

Inspection of Adelaide Heath Academy

Longridge, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 8PA

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 June 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Charlotte Cartlidge. This school is part of Manor Hall Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Richard Redgate, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Fitchett. There is also an executive headteacher, Sarah Martin, who is responsible for this school and two others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and sixth-form students who attend this school have often faced considerable barriers to learning in the past. Some have missed long periods of their education. This school provides an opportunity for pupils, all of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to re-engage with learning.

Staff provide a safe and caring environment where pupils develop their self-esteem and learn to manage their own emotions. Pupils benefit from the warm, nurturing relationships that staff foster. This builds a strong sense of community and helps the school to be a calm, orderly place. Most pupils are happy here. If they should become distressed, staff are quick to provide expert support. Pupils were keen to tell inspectors how the school has helped them to improve their behaviour.

The school has high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Staff are determined to prepare pupils well for their future lives. Typically, pupils achieve well. Most pupils gain the qualifications and skills that they need to successfully move on.

The school supports pupils to develop socially and culturally. For instance, pupils enjoy outdoor learning in the woodland area, where they build their independence and self-confidence. They also look forward to contributing to their community, such as by collecting for a local food bank.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum that meets pupils' needs, including their SEND needs, well. Pupils in key stages 2 to 4 study a broad range of academic and vocational subjects. This, alongside a comprehensive careers programme, prepares pupils well for their next steps in education, training or employment.

In most subjects, the curriculum is well thought out. The school has considered the knowledge that pupils should learn in each key stage. However, in a minority of subjects, this curriculum design is still developing. Curriculum content in these few subjects is less ambitious than in other subjects. Pupils do not learn all that is necessary to achieve highly in these subjects.

When pupils join the school, their needs are assessed thoroughly. This provides staff with detailed information about pupils' SEND, including their social, emotional and mental health needs. Teachers are skilled in delivering learning. They choose effective ways to help each pupil to access the curriculum. In lessons, staff are quick to identify and address pupils' misconceptions, which helps pupils to learn well.

Pupils have often spent long periods out of education. The school uses a range of supportive strategies to encourage pupils to attend more often. From very low starting points, most pupils make considerable gains in their levels of attendance over time. Despite this, some pupils' attendance remains stubbornly low.

The school tracks pupils' progress through the curriculum assiduously. Staff know how well pupils are learning and what knowledge they have not gained securely enough. This includes any learning that pupils have missed due to absence. At times, however, some of the strategies that staff use to remedy these gaps are not as successful as they could be. This is particularly the case for pupils who are persistently absent from school.

In recent years, the school has opened a sixth form. This allows pupils who joined the school later on, or those whose attendance has taken longer to improve, to complete their studies. Students follow a curriculum designed to compensate for their missed key stage 4 education. This curriculum is carefully shaped around the needs of each sixth-form student. They typically benefit from this additional time at the school. Most students gain the qualifications and skills that will help them to be successful in their future lives.

Students in the sixth form are not required to attend school full time. Their programme of study incorporates some remote learning and a regular work placement. Some students quickly develop the necessary independence to benefit from this blended approach to learning. For some other students, however, the school's expectations are not high enough. The positive attitudes to learning that these students developed during key stage 4 sometimes regress as a result.

The school has raised the profile of reading. Most pupils read well. They are beginning to read for pleasure more often. Staff know how to help pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read. This helps pupils who find reading difficult to catch up quickly.

Pupils' personal development is a priority across key stages. Pupils learn about topics such as substance misuse, healthy relationships and consent in an age-appropriate way. Staff also help pupils to engage positively with each other in a range of informal settings. For example, older pupils lead sports activities for their younger peers.

Staff recognise that support from the trust has helped the school to move forward in recent years. Most said that the trust and the local advisory board take their views into account when making changes that affect their workload.

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 minority of subjects, the curriculum lacks ambition. It does not equip some pupils with the knowledge that they need for their future learning. These pupils do not develop as deep a body of knowledge as they could. The school should

refine its curriculum thinking in these subjects so that pupils learn all that they should.

- Some pupils have had irregular attendance in the past, and others still do not attend school as often as they should. This creates gaps in some pupils' knowledge over time. As a result, the depth of their learning across the curriculum is uneven. The school should ensure that staff use effective strategies to address any missed or forgotten learning so that these pupils can build knowledge cumulatively through the curriculum. The school should also bolster its efforts to help these pupils to attend school more often.
- Programmes of study in the sixth form do not reflect the school's ambition for these students. Lowered expectations mean that at times, improvements in the attendance and attitudes to learning of some pupils in key stage 4 regress when they begin Year 12. The school should ensure that its expectations of students in the sixth form remain high for as long as they are enrolled so that they can reach their full potential.

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

Unique reference number	148641
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10321473
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	8 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	88
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	8
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Edward Fitchett
CEO of the trust	Richard Redgate
Headteacher	Charlotte Cartlidge
Website	www.adelaideheathacademy.net
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Adelaide Heath Academy joined Manor Hall Academy Trust in April 2021. Prior to this, its predecessor school was part of the Adelaide Academy Trust and was known as St John’s Wood Academy. When that school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- Since then, the number of pupils on roll at the school has more than doubled. The school has also increased its age range to provide education for students up to the age of 18.
- The school caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Places at the school are commissioned by the local authority.
- 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.

- The school makes use of one registered alternative provision for a very small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the executive headteacher, the headteacher, other leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector also met with the chair of trustees and separately with the chair of the local advisory board. He also spoke with a representative of the local authority and an independent consultant who works with the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, including early reading, art and design and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school and their views of behaviour and bullying.
- At the time of this inspection, pupils in Year 11 and students in the sixth form were not on site.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including leaders' improvement plans, minutes of local advisory board meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- 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 to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.

Inspection team

Ben Hill, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Dawn Farrent

Ofsted Inspector

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