

# Inspection of a good school: Stockport Academy

Heathbank Road, Cheadle Heath, Stockport, Cheshire SK3 0UP

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Inspection dates:

21 and 22 November 2023

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The principal of this school is Janine McCann. This school is part of the United Learning trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. United Learning is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Jon Coles, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Reena Keeble.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy being part of this school community. The house system helps them to make friends with pupils of different ages. For example, on 'fun day Friday' teams of pupils from different year groups compete in interhouse competitions and quizzes. This sense of belonging helps pupils to feel happy in school.

Pupils of all ages are encouraged to be good role models to others. Typically, pupils' positive conduct in lessons and around the school reflects this aspiration. In the main, pupils behave well. Older pupils proudly wear the gold ties which indicate that they are prefects. Younger pupils contribute to school life through roles such as respect leaders or librarians.

Pupils benefit from a multitude of opportunities to develop new and existing hobbies. The school provides a wide variety of clubs for pupils to join including sports clubs, hairdressing and tank building. Pupils value these.

The school is committed to providing a high-quality education that addresses social disadvantage. However, weaknesses in the curriculum have meant that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not achieve as well as they should. The trust is supporting the school to strengthen the quality of education that it provides. There is a clear understanding of what needs to improve.

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

The school is ambitious for pupils. For example, a high proportion of pupils in key stage 4 follow the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects.

The school has designed a curriculum where, in the main, it is clear what pupils should know and when they should learn it. Teachers are very knowledgeable about their subjects. They use their expertise to explain new concepts clearly. In most subjects, careful thought has been given to the essential information that pupils need to build a secure body of knowledge over time. However, in a small number of subjects this clarity is missing. In these subjects, teachers do not know the most important information to emphasise when designing learning activities. As a result, some pupils' learning is inconsistent. They do not achieve as well as they should.

The school has recently introduced new approaches to checking what pupils have learned. Sometimes, teachers use these well to identify learning which pupils need to revisit. However, this is inconsistent. At times, teachers do not swiftly identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge.

The school has recently strengthened its approach to managing unacceptable conduct. Pupils spoke very positively about the ways in which behaviour has improved as a result. Pupils are attentive to their teachers. The atmosphere around the school is calm and purposeful.

The school has appropriate processes in place to identify any additional needs that pupils may have. Typically, staff adapt their delivery of the curriculum so that pupils with SEND learn well alongside their peers. Recently the school has taken action to ensure that the needs of these pupils are fully considered when managing their behaviour. While some parents and carers remain concerned, staff now receive sufficient information to help them to support these pupils more effectively.

The school has a process in place to identify pupils who cannot read well. Pupils in key stage 3 benefit from effective support to help them to catch up to their peers. However, this programme is not used widely with pupils in key stage 4. As a result, older pupils do not get the help that they need to read confidently and fluently.

The school comprehensively promotes pupils' personal development. They benefit from carefully considered opportunities to prepare them for their next steps. For example, Year 11 pupils have mock interviews with local employers. Pupils value this learning which helps to prepare them very well for their lives beyond school.

Staff are happy at this school. They appreciate the way that their time is valued, for example they are given time in their subject teams to develop the curriculum.

Trustees and governors are knowledgeable about the school. They are sharply focused on working with all levels of school leadership to ensure that the school continues to improve.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

### What does the school need to do to improve?

#### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the school has not identified the essential knowledge that pupils need to retain over time. This means that teachers lack clarity about the information that they should emphasise when they deliver the curriculum. The school should ensure that teachers have a shared and firm understanding of this essential knowledge so that pupils build a deep and interconnected knowledge of these subjects.
- Some teachers do not use assessment strategies sufficiently well. As a result, some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge which are not swiftly addressed. The school should ensure that teachers are supported to use assessment strategies as intended so that they effectively remedy any forgotten or missed learning.
- The school's approach to supporting pupils who struggle with their reading is underdeveloped for pupils in key stage 4. This means that some older pupils who have gaps in their reading knowledge do not receive the help that they need to read well. The school should ensure that these pupils benefit from effective support to improve their achievement in reading.

## 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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2015.

### 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.

## Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135262
<b>Local authority</b>	Stockport
<b>Inspection number</b>	10294353
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,028
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Reena Keeble
<b>CEO of trust</b>	Jon Coles
<b>Principal</b>	Janine McCann
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stockport-academy.org">www.stockport-academy.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the United Learning Trust.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider for a very small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the principal, other leaders and staff.
- Inspectors spoke with representatives of both the trust and the local governing body.

- An inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses shared through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff.
- The inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including records relating to pupils' behaviour and the school's self-evaluation documents.

### **Inspection team**

Sally Rix, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Fiona Burke-Jackson

Ofsted Inspector

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