

Inspection of a good school: Cannock Chase High School

Hednesford Road, Cannock, Staffordshire WS11 1JT

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 June 2023

Outcome

Cannock Chase High School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

School leaders have created a calm, well-ordered environment in which pupils can thrive. Staff know pupils well. Pupils feel well supported and bullying is rare. If it does occur, it is well dealt with swiftly. As a result, pupils are happy and feel safe here.

Leaders' key values of integrity, teamwork, responsibility, excellence and resilience underpin all that the school promotes. Pupils respond positively to these values and high expectations. They work hard and their behaviour is exemplary.

Leaders offer pupils a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. Examples include sports, art, choir, dance, debating and drama clubs. Many pupils get involved in these. Recently, over 40 pupils participated in the school's successful production of 'We Will Rock You'. Pupils talked about how much they had enjoyed rehearsing and performing. Pupils had also improved their self-belief and communication skills as a result.

The majority of pupils and parents say that they would recommend the school. They praise the range of subjects on offer, level of care and emphasis on rewarding pupils' achievements. One parent summed up the views of many when stating, 'The commitment and dedication of the staff is fantastic. Our child is happy, able to learn, thrive and succeed.'

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school is well led. Leaders accurately identify the school's strengths and areas for development. They have drawn up informed and effective plans to achieve these developments. Governors show a high level of commitment to the school and local community. The support and challenge they bring helps to drive improvement in the school.

The curriculum is ambitious for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). At key stage 3, it is broad and balanced for all pupils. In key stage 4, leaders offer pupils a range of subjects to study. Pupils are able to make three option choices from a wide range of GCSE and vocational qualifications. Currently, the number of pupils who study the English Baccalaureate is low. This is because of the low numbers studying a modern foreign language (MFL). Leaders are aware of this and have acted to increase staffing in MFL to encourage uptake.

Curriculum leaders and their teams identify what they want pupils to learn in each subject. They sequence learning to build on what pupils already know. Teachers use 'end point' assessments to check for any gaps in pupils' knowledge. They then address such gaps in subsequent lessons.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. Lessons have clear structures that pupils understand. Starter activities ensure that pupils reflect on prior learning before moving on to new knowledge. Pupils complete independent tasks to practise using what they know. Most teachers check that pupils understand their learning. However, sometimes teachers move on without checking pupils' understanding thoroughly enough. When this happens, some pupils continue to have gaps in their knowledge.

The SEND coordinator and their team know pupils with SEND very well. They regularly assess and review pupils' learning needs. They have put a range of targeted interventions in place to help pupils make progress with gaps in knowledge or skills. For example, small group phonics sessions to improve pupils' reading competence and fluency. Pupils told inspectors they appreciate this support and were proud to show how it had helped them to improve.

Sixth-form students have access to a wide range of A-level and level 3 BTEC qualifications. Enrichment activities supplement their academic studies. All sixth-form students complete a work experience placement. Many students complete extended project qualifications in an area of their choice. These help to develop independent research and presentation skills. Many students also develop their leadership skills. They regularly lead school clubs, charitable events and support the learning of younger pupils. For example, they listen to pupils read and support them in developing their numeracy skills during tutor periods.

Leaders ensure that pupils' wider development has a high priority. They have thought carefully about personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education from Years 7 to 13. Through PSHE, pupils learn about a wide range of issues, such as healthy relationships, keeping safe and fundamental British values. There is a well-planned careers programme. This ensures that pupils receive effective support when considering their future. As a result, the vast majority of pupils progress successfully into education, employment or training when they leave school.

Staff are proud of their school and community. They feel trusted and well supported by the school's leaders. Staff appreciate the wide range of professional development opportunities on offer. Leaders consider their well-being and workload when planning for improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong safeguarding culture. They ensure that staff receive appropriate training to recognise pupils who are potentially at risk of harm. Staff are vigilant. They report any concerns in a timely fashion.

Pupils understand the importance of keeping themselves safe. They know who to talk to if they have a safeguarding concern and know they will be listened to.

Safeguarding leaders work effectively alongside a wide range of external agencies. They ensure that pupils get the support they need at the right time.

The required checks on adults are carried out.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, some teachers do not check thoroughly enough that pupils understand what has been taught. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should ensure that systems for checking pupils' understanding are applied consistently by all teachers in all subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2018.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	137384
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10257030
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,049
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Nikki Westwood
Headteacher	Iain Turnbull
Website	www.cannockchasehigh.com
Dates of previous inspection	31 January and 1 February 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses full- and part-time alternative provision for a small number of pupils at three registered providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school coordinates sixth-form provision alongside another local secondary school in order to offer students a wide range of post-16 qualifications.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Meetings were held with curriculum leaders and the SEND coordinator. Inspectors also met with a range of other staff and governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: science, geography and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, considered curriculum guidance, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also visited lessons, spoke to pupils, and looked at pupils' work in several other subject areas.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, moving between lessons, at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They spoke with pupils in formal and informal situations to ask about their experiences of the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of safeguarding information, including the school's safeguarding policy and record of employment checks. They spoke to staff and pupils about safeguarding and considered how pupils learn about keeping themselves safe. The lead inspector spoke to the safeguarding leader about the reporting and recording of any safeguarding incidents.
- Inspectors took account of the free-text comments and responses on Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Eddie Wilkes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Adele Mills

Ofsted Inspector

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