

Cedar Mount Academy

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

Inspection dates

4–5 July 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is variable both within and between departments. Occasionally, this leads to low-level disruption which prohibits good progress.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in English because expectations are not high enough and there are inconsistencies in assessment.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not make consistently good progress. This is because the quality of teaching is not consistently good enough and pupil premium funding is not targeted enough on improving progress.
- From low starting points, pupils achieve well and progress is improving across a range of subjects, including mathematics, science, geography, physical education (PE) and modern foreign languages.
- Middle leaders regularly monitor compliance with the school's policies and the quality of work but the variation in standards shows that their monitoring is not always rigorous enough.
- Senior leaders set high expectations for pupils' achievement. Their monitoring is thorough and well-focused.
- Governance is transformed. The recently appointed chief executive officer has brought a high level of challenge and a wealth of experience to support the school on a journey of rapid improvement.
- Overall attendance has improved significantly since the previous inspection. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities remains below that of their peers.

The school has the following strengths

- The principal has created a culture of collegiality and openness, where diversity is not just accepted but understood and respected.
- The leadership and management of behaviour is strong. Behaviour and attendance have improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- The vast majority of pupils behave extremely well and get along with their peers from very different backgrounds to themselves.
- Self-evaluation is honest and precise. This has helped to build strong capacity for improvement.

Full report

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 special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve outcomes, particularly in English and for disadvantaged pupils, by:
 - ensuring that standards of work and behaviour are consistently good
 - checking that work is accurately assessed
 - creating more opportunities for high-quality extended writing.
- Ensure that teaching consistently results in good progress by:
 - verifying that there is sufficient challenge for middle- and higher-ability pupils
 - checking that work is suitably adapted for pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Eradicate low-level disruption that exists in the small minority of lessons.
- Continue to improve attendance for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Strengthen the quality of leadership and management by:
 - rigorously evaluating the impact of pupil premium funding
 - ensuring that middle leaders monitor standards rigorously.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management are not yet good because pupils do not make consistently good progress; disadvantaged pupils' achievement is not improving quickly enough; standards in English are too variable; and the quality of monitoring by middle leaders is not rigorous enough.
- Although outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are improving, leaders and governors are fully aware that differences in the achievements of disadvantaged pupils and their peers are not diminishing quickly enough.
- Pupil premium funding and the Year 7 catch-up funding has had a positive impact on improving progress in reading. A significant amount of funding has been spent on appointing learning mentors who are valued by the pupils and have contributed to a very positive and cohesive school community. However, the wider impact of the funding has not been thoroughly evaluated to inform the spending plan for the next academic year.
- Middle leaders regularly monitor standards across their departments. However, their monitoring is not rigorous enough and leads to inconsistencies in expectations, behaviour and progress.
- The principal has been in post for less than a year; his impact has reverberated around the school community. His expectations are high. He has presence. His warmth and calm manner underpin the supportive school ethos.
- One member of staff commented: 'This school has gone from strength to strength during the last two years after a very difficult time for everybody. There is a really good, strong ethos here, where staff and students care about each other and I feel very proud and privileged to work here at Cedar Mount and for this Trust.'
- British values and spiritual, moral, social and cultural education are promoted well. At the time of this inspection the school was holding a 'diversity week'. Pupils say and books show that current affairs and political issues are regular topics for discussion.
- Year 9 pupils were observed behaving well in assembly. They were told about the life of Alan Turing, which was linked to current rates of self-harm and suicide. This is typical of the school's approach to addressing complex topics head-on and allowing pupils to speak openly about their beliefs and values.
- Performance management is used well. A number of teachers have left the school and more will leave at the end of this term. Staffing is much more stable and supply teachers are now used frugally. Newly qualified teachers feel well supported.
- The curriculum has been adapted to better suit the needs of pupils who benefit from a balance of academic and vocational studies. This has made a positive impact on progress. The school has developed its own high-quality alternative provision. Pupils achieve the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, and learn skills in orienteering, gardening and sport. Sport has radically improved since the previous inspection. Many pupils are enthused by the wealth of extra-curricular sport and the leadership opportunities it brings.

- Funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is having a positive impact. There is some high-quality intervention support for pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language. However, the impact of this work is diluted by the variable quality of teaching across the curriculum.

Governance of the school

- Members of the school improvement board know the school well because they meet regularly to scrutinise and digest a plethora of information about pupils' achievement, behaviour, attendance and more.
- The chair of the school improvement board is passionate about providing the very best quality education for all pupils regardless of race, religion, gender or ability. Members of the school improvement board regularly gather and act on parents' views and meet with pupils and teachers to discuss their views of the school. They hold leaders at all levels to account for the standards pupils achieve.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The single central record meets requirements. There is an established culture of safeguarding. Robust procedures are in place for child protection. There is a simple system for staff to report concerns about a pupil. Leaders and managers enlist the support of external agencies to help support pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Staff are well trained in child protection and the 'Prevent' duty, and case studies show that they have applied their training appropriately to help safeguard pupils. The vast majority of parents feel that their child is safe in school and that bullying is dealt with effectively.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The most effective teaching observed was typified by its inclusive nature, high expectations and the teacher's excellent subject knowledge. Where teaching is less effective, it does not offer sufficient challenge for middle- and higher-ability pupils. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low.
- The quality of teaching in English is inconsistent. There are not enough opportunities for extended writing and insufficient challenge for the middle- and higher-ability pupils. For example, in a Year 9 upper-ability set, pupils made an information leaflet relating to the text 'War of the Worlds'. Most pupils were engaged in their learning but expectations were not high enough. Scrutiny of pupils' work showed that the school's marking scheme was not consistently applied and the behaviour and reward system was not used.
- In other subjects, inspectors observed high levels of challenge for middle-ability and the most able pupils. Scrutiny of pupils' work in geography showed that the standard of work is high and pupils clearly make good progress. They show good subject knowledge through their writing and they write extensively with a good degree of

technical accuracy.

- There are growing numbers of international new arrivals joining the school who speak English as an additional language. Some pupils have a good grasp of English when they arrive and others have none. There is a highly effective induction programme for them to ensure that they are acclimatised to the school's language, routines and culture before they take on a full timetable of lessons. However, the quality of teaching for pupils who speak English as an additional language varies and they do not always receive the in-class support they need.
- In Year 8, PE pupils were engrossed in their learning due to excellent planning, preparation and very high expectations. Pupils' enthusiasm shone through as they led the warm-up for their group. Well-established routines were evident, together with high levels of respect for the teacher and each other. All pupils took part and all wore the school kit, heightening the importance of participation, belonging and collaboration.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is taught well across the curriculum. Pupils were asked to consider controversial topics and discuss their thoughts and opinions. They do so with respect and understanding for each other's beliefs and values. For example, in a Year 10 citizenship lesson, pupils were asked to consider racism and gender equality. The teacher effectively addressed a misconception by giving a very succinct explanation of 'prejudice'. Pupils showed excellent manners and maturity while they listened to a variety of different views on this topic.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- The vast majority of pupils understand how to be a successful learner but there is a small minority who do not value their education in the same way and contribute to low-level disruption in class.
- Extensive work has been carried out to eliminate bullying by promoting diversity, mutual respect and understanding to good effect. The few instances of bullying are logged and taken seriously. Pupils say that derogatory language is rarely heard.
- Careers information, advice and guidance are effective. Pupils have a good understanding of their options and high aspirations for the next stage of their education.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- There remains low-level disruption in a small minority of classes, particularly when teaching fails to engage pupils' interest or the work is not challenging enough for them.
- Pupils typically behave well at social times around the school site due to well-organised supervision by mentors, teachers and senior leaders. A greater choice of sporting

activities and a re-organised school day have contributed to a calm and orderly lunchtime.

- Attendance has improved significantly since the previous inspection, although it is still below the national average. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not attend as well as their peers. Persistent absence has reduced.
- There has been a drastic reduction in fixed-term exclusions since the previous inspection as the school invests in more productive alternatives. There are well-developed reciprocal relationships with local schools offering an alternative to exclusion.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Progress is not yet consistently good in English or for disadvantaged pupils.
- Observation of progress in lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work and current assessment data show that pupils' progress in English is too variable. This is because assessments are not always accurate and the curriculum does not offer enough challenge for middle- and higher-ability pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is mixed. Data shows that, from their starting points, pupils make at least sufficient and sometimes good progress in key stage 3. In key stage 4, progress is more variable due to a legacy of underachievement.
- Pupils' attainment on entry to school is well below the national average. Only a few have high attainment on arrival. Published progress data do not accurately represent pupils' achievements. This is because there are much higher than average levels of transience and many pupils arrive to school without any prior attainment information.
- Pupils' work, current tracking information and our lesson observations showed that progress is securely improving. Pupils make at least sufficient and often good progress across a range of subjects, including mathematics, science, geography, PE, business studies, information and communication technology (ICT) and modern foreign languages.
- In mathematics and science, progress has improved, particularly in key stage 3, due to improved teaching and careful assessment which is used to inform lesson-planning. Lesson observations in these subjects show that, while pupils make good progress in some lessons, progress remains variable both in and between departments.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making better progress, particularly in key stage 4. This is because leaders have changed their curriculum so that they can follow an appropriate pathway on the school site and still receive specialist teaching in English and mathematics. Their progress is regularly reviewed and appropriate interventions are put in place.
- Almost all pupils continue to further education, employment or training when they leave school. Due to raised expectations, many pupils spoken to by inspectors say that they are looking forward to visiting university as they aspire to be doctors or lawyers.

School details

Unique reference number	138097
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10022789

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 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	609
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Mr Gary Handforth
Principal	Mr Phil Mellen
Telephone number	0161 2487009
Website	www.cedarmount.manchester.sch.uk/
Email address	office@cedarmount.manchester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 April 2015

Information about this school

- The school is part of Bright Futures Educational Trust.
- A new chief executive officer was appointed in January 2017.
- The school does not meet the current government floor standards.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about the content of the curriculum and the qualifications pupils can achieve.
- Alternative provision is provided for approximately 16 pupils on the school site.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching across the school and carried out an extensive scrutiny of pupils', including disadvantaged pupils', work alongside their tracking information.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of pupils formally and at social times.
- Inspectors scrutinised school policies and records relating to safeguarding, self-evaluation information and a range of other documentation.
- There were 40 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- There were 47 responses to Parent View to be considered and nine free-text responses.
- Inspectors met with the chair of the school improvement board and the chief executive of Bright Futures Trust. Meetings were also held with senior and middle leaders.

Inspection team

Sally Kenyon, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Rochelle Conefrey	Ofsted Inspector
Jan Rowe	Ofsted Inspector
Phil Hyman	Ofsted Inspector

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