

# Castle Hill High School

Lapwing Lane, Brinnington, Stockport, SK5 8LF

## Inspection dates

2–3 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Outstanding teaching ensures students' exceptionally rapid progress and outstanding achievement. All students leave the school with nationally recognised qualifications and all who left in 2013 went on to further education, training or employment.
- Students make excellent gains in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers and teaching assistants have a detailed knowledge of the students and use this information to provide work that exactly meets their needs.
- All groups of students do very well, irrespective of their particular special educational needs. Staff act very swiftly to give students extra help when they need it.
- Students behave exceptionally well. They make great gains in confidence and are extremely eager to learn. Students say that they feel very safe. The school ensures students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- Very occasionally, students do not have enough time in lessons to work by themselves or with others.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have a detailed knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have taken concerted and highly effective actions since the last inspection to improve teaching and students' progress, particularly in mathematics. These are now outstanding.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 29 lessons, of which eight were joint observations with senior leaders.
- The inspectors took account of 11 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and of responses to the school's own survey of parents' views.
- The inspectors met with groups of students and with senior leaders and staff. Meetings were held with five members of the governing body and with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents. These included records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, the school's information on students' progress and evidence of the checks made on the quality of teaching and the setting of targets for teachers.

## Inspection team

Liz Godman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Ellwood

Additional Inspector

David Halford

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Castle Hill High School is a large special school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and the children of military personnel) is above average.
- All students have a statement of special educational needs. Students' complex needs consist mainly of moderate learning difficulties, autistic spectrum conditions and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. A small number of students also have physical disabilities.
- There are about twice as many boys as girls on the school's roll.
- Most students are of White British heritage.
- Most students in Years 10 and 11 attend Stockport College for half a day per week to follow a variety of vocational courses, for example, in hair and beauty or construction.
- The school is part of the Atticus Alliance, a group of schools which provide initial and in-service teacher education.

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

- Provide more frequent opportunities for students:
  - to find things out for themselves
  - to develop and use their own ideas
  - to work by themselves and with others.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is outstanding

- Students make outstanding progress from often very low starting points when they join the school. The school's own records and the results of external examinations show that a substantial majority of students make better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics during their time at the school. Many students and some parents comment that students are achieving more than they ever believed possible before joining the school.
- In 2013 all students gained either an Entry Level or GCSE qualification in English and mathematics, as well as in a wide range of other subjects. The school's approach of entering students for Entry Level qualifications as soon as they are ready, sometimes in Year 9, builds their confidence in the subject and in sitting examinations. As a result, by the time they reach Year 11, students are very well prepared for the GCSE examinations.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity most effectively. As a result, all groups of pupils make exceptional progress, including boys and girls and those eligible for support through the pupil premium. There are also no differences in the progress of students with different special educational needs because the work they are given is very accurately matched to their needs.
- Staff keep a very close check on the progress of every student and make sure that additional help is provided swiftly, either in the lesson, or individually or in a small group. This ensures that students in every year group make rapid progress in communication, reading, writing and mathematics.
- Where students have additional needs, for example in coordination, they have regular extra sessions designed to improve their physical skills. These are proving effective in improving not only coordination and movement, but also in boosting morale and confidence.
- Students are very well prepared for the future because they develop excellent social and communication skills and have excellent opportunities to try out and develop a variety of work-related skills. For many this is proving very motivating and is increasing their determination to do well because they know the grades they need at GCSE to follow their chosen careers.
- Consequently, all of those who left the school in 2013 have remained in education or training. This has enabled them to pursue careers in motor vehicle maintenance, agriculture or hairdressing, for example.

### The quality of teaching

### is outstanding

- The quality of teaching is outstanding because it ensures students' outstanding progress in the different subjects and across all year groups and classes. Similarly, it ensures that there are no variations in the progress of those with different special educational needs, of boys and girls, or of those known to be eligible for the pupil premium.
- Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire and to the school's own survey agree that their children are taught well.
- Teachers and teaching assistants know the students exceptionally well. They use this information to plan lessons which take into account the exact needs of each student, enabling everyone to make at least good progress in every lesson.
- All lessons are carefully thought out to provide the right balance of practical activities as well as time for talking and recording. Adults make close checks on students' progress and provide timely help and support to keep learning moving at a fast pace. Lessons in the different subjects also give students excellent opportunities to read a variety of materials and to write in different styles.
- Just occasionally, in the lessons where teaching is good rather than outstanding, students do not have enough time to find things out for themselves, to develop and use their own ideas or to work by themselves or with others.

- Where teaching is outstanding, students show a great capacity to work by themselves, to help one another and to find further work to do when they have finished a task. For example, this was seen in English and mathematics lessons in Year 11.
- Similarly, students in a Year 10 and 11 drama lesson showed great imagination and confidence in working together on an improvisation. However, these features are sometimes missing in other lessons.
- Students of all ages respond very well to the high expectations and trust which adults give them. For example, Year 8 students responded exceptionally sensibly when undertaking a practical science lesson on burning.
- The school runs regular short reading sessions for all students, enabling them to develop and practise their skills. It also allows those who need an extra boost to be identified and helped. Students approach these sessions very positively and many have made considerable progress in reading as a result.
- The quality of careers information, advice and guidance is very high. This, and the carefully designed programmes offered both in school and at Stockport College, build students' confidence and prepare them very well for the workplace and for life outside school. As a result, many older students have had very successful experiences of work and a number are already working on a voluntary basis in their chosen field.

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

- Students behave exceptionally well in almost all lessons. They show high levels of concentration because they are interested in the work and are very keen to do well. The helps to ensure their very rapid progress.
- Adults manage students' behaviour very well. Students show a clear understanding of the rules, rewards and sanctions. A number comment that the school's behaviour team has given them very good help and that this has changed their lives. As a result, there is very little use of exclusion and there have been significant improvements in the behaviour of those with more severe behavioural difficulties.
- Most students enjoy coming to school and this can be seen in their good attendance, even though many travel to school independently.
- Staff expect excellent behaviour and students respond readily to this. Students move around the school very calmly. Older students comment that they view the staff as positive role models and say that they try to be the same for the younger students.
- Students are keenly aware of the importance of good attitudes and behaviour and are eager to take on responsibilities, both within and outside school. For example, some are keen school councillors or eco-team members, while others help in a charity shop or assist with sports coaching. Students say that they are very proud of their school.
- Students say that they feel exceptionally safe in school. The inspection confirms that the school is a safe place. Students understand how to keep themselves safe, for example, when using the internet, travelling, on school visits or at college. This is the result of the school's careful planning and teaching in this respect.
- Students say that bullying or aggressive language are exceptionally rare. They understand the different forms of bullying and are very clear as to where they would go for help should they need it. Staff and all parents who responded to the questionnaire and to the school's survey agree that the school deals effectively with bullying and that the school make sure that its students behave well.

### **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- Leadership and management are outstanding and have proved highly effective in securing improvement in the school's work from good to outstanding since the last inspection.

- The headteacher, senior leaders, staff and governors have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They use this information very well to ensure sustained and further improvement, while still maintaining the school's strengths.
- Staff receive excellent training and support and promotion and pay awards are only given when these are merited.
- Subject leaders are highly effective in checking and developing the quality of teaching and students' progress in their subjects. For example, the work of the mathematics subject leader has ensured that teaching and students' progress in mathematics have improved dramatically since the last inspection and are now as strong as in English and science.
- The curriculum ensures that all students, including those for whom the pupil premium provides support, make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics and in developing their communication and social skills and confidence.
- The carefully constructed programmes of work-related learning and the excellent information, advice and guidance which students receive, ensure their excellent preparation for adult life and for the next steps in education, training and employment. The different experiences the school provides also help students to understand different cultures and to take part most confidently in activities with others who are different to themselves.
- All the parents who completed the questionnaire would recommend the school. A small number of past and current parents commented on how the school has transformed their and their children's lives. The school takes every step to ensure parents are well informed about the school's work, through invitations to visit the school and through the website and regular newsletters.
- There are strong partnerships with other schools in the Atticus Alliance. These have helped to provide initial teacher education and to develop the knowledge of subject leaders in GCSE work and examinations. In return, other schools have developed their knowledge of special educational needs.
- The local authority provides excellent support to the school and uses its expertise to develop the work of other schools, for example in checking and assessing students' progress.
- Ensuring students' safety is a high priority for the school and staff are highly vigilant in ensuring students' well-being. The school's arrangements for safeguarding its students meet the government's requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Members of the governing body have a highly accurate knowledge of the students' progress, the quality of teaching and the links between teachers' performance and pay. Governors regularly attend relevant training and bring varied expertise which is used to very good effect. They have a strong knowledge of students' and parents' views and use these to secure further school improvement. Governors also receive detailed reports from the headteacher and staff and are regular visitors to see the school at work. They ensure that resources, including the pupil premium, are used wisely and to best effect to ensure that provision for students and their progress are outstanding.

## 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>	106172
<b>Local authority</b>	Stockport
<b>Inspection number</b>	426053

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	160
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bevon Blackwood
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Law
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 September 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 494 6439
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