

# Inspection of Stockport Academy

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

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Inspection dates:	21 and 22 January 2025
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

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

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are happy and feel safe in this caring school. Strong relationships between pupils and staff are built on a foundation of mutual respect. Pupils benefit from high-quality pastoral support. They appreciate and value this. Pupils are kind to one another. They value each other's uniqueness.

Pupils understand and follow the school's clear 'chance, choice, consequence' behaviour policy. They behave extremely well. Pupils learn free from distraction. They are engaged in their learning and keen to take part in lessons. For example, pupils gladly volunteer to read aloud. There is a calmness in the corridors and around the school.

Aspiration runs high and pupils know that there is no ceiling put on their success. The school's house system, named after four of the world's highest mountains, reflects the school's ambition for pupils to climb high and achieve well. Most pupils do.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), enthusiastically take up a myriad of leadership roles such as sitting on the 'prefectural board', or becoming 'respect leaders' and 'language ambassadors'. They are proud to wear the ties and badges that represent these roles.

Pupils enjoy the sense of community when they participate in 'Funday Friday' activities. They also enjoy celebrating their successes at 'WOW' (work of the week).

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

Pupils benefit from a strengthened curriculum. The school has prioritised identifying the essential knowledge that pupils should learn. This helps teachers to be clear about what they should teach and when they should teach it. The published outcomes for pupils who finished Year 11 in 2024 are much improved. Most pupils are learning better than in the recent past.

Passionate teachers with secure subject knowledge explain ideas clearly. In most lessons, they check for misconceptions and address them swiftly. However, in some cases, these checks are not used consistently well to help pupils embed knowledge. At times, some teachers do not use the information about what pupils know and remember well enough to design activities that help pupils to apply and to practise what they have learned. This hampers some pupils from developing a secure understanding in that subject.

The school accurately identifies any additional needs that pupils may have. Staff are given helpful information to support these pupils. That said, in some subjects, this information is not used as effectively as it could be to adapt learning for some pupils with SEND. This hinders how well these pupils can access the learning and achieve.

High priority is given to the reading culture in school. Pupils who struggle with reading are given effective support that helps them to build their reading fluency and confidence.

The school has employed some successful strategies to improve attendance rates. Most pupils attend school frequently although there is a small group of disadvantaged pupils who attend less frequently.

Pupils understand and embrace the school's values of 'ambition, respect and community'. Routines around behaviour are firmly embedded and help pupils to behave appropriately.

The school places strong emphasis on ensuring that pupils are fully prepared for life in modern Britain. The school's programme for pupils' personal development provides pupils with a variety of rich experiences that equip them with the skills and knowledge that they need to thrive in their future steps. The school broadens pupils' awareness of potential pathways. For instance, Year 9 pupils visit universities. A carefully constructed careers programme helps pupils to make informed choices.

Those responsible for governance are highly skilled and use their expertise well to challenge the school. They have clear oversight of the quality of education in the school and have relentlessly held the school to account. Along with the trust, they recognise the improvements that have been made. Nevertheless, there is a fervent ambition to improve the school further.

Staff say that amidst lots of change, the school has been mindful of their workload. For example, they were given additional time to develop the curriculum. In addition, the trust's support has helped to sharpen staff's understanding of what constitutes a high-quality curriculum. The school has taken effective steps to engage more with the local community. For example, the Christmas market and Stock Fest were well attended.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Sometimes, teachers do not use the information and strategies given to them to make suitable adaptations to learning. This hinders how well disadvantaged pupils, including some pupils with SEND, learn the curriculum. The school should ensure that teachers are equipped to successfully apply strategies to adapt learning so that these pupils achieve well.
- In some subjects, teachers do not check pupils' understanding and application of knowledge as well as they could. At times, pupils are not given the opportunity to consolidate their learning. This hampers some pupils from developing a secure understanding in that subject. The school should ensure that teachers use assessment strategies consistently well to identify where pupils need to practise and embed key knowledge and skills.

## 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>	10348252
<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>	1012
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Christian Brodie
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Sir Jon Coles
<b>Principal</b>	Janine McCann
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stockport-academy.org">www.stockport-academy.org</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	21 and 22 November 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the United Learning Trust.
- The school uses two registered alternative provisions 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

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, senior leaders and other members of staff.
- Inspectors met with regional directors from the trust.
- An inspector met with a representative of the board of trustees and representatives of the local governing body, including the chair of governors.
- An inspector held a telephone conversation with representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, physical education, geography and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector observed reading support for key stage 4 pupils.
- 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 surveys for pupils and staff.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including local governing body and trustee meeting minutes, the school's self-evaluation and development plan, and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.

## **Inspection team**

Jenny Jones, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Scott Maclean

Ofsted Inspector

David Woodhouse

Ofsted Inspector

Lesley Nixon

His Majesty's Inspector

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