School report

Inspection of Macmillan Academy

Stockton Road, Middlesbrough TS5 4AG

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 November 2022

Overall effectiveness	**Good**
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Sixth-form provision	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and teachers have high expectations for pupils at Macmillan Academy. There are established routines that help pupils to know how to behave. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere around the building. The majority of pupils have a positive attitude to learning.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development and encourage pupils to participate in wider experiences. Many pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), attend extra-curricular activities. Every Year 9 pupil has the chance to gain their bronze Duke of Edinburgh's award. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the extra-curricular opportunities on offer to them, including debate club, chess and yoga.

The work of pupils is celebrated at the school. Pupils bring pieces of work they are proud of to the event known as 'Best Work Wednesday'. Staff use this opportunity to promote achievement and show a deep interest in the work that pupils present to them.

The school's curriculum is ambitious. Pupils learn a wide range of subjects. In the sixth form, several vocational and applied courses are offered as well as A levels.

Staff take bullying seriously and deal with it appropriately if it happens. Some pupils say that learning can be disrupted occasionally. Leaders know that a small number of pupils need support to fully meet their high expectations.

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

Since the previous inspection, leaders have thought carefully about the curriculum that they want pupils to learn and how this should be taught. Leaders have developed a well-considered curriculum that highlights what they want pupils to learn and how to achieve this. Over time, leaders have developed a school approach to teaching lessons. This helps teachers to support pupils' learning in a consistent manner. Staff have begun to look for, and introduce, learning links to other subjects. Pupils recognise this and say it helps them remember more. This approach is in the early stages of development.

Curriculum plans are well thought out. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum helps to build up pupils' knowledge in a logical way. Across the school, including in the sixth form, teachers teach well. They demonstrate strong subject knowledge. There are systems in place to support less experienced teachers. Teachers in the early stages of their career speak positively about the support that they are given.

Staff work with local primary schools to make sure that the curriculum builds on what pupils already know. Leaders have high academic ambitions for pupils. The proportion of pupils studying for GCSE subjects that make up the English

Baccalaureate is rising rapidly. Half of all pupils now study a modern foreign language.

A team of passionate leaders have prioritised reading. Assessment strategies are being developed to track pupils' progress and identify those who require support. A phonics programme is used to support pupils to become better readers. Effective reading strategies are modelled by all, including reading buddies from the sixth form. Year 7 pupils enthusiastically participated in an author visit during the inspection.

There is a well-designed curriculum for personal, social and health education. This is complemented by further work during tutor time. The 'Broadcast' programme is shown in form classes, where important personal development themes are shown to pupils. Pupils speak highly of how staff raise awareness of mental health. Leaders recognise that they need to develop the compulsory religious studies curriculum at key stage 4 and key stage 5. It is currently too closely linked to news and current affairs, which do not always have a sufficient religious connection.

Sixth-form students benefit from a range of opportunities to develop their leadership skills. Leaders organise a range of educational outings for older students, including museums and overseas trips. Within the sixth form, there are head students and a student union. Students value these leadership roles. Pupils lower down the school say they would like similar opportunities to ensure their voices are heard.

Pupils with SEND are included fully in the life of the school. They participate well in lessons. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils with SEND. Leaders provide teachers with information about pupils' learning needs. However, in some cases, more precision is needed relating to the strategies teachers use to support pupils to ensure pupils get the right support to meet their needs. Leaders have provided bespoke provision where pupils with SEND access support such as art therapy for their social and emotional needs.

Leaders have developed a high-quality careers education, advice and guidance programme. Many students in the sixth form benefit from well-planned courses that are linked to apprenticeships and career pathways. Pupils with SEND receive early and bespoke careers support to ensure that they have considered their GCSE option choices fully.

Leaders take account of staff's workload and well-being. The majority of staff who responded to Ofsted's inspection questionnaire say they enjoy working at the school.

Leaders at all levels, including trustees and governors, have a shared vision that pupils, regardless of background, should be supported to succeed.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture across the school. Leaders provide relevant safeguarding training to all staff. As a result, staff are able to spot the signs that show that pupils may need additional support. Leaders know their pupils and their circumstances very well. Leaders work closely with outside agencies to ensure that pupils and their families who need support receive it.

Pupils are knowledgeable about potential dangers, including online dangers, that they might encounter. Leaders need to fully assure themselves that all staff know about important safeguarding updates.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils do not feel that they have a say in specific aspects of school life. This means that their views are not always heard on some issues. Leaders should provide more opportunities for pupils in all year groups to share their views on life at the school.
- Pupils spoke positively about the ways staff help them to remember subject content over time. For example, some teachers make explicit links between subjects and ideas. This is not consistent across the school. Leaders should build on this work and ensure pupils have similar and varied opportunities to make links between their learning to help them remember content for longer periods of time.

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	130908
Local authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	10240453
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,543
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	252
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ken Fraser
Headteacher	Rachel Coning
Website	www.macmillan-academy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed.
- The previous headteacher is now the chief executive officer (CEO) of the multi-academy trust.
- The school includes a sixth form.
- The school uses six registered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information 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 held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders. The lead inspector met with the CEO, representatives of the trust board and governors
- Inspectors reviewed the school's records of safeguarding checks and referrals to the local authority. Inspectors spoke with staff about how they keep pupils safe. Inspectors also asked the pupils how they keep themselves safe and what to do if they have concerns.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff and considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils from all year groups and considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils.
- Inspectors considered the views of the parents who completed Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents. This included the free-text responses.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, history, modern foreign languages, science and physical education. Inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans.

Inspection team

Jessica McKay, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Richard Jones	His Majesty's Inspector
Shelley Heseltine	Ofsted Inspector
Jill Bowe	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Crane	Ofsted Inspector

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