

# The Canterbury High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	136302
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	382048
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 April 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Lesley Farmer

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Academy converter
<b>School category</b>	Modern (non-selective)
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,209
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	282
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Debbie Wells
<b>Headteacher</b>	Phil Karnavas
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 October 2008
<b>School address</b>	Knight Avenue Canterbury CT2 8QA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01227463971
<b>Fax number</b>	01227762801
<b>Email address</b>	canterbury-high@canterbury.kent.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	25–26 April 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	382048



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Lesley Farmer	Additional inspector
Helena McVeigh	Additional inspector
Howard Jones	Additional inspector
Des Dunne	Additional inspector
Philip Storey	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed a total of 47 lessons taught by 46 teachers and held discussions with groups of students, staff and six governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. Joint observations of lessons were conducted with three senior leaders. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at development plans, the school's self-evaluation, the school's tracking data showing students' progress, teachers' lesson plans and students' work. In addition, inspectors analysed the questionnaire responses of 61 parents and carers, 99 staff and 150 students.

## Information about the school

The Canterbury High School is a slightly larger-than-average mixed secondary modern school in Canterbury, which is federated with The Canterbury Primary School under one governing body and one executive headteacher. The two schools are located on the Canterbury Campus and became a Trust in April 2008. The schools converted to Academy status in October 2010. Entry to the school is after local authority selection procedures, where approximately one third of students from local primary schools go elsewhere to selective schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The school has an integrated speech and language unit and the proportion of students supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress. The executive headteacher is a National Leader of Education and the school is a National Support School.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good school. It is justifiably rated very highly by students, their parents and carers. The overwhelming majority of students make good progress as a result of carefully planned and well-resourced teaching. Attitudes to learning are a strength of the school. Leaders at all levels are ambitious for the students and highly effective in driving improvement. The school is not outstanding because teaching is not typically outstanding and not all students make enough progress in mathematics.
- The sixth form is good and growing in numbers as the success of its innovative new provision develops.
- Achievement is good overall, with rapid progress made by most students from exceptionally low starting points on joining the school. The school recognises that there is still more to be done to develop students' mathematical skills systematically across all subjects.
- Teaching over time is good and some is outstanding. Lessons are engaging and well planned. Teachers are knowledgeable, enthusiastic and keen to explore new approaches to drive up achievement. In most lessons, activities are tailored well to meet students' differing needs. However, in a few lessons these features are less well developed and students' progress is slower.
- Students behave well and the school provides a safe environment for them. Adults in the school know the students and care for them well. They sensitively reinforce high expectations of good behaviour. Support is highly effective for those students needing help to manage their behaviour. Consequently, there is little disruption to learning and a calm atmosphere pervades lessons and around school.
- The executive headteacher is highly motivational. Leaders at all levels, including the governing body, are aware of the strengths in teaching and performance and areas for development. They have developed strong curriculum partnerships including with a nearby grammar school that support students' learning exceptionally well.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the overall quality of teaching to the level of outstanding by:
  - developing teachers' questioning skills further so that students, particularly the more able, are routinely challenged across all subjects to think at a deeper level
  - structuring group work more effectively to create opportunities for students to undertake specific roles and responsibilities with no possibility of slackening their pace
  - creating opportunities for students to respond to the very detailed written feedback that they receive from staff, so as to strengthen their understanding of their challenging targets for improvement
  - providing more opportunities for developing greater independence in students' learning when planning and executing their lessons.
- Raise further the achievement of all students in mathematics by ensuring that all subjects areas give due consideration to the development of students' numeracy skills in the planning and execution of their schemes of work.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Students make good progress in lessons, particularly where they are given opportunities to discuss their work and engage actively in their learning. Most parents and carers rightly believe that their children make good progress at the academy. The development of students' literacy skills, including reading, is evident in most subjects and effectively driven by the English department. In the majority of lessons, teachers demonstrate an accurate understanding of how students learn and make progress. For example, in a Year 7 English lesson, students analysed technical styles in poetry. Pace and challenge were high and the session began with a motivational starter. A range of activities, including pair work designed to sustain both the pace and levels of engagement, were executed very effectively. As a result, the progress of all students was at least good.

Students join the school with low levels of attainment. Over time, they make good or frequently outstanding progress from their starting points. Examination results have improved and attainment is average by the end of Year 11, with GCSE results in line with those seen nationally and results in BTEC vocational qualifications above the national average. The school has rightly targeted additional support for those students in Year 11 who have not made the anticipated progress towards their GCSEs in English and/or mathematics. As a result, many are now making rapid progress, particularly in mathematics where the difference in 2011 was markedly lower. All groups of students achieve well, including disabled students and those with special educational needs and those in the specialist speech and language unit, because of the quality and the effectiveness of the support that they receive.

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In the sixth form, students' overall attainment on entry is below the national average. Sixth form students make good progress on vocational courses, responding well to the structured learning programmes so that their attainment is above the national average. Students make satisfactory progress in their AS- and A-level courses. Their attainment on completion has remained below the national averages, but the achievement of current students is better because of the targeted monitoring and intervention that has taken place.

### **Quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching is good overall, including in the sixth form. Provision for disabled students and those with special educational needs is good because teachers and assistants are well prepared and able to meet their needs effectively. The majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaires spoke positively about teaching. Lessons are characterised by teachers' secure and enthusiastically conveyed subject knowledge, high expectations and confident use of varied resources, including information and communication technology. Student engagement is strong and their good behaviour actively supports learning. The best lessons are sharply focused and are driven by comprehensive and well-executed plans that have explicit learning objectives. In such lessons, the learning is pacy and teachers use their expertise successfully to probe with their questioning and challenge all students to reflect individually at a deeper level.

Students respond equally well to opportunities to work in groups or pairs. In an outstanding Year 12 performing arts lesson, students worked in groups to devise and then assess monologue performance with movement. Students self- and peer-assessed in pairs and were then required to offer areas for improvement in line with the grade criteria. Teacher input was challenging and rigorous; consequently all students progressed rapidly and the motivation to improve was high. In a minority of instances, however, teachers dominate and do not exploit fully the opportunities to challenge students by creating opportunities for them to develop greater independence in their learning. In particular, where group work is unstructured, or the teacher's questioning is too random, some students make slower progress.

Across all subjects, through their planning and the careful selection of learning objectives, teachers reference the importance of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, so that opportunities to learn tolerance and respect for each other as well as reflecting on human rights, the environment and other such issues are fully exploited.

Assessment is strength and students are very aware of the bronze, silver and gold targets that inform lesson planning and the individual targets for improvement (MIT – My Individual Target) which are reflected in the written feedback. However, little evidence was seen of students being expected to respond routinely to written feedback and therefore its potential to make an impact on their progress is not fully realised.

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## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Students are typically courteous, friendly and polite. They take an evident pride in being part of the school community and were keen to advise inspectors of the improvements made and how greatly they value the staff. They say they feel safe in school and parents and carers agree. Students assert that disruption to learning is rare but when it does occur, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff. This is borne out by the levels of exclusion that have reduced considerably over the last year. Attendance has been below average in the past, but through determined work by the school with students as a whole, and with those where there are concerns, attendance is now above the national average and rising. Students are punctual, keen learners who understand the nature of risk and act responsibly. They have a clear awareness of the differing types of bullying that can arise. Through curriculum programmes, such as citizenship, students develop a good awareness of how to behave towards each other and of right and wrong. They say there is some low-level bullying but that it is almost always cleared up quickly if reported to staff.

Exemplary safeguarding and care arrangements, combined with good relationships and mutual respect, ensure that students know that adults in the school will help them if they have a problem. Students who have difficulty in behaving properly receive an effective range of tailored support. The school is highly inclusive and is successful in enabling most students to stay in school and learn, with a good focus on 'at risk' students so as to intervene swiftly and successfully as required. Effective links are maintained with external agencies, for example social services, to support families when required.

## **Leadership and management**

The executive headteacher is highly creative and provides clear and unequivocal direction. He is effectively supported by a capable senior leadership team and a strong contingent of subject and pastoral leaders. The governing body is highly ambitious for the school. It has supported a very effective strategy to 'grow' leaders from within which students and staff value greatly. Senior leaders' evaluation of areas for improvement is accurate and the effectiveness of their strategies is a conspicuous strength. For example, in mathematics, the need for new leadership and to improve achievement, after a period of instability and weak progress in 2011, has already had a successful impact on students' achievement, with a new subject leader in post and results gained through early entry already exceeding last year's figures, despite lower attainment on entry for the cohort.

Rigorous monitoring of teaching and students' progress towards challenging targets enables leaders to identify accurately what the school does well and what could be better. This information is used well to define priorities for strategic planning, including for staff training and performance management, which is a real strength of the academy, and to refine the curriculum. Changes in leadership and management of the sixth form have been implemented successfully and gains in students' attainment are clearly evident in Year 12. The curriculum is broad and highly

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effective in its provision of a range of pathways that support the needs of the student cohort, both in the main school and in the sixth form. In the sixth form, for example, recruitment has doubled owing to the creation of courses for gifted and talented students, known as 'elite academies', such as the Black Hole Academy of Acting. Good account is taken of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in taught programmes and through the innovative partnerships with a special school that shares provision, the campus-located primary school and a nearby grammar school. All leaders are held tightly accountable for students' achievement. Capacity to improve is strong. Ensuring equality of opportunity for all students is a high priority and school leaders do not tolerate discrimination.

## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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](http://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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.**

27 April 2012

Dear Students



**Inspection of The Canterbury High School, Canterbury, CT2 8QA**

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. Particular thanks to those of you who completed questionnaires or gave up time to meet with us. We judged your school to be good.

The executive headteacher and staff are working hard to bring about sustained improvements in many aspects of the academy's work. They set high standards and are well supported by the governing body. Everyone is determined that you should succeed and the work that they do is helping you to achieve well.

The school's culture of high expectations and the staff's belief in you provide you with a good platform for learning and help you prepare successfully for life beyond school. You told us you feel safe, and your behaviour in and around school and your positive attitudes to learning in lessons are good. You make good progress and enjoy your education because you are well taught and have a good range of options from which to choose. Overall, attendance has improved significantly in the last year and is now above average; your punctuality to lessons is equally good. These are important attributes, so please do keep them up!

To help you to do even better, we have asked teachers to provide more opportunities for you to respond to the written feedback on your work. We have also asked them to challenge you more, especially in group work so that no-one is able to do less work than others, and to ensure that their questioning of you in lessons always enables you to think and reflect further. You told us that mathematics provision has already improved considerably. We agree and to help you further in this we have asked all subject teachers, and not just the mathematics department, to help develop your numeracy skills.

You can help by reading and responding to comments made by your teachers and using the feedback to improve the quality of your work.

Yours sincerely

Lesley Farmer  
Lead inspector

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