

Calday Grange Grammar School

Grammar School Lane, West Kirby, Wirral, Merseyside CH48 8GG

Inspection dates	19–20 January 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Outcomes for pupils are excellent. Pupils make extremely good progress across a wide range of subjects, with many of them attaining the highest possible GCSE grades at the end of Year 11.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve as well as, and often better than, their peers.
- The sixth form is very well led. Learners benefit from good quality provision, enabling them to make good progress and develop into mature young men and women.
- Most pupils are benefiting from teaching that is good or better.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils and learners. Their experience in school is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. There is a very high participation rate in the enrichment programme.
- Pupils behave well around the school. They are polite and friendly. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive.
- The headteacher and governors have taken action to challenge staff in order to strengthen teaching and leadership across the whole school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While the headteacher's and governors' actions have brought about improvements, some inconsistencies in teaching and leadership remain.
- Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning have not been strong enough to ensure that teaching is outstanding across the school.
- While the welfare of pupils is a high priority for staff, policies and procedures are not always consistent or robust enough.
- Strategic leadership of pupils' behaviour and welfare is not strong enough.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen further the systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- Ensure that all policies and procedures relating to pupils' behaviour and welfare are consistent and robust, and that strategic leadership of this area is strengthened.
- Eradicate the remaining inconsistencies in teaching and learning by making sure that all teachers:
 - provide pupils with written feedback that helps them to improve the quality of their work
 - provide opportunities for pupils to act on this advice
 - use questioning effectively to develop pupils' understanding.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Since his appointment, the headteacher has worked hard to ensure that the culture of the school is one where all staff are focused on every pupil making the best possible progress. As a result, in the last two years, pupils in this school have made significantly better progress than the national average. This focus has had particular impact on the progress of the small number of disadvantaged pupils in school, who are now doing at least as well as their peers. The effective use of the pupil premium funding has contributed to improved outcomes for this group.
- The headteacher and governors have carried out a staffing re-structure to bring about more effective leadership. This re-structure initially led to some staff turnover and low morale. However, the headteacher has successfully led the school community through this and the views of staff, parents and pupils gathered during the inspection are very overwhelmingly positive. While there is stronger leadership across the school, the headteacher and governors know where further improvement is required at both senior and middle leader level. They also know that a culture of complacency still exists within a small number of staff and are working to eradicate this. Procedures for managing teacher performance are robust. The headteacher and governors have been prepared to take decisive action when teachers do not meet the required standards.
- The views of parents are extremely positive, with 94% of those who responded to the online Parent View survey saying they would recommend the school to other parents. Parents value the work leaders have done to improve communication between them and the school. They receive texts regularly about school matters and they can find out about current events through the weekly newsletter or social media. All staff are contactable via email. Leaders gather the views of parents at every parents' evening. Following concerns expressed about homework, the schedule has been re-designed and parents can now access the work via the website. Reports to parents about their child's progress are very informative, detailed and personalised.
- The content and tone of the curriculum is academic. The vast majority of pupils progress into the sixth form and the curriculum prepares them well for the rigour of advanced level study. The headteacher is keen that every pupil is enabled to progress successfully on to the next stage of their education and their chosen career. To this end, there is a very thorough careers education, information, advice and guidance programme running through all key stages.
- Pupils' experiences in school are significantly enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities in areas such as sport, robotics, music, drama, languages, debates and mock trials. Participation rates in these activities are high. For example, over the last three years the number of pupils involved in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme has risen from 40 to 300. These activities, alongside the travel experiences that sometimes accompany them, contribute significantly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These varied enrichment opportunities, and the school's involvement with many charities, reflect the high priority leaders give to developing pupils' character and preparing them to be successful citizens in modern Britain.
- Leaders responsible for teaching and learning believe that this has improved over recent years, with the majority of pupils benefiting from teaching that is good or better, which contributes to outstanding outcomes over time. However, they are aware that some inconsistencies remain, particularly in the quality of marking and feedback. Inspection evidence indicates that there is a lack of clarity about the school's marking policy. Senior leaders recognise that stronger monitoring by middle leaders would eradicate this remaining variability. Lead learners have been appointed to spread the good practice that is evident in the strongest areas of the school. They have introduced a number of initiatives, such as peer-to-peer observations, but these are not yet embedded across the school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is no doubt that staff see the safety of the pupils as a very high priority. They engage effectively with parents on areas related to the safety of their children. Procedures to ensure all staff receive relevant training are robust. Staff have received a range of training on potential areas of risk for young people, including radicalisation and extremism. Following 'Prevent' training, staff are confident about making referrals as appropriate. However, the school has not yet rolled out awareness training to all pupils in this area.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors play a key part in the strategic leadership of the school. In order to carry out this role effectively the governing body meets monthly. They also meet with senior leaders twice a year for a full day's session. They possess the required skills and expertise to robustly challenge senior and middle leaders and do so regularly. They work closely with the headteacher to review teacher performance.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Most pupils benefit from teaching which is good or better. The very positive relationships that exist between staff and pupils clearly make a contribution to learning in the vast majority of lessons.
- In most lessons, teachers use their expertise and passion for their subject, coupled with their knowledge of their pupils, to enthuse and involve them in their learning. They use questioning skilfully to check and extend pupils' understanding. In Key Stage 4 lessons, teachers focus on ensuring that pupils are confident about examination requirements.
- Inspectors observed particularly strong practice in design technology. Pupils in this subject demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning as a result of teachers' high expectations. Pupils are motivated, engaged and self-reliant. Teachers encourage them to learn from their mistakes and effective intervention and questioning lead to pupils producing work of an extremely high standard.
- Inspectors also observed some strong practice in mathematics. In some lessons, teachers' questioning challenges pupils to think mathematically and tackle difficult concepts. However, this is not happening consistently in this subject. Inspectors observed weaker questioning with teachers simply giving the correct answer and not tackling misconceptions. Even when pupils are giving answers, opportunities are sometimes missed for them to explain how they have arrived at the solution. Inspectors also observed questioning not being used effectively to probe pupils' understanding in a small number of other lessons in different subjects.
- Evidence from a book scrutiny carried out jointly with senior leaders and work seen in lessons indicates that there is variability in the quality of marking and feedback. Not all teachers are providing written feedback that explains to pupils how they can improve their work. There is little evidence that even those who do are giving pupils opportunities to act on this advice. Not all teachers have high enough expectations of the standard of pupils' work and some are willing to accept untidy presentation.
- Homework is embedded in the programmes of study and is set and marked regularly across a range of subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Staff know and care for their pupils well. Form tutors are led by a highly committed and skilled team of heads of year. This group of middle leaders works very hard to ensure that the pupils in their year groups are safe, happy and feel valued.
- Each of these middle leaders has their own systems, protocols and procedures for running their year group. The calibre of these leaders means that each year group is being effectively managed. However, the lack of senior leadership strategic direction in this area gives some concern, particularly about consistency. For example, although bullying incidents are recorded, there is no consistency in how this is done across the school. Also, the existing anti-bullying policy is not robust enough and does not reflect the practice and wealth of strategies being used by heads of year.
- Alongside the personal, social, health and economic education programme, much of what is done in form time is focused on emotional and physical well-being. The school works closely with a range of appropriate outside agencies to strengthen its work in this area.
- Pupils and staff feel that the school is a safe and accepting place to be open about one's sexuality and that people are respected for who they are. Proactive leadership in this area is coming from a small number of learners in the sixth form who are in the process of setting up a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) group. This will be for pupils and learners in all year groups. However, pupils interviewed during the inspection report that the use of the word 'gay' is sometimes used as a term of abuse or in a derogatory manner, particularly during unsupervised times. If teachers hear this, pupils say that they tackle it.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils who spoke to inspectors say that bullying is rare. On the few occasions when it does occur, nearly all are confident that staff will deal with it effectively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite, friendly, and generally behave well around the school. In lessons, pupils show respect to their teachers and each other which creates a positive atmosphere for learning. Pupils enjoy their learning and are keen to do well.
- Attendance figures are significantly above average for all groups of pupils. The number of pupils who receive a fixed-term exclusion is very low.
- Strategic senior leadership of personal development, behaviour and welfare is not strong enough. This means that there is a lack of consistency in some policies and procedures in this area. One fifth of staff who responded to the online questionnaire did not feel that leaders supported staff well in managing behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- For the last two years, by the end of Key Stage 4 pupils have made particularly strong progress when compared to national averages. In 2015 in English, 91% made expected progress and 69% made better than expected progress. In mathematics, 93% made expected progress and 58% made better than expected progress. Pupils clearly perform exceptionally well when compared to their peers nationally.
- In 2015, nearly all pupils attained five or more GCSE grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, confirming a strong three-year trend. A high proportion of the GCSEs gained were at grade A* or A.
- The small number of disadvantaged pupils progress and attain at least as well as their peers nationally and in school.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs is strong and in line with their peers. This is because they benefit from personalised provision that meets their specific needs.
- The results from the recent Year 11 mock examinations indicate that this trend of excellent outcomes for pupils is set to continue across a wide range of subjects. During the inspection, the school provided detailed information of how pupils' progress is tracked from Years 7 to 11. Leadership of this area is very strong.
- These excellent outcomes at the end of Year 11 enable pupils to progress successfully to a range of post-16 courses. The vast majority choose to do this in the sixth form.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- The sixth form is very well led. During their time in the sixth form, learners are provided with a range of opportunities that enable them to develop into mature and accomplished young men and women. Learners value the education they receive and speak very positively about their teachers.
- Learners have individual study programmes that build on their prior attainment. Effective teaching enables learners to achieve well across a wide range of subjects. Appropriate entry requirements and guidance leads to high in-year retention rates. There are also high rates of retention from AS to A level.
- Strong outcomes at the end of Year 13 enable learners to progress to their chosen higher education courses, 44% of which are at Russell Group universities. They benefit from a very effective careers education, information, advice and guidance programme that is personalised to meet individual needs. Learners are very well supported through the university application process.
- The very small number of learners who progress into Year 12 without grade C in English or mathematics receive appropriate teaching that enables them to gain these qualifications quickly.
- Learners in the sixth form enjoy the same wide range of enrichment activities as pupils in Years 7 to 11. They also contribute to the life of the school, for example, by assisting in form groups. Learners benefit from a high-quality personal, social, health and education programme. As in the main school, sixth form staff engage the services of a range of external agencies to provide appropriate expertise in these sessions.
- All learners have the opportunity to take part in some type of work experience during their two years in the sixth form. Leaders agree that this needs to be offered in a more coherent way. Plans to do this are at an early stage.
- There is a very small number of subjects in which learners have not made good enough progress. Leaders are aware of the reasons for this, often linked to staffing issues. The school's data indicate that actions taken to improve achievement in these areas are having an impact.

School details

Unique reference number	139144
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10003665

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,315
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	409
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Caroline Ashcroft
Headteacher	Mark Rodaway
Telephone number	0151 625 2727
Website	www.caldaygrangegrammarschool.co.uk
Email address	theschool@calday.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	November 2010

Information about this school

- Calday Grange Grammar School is a larger than average secondary school. It converted to academy status in January 2013.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and, therefore, supported with additional government funding, known as the pupil premium, is significantly lower than the national average. The pupil premium is funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and for looked after children.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is lower than the national average.
- The school does not use any alternative educational provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in lessons across a range of subjects, of which some were joint observations with senior leaders. They carried out a work scrutiny jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils and talked to others, informally, during break and lunchtimes. Discussions were held with staff, including senior and middle leaders, classroom teachers and learning support assistants. A meeting was held with three members of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of the 189 responses to the online Parent View survey, the 85 online questionnaires completed by staff and the 226 online questionnaires completed by pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents. These included the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, performance information, and a selection of policies.

Inspection team

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