

Charnwood College

Thorpe Hill, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 4SQ

Inspection dates

26–27 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that disadvantaged pupils make the progress they should. The difference between their attainment and others is not diminishing quickly enough, especially in English and mathematics.
- Until recently, leaders have not effectively evaluated the impact of teaching on the progress and attainment of all pupils.
- The quality of teaching is too variable. While teachers' planning is improving, they do not consistently use the information about pupils' needs effectively to accelerate pupils' progress. This is particularly true of the most able and disadvantaged pupils.
- The teaching of literacy and numeracy, especially in key stage 3, is not embedded consistently across the school.
- Leaders do not respond quickly enough to information about pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- The attendance of a minority of pupils, mostly disadvantaged, remains stubbornly low. In addition, the behaviour of a small number of pupils continues to affect their progress.
- Subject leaders have improved their leadership skills but require further support to develop their curriculum areas and to validate their assessments of pupils' work.
- Leaders of the sixth form have not ensured that the 16 to 19 study programmes have been implemented fully for all students. Students have insufficient opportunities to develop their understanding of personal, social and health issues.
- The local governing body and the trust have been slow to challenge weak leadership. Recent changes, however, have introduced much more rigour to their work.

The school has the following strengths

- The vice-principal has developed a coherent and effective system to monitor pupils' performance and provide teachers with valuable information about pupils' needs.
- The vast majority of pupils' conduct is polite and courteous.
- The extra-curriculum to enhance pupils' wider skills and interests is inspirational and successful.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to accelerate the progress of all groups of pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged and the most able, by:
 - ensuring that teachers use the information about pupils' barriers to learning and gaps in understanding more effectively to plan learning
 - strengthening the support and teaching strategies to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy, especially in the lower years
 - insisting that the most able pupils tackle and complete the challenging tasks set.
- Improve the attendance and behaviour of a minority of pupils by:
 - developing current work with families, including those of pupils intending to join the school from the feeder primary schools
 - ensuring that monitoring and tracking systems are more responsive and lead to timely action by leaders.
- Improve the quality of leadership by:
 - strengthening support for key subject leaders to moderate their assessments of pupils' work and prepare pupils more successfully for examinations at the end of key stage 4
 - improving the level of security of the school site
 - reviewing more thoroughly the current strategic plan to improve the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils
 - embedding a clear reading for pleasure strategy across the school
 - ensuring that the trust's support and challenge of the school leads to demonstrable improvements quickly.
- Improve the effectiveness of the sixth form by:
 - ensuring that leaders have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities
 - developing a clear and effective personal development programme
 - ensuring that the 16 to 19 study programmes are implemented effectively for all students.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders at all levels, including the governing body, have not ensured that the quality of teaching and pupils' progress have been rigorously and accurately checked. The new principal, with the support of the academy improvement leader from the trust, has recently introduced new robust strategies to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. It is too early to measure the impact of this strategy.
- Senior and middle leaders have had an overgenerous view of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across most subjects, until recently. They have not ensured that teaching is consistently effective for all groups of pupils, including the disadvantaged and the most able.
- Leaders' strategies to support disadvantaged pupils, through the use of pupil premium funding, have not been wholly effective. The actions to help disadvantaged pupils who were falling behind in Year 11 were often taken too late. Leaders' work to support pupils and their families before they start at the school and in the lower years is not as effective as it could be.
- Not all subject leaders have been supported equally in order to develop their curriculum areas and moderate their assessments. Consequently, some departments did not prepare pupils for the new GCSE examinations as well as they could. The leader of mathematics received valuable support last year, which led to much needed improvements in pupils' progress and teaching.
- Subject leaders have benefited from a range of courses led by the trust to develop their leadership skills. Many have undertaken additional interim senior leadership roles to further develop their skills.
- Pastoral leaders are becoming much more effective in tackling pupils' poor behaviour and attendance. A small minority of pupils, mostly disadvantaged, do not attend school regularly enough and are poorly behaved. The 'cooler' and the 'ice', which are supervised areas for secluding pupils with poor behaviour, are proving effective in helping some to modify their behaviour. However, senior leaders do not have a clear overview of patterns of behaviour incidents, especially by group, and absence trends. In some cases, this has led to slow action to address potential problems.
- The use of Year 7 catch-up premium funding to help pupils who start school behind their peers is more effective for literacy than it is for numeracy. Leaders' evaluations are now leading to more focused support for numeracy across the curriculum. It is too early to judge the impact of the new strategy.
- The leader of teaching has developed a wide range of continuous professional development opportunities for all teachers at different stages of their career, including the newly qualified stage. Staff told inspectors that they valued these opportunities. Teaching is now monitored more rigorously.
- The vice-principal has introduced a clear, well-understood consistent system to assess pupils' progress from Years 7 to 11. Staff, pupils and parents understand the assessment framework well. Pupils' performance across all subjects is tracked

rigorously.

- The leadership of special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective. The specialist support and the high-quality in-class help have contributed to strong outcomes for these pupils. The funding to support special educational needs is spent wisely and effectively.
- The school rightly prides itself on its unique curriculum provision to enhance pupils' wider educational experience. As part of the David Ross Education Trust, the school is able to offer a wide range of sporting, cultural and residential enrichment opportunities. A specific time is allocated on Wednesdays to facilitate an hour of enrichment for all pupils.
- The school's work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. Pupils are taught well about different faiths and cultures in their religious education lessons. Assemblies and personal development lessons encourage pupils to consider moral and social issues, such as bullying and extremism. The school encourages acceptance of difference, so, consequently, the incidence of prejudiced behaviour is very low. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- The alternative off-site provision caters well for those pupils who need a more bespoke curriculum to meet their needs. Last year, nearly all pupils achieved qualifications which led to appropriate post-16 education and training. The pupils' emotional and behavioural needs were monitored and supported well.
- The systems to support the performance of staff are managed well. All teachers have sharp targets which relate closely to the school's priorities. These are reviewed regularly.
- Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education. Leaders coordinate a range of advice and guidance, such as careers fairs, workshops, mock interviews, and curriculum vitae writing support, to help pupils prepare for the world of work.
- The trust has strengthened its support and challenge of the school. Previously, it had not taken sufficient measures to verify what leaders were telling them. The trust has undertaken important refurbishments, especially to the science laboratories, to improve the learning environment. The academy improvement leader is able and effective. The systems to track the school's performance, such as the TATS (team around the school) meetings, are proving to be effective.

Governance of the school

- While the local governing body has recently challenged leaders' assessment of teaching, their view of how the school was performing for most of last year was inaccurate.
- The chair of governors is skilled and experienced. He has undertaken more rigorous scrutiny of leaders' reviews of the school. The governing body minutes show increased challenge, especially about subject performance and the progress of disadvantaged pupils. There are vacancies on the governing body. This shortage of governors has prevented the governing body as a whole having a clear understanding of aspects of the school's performance, for example pupils' behaviour and the progress of disadvantaged pupils.

- Governors oversee the school's arrangements to safeguard pupils well. Regular visits to school and audits ensure that governors understand the school's effectiveness in safeguarding its pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have a deep understanding of pupils' needs and so they ensure that pupils are supported well.
- Leaders' risk assessments have highlighted the potential risks to pupils' safety because of the unsecured site perimeter. Actions to remedy this are now being considered urgently by trust leaders.
- Clear and appropriate systems are in place to ensure the health, well-being and safety of pupils. Leaders liaise with outside agencies that support pupils' welfare in a timely manner. Pupils know who to speak to if they have any concerns.
- Staff understand well their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. Parents, pupils and staff agree that pupils are safe at this school.
- The curriculum is designed well to support safeguarding. Pupils are advised well as to how to keep safe, including online and when using a mobile phone. Older pupils discussed the impact of extremism in the aftermath of the Manchester bombing in an assembly. In so doing, the school has made them aware of the risks of radicalisation from all political extremes.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is improving but is too variable across the school and across subjects.
- Teachers have good access to information about pupils' needs but they do not consistently use this information well to plan pupils' learning. This is especially true for the disadvantaged pupils and the most able. For example, some disadvantaged pupils who are affected by poor attendance do not routinely receive additional support to help them catch up in class. This means that gaps in their knowledge continue. Also, teachers do not always insist that the most able pupils get on to the more challenging tasks quickly and complete them.
- Teachers have introduced a range of whole-school literacy strategies. These include highlighting spelling, punctuation and grammar errors when giving feedback and ensuring that pupils use dictionaries in class. However, not all teachers implement these strategies consistently. Some pupils, especially in the lower sets, continue to make basic errors.
- Teachers' strategies to support pupils' numeracy skills are not well developed across the school. Tutorial arithmetic practice sessions are beginning to make a difference for some pupils, but these are not always well targeted according to ability.
- A consistently strong feature of teaching practice is the respectful and cooperative relationships teachers have with pupils. Pupils feel very well supported by their teachers. Teachers regularly give meaningful feedback, especially when pupils have

misconceptions.

- The new assessment policy, which sets high expectations for pupils' achievement, is understood well by pupils. The school's target-setting approach is used to motivate pupils to achieve well. All teachers demonstrate a good understanding of their subject and are clear about what pupils are expected to know and understand at the end of each year.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. Pupils with complex needs receive suitable specialist help. Teaching assistants are trained well. They provide good challenge as well as sensitive support.
- Teachers are aware of the specific needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Targets for pupils' achievement, however, are not always communicated clearly to pupils.
- Pupils enjoy learning in physical education, art, music, drama and dance. This is because teachers make the learning exciting and relevant.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils benefit from regular advice and guidance during their personal development lessons and assemblies. The programme of lessons is planned well and contains a range of age-appropriate sessions on subjects like mental well-being and online safety.
- Pupils are highly engaged in school life. The wide range of sporting, drama and public-speaking opportunities is valued by pupils. School records show that a high proportion of both boys and girls participate.
- Pupils' emotional well-being and behaviour in the alternative off-site provision are catered for well.
- Pupils speak highly of the range of advice and guidance to help them consider the next stages of their education and employment. The careers programme includes advice about becoming an entrepreneur, how to write a curriculum vitae and visits to universities to raise aspirations.
- Parents, pupils and staff agree that the levels of care and support are high in the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The absence rate for a minority of pupils is persistently high. Too many disadvantaged pupils are regularly absent from school. The pastoral team's work with hard-to-reach families is strengthening with the support of outside agencies.
- The number of behaviour incidents is reducing. While incidents leading to fixed-term exclusions rose in 2016/17, due to strict enforcement of the behaviour code, they have reduced since September. The mentoring and cooling-off strategies employed by the

pastoral team are making a difference in helping some pupils manage their behaviour. Despite this, repeat poor behaviour continues from a small minority of pupils. These pupils are mostly those whose behaviour is the most challenging and who are receiving alternative provision.

- Pupils' conduct around the school site is orderly and friendly. Incidents of poor behaviour or disagreements between pupils are infrequent.
- The vast majority of pupils are punctual to class and school.
- Pupils' attitudes towards one another and adults are polite and cooperative. They listen carefully to teachers in class and participate in group work activities fully. Most pupils are conscientious and follow the school rules without question.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The school's unvalidated report on pupils' examination performance in 2017 shows that pupils' overall progress in their best eight subjects, including English and mathematics, is below the national averages. Also, the difference compared with national averages is widening compared to last year. Much of this outcome can be attributed to instability in staffing in 2016/17 and also weak preparation for the new examination requirements, especially in science and English.
- While the most able pupils, during the previous year, made broadly average progress according to school records, few exceeded expectations. The progress they are making currently is variable across a range of subjects, due to inconsistent teaching.
- Disadvantaged pupils have not made enough progress at the end of key stage 4, particularly middle-ability pupils. Unconfirmed results for 2017 show that the difference between their attainment and others nationally is slightly diminishing in mathematics but widening in English.
- Pupils' achievement in the other more practical subjects, such as health and social care, design and technology, has been variable. Pupils who attend alternative provision, however, gain suitable qualifications and work experience in courses such as hair and beauty, catering and construction.
- Disadvantaged pupils in the lower years are not making the same rates of progress in English and mathematics as others, especially those who need to catch up.
- The school's records show that pupils' attainment is rising compared with provisional national figures, especially the proportion of pupils achieving grades 4–9 in both English and mathematics.
- Pupils perform consistently well in English across the school. Pupils arrive with standards in English which are, generally, broadly average. Currently, pupils' achievement in science, modern foreign languages and humanities is improving overall but inconsistent in different year groups.
- Pupils' skills in reading rapidly improve in key stage 3 due to focused and effective reading strategies. Pupils are encouraged to read regularly during tutorial sessions. Teachers share their love of reading with pupils in posters around the school. However, pupils say that opportunities to read for pleasure are not relished. Inspectors observed some pupils staying on the same page of their book for the whole tutorial session. A

reading for pleasure culture is not yet well embedded across the school, which limits pupils' cultural horizons and important literacy skills.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their different starting points. They are guided to choose the right courses for their abilities and aspirations.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well in a range of subjects. Their progress often outstrips that of others.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Leaders of the sixth form have not ensured that essential aspects of the 16 to 19 study programmes have been implemented for everyone. For example, not all students undertake suitable work experience related to their employment interests or aspirations. In some cases, students in Year 13 have not experienced any work placements.
- The range of non-academic experiences available to students is wide ranging but tutors and leaders do not monitor closely enough whether all students are participating in these opportunities. For example, the school holds a number of events to raise money for charity and provides pupils with opportunities to serve the community or help out with younger pupils in the main school; however, not all students participate, as these are optional.
- Students who spoke with inspectors were not confident about important issues which relate to their personal development. For example, they have received very little guidance about how to manage their mental and emotional well-being. They also knew very little about how to manage the range of risks they may face as they grow into adulthood, such as drinking and driving. The personal development programme of study is not well developed and is mostly taught through assemblies, limiting students' ability to explore important issues in any depth.
- Unvalidated records of students' examination performance in 2017 suggest that they make broadly average progress across a range of subjects compared with their peers nationally. Also, student outcomes in subjects where they had previously performed poorly, like chemistry and physics, are now improving.
- These records also show that the proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades is improving.
- The quality of teaching is improving because there has been a closer focus on monitoring the quality of teaching over the last year.
- Students' attendance and punctuality to school are good. Students are proud of their sixth form and praise the support they are given, especially when they're falling behind or need help completing their personal statement for applications to universities.
- The small number of students who have not achieved a grade C or above in English or mathematics GCSE resit these subjects in the sixth form and are successful.
- The sixth form attracts elite basketball players from England and abroad. The Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence in basketball (AASE) has been a unique feature of the school and some students who have studied this course have gone on to

gain scholarships in the USA to play professionally. In addition, the sixth form offers high-performing footballers an opportunity to undertake a Football Academy course alongside their A levels, during which they gain coaching qualifications.

- The school's work to help students make informed choices about their future careers and education after Charnwood College is effective. All students last year went on to their first or second choice university, suitable apprenticeships or work. This good advice has contributed to high rates of retention in the sixth form.

School details

Unique reference number	141874
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10037174

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
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	546
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	126
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Stephen Dorrell
Principal	Daniel Neal
Telephone number	01509 554400
Website	www.charnwoodcollege.org/
Email address	office@charnwoodcollege.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- This school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. The number on roll is lower than when the school became sponsored by the David Ross Education Trust. The number of students on roll in the sixth form is smaller than the average.
- Charnwood College comprises two predecessor schools: Charnwood College (Upper)

and Charnwood College (High). The two schools merged in August 2016.

- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupils premium funding is above average.
- The proportions of students from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language are slightly above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. A very small minority are supported by an education, health and care plan.
- A small number of pupils are educated off-site at the Loughborough Inclusion Partnership.
- The school receives part-time support from a headteacher of another school in the trust, Malcom Arnold Academy.
- The school meets the government floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 32 lessons. Almost all teachers were observed. Inspectors also observed learning in tutorial sessions and an assembly.
- Inspectors observed pupils' conduct and behaviour during breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with the principal, vice-principal and other members of the senior and middle leadership team. Two members of the local governing body were interviewed by the lead inspector.
- The lead inspector met with the academy improvement leader, who represents the trust.
- Inspectors met formally with pupils in key stages 3 and 4 and with a group of students in key stage 5.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of school documents relating to: behaviour, school improvement, pupils' performance, safeguarding, teaching, learning and assessment, and governance.
- Inspectors evaluated 35 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 36 responses to the staff survey. No responses were received to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Zarina Connolly, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Russell Barr	Ofsted Inspector
Annabel Bolt	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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