

The Cheadle Academy

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

Inspection dates

15–16 January 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Not enough students make as much progress in English and mathematics as they should during their time at the academy. This includes disadvantaged students, disabled students and those who have special educational needs.
- While standards overall are in line with those found nationally, the attainment of too many middle achievers is below average in key subjects. The gap between the achievement of boys and girls has narrowed in Key Stage 3 but not in Key Stage 4.
- The quality of teaching requires improvement because teachers' expectations of students' progress have not been high enough, particularly for the most able. Homework is not always well used to advance students' learning.
- Leadership and management requires improvement because until recently there has not been enough focus on improving students' progress. Leaders have not linked teachers' performance closely to the achievement of students.
- Governors do not have a clear enough view of staff responsibilities. They have not ensured that parents always receive accurate and up to date information about the academy.
- Behaviour requires improvement. This is because although there are few incidents of poor behaviour, not enough students have positive attitudes to their learning. A small number of students regularly fail to attend at the academy.
- Students do not have a strong awareness of the cultural diversity of modern Britain.

The school has the following strengths

- Since the start of the current school year, the new principal, his new team of senior leaders and the governors have been rigorous in identifying key areas for improvement. The quality of teaching is now improving.
- The sixth form is good. Students attain high standards as a result of good teaching. They receive good support and guidance and many go on to attend top-level university courses.
- Recent actions to improve the quality of teaching of literacy and numeracy skills for groups of students in Year 7 and Year 11 have shown a marked success in raising achievement.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students learn to keep themselves and other safe in school, in the community and on the internet.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed students’ learning in 33 lessons across the academy, including in the sixth form. Of these, 17 were observed jointly with the principal or senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team looked at students’ work in their books and folders.
- As well as conversations in lessons and at social times during the inspection, discussions were held with four groups of students about the quality of their educational experiences and the standard of behaviour in the academy. The inspectors also held meetings with senior leaders and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of the 46 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and considered the 47 responses to a staff questionnaire. Inspectors also considered responses by parents and students to recent questionnaires from the academy.
- The inspection team examined: the academy’s own information on students’ recent and current progress; the academy’s evaluation of how well it is doing and its records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Richard Boswell, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Andrew Hunt	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Talmadge	Additional Inspector
Alan Brewerton	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cheadle Academy converted to become an academy on 1 August 2011. It is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Almost all students are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported through the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for students in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals), at around a quarter, is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs, at around one sixth, is below average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 11.
- Sixth form students go off site to attend courses at The Moorlands Sixth Form College. The College is run as a partnership between Cheadle Academy, Painsley Catholic College and Moorside High School.
- A very small number of students attend alternative provision part time at PM Training, Leek.
- Since the previous inspection, the school received support from an executive principal from Leek Schools Federation. A new principal and head of the sixth form were appointed to start in September 2014. There have been a number of other changes in the school leadership team.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so it is consistently at least good and leads to good or better achievement for all groups of students, by teachers:
 - having high expectations of all students' progress, including those who were middle achievers when they left primary school
 - regularly setting homework that is interesting and challenging
 - planning more difficult work for their most able students.
- Improve leadership and management by making sure that:
 - senior leaders link their checking of the quality of teaching to students' achievement and insist that all teachers and subject leaders rigorously keep track of and report on students' progress as well as their attainment
 - governors closely monitor the accurate and timely distribution of information to parents, including on the academy's website
 - governors increase their awareness of the link between the level of staff responsibilities and their pay
 - the targeting and monitoring of the impact of the pupil premium funding for disadvantaged students is sufficiently rigorous.
- Improve behaviour and safety by ensuring that:
 - students, particularly boys in Key Stage 4, are given every opportunity to become engaged in their work and are given the confidence to share their interest and enjoyment of their learning
 - students, including those in the sixth form, broaden and deepen their knowledge of other faiths and cultures and of the diversity of modern British society
 - there is a further drive to decrease the number of students who are persistently absent from the academy through working more closely with families and external agencies.

External reviews of governance and of the academy's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- While actions taken by senior leaders in the main academy following recommendations from the previous inspection led to improved achievement in 2013, this was not sustained in the last school year. Since September 2014 a new principal, a new head of sixth form and new senior and middle leaders have given the academy a sharp and much needed focus on students' progress.
- The new leadership and the governing body have conducted a rigorous and realistic process of self-evaluation leading to clearly identified areas for development. The academy correctly judges itself still to require improvement.
- In recent academy questionnaires, as well as in evidence gathered during the inspection, staff, parents, students and governors all showed a commitment to the academy and to its leadership. However, students are often not sufficiently confident in their attitudes to learning in the classroom and not enough of them demonstrate a love of learning and a desire to share their discoveries and their questions.
- Senior and middle leaders have undertaken a thorough review of the academy's curriculum, particularly in English, mathematics and science. With a clearer understanding of the strategic direction of the academy these middle leaders are now more effective. While the curriculum still requires improvement, actions that have already been taken have narrowed the gap between the achievement of boys and girls in Key Stage 3. Gaps remain in Key Stage 4. The curriculum is now better designed to prepare students for life in modern Britain. A broad range of students engage in the wide variety of clubs and activities offered by the academy at lunchtimes and after lessons.
- Senior leaders and those responsible for subjects and areas of the curriculum have not until now made strong enough links between the quality of teaching and students' progress, particularly for the most able. This has led in the past to an unrealistic appraisal of the quality of teaching. Academy leaders are now insisting that all teachers and subject leaders rigorously and accurately check and report on students' progress. This is leading to improvements in the quality of teaching and is beginning to raise students' achievement, for example in Year 7 and in Year 11.
- The progress of disadvantaged students is now closely monitored. However, the academy has yet to use the pupil premium funding to create a robust and effective set of strategies to close the gap between their achievement and that of other students in the academy and nationally.
- The leadership and management of the sixth form is good. The sixth form has clearly benefited from the support of the other two schools as well as Cheadle Academy and the shared governance of the sixth form has been successful. The new head of sixth form has the confidence of all stakeholders and is clearly effective in her role, leading a team of tutors who offer strong support and careers guidance to students. This is an extension of the preparation for life in modern Britain that begins in Year 7 and promotes students' spiritual, moral and social development. In addition, the academy offers impartial and independent advice about future careers for Key Stage 3 and 4. However the school does not do enough to promote students' understanding of the cultural diversity of modern Britain.
- The academy meets the statutory requirements for safeguarding. The safety of students is paramount and the academy has an approach to safeguarding that is both appropriately meticulous and very caring. This is seen in the leadership of the senior assistant principal who also has particular responsibility for disabled students and those who have special educational needs. However, while the pastoral care of these students shows the academy's commitment to equal opportunities and to tackling discrimination, there has not been equal focus on academic performance. Equality of opportunity is also evident in the support given to disadvantaged students to ensure that they are able to participate fully in educational visits, clubs and activities.
- Up until the current school year, the academy has had the support of an executive principal. His part time involvement, alongside other school leaders, has not resulted in significant improvement in the academy's performance between the previous and current inspections.

- It is not possible to report on the achievement of students attending alternative provision because they are very small in number and would be at risk of being identified. The academy ensures, however, that their attendance and behaviour are closely monitored.

- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body are clear that governance requires improvement because they share responsibility for the lack of rapid improvement since the previous inspection. However the chair of governors has been relentless in offering a high level of challenge to senior leaders over that time. The vice chair of governors has ensured that the school's high level of awareness of student safety and safeguarding has been maintained, with frequent checks and close monitoring. The same level of scrutiny has not been always been given to the accuracy of information available to parents on the academy website.
 - Governors are aware of the quality of teaching and the level of students' achievement in the academy but have, until recently, relied on information that has not been wholly accurate. With a clear understanding of the new focus on students' progress, governors are now better placed to see the academy's strengths and weaknesses. However, not all governors are trained to an appropriate level in understanding information about student performance.
 - In spite of frequent visits to the academy, governors do not have a sufficiently detailed understanding of staff responsibilities and so are not always able to make informed judgements about the link between pay and performance. While the governing body has appointed a governor with specific responsibility for the use of the pupil premium, this has yet to be effective in promoting the closing of the achievement gap. The academy's finances, however, are well managed and the Year 7 catch up funding, for example, is used to good effect.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. Students in the main school, particularly middle achievers, do not have the positive attitudes to their learning that are seen in the sixth form. There is some low level disruption in class and the majority of students do not demonstrate a love of learning through, for example, lively debate and intellectual curiosity. The pride students show in their work is variable and this is seen in the mixed quality of presentation in their books.

- The conduct and behaviour of students around the academy is good and relationships between students and between staff and students are strong. Students show a pride in their academy and take care of their environment and their appearance. Staff, governors and parents are all positive in their responses regarding students' behaviour and safety.

- Behaviour in the sixth form is good and sixth form students are strong role models for younger students.

- Academy records indicate that incidents of bullying are extremely rare and students are adamant that this is the case.

- Since the previous inspection there has been a considerable decrease from what were very high levels of persistent absence by students. Although the academy has worked with parents and external agencies to reduce the rate of persistent absence further, this has not been entirely successful and it is still above the national average.

- The rate of temporary exclusions from the academy has reduced markedly since the previous inspection and students are clear about and appreciate the academy's system of rewards and sanctions. There have been no permanent exclusions.

- The levels of attendance at the academy are similar to those found nationally and punctuality is good. While the academy monitors absence rates of individuals, further analysis of particular groups of students

is less thorough.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. There is careful attention to the detail of safeguarding policies from staff and governors who are appropriately trained and well informed.
- Students learn to keep themselves and other safe in the academy, particularly through assessing risk in practical subjects such as physical education, science and design technology. They also learn to stay safe in the wider community through a programme of assemblies and tutorial sessions. Students show a good knowledge of keeping safe on the internet and understand the importance of protecting their online identity.
- Procedures are robust for the safe vetting of staff and visitors to the academy.
- Both staff and students pick up on any rare incidents of the use of discriminatory language and are clear that it is not tolerated. Students learn about wider issues of tolerance and British values of free speech in their personal and social education. Students' awareness of the cultural diversity of British society is less strong both in the main school and in the sixth form.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement in the main school because teachers do not have high enough expectations for their students' progress, particularly middle achievers in English and mathematics. While there has been some improvement in teaching since the previous inspection, resulting in improved progress for students in 2013, this has not been sustained and is not consistent across all subjects. Teaching in the sixth form is good.
- While there are good working relationships between students and their teachers, students' attitudes to their learning are not sufficiently positive. This is because teachers' delivery of the curriculum has not, until recently, offered enough opportunities for students, particularly the most able, to become fully engaged in their work. There are also limited opportunities to explore and develop their interests through homework. The most able do not always get set work that is hard enough and as a result they do not reach the standards of which they are capable.
- There is evidence of recent improvements in teaching, particularly in Year 7 and Year 11 and of greater focus on literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects. The early stages of the teaching of a new curriculum has resulted in the narrowing of the achievement gap between boys and girls in Key Stage 3 but not in Key Stage 4. Teachers are beginning to measure students' achievement not only by the grade they reach but by the progress they have made from their different starting points. The accuracy of this assessment is not always consistent.
- Well-qualified and experienced support staff give valuable assistance to students, both one to one and in small groups, particularly disabled students and those who have special educational needs and disadvantaged students. These students are identified by teachers as requiring additional support in order to close the gap in their progress with other students in the school and nationally. Since the previous inspection, this has only been partially successful and the gaps, although having narrowed, remain.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is actively promoted in lessons, along with an understanding of British values. For example, one Year 7 history lesson was about the murder of the twelfth century Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Becket. Students not only considered moral and spiritual questions relating to murder and sanctuary but the teacher also related the issue to the immediately relevant value of freedom of speech in a democracy. However, this example of good practice is not typical of how the school promotes students' understanding of British values. As a result students have a limited understanding of cultural diversity and British values in modern Britain.

The achievement of pupils**requires improvement**

- Students typically enter the academy with attainment that is in line with that found nationally. In recent years they have left Year 11 with standards that are in line with the national average. This means that not enough students are making good progress because teachers' expectations of their progress are not always high enough and students are not educated in a culture of academic excellence.
- Up until the current school year, the academy's main measure of academic success has been the grade that students' achieved at GCSE rather than the progress they have made from their starting points. This has led to underachievement for some students. The new leadership has given teachers a strong steer and a clear focus on the progress that students make from their different starting points.
- The students who have been achieving least well are middle achievers and boys. Since the previous inspection there has been some improvement in student achievement, particularly in 2013. However underlying issues with the achievement of boys and middle achievers surfaced again in 2014. While standards were still in line with the national average, the proportion of students making expected progress in both English and mathematics fell to below that found nationally.
- It is only with the arrival of the new principal and his new leadership team that the gap between the progress of boys and girls has begun to narrow considerably. This is more marked in Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 4, as a result of recent changes to the curriculum. In addition, senior leaders have introduced well-targeted programmes for accelerating the progress of middle achievers in Year 7 and Year 11. These programmes have already been successful in raising the achievement of these students and the Year 7 catch up funding has been well targeted.
- Some subjects have been more successful than others with the same students. Results in 2014 in the combined science GCSE and in geography were weak and the academy has already made changes to the way in which these subjects are taught. Students have attained high standards, however, in the separate sciences of biology and physics.
- While the most able students achieved standards in line with national averages in 2014, not enough of them secured the highest grades in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. The proportion of the most able students who made more than expected progress was below that found nationally. There were some successes at A and A* in some subjects in 2014, notably in business studies and in information and communications technology. Those students who enter the sixth form having achieved well at GCSE go on to make good progress and achieve standards at the end of Year 13 that are above the national average. The academy has not used early entry to examinations for the most able students.
- The pupil premium funding has not been targeted carefully enough and as a result the progress of disadvantaged students was behind that of other students both in the school and nationally in 2014. However gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged students and the attainment of their peers, both in the school and nationally, are narrowing. In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged students in English was behind that of their classmates by a third of a grade compared to nearly two whole grades in 2013; they were half a grade behind their peers nationally compared to one and a third of a grade in 2013. In mathematics, the gap narrowed in school and nationally from two whole grades in 2013 to around three quarters of a grade in 2014.
- While the provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs is good and they receive a high level of pastoral support and guidance, there has not been sufficient focus on their achievement. As a result students do not always make the progress of which they are capable and this has been the case recently in Year 11, although those in Year 10 are narrowing the gaps.

The sixth form provision**is good**

- Achievement in the post 16 provision is good because for most courses and qualifications, students attain above both national levels and their target levels, set by their teachers. In the last two years, students on vocational courses in both Year 12 and Year 13 have achieved above the national average. Academic attainment in Year 13 is also above the national average and a large proportion of students go on to university.
- Entry requirements for the sixth form are at an appropriate level and as a result almost all students stay on from Year 12 to Year 13 and no students leave the academy other than to further education, training or employment. Students' achievement in the sixth form meets the interim minimum standards specified by the Department for Education. The small number of students who enter the sixth form without a grade C in English or mathematics re-take the examination and pass rates are high.
- The leadership and management of the sixth form is provided in collaboration with two other schools and is developed strategically by the headteachers and governors in the partnership. The new head of sixth form offers confident and effective management and the provision continues to thrive under her leadership. The sixth form provision is good because, unlike in the main school, there are high expectations and a culture of academic excellence. This is enhanced by students from three different schools coming into the sixth form.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good and students are very positive in their comments about their lessons and the support offered to them to improve. Students from the academy are proud of the facilities in the sixth form centre and respect the strong subject knowledge of their teachers. Progress is assessed regularly and accurately and students are well informed about how well they are doing.
- The curriculum is both academic and vocational and the partnership allows students to have a broad range of subjects from which to choose. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs as well as disadvantaged students all do equally as well as other students and receive a good level of support.
- Students' personal, social and employability skills are well developed through an active tutorial programme. This includes regular work experience and visits to universities. They know how to keep themselves safe as they prepare to enter adult life. Students act as role models of good behaviour to younger students although there are few opportunities for them to mix in the current arrangements. Students understanding of and preparation for life in modern Britain is well supported through assemblies and in individual subjects, particularly law, sociology and geography. However there is an absence of awareness of the cultural diversity of British society. The sixth form is not outstanding for this reason and because students on academic courses are not yet regularly making outstanding progress.

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

Unique reference number	136959
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	448952

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	615
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	109
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Irene Welford
Principal	Neil Jamieson
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2013
Telephone number	01538 483900
Fax number	01538 483920
Email address	office@theheadleacademy.co.uk

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