

The Cheadle Academy

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

Inspection dates 12–13 February 2013

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | This inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Requires improvement | 3 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Students do not make fast enough progress across all their subjects and so their overall standards are not as good as they should be.
- Middle ability students, boys and students eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding) make slower progress than others, especially in mathematics.
- Teaching is not yet good enough to secure good progress for all students. This is because the work set is not always at exactly the right level for all students, who sometimes have to spend too long listening to their teachers.
- Leaders at all levels have been too slow to pick up signs of underachievement and tackle it quickly. This is because they do not check teaching and students' learning often enough to know how good they are.

The school has the following strengths

- The Academy is a happy place where students feel very safe. This is because of the high quality of care and support that the Academy offers them.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs reach higher standards and make faster progress than other students.
- Standards and progress in English are above average and have improved in geography, drama, modern foreign languages (MFL) and physical education (PE). This is because new structures, put in place by senior leaders and governors, have now begun to hold staff accountable more effectively.
- All aspects of the Academy's work in the sixth form are good. Students achieve well because of the good teaching, guidance and support that they receive.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with a half-day's notice.
- Inspectors observed 27 lessons, of which three were joint observations with the Academy's principal. Inspectors looked at students' written work during lessons observed. In addition, a number of other short visits were made to Year 8 classes involved in a cross-curricular International Day.
- Meetings were held with five groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body, and staff, including senior leaders and leaders in charge of subjects and other aspects of the Academy's work. A telephone discussion was held with a local headteacher from the loose federation of which the Academy is part, who acts as a consultant to the Academy.
- Inspectors took account of the small number of responses to the Parent View online questionnaire and students' views about the Academy.
- Inspectors observed the Academy's work and looked at a number of documents including information on students' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Susan Wareing, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Vanessa Love

Additional Inspector

Kerin Jones

Additional Inspector

David Hughes

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Cheadle Academy became an academy in August 2011.
- It is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The Academy is loosely federated with another other local school, both led by the same executive principal.
- Sixth form provision is based at the Moorlands Sixth Form College nearby and managed by the principals of the three schools.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for looked-after children, pupils known to be eligible for free Academy meals, and pupils with a parent in the armed services) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled students or with special educational needs supported through Academy action is below average. Their needs relate mainly to moderate learning difficulties and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- The proportion of students supported at Academy action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- Very few students are from minority ethnic groups, or are at an early stage of learning to speak English.
- The Academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- One student is taught away from the Academy in appropriate alternative provision. All other students are catered for on-site and a range of courses continues to be developed to meet their individual needs.
- The Academy has had specialist arts status since 2009.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to consistently good by making sure that:
 - tasks are always set at exactly the right level for each student
 - all teachers actively involve students in their learning
 - teachers' questioning checks understanding and makes students think for themselves about difficult ideas
 - teachers' approaches to marking make clear to students precisely what they must do in order to improve their work.
- Raise achievement for all students, but especially those of middle ability, boys and students eligible for the pupil premium, by making sure that:
 - leaders at all levels and teachers use information about students' progress promptly, to plan learning at the right level for them in all subjects.
 - leaders and governors check the quality of teaching and other aspects of the Academy's work more often, in order to prevent any decline in performance.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students join the Academy in Year 7 with standards that are broadly the same as those found nationally. The standards that students reach at the end of Year 11 are not yet good because they are not improving fast enough.
- Results in the 2012 GCSE examinations, although showing some improvement, were below average and significantly so by some measures.
- Progress, especially in mathematics and for boys and middle ability students, requires improvement because these students do not achieve as well as they could. This is partly because teachers do not always set work at exactly the right level for each student in the class or tell students exactly how to improve their work.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make faster progress than other students because the Academy checks their progress rigorously and often. These students greatly appreciate the high-quality counselling systems and 'Talking Partners' that support their learning and personal needs well.
- Some students did not do well in some science courses in 2012 but a new subject leader is now in place and more appropriate courses have been introduced that give more students a better chance of gaining a qualification. English is a consistently strong subject and geography and languages are beginning to improve.
- The standards of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, when they join the Academy, are significantly lower than those of other students. Pupil premium funding is spent on revision guidance, mentoring and equipment and visits in subjects such as history and physical education. The rates of progress of these students improved in 2012 but did not match that of the other students so gaps in attainment persist.
- The school no longer offers early entry for the GCSE examination in mathematics apart from in exceptional circumstances, because their experience is that more-able students do better after following a full two-year course. A very small number of students who might be at risk of discontinuing their studies before the end of Year 11 take the examination early. About 45% per cent of these students achieve their target grades at the first attempt.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good because students receive good guidance on course choices at a very early stage. Most students enter the sixth form with higher grades at GCSE and choose mainly to study AS and A level courses. They progress particularly well in art and design, geography, law and English at AS level and in psychology, English and physical education at A level.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently strong enough to make sure that all students progress as well as they can in all their subjects. The overall quality of teaching is too variable and too much requires improvement.
- Lessons that require improvement are hampered by teachers setting work that is either too easy or too hard. For example, most students do the same tasks, whatever their ability, so do

not make enough progress. Teachers talk too much, and their questions are sometimes too simple to maintain students' interest or to make them think more deeply.

- Inspectors saw some examples of good and outstanding teaching during the inspection and there was no inadequate teaching. In good and outstanding lessons teachers make clear to students exactly what they need to do in order to succeed and teachers' questions extend students' thinking. In a German lesson, for example, students greatly enjoyed the increasingly difficult stages, planned by the teacher, of working out for themselves some complicated grammar.
- The efforts of senior leaders to improve the quality of teaching since the last inspection have resulted in improvement in some previously weak subjects, such as geography.
- In the sixth form, teaching is consistently good. Teachers give students tasks and questions planned at exactly the right level for each of them. This means they think deeply and make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students behave well in lessons and around the Academy. They are courteous, confident and welcoming towards visitors. Their relationships with teachers and with each other are very positive and older students say that behaviour has greatly improved during their time in Academy.
- Despite these positive and mature attitudes, teaching does not encourage students to take enough responsibility for their own learning and show initiative.
- Students are very proud to belong to the Academy because they feel very safe and happy there and students of different genders, ages and groups get on well together. They say that they are taught well how to protect themselves, for example from internet and other forms of bullying and discriminatory behaviour and language. Students are sure that these incidents are very rare and tackled decisively if they occur. Inspection evidence shows that the small number of parents who expressed their views had few concerns about behaviour.
- Exclusions have been high, but are now reducing because of the Academy's good systems of rewards, sanctions and checking behaviour.
- Attendance is above average and improving. Most students generally arrive at the Academy and for lessons on time.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is still too variable because senior leaders do not check the quality of teaching often enough, with a wide variety of approaches, to be sure how good it is. This means that points for improvement are not followed up swiftly enough.
- Senior leaders were not quick enough in 2012 to react to signs of underachievement amongst some groups of students and in some subjects. The Academy identified weaknesses in the accuracy of some teachers' predictions about students' progress. All staff have now had intensive training to improve their skills but this came too late to improve the 2012 examination results.

- There are not enough opportunities for students to practise their mathematical skills in all subjects.
- The Executive Principal and Academy Principal share an ambition for the Academy to improve and senior leaders and other staff fully support them. There have been some strong new appointments of leaders in charge of subjects and other aspects of the Academy's work.
- The Academy's view of itself is honest and accurate and coincides with inspectors' findings. However, senior leaders have not always taken timely action to check the accuracy of assessment information before achievement starts to slow for some groups of students.
- The Academy has made some progress in tackling issues raised at the last inspection, although there is more work to be done. Systems for the management of teaching have led to some improvement in the proportion of good or better teaching and underperforming teachers are better held to account.
- Salary progression for teachers is firmly linked to students' progress and to good and outstanding performance. Staff have to work hard in order to be promoted and underperforming teachers are quickly given effective packages of support.
- The Academy's position within a loose federation of local schools and a sixth form College means staff can share good practice and there is more effective transition from primary to secondary education. It is too early to see any impact from these opportunities on students' achievement.
- The Academy takes its responsibilities for promoting equality seriously and this is reflected in students' strong sense of right and wrong and community. They are confident that they are well prepared for life in a more diverse society when they leave the Academy. Students have good opportunities to develop their spiritual awareness in music, and overseas visits and links promote their cultural knowledge.
- The Academy has few links with the local authority and draws instead on its federation for limited external support.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and more suitable courses for all students have been introduced recently in sciences. Opportunities for students to practise their skills in reading, writing and communication in all their subjects are well developed.
- The sixth form curriculum provides rich variety of both academic and vocational study options and most students progress to a university of their choice at the end of Year 13.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet all requirements.
- The Academy's work has been constrained by the need to clear a significant inherited financial deficit but it now operates with a small surplus.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The effectiveness of governance is variable, but the Chair of Governors is firmly committed to improving the Academy and to raising standards. Some governors have begun to play an active part in holding staff to account, including through performance management. High quality staff are rewarded with early responsibilities and subject leaders whose departments

do not perform well are called to interview before the governing body to explain any decline. Governors have been ready to take hard decisions about staffing in these cases. However, because the school's checking systems have not been sharp enough and governors have depended on senior leaders for information about the Academy's performance, they have not always had a clear and independent oversight of its work, specifically in improving teaching. They were not able therefore, to mount a prompt challenge to the school when standards began to fall. The governing body and its committees have since been restructured and this is increasing their effectiveness.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
|---------|----------------------|--|
| Grade | Judgement | Description |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 2 | Good | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

School details

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| Unique reference number | 136959 |
| Local authority | N/A |
| Inspection number | 412740 |

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

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| Type of school | Academy converter |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 11–18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 660 |
| Of which, number on roll in sixth form | 120 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Irene Welford |
| Headteacher | Keith Hollins (Executive Principal) |
| Date of previous school inspection | 24 May 2010 |
| Telephone number | 01538 483900 |
| Fax number | 01538 483920 |
| Email address | principal@theheadleacademy.co.uk |

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