

# The Cheadle Academy

Station Road, Cheadle, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST10 1LH

## Inspection dates

14 to 15 May 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
16 to 19 study programmes	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher and senior leaders have taken decisive action, since the last inspection, to get the school back on track. As a result, the school has made many improvements, even though some middle leaders have only been in post a short time.
- Leaders are committed to making this school a beacon of excellence and all share in this vision. They have the drive, determination and capacity to improve the school further.
- Pupils are proud of their school and are courteous and show respect for each other and for visitors.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school and the areas for development. They are fully aware of the challenges ahead as they set about further improving outcomes for pupils.
- The school is extremely pupil centred. Pupils lie at the heart of everything and they are extremely well cared for and supported.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are forensic in their analysis of key areas of the school and offer the right balance of challenge and support.
- The sixth-form provision is good. Despite the small number of learners, most go on to achieve results that enable them to access the next stage in their lives.
- Behaviour in the school is good. There is now an effective climate for learning and parents, pupils and staff agree with this.
- Overall, teaching is good. Teachers plan activities to engage and enthuse pupils. As a result, progress across all year groups is improving.
- Differences remain in the performance of disadvantaged pupils currently in the school compared with their peers, although this is reducing.
- Attendance is improving as a result of robust and targeted intervention to tackle absence.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)S do not attend school as regularly as their peers, although this is improving.
- Outcomes for pupils are good. Leaders are aware that provision in science, mathematics and modern foreign languages is not as strong as in other subjects. There are clear plans in place to address this and they are having positive impact.
- There are fewer opportunities for pupils to learn about other faiths and cultures.

## **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?**

- Embed the changes that leaders are making to teaching and learning and the curriculum so that all pupils, including disadvantaged learners, achieve the outcomes of which they are capable.
- Continue to embed effective teaching and learning strategies so that progress improves further, especially in mathematics, science and modern foreign languages.
- Ensure that there are more opportunities for pupils to learn about other faiths and cultures outside of religious education lessons, in order to increase their understanding and awareness of life in modern Britain.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- After the last inspection, leaders took swift and decisive action to address the areas of concern. The headteacher has appointed a number of key senior and middle leaders who have the requisite skills, knowledge and understanding to bring about positive change.
- The headteacher and senior staff are relentless in their determination to make this school a beacon of excellence in the local community and provide the very best education for its pupils.
- Leaders know the school well and they have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They know where teaching, learning and assessment are the strongest. They also identify where they are less effective by monitoring and evaluating the effect of teaching on pupils' learning and progress.
- Leaders use the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively. Leaders support the learning of disadvantaged pupils in a variety of ways and there is a forensic analysis of pupils to ensure that no one is left behind. For example, leaders use 'fortnightly five' to identify five disadvantaged pupils and ensure they are given a high profile in all lessons. As a result, the progress of this group of pupils is improving across all year groups, albeit progress is still below that of their peers.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Leaders have taken steps to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of learners. Middle leaders are planning collaboratively to ensure that pupils are able to develop their knowledge skills and understanding within and across different subjects.
- The programme of development for staff is good. Staff value the opportunities to receive regular and personalised training to improve their teaching. Training is targeted well to support the areas of improvement for the school, such as the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Staff benefit from weekly 'teaching and learning briefings' where they are encouraged to share examples of best practice. As a result, teaching is now meeting the needs of all learners.
- Year 7 catch-up funding is used well to support lower-attaining pupils, when they join the school. The leaders responsible for catch-up funding are relentless in their pursuit of excellence. Consequently, the vast majority of learners have caught up with their peers. The school continues to monitor these pupils closely into Year 8 to ensure that this improvement continues.
- Leaders place a high priority on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning. There is a well-planned programme in place. Pupils are also taught about personal, social and health education through assemblies and tutor time. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to learn about other faiths and cultures outside of these lessons.
- The vast majority of staff who completed the online questionnaire feel that the school supports and challenges them in equal measure. Newly qualified teachers and teachers new to the school told inspectors that they feel extremely well supported.

- There are numerous extra-curricular activities on offer for pupils, including choir and sport. Pupils welcome these, but the tracking of activities could be better to ensure that leaders have a greater understanding of their impact and to ensure more pupils attend.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors care passionately about their school and have lost no time, since the previous inspection, to improve the learning experiences for the pupils at the Cheadle academy. They have had to deal with considerable staff absence in key areas but have not shied away from the challenges facing them.
- Governors know the school extremely well and have a very clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development. They have introduced 'team improvement plans' (TIPs) for each curriculum area to enable them to challenge and question more effectively where underperformance lies. This means they are exceptionally well informed but are also able to make a deep and forensic analysis of the barriers to learning. Consequently, they are able to hold leaders stringently to account.
- Governors routinely speak to pupils, staff and parents to gather their views and follow up any issues.
- Governors take their responsibilities extremely seriously and discharge them with diligence. For example, by ensuring that safeguarding procedures are robust in the school.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is an exceptional culture of safeguarding in the school. All staff clearly understand their responsibilities in keeping children safe. The designated person for safeguarding is extremely knowledgeable and thorough.
- The systems for reporting a concern about a child are robust and all staff receive regular and effective training to keep up to date with the latest legislation regarding safeguarding, including 'Prevent' duty. Any concerns about a child are acted on swiftly. As a result, pupils and their families receive the help they need.
- Pupils said that they feel safe in school. Pupils are clear about whom to speak with if they need support. They told inspectors that the staff are caring towards them. Incidents of bullying are rare, and pupils feel that staff deal with it effectively if it does occur.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teaching is improving because teachers are now able to concentrate on developing their practice to improve pupils' learning rather than prioritising the behaviour of some pupils.
- Teachers know their pupils well and are using information about learners to plan lessons that engage and enthuse them and meet their needs. As a result, more pupils

are making the progress of which they are capable.

- Over time, some teachers have not planned work which was suitably challenging for pupils. This is getting better and staff receive regular training on how to extend thinking and develop answers further. As a result, more pupils are progressing because they are able to deepen their answers.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Pupils are attentive and listen well to their teachers. They show respect for one another's ideas and value different attitudes and opinions. Teachers create an effective climate for learning and some pupils are now ready to think more independently and take greater risks in their learning. At times, teachers miss opportunities for pupils to practise and hone their reading skills.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and are able to plan lessons that build on prior learning. Questioning is improving, and teachers are increasingly able to probe understanding and help pupils to develop their ideas further.
- Homework is set regularly across a range of subjects to support pupils' personal learning.
- Teachers are working hard to ensure that the accuracy of assessment information improves. They meet regularly within departments to ensure that they all know the correct standard pupils should be aiming for. The school also works with other schools for this purpose. This means teachers are better able to plan activities that meet the needs of all pupils.
- Teachers use information about pupils who are disadvantaged to support them to learn well. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils' progress is improving.
- Work in pupils' books shows that teachers match work to pupils' differing abilities in most subjects. They have high expectations of pupils, and the standard of presentation in books shows that the majority of pupils take pride in their work. The progress of work in science and modern foreign languages is still not as strong as it is in other subjects.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders have created a fully inclusive school where all pupils feel valued, supported and nurtured. Inspectors spoke to a few pupils who have moved from different schools and say that their learning and progress is now much improved. This is as a result of the commitment and personalised approach that all teachers take to supporting pupils.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare in the school. When it does happen, pupils say that staff are quick to deal with it and they all have someone to go to if they need any help or advice.
- The vast majority of pupils take pride in their work, in their appearance and in their school environment. When given the opportunity, pupils work well together in pairs and groups and are sensitive to the views of others. Pupils whom inspectors met during the inspection spoke very positively about their school and the opportunities it

affords them.

- Parents and staff overwhelmingly agreed that the school keeps children safe.
- Pupils receive information about careers and different pathways open to them through fairs, outside speakers and visits. This could be further strengthened to ensure that there is greater robustness in the tracking and monitoring of pupils' future aspirations to ensure guidance is more targeted.
- The 'seclusion' unit is used effectively to support pupils' well-being. Staff there are able to give pupils the bespoke support they need, whether it be for poor behaviour or as a result of social and emotional needs. The school is developing its work on mental health.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, such as when using social media and forming healthy relationships. Pupils learn about other faiths in religious education, but greater opportunities to raise their cultural awareness are needed to enable them to contribute more effectively to life in modern Britain.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school and speak highly of it, wearing their uniform with pride. The school is a calm, orderly environment. Pupils are polite and courteous, hold doors open for visitors and frequently asked inspectors, 'How are you today?'
- Pupils say that behaviour has improved over the last two years. They say that they can now learn better in lessons as there are fewer disruptions to teaching. The school is calm and purposeful during lessons and at social times.
- In lessons, even when the work is less challenging or the pace dips, pupils remain focused and ready to learn. Pupils enjoy coming to school.
- Attendance is improving for all groups of pupils and is higher than at the same point last year. This shows that pupils enjoy attending school. Absence and persistent absence, although reducing, continues to be higher for disadvantaged pupils.
- Exclusions are reducing swiftly as a result of higher expectations of pupils' behaviour and the robust and effective behaviour policy. There have been no permanent exclusions this year, to date.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Outcomes for pupils are improving. In 2017 and 2018, pupils' overall progress at the end of key stage 4 was in line with the national average.
- Inspectors' analysis of pupils' current work shows that progress is good across a broad range of subjects. In English, history, art and IT, pupils' progress is particularly strong.
- Historically, disadvantaged pupils did not perform well, and their progress was significantly below that of their peers. Through targeted use of the pupil premium funding and improved teaching and learning, disadvantaged pupils are catching up. For example, disadvantaged pupils make more secure progress in English and history.

- Teaching is now improving for all groups of pupils as a result of the decisive actions taken by leaders and the opportunities the teachers have to share good practice and learn from the very best.
- School leaders and governors have an accurate picture of where pupils achieve well and where actions are needed to improve outcomes further. They use this information effectively to improve progress for pupils. For example, outcomes in science and mathematics have been weak. Leaders have taken action to resolve issues that led to some pupils underachieving. During the inspection, inspectors saw evidence of good practice in classrooms and good work in current pupils' books in science and mathematics. In mathematics, inspectors saw good questioning and challenge. Progress is now rising in both subjects, albeit still below that of other subjects.
- Leaders use catch-up funding effectively. Pupils who join the school in Year 7 with very low levels of literacy and numeracy receive additional support. This support is effective in helping most of them to catch up so that they can access the curriculum successfully. This support is continued into Year 8 to safeguard against any dips in learning.
- Overall, the most able pupils make good progress. At times, however, the progress of the most able slows, especially in key stage 4, when teaching fails to challenge and extend their learning. Consequently, these pupils do not routinely make the rapid progress of which they are capable. This is being addressed robustly and current progress, particularly in key stage 3, is strong.
- Weaknesses exist in modern foreign languages, science and mathematics where there is still a legacy of underachievement to overcome. However, the appointment of new leaders in these areas is leading to an improvement in progress. Inspectors noted that the quality of work in pupils' books in science, while more variable than other subjects, is showing signs of improvement.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

**Good**

- Leaders have high aspirations for the students in the sixth form. They know their students extremely well and are able to offer bespoke, targeted support to help them achieve. Students' outcomes are good. A small number of students are now aspiring to join 'Russell Group' universities.
- As a small sixth form, leaders are able to monitor students' performance closely. As a result, they are able to identify quickly any gaps in their learning and put plans in place to remedy them.
- At times, leaders need to consider specific teaching and learning strategies that may be barriers to learning rather than more general issues such as attendance.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Students are challenged through effective questioning, and their notes are well organised and detailed. Inspectors saw strong practice in mathematics, history and English.
- Students behave well in the sixth form and are well-motivated. They have seen the school go through a journey and now say that they feel the school is 'the best it has ever been'.
- Students in the sixth form feel safe. The safeguarding arrangements are as robust as in

the rest of the school.

- Students are effective role models for younger pupils in the school. They contribute to the school in many ways, such as acting as mentors and supporting key stage 3 pupils with literacy.
- Students have appropriate opportunities to undertake work-experience placements and work-related learning activities. These are an important part of their study programmes. At times, these could be linked more coherently to their future aspirations.
- Retention rates are below the national average. The school is working hard to address this.



## School details

Unique reference number	136959
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10088445

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	454
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	49
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mrs Irene Welford
Headteacher	Mr Neil Jamieson
Telephone number	01538 493 900
Website	<a href="http://www.theheadleacademy.co.uk">www.theheadleacademy.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@theheadleacademy.co.uk">office@theheadleacademy.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	21 to 22 May 2017

## Information about this school

- The Cheadle Academy is a smaller-than-average secondary school.
- The school has a 'seclusion unit' which supports pupils with a variety of learning and emotional needs.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to senior and middle leadership.
- Most pupils are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The proportions of disadvantaged pupils and of pupils with SEND are both average.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons in all year groups and in a wide variety of subjects to observe teaching and learning. Some of these observations were with senior leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the pupil premium strategy, the school's development plan and self-evaluation, minutes of governing body meetings, behaviour and attendance information and information on pupils' achievements.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of pupils during lessons, at breaktimes and lunchtimes and as they moved around the building. Inspectors met formally with groups of pupils and considered their responses to the Ofsted questionnaire.
- Inspectors met formally with governors, senior and middle leaders, including those who are newly qualified and new to the school.
- A detailed review of pupils' work in books and assessment folders was carried out from a sample of pupils.
- The views of 47 parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were considered.

## Inspection team

Neil Warner, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Godden	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Onyon	Ofsted Inspector

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