 'no tolerance approach to misbehaviour' and this led to permanent exclusions and fixed term exclusions, in the autumn term 2014, that were well-above average. However, there have been no permanent exclusions in the spring term 2015 and fixed term exclusions have reduced by half, although they remain above average. Students say that behaviour has improved due to the actions taken by the new Principal.
- The use of the academy's 'internal exclusion unit' is helping to reduce external exclusion from the academy. An inspector saw students working well in the unit and focusing on the tasks set for them.
- Around the academy, students are generally well behaved and respond well to visitors.
- A small number of students are taught at off-site provision for the whole of the week. Leaders have established procedures with the provider to ensure students are well behaved and most students attend well.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure requires improvement.
- Some students are often absent from the academy and this has the potential to impact on their safety. The academy recognises this risk and uses a range of strategies to check that students are safe. For those who are regularly absent, there are home visits, the use of education welfare officers and regular contact with parents whenever possible. There is further work to do to reduce the number who are absent and so ensure their safety.
- Almost all students said they felt safe in the academy. Students say they have a clear understanding of internet safety and what to do should issues arise. For example, those having experienced cyber-bullying, outside of the academy, report it and swift action is taken involving the police when necessary.
- There are well-developed links with off-site providers to ensure students are safe.
- Arrangements to support students whose circumstances make them most vulnerable are good. Staff are vigilant and there is an effective system for reporting concerns. The academy links well with other agencies and is persistent in ensuring a quick response to safety matters.

- Students are clear about what constitutes bullying, including prejudice-based bullying. Bullying has reduced and is much less prevalent than at the start of the academic year. However, there have been occasional examples of racism and other types of bullying in the academy this year. Students told inspectors they are safe in the academy and are confident that the academy leaders do not tolerate bullying and take firm action when it occurs.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching is highly inconsistent across the academy. Students underachieve due to the impact of many temporary teachers and overall weak teaching over time.
- Expectations from teachers of what students are capable of achieving are too low. The quality of work accepted from students is often not good enough and results in students making slow progress and underachieving. This is not encouraging students to strive to attain higher standards and improve their progress.
- Work set across the academy does not meet the needs and abilities of students and results in students making slow progress. This lack of progress goes unnoticed by some teachers and leaders. The pitch of work is not adjusted appropriately to get the best out of all groups of students. The academy's achievement information is not used well enough to set appropriately challenging work for all groups of students. This leads to students' underachievement over time.
- Teachers' marking of students' work is very inconsistent. There is some good marking of work and helpful comments that students act upon, particularly in some English books. However, there is much work that is not marked effectively across subjects and many examples where students are not provided with useful advice. When marking is weak, students do not respond to improve their work and consequently their rate of progress slows.
- In subjects other than English, there are insufficient opportunities for students to develop their reading and writing skills. Mathematical skills are not strengthened through the effective application of these skills in other subjects.
- The quality of questioning is inconsistent across the academy and is not used skilfully by teachers to involve students in their learning. Often it is not used well enough to assess what an individual student understands. Too often, an individual student responds to a question but other students do not have the chance to contribute their knowledge or views. Consequently, teachers are often unaware of the depth of knowledge and understanding of their students.
- Teachers do not manage students' behaviour consistently well and do not apply effectively the academy's policies for behaviour. For example, students are not consistently challenged when they are late to class, and occasionally they can be considerably late. Also, misbehaviour is not always managed swiftly and it then disrupts the learning of other students.
- Teachers do not deploy teaching assistants effectively to ensure that all groups of students make at least good progress. Their work is not checked effectively to help them to support students better.
- There are pockets of good teaching where students are motivated to play a full part in activities, are enthusiastic and work is set at the right level. At these times, progress is good and students move forward quickly in their learning.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Achievement is inadequate as weak teaching over time results in students underachieving. Attendance is low and is also a contributory factor to students' inadequate progress.
- Students enter the academy with standards that are well below average. They make inadequate progress and standards remain low across the academy.
- Since the opening of the academy, students' progress and the standards they attained have been below the government's minimum expectations. In 2014, the proportion of students making expected progress was well below average in both English and mathematics. Overall progress across subjects was also well below average. Some students left the academy having achieved no GCSE qualifications at all.
- In 2014, students in Year 11 did not achieve their academy targets in English and mathematics. Leaders state, and inspection evidence confirms, that progress has accelerated for students in Year 11 in both English and mathematics this year. The academy's data indicate that it is currently on track to meet the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics in 2015.
- Inspectors reviewed a large amount of work in students' books during the inspection. This included a

small sample chosen by leaders and inspectors. Work completed by students varies considerably in quality. Some students do as well as they should, while others do not make at least expected progress due to the poor quality of teaching they receive. This high level of variability is an indicator of the overall inadequate achievement of students.

- Since the previous inspection, students leaving Year 11 in 2014 underachieved in Spanish, made broadly expected progress in science and achieved well in history and geography. Overall, across their best eight subjects, students' achievement was inadequate.
- There are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls; both underachieve considerably.
- The most able students do not do as well as similar students in other schools. This is because the work set for them lacks challenge and teachers' expectations are too low. As a result, the most able do not attain highly or make good progress.
- The academy does not use early entry to GCSE examinations.
- The few students studying at alternative provision make less progress than expected of them in both English and mathematics.
- Students who speak English as an additional language are given effective support to help them settle into the academy. This is through a structured induction programme. In the past, these students have achieved well and better than other students. However, at present, their progress varies across the academy according to the quality of teaching they receive.
- In 2014, disadvantaged students underachieved and made much less progress than non-disadvantaged students both in school and nationally. Gaps in attainment widened in English and narrowed slightly in mathematics in comparison to non-disadvantaged students nationally. Disadvantaged students, at the end of Year 11 in 2014, were almost two GCSE grades behind non-disadvantaged students nationally in both English and mathematics. In GCSE mathematics, their standards were equally low when compared to non-disadvantaged students in the academy. In English, disadvantaged students were half a GCSE grade behind non-disadvantaged students in the academy and attainment was low.
- The academy's current progress data indicate that disadvantaged students in the present Year 11 are making better progress than non-disadvantaged students in English but slower progress in mathematics.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make less progress than other students in the academy. Leaders do not focus well on the progress of these students. Work set does not meet their needs and abilities effectively. The academy has provided training for staff to raise their awareness of the barriers to learning these students face. Leaders are systematically researching what needs to be done to help these students do better. At the time of the inspection, there was no measurable impact evident of the training and research.
- The academy is beginning to focus its efforts on improving reading. Some form time is provided to allow students to read more widely and additional support has been provided for weaker readers. Inspectors listened to a few students reading and found that they could read the text clearly but could not always fully understand its meaning. Students told inspectors that there are few opportunities to read in a wide range of subjects and inspectors also observed this. The academy's leaders are clear that poor reading inhibits students' learning and that this has not been successfully tackled.

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

Unique reference number	138097
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	452010

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	571
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Josephine Purcell
Headteacher	Pat Rice
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2014
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