

The Macclesfield Academy

Park Lane, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK11 8JR

Inspection dates

11–12 October 2017

| Overall effectiveness | Requires improvement |
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| 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 | Good |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders, including governors, have not sustained the strengths seen at the previous inspection. They were not effective in preventing a decline in pupils' outcomes across a broad range of subjects in 2017.
- Leaders do not systematically monitor and evaluate academic and pastoral performance. As a result, school improvement plans are not effective enough.
- In 2017, Year 11 pupils did not achieve as well as others nationally across a broad range of subjects. Pupils' outcomes remain stubbornly low in mathematics.
- Some teachers do not give pupils sufficient guidance to improve their grammar.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good. It requires improvement because it is too variable within and across subjects and between different year groups.
- Some teachers do not routinely set pupils work that matches their starting points. Consequently some pupils, including those who are most able, do not make the progress that they should.
- School leaders have not used additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively enough. Consequently, outcomes of this group of pupils have not improved sufficiently. Disadvantaged pupils' attendance is also low.
- Leaders do not use the Year 7 catch-up funding effectively enough.

The school has the following strengths

- School leaders, including governors, have an accurate understanding of what needs to be done to improve the school.
- Pupils are positive about the broad and balanced curriculum provided by the school. They value the range of subjects that are offered and all participate in extra-curricular activities.
- Adults support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities well and most make good progress.
- Leaders ensure that the quality of careers education that pupils receive is good. As a result, all Year 11 pupils who left the school in 2017 moved on to education, employment or training.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for in school. Pupils' conduct is usually good.
- Pupils learn effectively about spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues and the fundamental values that underpin British society.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that school leaders, including subject leaders, monitor and evaluate their plans systematically, so that improvements are more consistent.
- Continue to improve the progress of pupils eligible for Year 7 catch-up funding.
- Continue to improve outcomes so that all pupils achieve what they are capable of, especially disadvantaged pupils and pupils in mathematics.
- Ensure that teachers challenge pupils, including those who are the most able, appropriately in lessons so that they make good progress.
- Ensure that teachers routinely give guidance to pupils so that they improve their grammar.
- Improve attendance and reduce the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are regularly absent from school.

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 school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to ascertain how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders, including the governing body, have not been successful in sustaining the good quality of education seen at the previous inspection in January 2014.
- Senior leaders, including governors, have an accurate understanding of the priorities which reflect the developmental needs of the school. However, the monitoring and evaluation of the success of these actions is not rigorous enough. As a result, leaders do not adjust plans to ensure that they are fully effective.
- Leaders have not used the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively enough. Leaders do not assess or review the effect of their actions and interventions on disadvantaged pupils' progress and attainment. Outcomes for this group of pupils are inconsistent and their attendance remains low.
- Leaders do not monitor and evaluate the impact of the Year 7 catch-up funding with sufficient precision. This is because leaders' planning is not careful or systematic enough to improve these pupils' progress. Pupils who enter the school below the expected standard in literacy and numeracy do not catch up with their peers quickly enough. That said, pupils with low starting points make better progress in reading than in numeracy.
- Subject leadership requires improvement because there is inconsistency between the quality of teaching and learning across subjects. The stronger leaders monitor teaching and outcomes effectively and make adjustments where necessary. However, monitoring is not strong enough in mathematics and leaders are not accelerating pupils' progress with sufficient urgency.
- Senior leaders closely monitor and review the range of subjects that they offer pupils to ensure that the curriculum meets pupils' needs. Pupils said that they valued the range and flexibility of the courses that leaders offer them, especially at key stage 4, and describe this as a strength of the school. They follow academic or vocational options as well as the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and a modern foreign language. All pupils study courses on personal development and welfare. Consequently, pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum that supports the pupils' well-being and next steps effectively.
- The curriculum provision to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural knowledge and their appreciation of fundamental British values is effective. Pupils explore issues relevant to modern Britain and the values that underpin British society.
- School leaders provide a wide range of extra-curricular options, which are part of every pupil's curriculum. All pupils participate in clubs or activities on a Thursday afternoon, including those who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The leadership of careers education, information, advice and guidance is highly effective. Information shared by school leaders shows that in 2017 all pupils who completed Year 11 moved on to education, employment or training.
- Staff say that the training planned by school leaders has supported recent improvements to teaching and to pupils' progress. For example, teachers now routinely

think about how they question pupils to deepen their knowledge, skills and understanding.

- Senior leaders implement rigorous performance management systems that link to pay progression and staff training. Leaders set and review targets, which include those relating to the outcomes of pupils. Staff and school leaders are not automatically eligible for pay progression if they do not meet their targets.
- Leaders have used the funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities effectively. The systems for identifying pupils who have additional needs have improved recently. The support for these pupils is well matched to their specific requirements. Consequently, the funding is having a positive effect on the progress and attainment of many of these pupils.
- Parents say that the school is starting to improve and because of this the number of pupils who choose to join the school is increasing. The parents who contacted the inspection team identified the headteacher for praise because of the positive improvements that have been made to the school.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not managed to prevent the recent low outcomes across a broad range of subjects because of inconsistent teaching. Added to this, they have not addressed the stubbornly poor attendance of some pupils. Although they have challenged senior leaders robustly at times, governors have not managed to support leaders effectively in the areas where most improvements have been required.
- Governors' monitoring of the leadership of the school in some crucial areas has been limited. For example, governors have not been clear on how effectively pupil premium funding has been used to raise the achievement and the attendance of eligible pupils.
- The governing body has recently elected members in key positions, including a new chair of governors and a governor to lead on the use of the pupil premium. This is helping the governing body to fulfil its duties more effectively now.
- The governor responsible for safeguarding has work-related expertise in this area and works closely with leaders to check that the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe are effective. All members of the governing body fully understand their responsibilities regarding keeping pupils safe.
- Governors demonstrate good knowledge and application of financial capability. They have been effective in leading the school to a state of financial security following a period of budget deficit.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's ethos reflects the high priority given to the safety and well-being of pupils. Leaders review their systems regularly to ensure that where training can improve safeguarding practice they provide it swiftly.
- Staff are vigilant in identifying potential risks to pupils, such as sexual exploitation,

radicalisation and alcohol- or drug-related dangers. Staff report and act on the information that they receive appropriately.

- Leaders maintain good-quality safeguarding records. There are systematic procedures for checking the backgrounds of staff when they are appointed.
- School leaders work effectively with parents, carers and external agencies and act swiftly when required. Leaders follow up referrals in a robust manner and they maintain good-quality records.
- Most pupils and parents say that pupils feel safe and are well looked after. Pupils have a clear understanding of the risks that might affect them and how to keep safe, including staying safe online. Pupils know to whom they should report concerns and how to do this.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment are not consistently strong enough to ensure that all pupils make good progress. There is too much variability across and within subjects, and between different year groups.
- Teachers do not regularly use the information that they have about pupils to plan work at the correct level. Therefore, pupils often complete the same work as their peers, regardless of whether it is too easy or too hard for them. Pupils, including those with high and low starting points, and those beginning Year 7, are not provided with the challenge or support that allows them to make consistently good progress.
- Teachers do not assess grammar consistently well. The improvements made since the previous inspection to improve pupils' grammar and spelling require strengthening further. Pupils' misconceptions in grammar remain because assessment is seldom good in this area. However, pupils make stronger progress in improving the accuracy of their spelling because they are regularly given direction and time to correct errors.
- The teaching of writing requires improvement. Pupils learn how to write in different styles across a range of subjects, including letter writing and recording information effectively. However, teachers do not routinely plan extended writing activities; pupils are weaker in this aspect of their learning.
- Leaders and teachers regularly plan reading activities. There is a strong culture of reading at the school and most pupils say that they enjoy reading. Most pupils read confidently.
- Most teachers plan and use questioning in line with the expectations of school leaders. Where teachers ask questions that allow pupils to think and reason deeply, such as in English and history, pupils respond with detail and fluency.
- Overall, teachers manage behaviour successfully and ensure good standards of behaviour and attitudes to learning. Consequently, pupils usually take care over the presentation of their work, bring the correct equipment and most behave well. Pupils' attitudes to learning decline when work fails to engage and challenge pupils or teachers do not have high enough expectations.
- Leaders, teachers and other adults know pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities well. They take care to plan and support the learning of these pupils

effectively and encourage pupils' independence by providing a good balance of challenge and support. Accordingly, in most cases pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make strong progress from their starting points.

- Leaders have reviewed the systems used for setting and monitoring homework, so it is of a better quality than previously. Pupils and parents say that homework is set regularly and that the work that is set for pupils is usually of an appropriate standard.
- School leaders provided inspectors with reports that they send home to parents. These documents contain clear and useful information about pupils' recent outcomes. Most parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, said that they receive valuable information from the school about their child's progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils speak positively about their school and its values. They say that they would recommend the school to others because they feel well supported by one another and by staff.
- Pupils learn to respect differences and tolerate views that are different from their own. They learn about fundamental British values and other faiths and cultures regularly.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and that it is dealt with effectively. They say that they are 'safe to be who they want to be' and that neither pupils nor staff tolerate racism or homophobia.
- Leaders plan the transition of pupils from primary to secondary school effectively. Year 7 pupils say that they are happy and value the information and support that they have received during their first weeks at the school. Parents who contacted inspectors to comment on the procedures in place for pupils joining the school were positive about the systems and the school's staff.
- Pupils know how to identify dangers and remain safe online. They are supported by the online safety systems established by school leaders.
- Pupils say that the school teaches them how to remain mentally and physically healthy. Pupils were especially positive about the range of healthy foods that are promoted and available in the school canteen. They say that these items help them maintain a good diet.
- The school provides effectively for the personal development and welfare of the very small number of pupils who attend alternative provision.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' attendance overall is broadly in line with the national average. Systems introduced by school leaders have been effective in encouraging some pupils who have been persistently absent in the past to attend school more regularly. Despite

improvements, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils remains well below that of other pupils nationally and their rates of persistent absence require further improvement.

- Most pupils behave well in lessons. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and take pride in their work, where expectations are high.
- The school is a calm place. Pupils are polite and have positive relationships with one another and with staff. Most pupils treat the school environment with respect and do not leave litter lying around. At break, lunchtime and at the change of lessons, pupils move around the school in an orderly manner. They arrive punctually to lessons.
- School leaders manage effectively the attendance, behaviour and safeguarding of the small number of pupils who attend alternative provision.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Provisional 2017 examination results indicate that outcomes across a broad range of subjects including English and mathematics were below the national averages.
- Records provided by school leaders and inspectors' analysis of pupils' current work show that more, but not all, pupils are now learning at a faster rate. For example, current pupils in Years 9 and 10 are making stronger progress overall than previous groups of pupils. However, variation remains within and across subjects and for different groups of pupils, especially Year 11.
- The outcomes for disadvantaged pupils were lower than for others nationally in Year 11 across a broad range of subjects in 2016 and 2017. However, assessment records shared by school leaders and the work seen by inspectors show that the differences between current disadvantaged pupils and others are diminishing because disadvantaged pupils are now making stronger progress. Despite these improvements, many inconsistencies remain across and between subjects. The use of funding to support these pupils requires improvement.
- Provisional 2017 results in English and mathematics show that attainment and progress are lower than the national averages. The work of current pupils shows that more are now working at the level expected of their age. They are making better progress. However, variation remains and this improvement is less evident in mathematics than in English.
- Outcomes for the most able pupils across a range of subjects in 2016 were broadly in line with those of others nationally. However, outcomes remain variable within and between subjects because teachers do not routinely set the most able pupils work that challenges them.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities usually make good progress across a broad range of subjects. This is because leaders and teachers identify and meet pupils' individual needs effectively.
- Leaders monitor the outcomes of the very small number of pupils who follow alternative provision effectively. Consequently, they are generally good.
- Information provided by school leaders shows that the proportion of pupils who progress to further education, employment or training is well above the national average.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 137064 |
| Local authority | Cheshire East |
| Inspection number | 10036731 |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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| Type of school | Secondary comprehensive |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 485 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair | Alistair Sutcliffe |
| Headteacher | Richard Hedge |
| Telephone number | 01625 383100 |
| Website | www.macclesfieldacademy.org |
| Email address | Richard.Hedge@macclesfield.academy.org |
| Date of previous inspection | 16–17 January 2014 |

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students and those supported by the pupil premium funding is in line with the national average.
- The number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities supported by the school is below the national average. The number of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above the national average.

- The school uses alternative provision for a small number of pupils at The Fermain Academy, the Arc Centre and Project INC.

Information about this inspection

- Meetings took place with school leaders, teachers and members of the governing body.
- Discussions were held with pupils to gather their views on issues including safeguarding, bullying, behaviour, teaching, careers guidance and the curriculum.
- Inspectors examined a range of supporting documentation such as the school's self-evaluation, the school's improvement plan, the school's assessment information, the school's pupil premium plan, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance and behaviour records and safeguarding documentation.
- Inspectors considered 110 responses to the Ofsted online parental questionnaire and 32 responses to the Ofsted online staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors conducted learning walks and lesson observations across a range of subjects and year groups. They were accompanied by school leaders on some of these lesson observations.
- Inspectors scrutinised the work in pupils' books by undertaking a work analysis with school leaders.

Inspection team

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|-------------------------------|------------------|
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| Alison Stott | Ofsted Inspector |
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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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