

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: The Cheadle Academy

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

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 February 2025

Outcome

The Cheadle Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The principal is Nicola Slack. The Cheadle Academy is a single-academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Irene Welford.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a welcoming and friendly school. Staff know their pupils well. They have high expectations for all pupils and provide daily care and support when needed. Most pupils respond well to staff's high expectations. While the school's high aspirations for all its pupils have not yet been fully achieved, pupils now produce work of a higher standard than previously.

Most pupils are polite and respectful towards adults and each other. Pupils are safe. They know who to talk to about any concerns they have. Pupils say that bullying can sometimes happen, but when they report it to staff, it is resolved quickly. Pupils attend school regularly and are taught how to be responsible and healthy citizens.

Pupils in Years 10 and 11 benefit from a range of subject choices. All pupils receive independent advice on their next steps as part of the well-organised careers programme. The school offers pupils a wide range of clubs and activities. Pupils regularly take part in activities such as debating, art and volleyball. The school also offers residential trips to enrich pupils' lives. The school ensures these activities are available to all pupils. This helps pupils experience a variety of opportunities beyond the classroom.

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

The school ensures its pupils receive an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum. All pupils follow the same curriculum, including those with special educational needs and/or

disabilities (SEND). Pupils who require help from support staff receive effective encouragement in lessons. However, the documents for some pupils with SEND do not always identify the precise support that pupils need. As a result, some teachers are not fully aware of individual pupils' learning needs.

The school's ambitious curriculum helps pupils to develop their knowledge and skills well. For example, in history, pupils in Year 11 recalled detailed information about 1940s Germany. This helped them to prepare for their next activity using source texts. The school has refined the curriculum for pupils in all years effectively. Recent changes to lesson structures mean pupils can now recall more key skills and knowledge over time. In some subjects, pupils receive helpful feedback to improve their work. However, some teachers do not always provide pupils with sufficient detail on their next steps. This means some pupils do not always understand how to improve their work.

The school's effective reading strategy allows pupils to explore a range of challenging, diverse texts. The school has introduced a 'reading mindfulness' programme. This is having a positive impact on pupils' interest in reading. The school now quickly identifies the specific issues that cause some pupils to struggle with reading. This means the school effectively supports pupils who need individual practice with their reading.

Pastoral care is a strength of the school. Pupils trust adults to support them if they need help. Most pupils focus on their learning well and work hard. The school provides effective support to pupils who struggle to meet the school's high expectations. These expectations also support pupils to maintain high attendance and to reduce the number of suspensions.

Pupils are proud to represent their school. For example, some pupils take on roles as librarians, as mental health ambassadors or on the school council. Pupils also actively fundraise for local charities. Pupils are taught how to stay safe through a well-considered personal, social, health and economic education curriculum. They also learn about protected characteristics and different religions from visiting speakers and assemblies. Year 10 pupils take part in work experience. This helps them plan for their next steps in further education, apprenticeships and training.

The school is well led and managed. The new leadership team has a clear vision for the school. Staff appreciate leaders' efforts to reduce workload and improve their well-being. Most parents recognise recent improvements at the school. Trustees are experienced and reflective. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. For example, the school has recently become more actively involved in the local community for the benefit of all pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not always provide pupils with precise information on how to improve their work. As a result, some pupils do not always know how to address misconceptions and gaps in their knowledge. This means some pupils' learning is less secure than the school expects. The school should ensure a more consistent approach by all teachers in helping pupils to know and understand how to improve their work.
- Sometimes the information provided by the school does not help teachers understand the specific needs of pupils with SEND. This means that adaptations to teaching are not as effective in helping pupils with SEND learn the curriculum as intended. The school should ensure that all staff have the expertise to precisely understand the individual and specific needs of all pupils with SEND.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in May 2019.

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	136959
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10343951
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	400
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	0
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of Trustees	Irene Welford
Principal	Nicola Slack
Website	www.theheadleacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The Cheadle Academy is a single-academy trust.
- The principal commenced her role in January 2024.
- The school uses three registered alternative provisions.
- 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 evaluation 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.

- The school is registered on Get Information about Schools as an 11 to 18 provider. However, at the time of this inspection, the sixth-form provision was closed and there were no sixth-form students on roll.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, senior leaders and trustees during the inspection. The lead inspector also spoke to the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, looked at samples of pupils' work and talked with some pupils about their learning. They also spoke to pupils about their experiences at the school and their views on behaviour and bullying.
- The lead inspector visited the school's reflection room.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders about the provision for pupils with SEND and reviewed documentation relating to pupils with SEND.
- 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 reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about pupils' behaviour, attendance, the school's curriculum and improvement planning. They also checked the school's website and reviewed the school's self-evaluation, published information about pupils' performance and minutes of trustees' meetings.
- Inspectors considered responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and the free-text responses. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and pupils survey.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes.

Inspection team

Michael Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Darren Bishop

Ofsted Inspector

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