

Inspection of The Milton Keynes Academy

Fulwoods Drive, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK6 5LA

Inspection dates:	13 and 14 May 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Gordon Farquhar. This school is part of Creative Education 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), Nicole McCartney, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Abbie Rumbold.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff are proud of the significant improvements made since the school's last inspection. Most pupils understand how the school expects them to behave. If pupils do not meet the school's high expectations, staff take prompt and effective action.

The school's values are prominent in everyday interactions. Pupils learn to act responsibly and as a result they demonstrate high levels of respect for each other, staff and visitors. Relationships are strong. Pupils appreciate the individual support that they get from staff, which helps them feel happy and safe. They know they have a trusted adult they can talk to if they have any worries. Staff provide high-quality pastoral support for those who need it.

Pupils are motivated to achieve well. They are increasingly positive about their aspirations. This is because the school's high expectations for pupils' future success continue to rise. Classrooms are calm and orderly. Well-established routines help pupils concentrate in lessons. Pupils are becoming more resilient, which is improving their engagement in learning. Pupils on the student council appreciate the positive contribution that they make to further improving their school. The school is highly inclusive. This makes everyone feel welcome.

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

In recent years, pupils' achievement has improved. However, the school's published outcomes in 2024 were below national averages. These do not reflect the higher quality of education current pupils receive.

The school continues to strengthen curriculum implementation. Staff use their strong subject knowledge to present information clearly, ensuring that the work given to pupils aligns with the ambitious curriculum goals. However, in some lessons, some teaching activities do not help pupils learn the curriculum. Teachers sometimes do not address pupils' misconceptions or gaps in knowledge and skills as effectively as they could. This issue is less evident in Key Stage 3, where they more successfully embed checks for pupils' gaps and misconceptions. In key stage 4 the school proactively addresses knowledge gaps and recall to help Year 10 and 11 pupils succeed in the future.

Staff identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities swiftly and accurately. Staff are trained to provide effective support for pupils. The school has renewed its focus on reading, with a strong emphasis on literacy in all subjects. Staff actively encourage reading for pleasure, for example, through the tutor reading programme and thoughtfully designed activities in the library. Expert staff provide carefully tailored support to pupils who have fallen behind in reading.

Attendance remains a high priority. The school's proactive attendance team builds strong relationships with families and provides support and intervention when needed. Bespoke strategies help pupils successfully re-engage with school after extended absences.

Behaviour has improved significantly. Clear expectations foster positive behaviour, and most pupils embrace them fully. Specialist staff provide targeted behaviour support for those pupils who need it most. The school uses suspensions only as a last resort. However, its approach to helping pupils make lasting changes to their behaviour following a suspension is not as effective as it could be. A small number of pupils who struggle to meet the school's high expectations receive repeated suspensions. These pupils miss lessons and risk falling behind due to gaps in their knowledge.

The school's approach to the wider personal development of pupils is a shining strength. Staff teach pupils about all aspects of personal, social and health education and they receive specialist training for the sensitive parts of the curriculum to enable them to deliver this effectively. They use what they know about emerging local and national risks and adapt the curriculum appropriately. This helps pupils understand how to stay safe, including when online. The school is expanding opportunities for pupils to develop positive character traits. These include visiting local care homes, supporting charities, and engaging the community by hosting events such as a film night.

Leaders, including trust leaders, have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for development. The trust provides expert support that challenges school leaders appropriately. It offers opportunities for development through collaboration and coaching. Staff feel highly positive about working at the school. They recognise that the school prioritises ongoing improvements in a way that promotes positive wellbeing for everyone.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are inconsistencies in the way teachers implement the curriculum in some subjects leading to misconceptions or gaps sometimes being left unaddressed. As a result, some pupils struggle to consolidate prior learning and develop new skills as effectively as they could. The school must ensure that curriculum implementation and the work provided, effectively addresses any gaps in knowledge or misconceptions, enabling pupils to build on what they already know, remember, and can do
- The school's approach to supporting pupils to reintegrate to the school after a suspension is not as effective as it could be. As a result, some pupils fail to meet the school's high expectations and miss crucial learning and falling further behind. The school must continue its efforts to reduce suspensions and strengthen its reintegration system to support these pupils in achieving success.

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	135665
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10379845
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	1024
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Abbie Rumbold
CEO of the trust	Nicole McCartney
Headteacher	Gordon Farquhar
Website	www.miltonkeynesacademy.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	17 and 18 January 2023, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school joined Creative Education Trust in September 2021.
- The school currently uses one registered alternative provision.
- 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 (early years and/or 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 headteacher and senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also met with the director of education for the trust, the director of performance, a representative of the board of trustees and the CEO.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, geography, history and modern foreign languages. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, teachers and pupils, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector reviewed the provision for pupils who need extra help with their reading. Inspectors also looked at the curriculum visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work in some other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including the free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff and pupil surveys and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- 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 reviewed and scrutinised a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' plans for improving the school, minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Linda Culling, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Caroline Legg	Ofsted Inspector
Marieke Forster	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Robb-Webb	Ofsted Inspector

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