

Inspection of Irlam and Cadishead Academy

Station Road, Irlam, Manchester M44 5ZR

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The principal of this school is Chris Leader. 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), Jon Coles, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Richard Greenhalgh.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy in this tight-knit school community where they benefit from strong pastoral support. They have strong relationships with staff and feel safe.

The school has high expectations of its pupils. In particular, expectations around behaviour have risen. Consequently, pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. In lessons, pupils follow the school's routines diligently. Many staff and pupils commented that pupils' behaviour is much improved and that learning is rarely disturbed.

In the past, some pupils did not achieve as well as they should. However, the school now has an ambitious curriculum that is delivered effectively. As a result, current pupils achieve well in most subjects.

Pupils are respectful. This is typified by the care and respect that they show to each other, their learning and the school building. The school instils self-belief into pupils. For instance, the weekly 'proud' table encourages pupils to celebrate their work. Moreover, pupils also develop their oracy skills and can articulate why they are proud of their work.

There is a wealth of clubs on offer that cater for a wide range of pupils' interests. For example, the lunchtime board games club is a hive of activity, with friendly competition between pupils and staff. The carbon research club has an ambitious mission to make the school carbon zero. Many pupils also enjoy the e-sports clubs.

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

Historically, pupils have not achieved well in this school. The published outcomes in 2023 were low. This is due to the legacy of a weaker curriculum. However, the school has been on a journey of improvement over recent years. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) now benefit from a broad and ambitious curriculum. The school has clearly identified the important knowledge that pupils should know and the order in which it should be taught. This is helping current pupils to achieve well.

Staff development has been a key ingredient to improve the quality of education in the school. Teachers use their subject expertise well to explain learning clearly. Typically, there is a consistent approach to the delivery of the curriculum.

In some subjects, teachers use assessment methods effectively to check what pupils know. However, in a small number of subjects, teachers do not systematically check whether pupils have understood their learning. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge which are not addressed. That said, most pupils make progress in their learning. They know and remember more. This is evident from the high-quality work that they produce and in how well they talked about their learning.

The school now accurately identifies any additional needs that a pupil may have. Staff skilfully adapt learning to meet these pupils' needs. This helps pupils with SEND to achieve well.

There are a significant number of pupils who struggle with reading. Some of those pupils are supported successfully to improve their reading. However, there are still too many pupils, particularly those who are at the early stages of reading in key stage 4, who do not receive appropriate support. This hampers them from being able to access the curriculum successfully.

There is a calm atmosphere in the school. Pupils follow the school rules consistently and they behave well. This academic year, there has been a significant reduction in the number of negative behaviour incidents. Most pupils now attend school regularly. The school's work with families has secured improvements in attendance for some groups of pupils.

Pupils are successfully prepared for their next steps. The well-thought-out careers provision helps pupils to link subjects with careers. Pupils' aspirations are high. The school provides many opportunities for pupils' wider development. The carefully considered personal, social, health, economic and citizenship education curriculum helps to grow pupils' understanding of society. Pupils are accepting of difference. They enjoy visits to different places of worship. Pupils keenly take up positions of responsibility such as student principal, prefects and mentors.

The school has benefited immensely from working closely with the trust. The trustees and governors have an accurate insight into the school. They support the school well and challenge it to be even better. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about working in the school. They appreciate the planning days which help them to manage their workload effectively.

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 use assessment strategies effectively to check how well pupils have learned the curriculum. As a result, some pupils' misconceptions and gaps in knowledge are not addressed. The school should ensure that teachers systematically check whether pupils have learned the intended content so that any gaps in pupils' learning can be addressed.
- Some pupils in Years 9 to 11 who struggle with reading do not receive the help that they need to catch up. This means that some pupils have gaps in their reading knowledge, which prevents them from accessing the curriculum

effectively. The school should ensure that pupils who need additional help with reading receive high-quality support to enable them to improve their fluency and confidence.

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	142073
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	10294387
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	709
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Richard Greenhalgh
CEO	Jon Coles
Principal	Chris Leader
Website	www.irlamandcadishead.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 September 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher has been in post since September 2023.
- The school makes use of two registered alternative provisions for a 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, physical education, history and art and design. 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.
- Inspectors observed behaviour and break and lunchtimes.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with the trustees including the CEO, representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation including records linked to behaviour and attendance, the school's self-evaluation and development plan.
- 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.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's Parent View. They also considered the responses to the staff and pupil survey.

Inspection team

Jenny Jones, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Kelly Leonard	Ofsted Inspector
Jamie Jardine	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Yarwood	Ofsted Inspector

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