

# Cannock Chase High School

Hednesford Road, Cannock, Staffordshire, WS11 1JT

**Inspection dates** 9–10 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Not all students are making the progress they should in mathematics.
- Teaching is not consistently good. Teachers do not consistently plan activities that meet the needs of all students. Students who have differing levels of ability often complete similar work and are not sufficiently stretched.
- Arrangements for reinforcing students' literacy skills in subjects other than English have only recently been introduced. There are not enough opportunities for students to use their numeracy skills in other subjects.
- Marking and feedback do not always give students clear guidance on how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- Attendance is below the national average.
- Systems that leaders use to improve teaching and to raise standards have not resulted in good achievement for some groups of students this year.
- A small number of teachers do not use the available information about students' progress to check whether the teachers' own actions have made a positive difference.

### The school has the following strengths

- The proportion of students achieving five GCSE passes at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, has increased. Progress in English and science is good. A-level and AS-level results have risen this year.
- There are examples of outstanding teaching in English, drama and science.
- Behaviour and safety are good because students are polite and get on well with each other. They show each other respect and value the support they get from the school.
- Exclusions are significantly lower this year because of better behaviour.
- The headteacher focuses on the right priorities because he has a realistic understanding of the school's performance in relation to other schools. Actions have been taken to improve the quality of teaching and manage teachers' performance.
- The governing body robustly holds the school to account and has acted quickly and decisively to secure improvements in recent years.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 50 lessons, of which 12 were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, they made a number of shorter visits to lessons and tutorial sessions.
- Inspectors held meetings with the members of the governing body, the headteacher, leaders and managers, and groups of staff.
- Inspectors held meetings with four groups of students, representing all age groups. Discussions also took place with students informally.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and reviewed a range of documents, including the school's own evaluation of how well it is doing, its improvement plan and statistical information about students' achievement, attendance and exclusions.
- Inspectors considered the 31 responses to the online Parent View survey. The 66 responses to the staff questionnaires were also considered. Additional comments were received from parents and carers, and consideration was given to the views expressed by families in response to the school's own surveys completed by almost half of the parents of the Year 7 students attending the academy.

## Inspection team

Rob Ridout, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Beverley Mabey	Additional Inspector
Russell Barr	Additional Inspector
Anne McAvan	Additional Inspector
Susan Vasey	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The academy is larger than the average-sized secondary school with a sixth form.
- Almost all of the students are from White British, Irish or Other White or Mixed White backgrounds. A very small number of students are from other minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium is above average. This is additional government funding to support particular groups of students, including those known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- There are no students that attend any off-site provision currently.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Accelerate the improvements in teaching, so that it is at least consistently good, by:
  - subject leaders ensuring that all teachers use data consistently to set work at the right level of difficulty for each student, with enough challenge, particularly for the most able students
  - improving the quality of marking and written feedback so that students know how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve their work, and that they are given time to make the improvements
  - extending the successful practices introduced to support literacy across all subjects
  - introducing measures that have a positive impact on using and applying numeracy skills in subjects other than mathematics.
- Raise achievement across the school, particularly in mathematics, so that more students secure at least the progress expected or better from their starting points.
- Improve attendance rates more rapidly by the continued close monitoring of the impact of current systems to support good attendance and refining these where necessary so that overall attendance levels continue to close the gap with the national average.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Standards are not high enough in all subjects to demonstrate good progress. Students join the school with below-average attainment and leave broadly in line with the national average. There has been an improvement in results over the last two years, but attainment in some subjects still remains no better than average. The majority of students are making the progress they should; teaching remains too variable; so that too few are making better progress than this.
- The percentage of students who gain five A\* to C grades including English and mathematics remains broadly in line with the national average; although it has risen over the last three years. Although progress in English is at least good, progress in mathematics is not yet good because too few students achieve better than might be expected of them compared to other students nationally.
- Results in science have improved over the last three years and students are now making at least good progress in this subject this year. Standards are also improving in drama, languages and humanities but improvements are still required as more students are capable of gaining higher grades in these subjects.
- The school no longer enters students early for GCSE.
- The achievement of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is now broadly similar to that of other groups. Some make good progress and achieve well. The support they receive from attainment managers helps them to learn effectively and they often benefit from working alongside their peers especially where the teaching is good.
- Students in the sixth form are achieving as well as other students nationally. This year, achievement has improved at both AS and A level, and more students are gaining higher grades and continuing into employment, training or higher education.
- The school has used its Year 7 'catch up' funding well and invested heavily in supporting students in the lower school to improve both their reading and writing skills. The school's close monitoring of students through their literacy passports, which helps track their reading and writing skills, clearly shows that a large majority are make good progress and are 'Reading for Success'. Evidence provided by the school shows an increasing proportion of current students, especially those in Years 7 and 8 are making better progress overall.
- Current data indicate that students eligible for the pupil premium are now making better progress. Additional funding has been used to employ additional adults as attainment managers who provide targeted support in class for eligible students. It has been used to fund evening and weekend revision and learning groups. In 2013, the attainment of students known to be eligible for free school meals rose significantly. The gap between the attainment of these students and their peers has closed, particularly in English, but is still about one grade below that of other students.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching remains too inconsistent across the school to be good overall and students do not make enough progress in some lessons. Teaching is improving rapidly and there is much

evidence of good or better teaching across most subjects. Even so, there remain some instances where the quality of teaching and learning require improvement and a very small number where the teaching is inadequate.

- In lessons where teaching requires improvement, particularly in mathematics, teachers do not plan activities which meet the differing needs of students. In such lessons, all students complete the same work and, as a result, it is sometimes too simple for them and does not provide them with enough chances to practise thinking independently, to interact with each other or to work by themselves.
- Inspectors observed good examples of teaching in the sixth form reflecting the improvements recorded by the school over the last year. A psychology lesson was typical. Students were engaged, challenged and encouraged to reflect on what they and others had learned. Questioning was designed to test the understanding of students and helped them learn well. As a result students achieved well.
- Students concentrate and learn well when activities are interesting and engage them. However, there are some lessons where the teaching and work set for them does not capture their attention and they become distracted.
- Recent appointments to the school have significantly strengthened teaching. Variations in the overall quality of lesson planning have been reduced and the deployment and effectiveness of others adults within classrooms has been enhanced. As a result, the learning experiences of students over the last year have improved.
- The best teaching is supported by the most effective marking because these teachers are clear about what students have done well, and precisely what they need to improve. However, in some books, the marking is cursory or ineffective, often because the comments are ignored by the students, and teachers do not check that their guidance is followed.
- Where teaching is weakest, students make little or no progress because they spend too long on low-level tasks or simply copy work from one another when they find it too difficult.
- Relationships between students, their peers and their teachers in most of the lessons visited were very positive. Teachers used humour well and ensured that all students got on with their work because they felt that their learning was important to them and they wanted to learn.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers set a demanding pace. They hold students' attention for long periods of time with probing questioning and lively discussions. Teachers also give students the opportunity to refine their ideas and deepen their understanding, either by working collaboratively in groups or on their own. This was clearly seen in both English and drama lessons, where the emphasis on developing students' independence was highly successful, particularly in regard to challenging students to reflect upon their own work and challenging each other's productions or presentations.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Most students behave well in lessons and around the school, and this contributes to a calm and orderly environment. Parents, staff and senior students confirm that behaviour has particularly improved over the past two years. This is because there are now clear expectations of behaviour and consistent systems to deal with any misbehaviour.

- Students are generally polite and courteous to each other, staff and to visitors. Inspectors were especially impressed by the helpful and considerate way in which they were treated by sixth form students. The house system has a positive effect on the learning environment as it enables young people to mix with others of different ages and backgrounds. Sixth formers act as good role models and have opportunities to support the younger students.
- The large majority of students show good attitudes towards their learning in lessons. Some are guided in their learning and an increasing number are able to work independently without the full support of the teacher in the classroom.
- Many students are also engaged in a rich and diverse range of activities, both in and out of school. They are actively involved in community events and show great generosity through their fundraising for local charities raising tens of thousands of pounds for good causes.
- Bullying is rare and students say that it is dealt with effectively. Students are aware of the different forms of possible bullying, such as cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying related to sex, gender, race and disability. The school has been particularly active in ensuring that students understand why any form of racist and homophobic bullying will not be tolerated. The school has received the Diana Award in recognition of the good work it does.
- Students respond well to teachers' good use of praise and encouragement to promote high standards of behaviour. They say they would like more recognition of what they do well. Students are developing their skills in managing their own behaviour and can be trusted to move around the corridors and socialise at break and lunchtime.
- The school makes every effort to ensure that students feel safe and secure. Students display a good understanding of the issues relating to safety. They talk confidently about how they would keep themselves safe when using the internet and social networking sites. They confirmed that the school provides them with information on sex education and the dangers of smoking, alcohol and drugs.
- The school is working hard to encourage students to come to school and has implemented all the nationally recognised best practices to improve attendance. Good liaison with its feeder primary schools and with parents has seen attendance in the lower school rise; but this has not had the same impact on older students. As a result, attendance remains below the national average. Despite the work being done to address this issue, attendance is not improving quickly enough.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher and senior leaders are ambitious for the school and can clearly demonstrate the impact of their work in improvements secured over recent years. Together with governors they have worked with some significant measure of success to improve the school and tackle the many areas for improvement from the previous inspection. They have put in place a culture of continuing improvement that is overwhelmingly shared by staff. The improvement in results is testimony to this.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, particularly of the quality of teaching. Teachers are appreciative of the good system of professional development

and the opportunities it offers for the sharing of ideas and the improvement of their practice. While teachers are offered every opportunity to improve their performance, senior leaders and governors do not shrink from hard staffing decisions when necessary and this is beginning to pay dividends in the improvements secured this year.

- The school has put in place the revised performance management procedures required this year. It makes all staff accountable for their performance and this has led to the improvements in teaching and students' achievement. The quality of teaching and tracking of students' progress are very regularly and rigorously monitored. Leaders and the governing body ensure that there is a link between performance management and salary progression.
  - Senior leaders are well supported by subject leaders. However, the good policies and procedures that they have put in place to improve the school have not yet had equal impact in all subjects. Improvements in the teaching and achievement of students at AS and A level this year reflect the good leadership in the sixth form. Improvements can also be seen in all subjects at GCSE, but outcomes are notably better in English and science than in mathematics. This is because changes to staffing, the curriculum and teaching have had more time to have an impact in English and science.
  - The school has improved its provision through the introduction of a new programme to support learning skills called 'Curriculum Plus'. This involves the promotion of cross-curricular literacy and a fortnightly library lesson. Students say they like 'Curriculum Plus' because 'it teaches you the skills you will use in different subjects'. There is no similar initiative currently running to promote numeracy; although the school has plans to address this in the near future.
  - The curriculum is well planned and takes due account of the aspirations of students. Science contributes well to students' learning and progress overall. The school has adapted the curriculum in the light of students' performance in examinations and national developments, so that as many students as possible have opportunities to gain good GCSE qualifications and have clear routes into further study, training or work after Year 11. It has similarly revised its curriculum offer in the sixth form and actively advises students to select more appropriate courses, with the result that grades improved significantly in 2013.
  - The school's commitment to equality of opportunity is evident in the care it takes to make sure that students make progress, and is notably seen through the impact of the use of the pupil premium to support those students who need extra help with their learning.
  - Arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Governors show great pride in their school and its recent achievements. The governing body is well informed and aware of current issues. It has clear strategies in place to check, challenge and support senior and subject leaders in their work. Governors undergo regular training to ensure that they are fully able to contribute to the raising of standards. They monitor closely the school's actions put in place to support students eligible for the pupil premium and can demonstrate clearly the impact this work has had on raising achievement. They ensure the effective management of the finances, as confirmed by audit reports.
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## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137384
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	427055

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1230
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	220
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Barbara Lomas
<b>Headteacher</b>	Barrie Scott
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 March 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01543 502450
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