

Cannock Chase High School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	137384
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	386197
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2012
Lead inspector	Davinder Dosanjh HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1342
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	163
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barbara Lomas
Headteacher	Barrie Scott
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2009
School address	Hednesford Road Cannock WS11 1JT
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Age group	11–19
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Introduction

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Teresa Hill

Additional inspector

Michael Marks

Additional inspector

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William Cassell

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed 45 lessons, including six joint observations with members of the senior team, taught by 45 teachers. Inspectors met with senior leaders, groups of students, members of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work, looked at the tracking of students' progress, and scrutinised students' work, whole-school and subject development plans, numerous policies, records of students' attendance, exclusions and records of any bullying. They reviewed responses to questionnaires from 154 parents and carers, 141 students and 41 staff.

Information about the school

This school is larger than the average-sized secondary school. The number of students known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average. The vast majority of students are from a White British background. The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is below the national figure. The school has specialisms in science and mathematics. The school meets the current floor standard set by the government, which determines the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. In addition, it holds a number of awards including the Diana Anti-bullying Award and Stonewall School Champion.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- Cannock Chase High is a satisfactory school that continues to improve. The school provides a supportive and inclusive environment for its students, especially those students whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Relationships are positive and the mixed year tutor groups help students to get on with each other. The sixth form is satisfactory. The school is not good overall because teaching does not ensure that all students make good progress. Attainment is not above national averages and attendance is below average.
- Students' achievement is satisfactory, and attainment is low. The achievement of disabled students and those with special educational needs is good due to well-targeted intervention in and outside lessons. In the sixth form, students make satisfactory progress on their courses. There is a wide variation in the performance of subjects.
- Teaching is satisfactory, including in the sixth form. Lessons are well structured but do not always challenge students sufficiently or match their varying needs. Marking gives helpful feedback on how students can improve their work and the 'Chase marking' system is understood by all.
- The school is an orderly place and behaviour is satisfactory. Students say they feel safe and are confident that when bullying happens, it is dealt with swiftly. Attendance is below average and currently shows limited signs of improvement. Strategies and procedures to improve attendance have recently been revised but have not had sufficient time to make a difference.
- Effective leadership from the headteacher and leadership team has ensured improvements in attainment and a strong pastoral system. School leaders, including the governing body, have a clear vision for the school's future and increasingly hold staff to account for the school's performance. Past weaknesses in subject performance are being addressed with significant

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improvements in English. Middle leadership is improving but there remain too many inconsistencies in evaluating and the improving the quality of teaching. The school's specialism in science and mathematics has had limited impact on driving up standards.

- Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise students' achievement by:
 - developing students' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum
 - increasing the proportion of students who get the highest grades at GCSE
 - ensuring a consistent approach by middle leaders in monitoring and evaluating their subject areas.
- Increase the proportion of teaching which is good or better to over 75% by July 2013 by ensuring that all teachers:
 - match work carefully to students' varying needs so that they are challenged at the right level, particularly for those of high ability
 - use effective questioning to consolidate and extend students' understanding
 - provide more opportunities for students to be active and independent learners
 - have frequent checks on learning during the lesson.
- Improve attendance by:
 - monitoring and evaluating the strategies developed to combat low attendance to ensure they are effective
 - engaging parents and carers in a high profile strategy to promote good attendance.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Students enter the school with attainment that is low. The proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics continues to rise and, while still low, represents satisfactory progress. Mathematics has performed consistently over a number of years. Students have made slower than expected progress in English. However, evidence in lessons and books indicate they are now making progress in line with expectations. In some subjects, GCSE results are above average, such as drama, physical education and religious studies. A similar picture in the sixth form sees students making satisfactory progress overall but good progress in physical education and further mathematics courses. Current

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data and students' progress in lessons indicate that all abilities are making at least satisfactory progress towards challenging targets. Children who are looked after make good progress as do disabled students and those with special educational needs. This is due to small group and key worker support for individual students. In addition, students' weak literacy skills in the lower years are being effectively addressed by additional reading support. There is evidence to show improvement in reading in Years 7 and 8. Disabled students are fully integrated into all aspects of school life. Close attention is paid to their individual needs so learning materials are prepared in advance and reasonable adjustments made.

In the majority of lessons observed, progress and the quality of learning were satisfactory. Learning is strongest in lessons where there is an element of independence and students have opportunities to undertake self- and peer-assessment. In satisfactory lessons, learning tasks do not always meet the needs of students sufficiently well because all groups are learning at the same pace; thus, some are not challenged enough. Most students have positive attitudes, listening and cooperating well with teachers. The development of students' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum varies. There are examples of effective strategies ensuring students understand key words for the subject but these are not consistently applied. Not all teachers regularly identify common spelling, punctuation or grammatical errors in students' work and support them to correct any misconceptions. Most parents and carers are positive about the progress their children make at the school.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is satisfactory and results in most students making progress that is broadly in line with expectations. Where teaching is good, it is characterised by a high level of independent work, good teacher subject knowledge which supports and challenges students. There are high levels of student engagement as a result of tasks and questioning that are appropriate to all abilities. In an outstanding physical education lesson, students worked collaboratively in groups in examining the effects of exercise. Peer assessment was used well and students considered the views of others. A very good range of activities ensured students were engaged and challenged to evaluate the impact of exercise. A science lesson promoted outstanding learning for students because the teacher used questioning to probe understanding and targeted questions at a wide range of students. The work on osmosis was linked to GCSE grades with precise guidance on what is required for each grade. The teacher carefully built on prior knowledge and gave students confidence to tackle challenging activities. Satisfactory teaching was characterised by high levels of teacher input which resulted in a lack of pace and challenge, learning objectives which were task related rather than focusing on learning. Teachers often set explicit expectations for students of differing abilities but the subsequent work is not necessarily matched closely enough to their current attainment, resulting in all students doing the same level of task. This disadvantages higher ability students in particular. Most parents and carers feel that their children are taught well but they comment on the variation across subjects, as

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do students. Inspectors also found some variation.

There are examples of good specific subject marking which supports students' progress and gives clear guidance on how to improve but is not always acted on by the students and followed up by the teacher. The curriculum meets students' needs, and cross-curricular skills from the Year 7 'curriculum plus' programme are used effectively in other lessons. Teachers often provide time to reflect and broaden students' understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In Year 8 English, students had good opportunities to reflect on a speech by Martin Luther King and analyse its powerful impact on the audience.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

During the inspection, students' behaviour was good around the school. In those lessons that are good or better, students are well behaved because the lessons are engaging and they are willing participants in effective group work and peer-assessment. Behaviour is less than good when teachers are not consistent in using agreed behaviour management strategies and this was confirmed by students and parents and carers in the questionnaires. Students generally engage in the tasks set for them, but show a lack of urgency in lessons where the work is not well matched to their needs. In the sixth form, students' behaviour is good because in lessons they are actively involved and respond well to teachers.

Students know how to keep themselves safe. They are confident that the small numbers of bullying incidents are dealt with appropriately by their teachers. Students have a good understanding of different types of bullying, such as cyber-bullying, prejudice-based bullying and homophobic bullying, and feel that the use of inappropriate language is not tolerated. Some act as 'house champs' to mediate problems between students, having a dedicated base to carry out their work. As a result, students feel safe in school and a large majority of parents and carers agree.

Attendance rates are below the national average. Recent developments have been put in place in order to have a more systematic approach to improving attendance. These include house managers and focused multi-agency work. Punctuality, although improving, remains a focus for the school. There is still a significant minority of students who are slow to arrive at lessons.

Leadership and management

The school is led effectively, and senior leaders are driving forward improvements. There are clear lines of accountability which enable senior and middle leaders to ensure the smooth running of the school. The key priorities are shared with staff so that there is a clear agenda for raising standards and improving teaching. Central to these improvements has been the establishment of ambitious target setting. There are rigorous systems to monitor and evaluate the progress the school is making, such as data systems to track students' progress. Accurate assessments mean that the school can now identify more precisely the individuals and groups where further

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support is needed, leading to better achievement, however leaders do not ensure that assessment information is used sufficiently by teachers in planning lessons. Directors of the different subjects have an effective understanding of data and whole-school priorities. There have been significant improvements in English but slower progress is evident in science and modern foreign languages. Some subjects are more successful than others in securing good achievement. Subject improvement plans are variable, with insufficient focus and precision in driving up the quality of teaching. Senior leaders are improving teaching and tackling weak performance with training programmes in place to develop classroom practice.

The leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory. There remains some underachievement because intervention and tracking of students' progress has not always been effective. Staying on rates are high and indicate students are on appropriate courses.

The school's effectiveness in promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination is satisfactory. It is closing the gap in achievement between different groups of students. Those whose circumstances make them vulnerable are well supported and make good progress during their time in school. The school has demonstrated that it has capacity to make further improvements because achievement continues to improve.

The governing body discharges its responsibilities effectively. Its members understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school and bring a broad range of expertise to their work. They provide appropriate challenge. Safeguarding arrangements are fully in place and are thorough, thus, ensuring the well-being of students.

The broad and balanced curriculum enables students to achieve satisfactorily. The range of GCSE and vocational courses meets students' needs. Extra-curricular activities and trips broaden their experience. Provision for disabled students and those with special educational needs is good. The alternative curriculum ensures students are on appropriate courses, enabling them to achieve qualifications. The community provision has positively raised the profile of science as a discipline both in the school and beyond as part of the specialist status. The 'classroom medics' workshops during the inspection were fun and engaging. Reasonable actions are taken to ensure that students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. These aspects of learning are evident in subjects and promoted through lessons in personal development, enrichment activities, assemblies, tutor-time and events such as Black History Month. The house system of mixed aged groups promotes a strong sense of belonging and students are proud to wear their house badges.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 March 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Cannock Chase High School, Cannock, WS11 1JT

Thank you for the welcome you gave us during the inspection. We found it very helpful to talk to you, look at your work and visit your lessons. You helped us to understand what it is like to be a student at your school.

The school provides you with a satisfactory education. Staff work hard to support you in your work. GCSE results are improving year on year and you make satisfactory progress. The quality of teaching you receive is varied and the 'Chase Marking' system gives you an idea of what you need to do to improve. The curriculum is broad and you benefit from a wide range of courses. Provision for disabled students, those with special educational needs and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable is good. You feel safe and your school is led effectively by your headteacher and the team of leaders and managers, who are determined to ensure that it provides the best for every one of you. We were very impressed by the 'classroom medics' workshops during the inspection which were fun and engaging. The house badges you wear give you a sense of belonging and the mixed age groups ensure you get on with each other well. To improve some areas of its work, we have asked the school to:

- raise achievement so GCSE results continue to improve in all subjects
- provide more good or better teaching by matching tasks to your abilities so that you are challenged effectively
- improve your attendance.

You have a part to play and you can help your school by ensuring that you attend regularly. I wish you all success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Davinder Dosanjh
Her Majesty's Inspector

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