

Cansfield High School

Old Road, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Wigan, Lancashire WN4 9TP

Inspection dates

27–28 September 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The rates of pupils' progress and the levels of attainment these lead to have varied considerably over time. Pupils' outcomes were too low in 2015. While there were increases in attainment in 2016, rates of progress were lower than seen in many schools.
- Until recently, the school has paid too much attention to pupils' attainment and too little to their progress.
- Information from the school's systems for assessing pupils is complex and does not provide an easily understood picture for pupils and teachers.
- Teaching is inconsistent within and between subjects across the school. This means that the challenge that pupils receive and the quality of their learning depends too much on their particular classes.
- While governors acknowledge that pupils' outcomes have not been good enough, they have not provided sufficient challenge to ensure that achievement consistently improves.
- Senior leaders' and governors' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is too generous. The improvement plans linked to this lack precision. The plans do not provide a firm enough framework to ensure that provision for key groups, including disadvantaged pupils, the most able and boys, is effective enough.
- Attendance overall is in line with the national average; however, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is below average at key stage 4.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not do as well as other pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders, other staff and governors are highly committed to the school and its pupils.
- The recent changes to the senior leadership team have allowed for actions to be taken which are starting to address the inconsistency in outcomes and teaching.
- Some teaching is highly effective. Where pupils experience this, they make rapid progress.
- The school has a happy and welcoming atmosphere. Pupils are very polite and behave well. They are proud of their school and look after it. Classrooms and corridors are attractive and help pupils to learn and keep themselves safe.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers and among pupils are positive.
- Parents are supportive of the school. They say that their children are well looked after.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that consistently effective teaching provides high levels of challenge to pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, the most able and boys, by teachers:
 - planning activities which are hard enough to help pupils to learn rapidly
 - identifying pupils' misconceptions and using these to help further learning
 - providing greater opportunity across all subjects for pupils to develop their understanding through more demanding written tasks
 - using information from the regular testing of pupils on the essential information needed in each subject to help them fill any gaps in what pupils need to know, as well as confirming where they are already confident.
- Ensure that the school's systems for assessing pupils and setting targets are refined to provide clear information which is readily understood by pupils and raises their aspirations and those of their teachers.
- Ensure that governors and other leaders use sharp and accurate evaluation of the school's recent performance to identify and celebrate the school's strengths and robustly challenge weaker aspects so that pupils consistently make rapid progress across the school.
- Ensure that the planning and provision for disadvantaged pupils leads to further improvement in their attendance and wider success.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Senior leaders have created a positive atmosphere in which pupils are well cared for. However, they have not been able to make sure that pupils' results are as good as possible. Pupils' progress is inconsistent and, year by year, there have been swings in the final results pupils gain, both overall and in different subjects. Until recently, the school has tended to emphasise pupils' attainment, with insufficient emphasis on the progress individual pupils and groups of pupils need to make to ensure that their results are as good as possible.
- The senior leadership team has been reduced and reorganised since the previous inspection. This has allowed senior leaders to start to take determined actions to address the less effective aspects of the school's work. Senior leaders work closely together as a group which has taken on overall responsibility for increasing the rates of progress across the school. Middle leaders are increasingly being held to account for the success of their subjects.
- Leaders' and governors' evaluation of the school is detailed and makes use of a large amount of data. It notes improvement and positive features from a relatively long period. However, this does not give a clear enough picture of the school as it is now and leads to the conclusions being overgenerous. The evaluation identifies improvement actions, but these are not closely linked in to the school's development plan. This document is also lengthy and has many planned actions. There is less detail about the precise improvement these are expected to lead to or how leaders will check that the actions have been consistently effective.
- The school has a regular programme of training for staff and has provided additional support and challenge where the results in particular subjects have dropped. However, this has not been sufficient to make sure that teaching is consistently effective. When leaders have appointed new teachers to the school, they have been careful to ensure that these colleagues have the skills they need to improve teaching overall. Specific training and development activity has been provided in partnership with the local authority and other schools, for example to improve mathematics and the school's approach to development planning.
- The school offers a wide range of subjects. A higher proportion of pupils than is seen in many schools follow the combination of subjects within the government's English Baccalaureate criteria for academic study. In addition, vocational subjects are provided for some older pupils in partnership with alternative providers. Leaders have recognised that some pupils would benefit from additional teaching in English and mathematics and have introduced 'learning hub' provision to provide this. An extra lesson each day is also offered to Year 11 pupils as their GCSE examinations get closer to support their continuing learning and revision. The school has a wide programme of extra-curricular activities. Many of these involve opportunities for pupils to take part in sport. A group of the most able pupils who spoke to inspectors indicated that they would prefer more extra activities designed to stretch and challenge them.
- The relatively weaker outcomes for disadvantaged pupils when compared to others indicate that leaders' and governors' use of the additional funding provided to support these pupils has not had full effect. The school has comprehensive data from regular

assessment of these and other pupils. However, this is not analysed in a way which has helped leaders and teachers to target the progress of disadvantaged pupils and other key groups, including the most able and boys, well enough. The extra funding to help pupils with lower starting points in English and mathematics is used to support appropriate provision, particularly for literacy where additional teaching is closely matched to pupils' needs. However, the published details of how this funding is spent are unclear.

- Parents' views of the school are generally very positive. The large majority of those completing Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, would recommend the school to others. Additional comments received from some parents recognised the high levels of care and commitment of staff in the school.

Governance of the school

- Governors are well informed and knowledgeable about the school. They are passionate about its successes and recognise its strengths. They are also aware that outcomes have been too variable over time. However, their challenge and support to leaders has not been sufficient to lead to consistent improvement.
- The governing body was reconstituted at the start of this school year, leading to a slight reduction in its size and a refocusing of its work. This change also meant that governors' skills have been better matched to the needs of the school. The chair of governors has regular contact with the school.
- Governors are appropriately involved in the school's systems to manage the performance of teachers. The pay committee is provided with detailed information and is involved in careful discussion to ensure that there are proper links between teachers' performance and their pay. Governors take difficult decisions when these are needed with regard to teachers' pay awards.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that teachers and other members of staff are regularly trained to provide them with the information they need to protect pupils. Over the last year, staff have followed programmes about the potential risks of pupils coming into contact with extremist views. They received the latest guidance about keeping children safe at the start of this school year. The annual cycle for the revision of the school's formal safeguarding policy will be completed later this term.
- The school's corridor displays provide clear information to pupils about where to find help if they feel they need this. The high levels of care about pupils and their welfare strengthen the protection they receive.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching has not secured consistently rapid progress across different subjects over time. Inspection evidence confirms that the quality of pupils' learning varies between different classes. The headteacher has discussed with teachers how there should be 'tough teaching' and 'tough learning' in the school, but some teachers still do not provide sufficient challenge to pupils.
- When pupils learn well, a common feature is teachers' use of precise questioning to

develop pupils' ideas and to turn misconceptions into learning points. However, this kind of approach is not embedded across the school.

- Some teachers do not use the opportunities provided by pupils' positive attitudes to get the most out of them. Sometimes, tasks set are too easy and, at other times, teachers allow pupils to do too little work on harder tasks and then provide answers rather than expecting pupils to find these out themselves. For example, in modern foreign language lessons, teachers and teaching assistants sometimes translate words and phrases which pupils could work out without this support. In contrast, in technology, Year 7 pupils are stretched by their teachers to develop their knowledge and skills. They are captivated by the tasks set. The same variability also occurs within subjects. For example, while some mathematics teaching is highly effective, some is far less so.
- Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and have a wealth of data about how well pupils are doing. This allows teachers and leaders to check how well pupils are progressing towards the targets the school sets and to work with pupils to help them know what they need to do next. However, some pupils do not understand what the information is telling them and some teachers do not use the information well enough to provide enough challenge to pupils. The school's analysis of its assessments is made more complicated because the school is in the early stages of changing the system to better reflect the recent national changes to assessment of the national curriculum.
- As part of its assessment system, the school uses tests about essential facts and ideas needed in each subject. These tests are designed to cover all the material taught up to that stage and confirm whether pupils have grasped the particular points included. However, teachers do not routinely use the opportunity provided by pupils' failure to answer questions correctly as a starting point for further learning.
- Teachers know whether pupils are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities and identify this in class seating plans. However, this does not lead to sufficient emphasis in ensuring that key groups of pupils, including the most able, learn as well as possible. While ability setting is used, particularly for older pupils, and more demanding targets are set for pupils with higher starting points, the most able learn less quickly than is typical for similar pupils in other schools. In general, boys achieve less well than girls.
- Staff working with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well informed about pupils' needs. This helps them to make sure that their support work leads to faster progress for such pupils.
- Teachers and leaders have increased the emphasis placed on ensuring that pupils' English and mathematical skills are as good as they need to be. However, scrutiny of pupils' written work indicates that the range and difficulty of written tasks set across subjects is sometimes limited. This represents a missed opportunity to further challenge pupils, including the most able.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are positive about their school. They are encouraged to be proud of their work and the school. This is formalised in the 'Pride of Cansfield' system which celebrates

and recognises when pupils achieve high standards in aspects such as attendance, punctuality and behaviour. Teachers make pupils aware of these expectations when they first join the school.

- On occasion, teachers' expectations of pupils' work rate are not as high as possible. Some pupils then respond with lower levels of self-motivation.
- The school's buildings are attractive, well kept and provide a safe environment for pupils. There is very little litter around the school and any careless or deliberate damage to the buildings, including through graffiti, is negligible.
- Pupils get on well together. Those who spoke to inspectors said that there was little or no bullying. They were confident that staff would quickly resolve any issues which could arise.
- Leaders and teachers work closely and effectively with external partners when this is needed to keep pupils safe or improve their welfare. Close liaison is maintained with organisations offering alternative provision to pupils. A senior leader makes regular checks to ensure that pupils attend as expected and are safe. The use of this provision has helped leaders to ensure that the pupils involved are better engaged in their education.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons and around the school is good. This supports learning in lessons and contributes to the school's harmonious feeling. Staff supervise pupils carefully so that instances of anything other than sensible behaviour around the school are very rare.
- Lessons are seldom disturbed by low-level disruptive behaviour. On the rare occasions when this does happen, teachers and pupils are clear about how incidents will be followed up. Pupils may be asked to work with a different class for a short period and detentions are used. For more serious instances of poor behaviour, the school has established a 'respite' room where pupils are closely supervised and required to work by themselves for a period of time. This arrangement has contributed to the reduction in fixed-term exclusions seen in recent years. While the number of pupils using 'respite' has been low so far this school year, the number of disadvantaged pupils using it has been disproportionately high.
- Pupils want to be in school. This is shown by the overall attendance broadly matching the national average. While the attendance of younger disadvantaged pupils is similar to others, older disadvantaged pupils attend less well and their rate of persistent absence is higher. Leaders are aware of this issue and have started to actively reinforce the good attendance of these pupils as a prerequisite of them learning as well as they should. Pupils' punctuality is good.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The school's most recent confirmed results for Year 11 from 2015 were too low and continued a pattern of variability in particular subjects since the previous inspection. Leaders set in place a number of strategies to improve pupils' achievement. These were partially successful, as Year 11 pupils' attainment rose in comparison to the previous year. However, unconfirmed national data for 2016 indicates that, once again,

pupils made slower progress than was typically seen in other schools. Even with increases expected by leaders following re-marks and other adjustments to final grades, a picture of stalling progress is likely to remain the case.

- Leaders have identified that the overall results in 2016 were reduced in part because of a small number of pupils who faced challenges during their school experience. One of the alternative providers did not ensure that pupils gained the qualifications expected. While this issue was not resolved while the pupils were attending, that provider is no longer used by the school.
- In 2015, as in previous years, Year 11 pupils made less progress in mathematics than in English from their different starting points. There was also significant variation in their progress across other subjects. Disadvantaged pupils in the school made less progress than other pupils across the country and particularly so for those of middle ability and the most able. The provisional data for 2016 is not directly comparable but indicates that differences between disadvantaged pupils and others are not diminishing.
- Inspection evidence indicates that there is also variability in the rates of progress for pupils in different subjects and across all years of the school. For example, sets of similar ability in the same year groups and studying the same subject learn at markedly different rates as a result of the differences in the ways teachers approach their work. These differences are apparent in pupils' written work.
- In 2016, school information indicates that all pupils have gone on to further education or training, including apprenticeships. This represents a significant improvement on the most recent published data from 2013. The improvement reflects the careful preparation offered to pupils through their taught careers lessons, the individual advice offered and the increase in Year 11 pupils' attainment this year.

School details

Unique reference number	106521
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10003143

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	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	955
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Les Archer
Headteacher	Mr Michael Southworth
Telephone number	01942 727391
Website	www.cansfield.wigan.sch.uk
Email address	enquiries@admin.cansfield.wigan.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 February 2012

Information about this school

- Cansfield High School is an average-sized secondary school.
- The school's senior leadership team has been reduced in size since the previous inspection. The governing body was reconstituted at the start of this school year.
- The proportions of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities broadly match the national averages. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan or a statement of educational needs is below average.
- Few pupils are from minority ethnic groups or speak English as an additional language.
- A number of pupils are educated through off-site provision at eight providers. Providers include: Bodymech Repair Centre; Fur Clemt/Wigan Warriors; Mill Farm; New Horizons School; Rose Bridge Academy; Three Towers Alternative Provision Academy; Total People and Western Skills Centre.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum

expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum and the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school. They visited form times and assemblies. They observed pupils' conduct in lessons, while moving around the school and at breaks and lunchtimes. They visited the school's 'respite' room.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders and groups of teachers, including middle leaders, and other members of staff. They met formally with two groups of pupils and spoke to others during lessons and at other times during the school day. An inspector met with a group of governors.
- An inspector spoke by telephone with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined pupils' books during lessons and during a scrutiny of samples of written work across a range of pupils and subjects.
- Inspectors reviewed documents, including school policies, safeguarding information, the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness and development planning, minutes of meetings and information about teaching, learning and assessment.
- Inspectors considered 42 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 32 additional written comments to the survey questions. They considered 13 responses from staff to an online questionnaire. No responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire to pupils were received.

Inspection team

David Selby, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Anne Seneviratne	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jan Peckett	Ofsted Inspector
John Leigh	Ofsted Inspector
Kath Harris	Ofsted Inspector

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