

Cannock Chase High School

Hednesford Road, Cannock, Staffordshire WS11 1JT

Inspection dates

31 January–1 February 2018

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	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has a deep-seated commitment to the school community. This has been the driving force since the last inspection. As a result, all pupils are encouraged to do their very best, aspirations have risen and outcomes are improving.
- Skilled senior leaders have developed a rich curriculum where every pupil can succeed. There is a strong focus on the arts and sport, and pupils are encouraged to study subjects where they have most interest. As a result, pupils are fully engaged in their learning and behaviour is exemplary.
- Outcomes for pupils are good because teaching is strong. Leaders rigorously track pupils' performance so that timely intervention is put in place when pupils fall behind. As a result, progress is more rapid.
- Disadvantaged pupils' outcomes are improving. Although diminishing, there is a difference in the performance of disadvantaged pupils in a small number of subjects. Leaders have put plans in place to tackle this.
- Governors are highly effective. They hold leaders to account and ensure that leaders continue to plan rigorously for the school's future development.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and have high expectations of their pupils. A whole-school focus on literacy is resulting in pupils being more assured in the correct use of subject-specific vocabulary.
- Parents, staff and pupils are overwhelmingly supportive of school leaders and feel that the school has improved markedly since the last inspection.
- The sixth form is good. Leaders are strategic and highly effective in bringing about improvements. As a result, outcomes in the sixth form are strong and improving.
- In a small minority of lessons, teachers are not as skilled in the use of questioning. Leaders' commitment to professional development continues to offer an effective personalised approach to staff training.
- Attendance has fallen since the last inspection particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have rightly made improving attendance a top priority and have robust action plans in place to improve attendance.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and reduce the number who are persistently absent.
- Continue to improve consistency in the quality of teaching by ensuring that questioning across the whole school is as effective as in the learning communities where excellent practice already exists.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher leads the school very effectively. He has a clear vision, based on a strongly held set of values and belief in a 'team' approach. He is focused on raising aspiration and wants every pupil to succeed in their chosen field. His energy, ambition and commitment are infectious and, as a result, he enjoys the wholehearted support of pupils, staff, parents and carers. Many refer to the 'team' culture that has been successfully established.
- A skilled and supportive leadership team has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It has focused and ambitious improvement plans in place. Considerable improvement is evident in many areas highlighted in the previous inspection including governance, staff development and quality of teaching.
- School leaders and staff have a strong belief in ensuring that every pupil achieves, and have created a culture that welcomes all pupils whatever their previous degree of success. The curriculum is a key feature of the school's success because it is designed to match pupils' needs and aspirations regardless of performance table measures. Pupils benefit from the continued use of early and repeat entry at GCSE. This is done in a personalised and considered manner, which addresses individual learning styles and builds confidence. Pupils speak positively of this strategy and appreciate the opportunities they are given.
- The curriculum is rich and ensures that there is wide and varied provision in the arts and in sport supported through a wide range of extra-curricular activities. A range of GCSE and BTEC qualifications are available. Pupils take their options at the end of Year 8 and have access to a range of enrichment opportunities to broaden their education.
- Leaders observe lessons, drop into lessons and regularly look at pupils' assessment information and their work. The headteacher ensures that middle and senior leaders regularly evaluate and analyse school performance through an established, effective and rigorous quality assurance policy. Teachers are held to account for the data submitted, and there are efficient and robust standardisation protocols in place to ensure that the information provided helps support next steps for learning. Leaders act quickly to address any underperformance and this is bringing about more rapid progress particularly further down the school.
- Middle leaders are highly effective. They, too, very much feel part of the 'team' and are determined to support the headteacher in his vision for the school. They have an honest and accurate view of their learning communities, and are making a valuable contribution in continuing to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- Staff value the high-quality professional development opportunities that they are given. The school's programme both responds to whole-school priorities and is personalised around the needs of each member of staff. The support for recently appointed teachers is strong. They speak positively about the effective support given prior to starting at the school, which includes a minibus tour of the local community driven by the headteacher. This means that they are able to settle in to their new environment

speedily and are better prepared to carry out their duties.

- Leaders ensure that pupils are given good-quality advice regarding their future careers. The school employs a careers adviser who is highly respected and valued by pupils. As a result, pupils receive sound advice about a range of careers. Retention is high. Leaders say that the focus on careers education has helped support the school's drive in raising aspirations.
- Leaders make effective use of pupil premium funding to ensure that class sizes are appropriate to meet individual needs. These pupils are supported well. Lesson observations, particularly scrutiny of pupils' work, suggest that progress for disadvantaged pupils is improving in many subjects. However, disadvantaged pupils are not yet making consistently strong progress in English, mathematics and humanities.
- Leaders also use catch-up funding to address the underperformance of pupils joining the school in Year 7. Smaller group teaching is provided for those who are most in need of support. A focus group is also given additional lessons to support literacy development instead of learning a modern foreign language. School leaders have established closer links with some of their feeder primary schools so as to ensure that the right pupils receive the necessary support on transition.
- Literacy and numeracy have been a key focus across the school. Inspectors saw good evidence of teachers focusing on the correct spelling of subject-specific words, which is ensuring that pupils are more confident in using relevant vocabulary. The weekly whole-school reading strategy is resulting in more pupils reading more widely, and pupils are rewarded for their reading.
- Leaders ensure that pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are monitored closely and that targeted funding is used effectively. Consequently, these pupils are making good progress from their starting points and are building their skills and knowledge appropriately. The number of pupils on the SEN register is falling. Leaders responsible for SEN continue to monitor closely those on the register, and to remove pupils, in partnership with parents, if sufficient progress is made.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are given effective provision. Pupils with support plans receive personal support from teaching assistants and there is a variety of intervention sessions and homework clubs available to pupils at the end of each day. Each pupil who has SEN and/or disabilities benefits from an individual plan that supports pupils in their learning. Teachers use these personalised strategies in their teaching, and they form an important part of their teaching and learning folders that are available in every classroom.
- Leaders have been successful in making sure that pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain. Through a highly effective personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme, supported by tutorial sessions, pupils learn about a variety of topical issues including the importance of democracy and the rule of law.
- Pupils feel safe, and parents and staff agree that children are safe, well-cared-for and provided for effectively at this school. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school to other parents.

Governance of the school

- Governance of the school is highly effective. Governors responded positively to the previous inspection report. They restructured the governing body in order to ensure that it was made up of appropriate skills and experiences to be able to challenge school leaders more effectively. This has proved successful.
- Governors are committed to the school and its community. They feel part of the team culture established by the headteacher and share school leaders' high aspirations for the school. They are rightly proud of the improvements that have been brought about since the last inspection.
- Governors hold leaders to account effectively. They know the strengths of the school and what actions need to be taken to improve further.
- Governors role model the school's commitment to continuous improvement. They are not complacent and continue to adjust the way they work in order to further challenge and support school leaders. They follow up on information, shared with them, through school visits to 'test out' what they have been told. This has developed a strong link relationship between key governors and school leaders, allowing governors the opportunity to dig deeper before disseminating such information more widely through committees and full governing body meetings.
- Governors take their safeguarding role seriously. They are well trained and records show that they monitor the suitability of adults to work at their school and the training that is provided in order to meet their statutory responsibilities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils are safe. All pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel safe in school. Pupils who have particular vulnerabilities are supported effectively. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. They understand the risks around social media, for example. They are able to identify the preventative steps that they should take in order to keep themselves safe online.
- Staff work together to create a culture of safeguarding, which is underpinned by regular training for every member of staff at the school. All staff agree that leaders make pupils' welfare and safety a priority.
- The safeguarding team works with relevant external agencies. Staff are persistent when they are concerned about a pupil's welfare and follow up concerns with these agencies as necessary. They ensure that pupils' welfare and safety are a priority.
- Safeguarding records are comprehensive and evidence strong support for young people. Those directly involved with safeguarding are tenacious in their work and a strength of the school. They ensure that training is timely and addresses immediate needs in order to ensure that all pupils receive the best support when it is most needed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The leadership of teaching and learning is a strength. Leaders monitor the quality of teaching effectively across the curriculum. As a result, teaching has improved markedly since the previous inspection. There is a consistent approach across all staff in their planning, assessment and the use of information about pupils.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge, planning lessons that meet the needs of all pupils. As a result, progress over time is more rapid and a thirst for learning is now evident particularly in Year 7.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils and develop very positive relationships. Teachers check pupils' understanding effectively and provide support and intervention when pupils fall behind. Pupils speak very highly of the support that is given, and appreciate the encouragement and belief that teachers show in them.
- Teachers support pupils in their learning by using a range of strategies to help them understand where they are in their learning and the next steps that are required. Inspectors saw particularly strong evidence of this in English, history and business studies where pupils engaged thoughtfully with what they were given or told, responding effectively to the learning challenges presented to them.
- Where questioning is most effective, pupils are inspired to engage in learning conversations creating curious and excited learners. This leads to more rapid progress. In a Year 7 art lesson on primary, secondary and tertiary colours, the teacher used a range of open and closed questions inviting pupils to use their subject-specific vocabulary.
- In many subjects, there is a strong focus on spelling, punctuation and grammar. This focus is improving pupils' literacy awareness and skills. For example, inspectors saw evidence of spelling tests in technology and science, which were helping pupils to be more confident and accurate in the use of subject-specific vocabulary in their written work.
- Pupils are given tasks that stimulate and motivate them. The challenges that teachers provide encourage pupils to think more deeply and they respond positively. Inspectors saw numerous examples of high-quality work. Pupils now have the capability to tackle higher, more challenging topics within a range of subjects. This contributes effectively to their personal development and understanding.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities say that they appreciate the extra help they are given in lessons. They appreciate the support they receive through one-to-one teaching, small-group teaching and in class. The progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is good.
- Leaders regularly assess pupils' progress and use this information to identify priorities for staff training, which often is personalised. Some teachers have been supported to mark for external exam boards. This helps everyone to understand the expected standards within the new and more challenging GCSE examinations.
- Senior leaders have responded positively to parents' feedback about homework. They have worked closely with parents in establishing a new policy and many now feel that homework, which parents can track online, is appropriate and contributes to pupils'

learning.

- Pupils are well motivated and enjoy learning. They work effectively alone or in groups. Pupils quickly settle to tasks, are proud of their work and genuinely interested in the vast majority of lessons. Senior leaders continue to create a positive environment for learning, which is infectious, and this is particularly noticeable in key stage 3.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View were very positive about the quality of teaching in the school and the progress their children are making.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The pastoral support provided by the school is a strength. Pupils say they benefit from the help, support and guidance they receive.
- The school is proud of its inclusive ethos, where every pupil is valued and cared for. Pupils say that bullying is rare. Pupils have every confidence in the adults within the school who, they know, deal swiftly and effectively if help or support is needed.
- The banners around the school, which bear the slogan 'wear your uniform with pride', is respected fully by all pupils. They look smart. They are proud of their school and look after the school environment. There are no signs of graffiti or litter.
- Pupils have numerous opportunities to explore leadership. Opportunities such as the school council, for example, empowers pupils to develop self and others. Inspectors met with members of the school council who spoke passionately about the benefits of the peer mentoring system that they are involved in. These opportunities contribute to pupils' readiness for the world of work.
- Leaders' curriculum planning ensures that pupils are fully understanding and aware of topical issues. Work around e-safety and the dangers of social media are particularly strong. Leaders carefully plan their work around matters such as sex and relationships education, radicalisation and extremism to ensure that they are age-related and appropriate to the community and individual needs. Leaders, however, are not complacent. Pupils' awareness of a wide range of safeguarding and health and safety issues is strong. This is the case even when particular concerns are not prevalent in the local community, such as female genital mutilation. Leaders are keen to promote good awareness of the world in which we live.
- PSHE, tutor time and assemblies make a powerful contribution to the development of the whole pupil. Inspectors observed an assembly, delivered by one senior leader, entitled 'The world in which I live'. The assembly encouraged pupils to reflect on their global responsibilities. Pupils responded positively and engaged fully with the subject matter. They are able to discuss topical matters maturely and to communicate a view or opinion.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Since the last inspection, school leaders have focused on behaviour and have brought about significant improvement. Pupils' conduct on corridors and around school is very good. They treat each other with good humour and respect. Their relationships with staff are very positive.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is exemplary. Their attitudes to work are consistently positive. They listen well to teachers and work hard in lessons. They show great enthusiasm for the curriculum offered to them.
- Attendance has fallen since the last inspection and is particularly low for disadvantaged pupils. School leaders have made this a priority and data shared with inspectors show that this is improving. Persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils is also above the national average but improving due to the robust strategies that are being employed.
- A significant percentage of parents who responded to Parent View agree that the behaviour of pupils is a strength of the school. Many of the pupils spoken to, particularly the older pupils who were in the school at the time of the last inspection, spoke very positively of the impact that leaders have made around improvements in behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Published performance data for 2017 contain inaccuracies because of the school's continued use of early entry in some subjects, which leaders believe benefits pupils leading to better results and improved confidence. Pupils agree.
- Data shared with inspectors show that the improvement between first entry and best entry can be significant. In 2017, in mathematics, first entry results at the end of Year 10 show that 44% of pupils gained grades 4 to 9. This improved to 66% by the end of Year 11. For grades 5 to 9, the increase went from 19% to 39%. All current Year 11 pupils spoken to said that they benefit from the opportunity to resit their examinations, and feel that this is helping their confidence.
- Outcomes are on an improving trend for both first and best entry. The trajectory of improvement that was already evident at the time of the previous inspection has continued and accelerated in the intervening time. For example, pupils' performance in mathematics and science is now broadly in line with that of similar pupils nationally.
- Overall progress last year was broadly in line with national averages but this masks progress data that are less strong in some areas of the curriculum.
- Progress in English has been less strong. Leaders are taking effective action to address historical results and their analysis of recent assessment information suggests that the progress of all pupils currently in Year 11 will improve significantly this year. Inspection evidence, including lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work, supports this.
- Outcomes for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are good. Pupils are supported well to reach the next steps of their education.
- Over time, outcomes for disadvantaged pupils have improved. Best entry results show that in overall progress, in 2017, disadvantaged pupils performed as well as other

pupils. However, disadvantaged pupils are not yet making consistently strong progress in English, mathematics and humanities. While school leaders expect outcomes for disadvantaged pupils to continue to improve, an inconsistent pattern is evident particularly in mathematics.

- Leaders' regular checks on attainment and progress provide a wealth of information about pupils' progress. Leaders, including middle leaders, carefully analyse this information to check that all groups of pupils continue to make progress. School assessment information, alongside inspectors' observations of learning and scrutiny of pupils' work, confirm that the trajectory of improvement is good.
- Pupils are well prepared for their future. Last year, all pupils who left Year 11 went on to employment, education or training.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leadership in the sixth form is highly effective. Leaders are ambitious to see the sixth form continue to improve. Their actions have ensured that outcomes remain strong in applied subjects while outcomes in academic subjects have improved and are now above the national average. Leaders are ambitious and committed to academic progress rising further.
- Achievement in the sixth form continues to be good. This is because there is an effective system of monitoring so that students make good progress. They value the support they are given.
- Students who join the sixth form without the requisite grades in English and mathematics benefit from specialist teaching and are successful in improving their grades.
- A broad range of academic and vocational options are offered in the sixth form with Cardinal Griffin Catholic College. The success of this is evident in the good and improving standards, particularly in academic study, and the very good retention rates, particularly at A level. Staff from both sites engage in regular learning walks in order to monitor the quality of teaching. Attendance across the two sites is shared daily. Presently, there are more students from Cardinal Griffin Catholic College studying courses at Cannock Chase than the reverse.
- As in the main school, the quality of teaching is good. Students have mature conversations with their teachers and engage thoroughly with their learning, which accelerates progress.
- A closely tailored careers programme helps students prepare for further and higher education. As in the main school, the careers adviser employed by the school is in much demand and highly respected by students. A governor holds the adviser to account, through regular meetings, to ensure impartiality. A number of visiting speakers enhance the careers, support and guidance offer that enriches students' experience. This means that students are very well prepared for their next steps in education and the vast majority gain places in employment, higher education or training.
- All elements of the 16 to 19 programme of study are met. Students benefit from frequent PSHE education and tutoring, which enables them to get a better

understanding of life in modern Britain. Assemblies also enrich this provision. Topics looked at include British values, extremism, radicalisation, sexual health, and the negative effects of drugs and alcohol. This impacts directly on students' ability to be better prepared for employment, higher education or training.

- As in the main school, leaders' integrity is evident in their decision to allow students to continue to be entered for AS examinations, where available. Students feel that they benefit from this giving them a good perspective of where they are in their learning and better preparing them for their final year of study, building confidence in what they are doing. This policy also supports those students who wish to follow a one-year study programme, which they believe helps raise maturity before going on to further education, training or employment.
- Attendance and punctuality are good because students value their education. Leaders monitor robustly all students' absence and interview all students who have been absent, on their return, to ensure that they do not fall behind. Students value the support they are given.
- The exemplary behaviour seen in the main school is mirrored in the sixth form. Students' enjoyment and commitment to their studies is evident in their learning.

School details

Unique reference number	137384
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10042872

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	806
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	115
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Craig Squire
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Iain Turnbull
Telephone number	01543 502 450
Website	www.cannockchasehigh.com
Email address	i.turnbull@cannockchase-high.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26–27 January 2016

Information about this school

- Cannock Chase High School is an average-sized secondary academy converter with a sixth form.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any time during the past six years is consistently above the national average.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education,

health and care plan is average.

- The school operates an early entry policy in English and mathematics. This is regularly reviewed depending on the needs of the cohort. This does mean that published data are inaccurate.
- The school shares sixth-form provision with Cardinal Griffin Catholic College.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision for any pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a wide range of lessons across key stages 3, 4, and 5. Some of this activity was conducted alongside school leaders.
- Inspectors held a range of meetings with the headteacher, other members of the leadership team, middle leaders and other teachers. Inspectors also met with five members of the governing body including its chair. A selection of minutes from governors' meetings was also scrutinised.
- Inspectors met with four groups of pupils and discussed with them their learning and their views of the school. Inspectors listened to the reading of pupils during curriculum learning.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead and deputy and scrutinised a range of records, including the record of checks on the suitability of staff to work with children, welfare plans and actions to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors also scrutinised a wide range of documentation that the school produces as part of its self-evaluation and development planning. Inspectors also looked at policies and documents published on the website and those made available during the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of 52 responses from parents to Parent View as well as the responses from pupils and staff to the Ofsted questionnaires.

Inspection team

Richard Gill, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Caroline Badyal	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Henshaw	Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Walters	Ofsted Inspector

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