

Inspection of a good school: Mascalls Academy

Maidstone Road, Paddock Wood, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 6LT

Inspection dates:

16 and 17 November 2021

Outcome

Mascalls Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a vibrant place to learn. Pupils value the opportunities they get. Leaders and teachers are always looking for ways to improve the school and go the extra mile. As one parent wrote: 'It gets better every year.'

School leaders have designed a rich curriculum, including remote learning. There is a wide variety of subjects on offer up to, and including in, the sixth form. Leaders and teachers maintain high standards and pupils learn very well in most of their subjects. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted after-school clubs, but a wide range are now restarting. The school enjoys a well-deserved reputation for excellence in the arts.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They feel safe and are well looked after. There is very little disruption to learning and staff act quickly to deal with any that occurs. There is a strong system of rewards and punishments which pupils respect. Relationships are very strong between pupils and school staff. Pupils trust the adults who work with them. As a result, pupils gain confidence and learn well.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Dynamic school leaders set an energetic pace, which staff and pupils willingly follow. There is a passion for improvement. Governors and trustees know the school very well. They provide expert support or challenge in a wise and proportionate way.

Leaders have thought long and hard about what pupils will learn and when. Each subject area has a comprehensive seven-year journey from Year 7 to the sixth form. Every step of learning is set out in detailed planners, which means that teachers and pupils can see what pupils need to study and in what order.

Every teacher has a mentor who helps build up their expertise. Teachers use strong subject knowledge to bring their subjects to life, often including real life examples from the world of work. Pupils respond very well and develop a passion for learning. Most of the time, pupils

use their planners to check backwards and forwards as they learn. As a result, they retain more knowledge. Their understanding builds up over the years. One sixth former summed it up. He said, 'The organisers just become memory as you get older.'

School leaders ensure a broad choice of subjects at key stage 4. However, the proportion of pupils, and especially disadvantaged pupils, who take the full set of English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects is very low, mainly because few pupils study a language. School leaders recognise this. Their actions have recently increased the proportion, but it is still well short of the Government's ambition and may limit these pupils' future prospects.

Pupils' learning beyond the classroom is carefully planned and supported. The advisory programme delivered by tutors gives pupils a good range of activities to help their development as citizens. It includes work experience, such as army days. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps.

Many pupils choose to stay at the school and move into the school's sixth form. They value the choice of subjects, the teachers' expertise, the specialist facilities and the pastoral care. Sixth-form teaching encourages a high quality of academic debate and subject mastery.

Leaders check that subject departments follow the detailed plans for pupils' learning. However, turbulence in staffing and the pandemic has disrupted implementation in science. Here, pupils do not always remember what came before their current learning. Teachers do not always revisit topics in time, and pupils then forget important knowledge. Leaders have acted to sort this out, but pupils do not yet learn as well in science as they do in other subjects.

Teachers generally check pupils' understanding very well. They make sure that pupils have sound foundations for later learning. Teachers use behaviour systems well to prevent any disruption to lessons.

Subject planners set out the specialist vocabulary that pupils will need. School leaders monitor pupils' reading ability. They give extra classes to those who need to catch up. These classes have been very successful in boosting pupils' reading fluency. Leaders use extra resources well to encourage reading for pleasure. This has particularly helped disadvantaged pupils with their reading.

Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities are well supported in lessons. New, determined leadership in this area is helping to hone teachers' skills and improve the use of strategies further. Teachers adapt work in line with pupils' individual plans and keep them on track, learning alongside their peers.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is exceptionally well led in this school. The designated safeguarding lead and her team have excellent relationships with the community. They have the trust of

pupils and families. Staff are well trained and vigilant. They report any concerns quickly. There is a culture that is 'better safe than sorry'.

All the correct checks are made when staff are appointed. Leaders invite outside agencies to check the safeguarding arrangements in case they can improve them.

Pupils are taught how to keep safe, including online. Pupils feel confident that they can get help if they need it.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The quality of the curriculum is not equally strong in all subjects. Science is at an earlier stage of development than most other subjects in the school. As a result, pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is equally well planned and implemented across all subjects.
- A smaller percentage of disadvantaged pupils follow a strong academic curriculum than their non-disadvantaged peers, particularly in relation to the subjects which form the EBacc. This potentially has an adverse impact on their prospects. Leaders should ensure that disadvantaged pupils are encouraged to follow an academic curriculum that is fully commensurate with their ability.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2012.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	136847
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10200295
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive (non-selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1216
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	193
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Frank Green
Principal	Will Monk
Website	www.mascallsacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The principal took up his post in September 2019.
- The school joined the Leigh Academies Trust in September 2015.
- The school is an International Baccalaureate World School.
- The school uses two registered providers of alternative provision. A very small number of pupils attend Two Bridges School and Kent Health Needs Education Service.
- The school is a large non-selective school in an area which has many selective schools.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the principal and other senior leaders. The lead inspector met with two trustees and four governors, including the chair and vice-chair of governors. He also met with the chief executive officer and academies director of the Leigh Academies Trust. He held a telephone call with the headteacher of Two Bridges School.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, history, creative arts and Spanish. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at work produced across a range of subjects by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Inspectors evaluated safeguarding throughout the school. They met the designated safeguarding lead and members of her team. The lead inspector examined the pre-employment checks made on staff who join the school and the other systems that the school uses to keep children safe.
- Inspectors observed the school at breaktimes and after school. They also spoke with pupils informally at those times.
- Inspectors considered responses from staff's and pupils' online surveys. They also looked at responses from parents on Ofsted Parent View, including their written comments.

Inspection team

Keith Pailthorpe, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Baker	Ofsted Inspector
Ann Fearon	Ofsted Inspector

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