

# Canons High School

Shaldon Road, Edgware HA8 6AN

## Inspection dates

27–28 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
16 to 19 study programmes	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Weaknesses in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in science, combined with a poor science curriculum, mean that pupils do not make enough progress in this key subject.
- Teaching in mathematics is too variable in quality to ensure that all groups of pupils make good progress.
- Outcomes in the sixth form require improvement. Students' achievement by the end of Years 12 and 13 was significantly lower than average last year. Some students have been enrolled on courses in mathematics and science without having attained the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to achieve well on these courses.
- Pupils' behaviour is not consistently good. Some pupils misbehave when teaching is less effective.
- Too many pupils arrive late to school and to lessons. Attendance in Years 10, 11 and 13 is too low.
- Senior leaders' views of the school's effectiveness are overgenerous and do not give sufficient weight to the weaknesses they have identified in science and mathematics and in pupils' behaviour, attendance and punctuality. Some aspects of the school's work are not monitored carefully enough.
- Leaders responsible for the sixth form are not given opportunities to monitor how well teaching meets students' needs. This is also the case for leadership of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This hinders the effectiveness of these leaders in carrying out their roles.
- Governors do not have sharp enough oversight of some aspects of the schools' work.

### The school has the following strengths

- Much teaching in the school is very effective, including in English, the humanities, the arts and modern foreign languages. In these subjects, pupils behave well and make good progress.
- The school's innovative curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' learning across a wide range of subjects.
- Leaders have established an ethos where staff are valued, committed and provided with plentiful opportunities to engage in professional research.
- Pupils feel safe as a result of strong support for their well-being. The school provides well for pupils' personal development.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in science and mathematics by:
  - raising expectations of pupils' productivity and the presentation of their work, particularly in science
  - ensuring that the science curriculum adequately prepares older pupils for GCSE examinations
  - strengthening teachers' skills in using assessment to set work that meets pupils' differing needs and to check that the intended learning has been understood by the whole class.
- Improve pupils' behaviour, attendance and punctuality by:
  - ensuring that teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour in lessons are consistently high, particularly in mathematics and science
  - raising expectations of how pupils should conduct themselves as they move around the school
  - further developing strategies to improve pupils' punctuality and attendance and monitoring the impact of this work to ensure that it brings about improvements.
- Improve outcomes in the sixth form by ensuring that:
  - students opting for mathematics and science A levels have the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to succeed on these challenging courses
  - the planned changes to broaden the sixth-form curriculum in science are implemented
  - lower-attaining students currently completing their courses in mathematics and science receive the extra support they need to secure the best grades possible.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - strengthening procedures for self-evaluation to ensure that leaders and governors have a comprehensive and accurate view of the school's effectiveness
  - ensuring that leaders responsible for the sixth form and for pupils with SEND have sufficient opportunities to monitor the effectiveness and impact of teaching on the pupils they support
  - undertaking appropriate analysis of the impact of funding provided through the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium
  - monitoring more rigorously the impact of the school's enrichment curriculum
  - ensuring that governors maintain sufficient oversight of the school's safeguarding arrangements and the effectiveness of provision for pupils with SEND.

An external review of 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

- Leaders have a generally accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, when making judgements about the school's overall effectiveness, they do not give due weight to the weaknesses they have identified.
- Leaders and governors draw on information provided through the evaluations they commission, including from external consultants. They do not synthesise these findings sufficiently well to provide a clear overview of the quality of education provided.
- In observations with inspectors, leaders demonstrated that they have a sharp understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching they observe. However, they have not used this understanding to quickly remedy underachievement in science and mathematics.
- Pupils' progress and attainment in science have been hampered by a poorly conceived curriculum from Years 9 to 11. This has resulted in pupils completing their courses by the end of Year 10 and then spending lesson time in Year 11 engaged independently in revision activities. This approach has not prepared pupils well enough for the increased demands of the revised GCSE specifications. Leaders have rightly devised plans to remedy this in the next academic year and have tightened the Year 11 curriculum for current pupils. Nevertheless, inspectors observed pupils in Year 11 trying to revise in their science lessons without the support they need to make the best use of this time.
- The school has also introduced changes to the key stage 3 mathematics curriculum. Leaders have not ensured, however, that this curriculum meets the needs of different groups of pupils well enough, particularly those who find the work difficult. Some of the lower-attaining pupils complete very little work in lessons and are left struggling unless they ask for help.
- Other aspects of the curriculum are very strong and are highly valued by pupils. GCSE courses in many subjects are very well organised and managed. Leaders have ensured that teachers have the skills and curriculum time they need to develop pupils' subject-specific knowledge, skills and understanding very effectively. In many subjects, staff are highly skilled at making the best use of the two-hours-long lessons provided.
- The key stage 4 curriculum includes a significant proportion of time allocated to courses designed to enrich pupils' learning and personal development but for which no qualifications are awarded. While this approach works well in many areas, including drama and media studies, leaders have not ensured that the best use of this time is made everywhere. Occasionally, enrichment courses lack purpose, impetus and value.
- Leadership of the school's provision for pupils with SEND is effective in many respects. Leaders ensure that staff are well informed about how to meet the pupils' individual needs. However, they are not empowered, and do not have sufficient time, to monitor the impact of teaching and the curriculum on pupils with SEND at first hand. This inhibits the effectiveness of this aspect of leadership.
- Leaders ensure that the money provided to support disadvantaged pupils is carefully deployed. However, they have not evaluated the impact of funding provided through

the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium, as is required.

- The headteacher has developed a very strong culture of professional development at the school. He is highly valued, respected and supported by staff. Teachers and other staff are given wide-ranging opportunities to conduct research to help improve their practice. Such opportunities, and the commitment of senior staff to helping teachers to manage their workload, have ensured that staff retention is high.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors are highly committed to the school and play a key role in setting the school's vision.
- Governors monitor carefully the impact of the school's curriculum on pupils' attainment in public examinations. They know that the quality of provision in science is weaker than in other areas, for example, and have attended meetings at the school to find out about the actions taken to bring about improvements.
- Governors' knowledge of some aspects of the school's work is less strong, however. For example, while governors monitor the school's provision for pupils with SEND, they do not have a sufficiently clear view of the difference this provision is making. Similarly, governors' oversight of the school's single central record of checks on the suitability of staff is not well informed about the checks that are needed or how they should be recorded.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that staff receive good-quality training in safeguarding.
- Leaders use their strong understanding of local risks to ensure that pupils who may be vulnerable to harm are kept safe and protected and receive the early support they need from social care. Leaders' practice in this area has been modelled by the local authority as an exemplar to other schools in the area.
- Leaders work well with other agencies, such as the police, to ensure that pupils are protected from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. They also tailor the curriculum so that pupils know how to keep themselves safe.
- Inspectors found that the checks that had been made on staff and trustees to ensure that they were suitable to take up their post or had received the required training had not been recorded, as required, on the single central record. This was remedied by the end of the inspection.

**Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Requires improvement**

- The overall quality of teaching in science is weak. Teaching in mathematics is not consistently effective.
- In science, teachers' expectations are too low. This results in some pupils regularly failing to complete the work set or simply copying the answers. The teaching makes inconsistent use of assessment. In some of the lessons observed, teachers moved pupils on to new work without identifying that not all pupils had understood – or completed – the previous task. Inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' work in their science books showed that some pupils have achieved little this year. Work is often completed very untidily.
- There is some strong teaching in mathematics but teaching is not consistently effective in ensuring that all groups of pupils learn well. Weaker teaching is not sufficiently challenging for the most able pupils and does not provide the support needed for lower-attaining pupils. Teachers do not ensure that all pupils complete the work set. In some classes, pupils' presentation of their work is poor and books contain loose worksheets which are not organised in a way that supports mathematical understanding.
- In contrast, where mathematics teaching is strong, pupils' books demonstrate their high levels of commitment to the subject. In these lessons, learning is well matched to pupils' different needs, including those of the most able pupils.
- Teaching is much more consistently effective across many other subjects, including English, modern foreign languages, the humanities, art, media, drama and business studies. In these subjects, teachers' high expectations, effective planning and strong use of assessment inspire pupils to do their best. Good use of questioning challenges pupils' thinking and deepens their understanding.
- In English, for example, pupils relish the challenges provided by their teachers and deploy subject-specific vocabulary accurately and with confidence. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to plan learning which helps pupils understand how to evaluate complex poetry. Pupils discuss their work maturely and purposefully but also work in silence when this is demanded by their teachers.
- Occasionally, even when teaching is otherwise very effective, teachers do not ensure that enough pupils participate in whole-class question-and-answer sessions.

## 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 told inspectors that they feel safe in school. Pupils understand their responsibilities to report any incidents of bullying and that it is not acceptable to observe bullying as a bystander.
- Pupils also know how to keep themselves safe from risks beyond the school community. They are well informed about the risks associated with gang membership, including knife-related crime. Leaders ensure that additional teaching is provided to support pupils perceived to be most at risk.
- Pupils particularly value the support provided by the behaviour support team, which is

made up of staff and pupils. This, together with other services such as counselling, makes a strong contribution to supporting pupils' mental health.

- The school's 'digital leaders' help ensure that their peers understand well the risks associated with social media and how these can be avoided.
- Pupils value the school's diverse community and have a very good awareness of the fundamental British values of mutual respect, democracy and the rule of law. This is typified in the knowledgeable and mature way they speak about LGBT rights. Pupils recently raised money to support the work of a charity which supports gender-diverse and transgender children.
- Pupils benefit from rich and varied extra-curricular provision. This makes a strong contribution to their personal development and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school provides extensive careers support for pupils at key transition points, such as at the end of Year 8, when pupils begin to choose their GCSE subjects. However, some older pupils have been allowed to pursue A levels in mathematics and science, which they were not ready for.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Most pupils behave well. Where teaching is effective, pupils' behaviour is often impeccable.
- However, pupils' behaviour declines where teaching is less effective. This is particularly the case in science, where the persistent, low-level disruption of some pupils affects the learning of the whole class. Pupils from one class told inspectors that they are not allowed to conduct experiments in science because of the class's poor behaviour. Off-task behaviour also hindered pupils' learning in some of the mathematics lessons observed.
- Some pupils do not conduct themselves appropriately at break and lunchtimes or when moving between lessons. Inspectors heard numerous examples of pupils using foul language or making inappropriate comments to others.
- Despite the concerted actions taken by leaders to improve punctuality to school, too many pupils arrive late in the morning. A small minority do not arrive punctually to their lessons either.
- Previously, attendance has been broadly average but it has dipped this year. While pupils in Years 7 to 9 attend very regularly, overall attendance in Years 10 and 11 is too low.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Requires improvement**

- While pupils achieve well across a wide range of subjects, their progress and attainment in science are poor. Pupils have underachieved considerably in science in

key stage 4 for the last two years, with attainment well below that in other subjects. Leaders anticipate that attainment is likely to be similarly low for the current cohort of Year 11 pupils.

- Inspectors' observations of teaching and scrutiny of pupils' work in science showed that pupils continue to underachieve. Work is often left incomplete and presented poorly. Some pupils' learning in science is inhibited by persistent low-level disruption. Older pupils are not supported well enough in revising key aspects of the science curriculum.
- While some pupils make stronger progress in mathematics, teaching does not ensure that this is the case for all groups of pupils. Pupils' progress in developing mathematical knowledge and understanding varies too much between classes. Where progress is weaker, some pupils do not complete the work set and misconceptions are not addressed.
- Progress in many other subjects is strong and has been consistently so since the last inspection. In 2017, for example, pupils' progress in their best eight subjects combined placed the school in the top 10% of all schools nationally. An apparent dip in achievement in pupils' best eight subjects in 2018 was the result of pupils completing legacy qualifications earlier in key stage 4, for example in history and modern foreign languages, which are not included in the performance tables.
- Inspectors found compelling evidence through visits to lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work that pupils make consistently good progress across many curriculum areas, including the humanities, the arts and modern foreign languages. For example, in a mixed-age GCSE art lesson, all pupils skilfully used a range of media to produce high-quality work, demonstrating their strong command of artistic techniques and good use of colour. In a religious education revision lesson, pupils demonstrated very good understanding of religious teachings about marriage and divorce.
- In lessons and over time, disadvantaged pupils make broadly the same progress as other pupils in the school. In recent years, they have achieved very well across a range of subjects compared to other pupils nationally, but have achieved less well recently in science.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

## Requires improvement

- Students' attainment at A level declined last year and was significantly below the national average. The most able students achieved poorly. Attainment in the smaller number of entries at AS levels was also significantly below average and in the bottom 10% of all schools nationally.
- Students' attainment in 2018 was poor in A-level mathematics, biology and chemistry. These subjects had high numbers of entries. The school rightly prides itself on its inclusive ethos, but this contributed to some students being allowed to choose courses which they were not ready for. This includes some students currently in Year 13. Leaders have since strengthened the quality of advice and guidance provided to prospective sixth-form students. As a result, students in Year 12 follow study programmes which more consistently meet their needs.
- Leaders have also made appropriate plans to introduce applied qualifications in science from next September so that lower-attaining pupils can pursue their ambitions in

science by following courses that better meet their needs.

- Students' achievement in other subjects, including sociology, psychology and history, has typically been much stronger. Students' attainment in A-level English literature and information and communication technology was significantly above average last year.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers use their strong subject knowledge to set challenging work and use good questioning techniques to check students' understanding. Teachers typically have high expectations and, in most lessons, ensure that learning is purposeful and productive. On occasions, teaching makes insufficient use of assessment to check the learning of the whole group or to provide the necessary challenge to the most able students.
- The school's approach to monitoring the quality of teaching in the sixth form is not strategic enough to ensure that the remaining inconsistencies are reduced. The monitoring of students' attainment is based on information provided by staff, with few opportunities for leaders with responsibility for the sixth form to observe teaching at first hand. This means that there are no checks on how well teaching meets students' needs across different subjects, including the most able students and those with lower starting points.
- Last year, no students who joined the sixth form without a standard pass in English GCSE improved their grades. This was in contrast to a more positive picture in mathematics. Leaders have redesigned this aspect of the curriculum so that students are better prepared for their English examinations than before.
- Students benefit from a good range of non-qualification activities designed to develop their character, skills and attitudes. These include the Duke of Edinburgh's Silver Award, work with younger students in the school and in local primary schools, and opportunities to develop their skills as sports leaders. These activities contribute well to students' personal development.
- The school's football development programme in partnership with Barnet FC is a strong part of provision. This programme enables aspiring professional footballers to combine their football apprenticeships with academic or applied qualifications. This programme is being rolled out next year to support the ambitions of talented female footballers.
- Sixth-form students are highly complimentary about the new leadership of the sixth form. They value the high-quality advice and guidance they receive. Students also spoke of the increased range of visits to universities provided this year.
- Students' attendance and progress are monitored carefully. Although interventions to support vulnerable students are increasingly effective, attendance in Year 13 remains too low. Punctuality in the sixth form is variable, as in the main school.
- The school is rightly proud of the increasing numbers of students who gain places at university, including Russell Group universities.



## School details

Unique reference number	137199
Local authority	Harrow
Inspection number	10086814

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	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	1,244
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	268
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Keith Rutter
Headteacher	Keven Bartle
Telephone number	020 8951 5780
Website	<a href="http://www.canons.harrow.sch.uk">www.canons.harrow.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@canons.harrow.sch.uk">admin@canons.harrow.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	18–19 June 2013

## Information about this school

- The school is the only school in the Canons High School multi-academy trust. The board of trustees delegates some responsibilities to the local governing body. In practice, however, the board and the local governing body operate as a single entity.
- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school. It has grown in size and there are over 200 more pupils on roll than at the time of the last inspection.
- The school provides sixth-form teaching through collaborative arrangements with post-16 providers from across the local authority. In practice, this mostly involves partnership working with one local secondary school.

- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. Three quarters of the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly average.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning and scrutinised pupils' work across a range of subjects and in all key stages. They visited 52 lessons in total. Some observations of teaching were completed jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors held formal discussions with pupils in all key stages and also spoke with pupils informally at other times of the school day.
- Inspectors met with a range of staff, including senior and middle leaders, and other teachers. They also met with members of the trust and the local governing body. The lead inspector spoke by telephone with the education lead from the local authority's multi-agency safeguarding hub.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of school policies and documents. These included published performance information and the evaluations presented of different aspects of the school's work, including those conducted by external consultants. Inspectors also scrutinised a sample of improvement plans, known as 'team improvement plans' at the school. Inspectors scrutinised records regarding pupils' behaviour and attendance and the arrangements for safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the views of the 70 staff who completed the staff questionnaire. They also considered 29 email submissions received from staff. Two parents contacted inspectors during the inspection and their views were considered alongside the rest of the evidence gathered during the inspection.

## Inspection team

Daniel Burton, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Charlotte Robinson	Ofsted Inspector
Jeff Cole	Ofsted Inspector
Lizzie Jeanes	Ofsted Inspector
Aruna Sharma	Ofsted Inspector

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