

Inspection of Cedar Mount Academy

Gorton Education Village 50 Wembley Road, Gorton, Manchester M18 7DT

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 April 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders' strong moral purpose and unwavering focus to create a positive culture for learning has transformed the school into a better place.

Cedar Mount is a welcoming and inclusive school. Pupils share highly positive relationships with staff and their peers. They know that staff care deeply for them. This helps pupils to feel happy and safe in school. Pupils say that the school is like a second family.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils. Pupils embody the school's values of 'hard work, aspiration and respect' through their positive attitudes to learning and good standards of behaviour in lessons and around school. Pupils value leaders' commitment to creating an environment free from discrimination where other cultures are celebrated. Leaders teach pupils not to accept any bullying behaviour. Leaders deal with bullying when it happens and take action quickly.

Leaders have developed a rich, varied and ambitious curriculum. Pupils enjoy learning new knowledge and ideas. However, teaching of the planned curriculum is sometimes inconsistent. It does not sufficiently allow all pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to know and remember more. Although pupils' work and some examination results show that they are starting to achieve more successfully, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should in some areas of the curriculum.

Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. For example, pupils enjoy clubs such as rock band, robotics and cricket club. Pupils relish leadership opportunities that tangibly contribute to improving the school community, including the anti-discrimination group, diversity group and student leaders.

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

Leaders, including trustees and governors, have a clear vision for the school. Supported by the trust and governors, school leaders have successfully made many improvements since the previous inspection, especially in relation to pupils' behaviour and learning experiences. For example, pupils attend school regularly and engage positively in the classroom. Leaders have taken action to ensure that pupils are better prepared for the next stage of their education or training.

Leaders have raised aspirations. They have strengthened the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of pupils, including those with SEND. All pupils in key stage 3 study two languages and many pupils study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects. Leaders have thought carefully about the curriculum. Mostly, they have considered how topics and concepts link together to help pupils know and remember more knowledge. However, in some subjects, leaders have not consistently identified

all the essential information that pupils must learn across some areas of the curriculum. They have not ensured that the curriculum is fully adapted to reflect pupils' starting points when they begin in Year 7. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Furthermore, some pupils do not have secure foundations on which to build future learning, which hinders how well they achieve.

Leaders prioritise subject leaders' and teachers' continuous training to help support them in delivering the curriculum increasingly well. Teachers typically have strong subject knowledge, and in most cases choose activities that meet the needs of pupils. However, this is not always the case. Sometimes, teachers do not choose the most appropriate activities to help pupils to learn new information. As a result, the delivery of the curriculum is uneven and some pupils underachieve.

Since the previous inspection, leaders and teachers have thought carefully about the assessment methods that they use to check how well pupils are learning and retaining new knowledge. In some subjects, however, systems to check where pupils are insecure in their learning are underdeveloped. This means that pupils develop misconceptions in their learning that go unchecked.

Across subjects, and as part of the wider curriculum, leaders have ensured that teachers prioritise the development of reading. They also encourage a love of reading in many pupils. They place a strong emphasis on supporting weaker readers through implementing an effective catch-up programme. This helps pupils to become more confident and fluent readers.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have effectively strengthened systems to identify the needs of pupils with SEND at the earliest opportunity. They give staff the information that they need to adapt the delivery of learning activities. However, some subject leaders have not ensured that teachers are fully confident in how to adapt the delivery curriculum for pupils with SEND. As a result, some pupils with SEND underachieve.

Leaders have raised their expectations of behaviour. New routines are in place. Many pupils show positive attitudes to learning. Leaders have a clear behaviour policy in place that staff follow consistently well. Lessons are focused and generally free from disruption.

Leaders place personal development at the heart of the school's work. Teachers cultivate pupils' learning through important topics such as healthy relationships, financial planning, democracy and equality. Pupils are vocal about celebrating difference and creating a community where everyone is welcome. Pupils value enrichment opportunities outside of the classroom. For example, many pupils participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Pupils receive an extensive programme of careers education. This helps pupils to make informed decisions about their next steps.

Staff, including early career teachers, feel that leaders support them well. They say that leaders are approachable. Staff believe that leaders consider their well-being when introducing any changes. Most staff enjoy working at the school.

Trustees and governors provide challenge and support to leaders. This has helped the academy to improve.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders responsible for safeguarding are highly knowledgeable. They are alert to the local risks that pupils may face in the community. They maintain robust oversight of any issues that arise. All staff have been well trained in safeguarding and understand their responsibility to keep pupils safe. Staff pass on any concerns they have. Leaders are adept at working with a wide range of external agencies. They are persistent in securing the right support for vulnerable pupils and their families.

The curriculum content ensures that pupils learn about how to keep safe in a variety of situations. This includes outside school and particularly when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subject leaders have not consistently identified all the essential information that pupils must learn across some areas of the curriculum. Neither have they ensured that the curriculum is fully adapted to reflect pupils' starting points when they begin in Year 7. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Also, some pupils do not have secure foundations on which to build future learning, which hinders how well they achieve. Leaders must ensure that they finalise exactly what must be taught in each subject and in what order. They must also ensure that the curriculum is well designed to reflect pupils' starting points.
- Sometimes, teachers do not choose the most appropriate activities to help pupils to learn new information. As a result, the delivery of the curriculum is uneven and some pupils underachieve. Leaders must ensure that teachers are supported to decide which activities are best suited to help pupils to learn new topics and concepts.
- Some subject leaders' systems to check how well pupils are learning and retaining new knowledge are underdeveloped. This means that pupils' develop misconceptions in their learning that go unchecked. Leaders must ensure that teachers are well trained to use assessment systems that identify where pupils are insecure in their learning. They must ensure that teachers know how to adapt the delivery of the curriculum to address these misunderstandings.
- Leaders have not ensured that teachers are fully confident in how to adapt the delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND. As a result, some pupils with

SEND underachieve. Once they have established exactly what pupils must learn, leaders must ensure that teachers are well trained to modify the delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND, where appropriate.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	138097
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10286274
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	893
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Daniel Rubin
Chief Executive Officer	John Stephens
Principal	Kal Hodgson
Website	www.cedarmount.manchester.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school joined the Bright Futures Trust in September 2012.
- Leaders use three registered alternative providers and one unregistered alternative provider 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 7 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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and other members of staff. They also spoke with members of the trust and the local governing body.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including leaders' self-evaluation documents, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and the single central record. They met with leaders, staff and pupils to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science, mathematics, geography, modern foreign languages and physical education. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Kate Bowker, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Kelly Leonard	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Glennon	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Mitchell	Ofsted Inspector

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