

Calderstones School

Harthill Road, Liverpool, Merseyside L18 3HS

Inspection dates

21–22 May 2019

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
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, leaders have been unable to sustain some of the improvements they secured in pupils' achievement.
- Those pupils who left the school in 2018 did not make good progress and did not achieve well across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Inconsistencies remain in the ability of middle leaders to improve the quality of teaching in their subject areas.
- Some teachers do not have high expectations or expect the best of pupils.
- In some areas of the curriculum, such as French, pupils do not receive sufficient support to enable them to make good progress. This is especially the case for boys and disadvantaged pupils.
- There are times when teachers do not ensure that pupils' learning is secure before they move on.
- Some teachers do not routinely identify and address the gaps in pupils' learning.
- Some teaching does not meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have secured improvements in pupils' attendance. As a result, the proportion of pupils attending school is now closer to the national average.
- The quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form is good. Students make progress that is in line with other students nationally.
- There have been improvements in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. Consequently, pupils make good progress in some subjects, for example in science.
- Pupils feel safe in school. Incidents of bullying are rare.
- A strengthened governing body is holding leaders to account more diligently for their actions.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of effective careers advice.
- Most pupils behave well and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils, particularly boys, disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with SEND, make at least good progress across a range of subjects by ensuring that teachers:
 - identify and address the gaps in pupils' knowledge
 - ensure that pupils' learning is secure before they move on to more demanding tasks
 - have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve and expect the best of pupils
 - use information about pupils with SEND to plan learning that meets their needs.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - middle leaders are consistently successful in improving the quality of teaching in their subjects
 - pupils make good progress in a wider range of subjects across the curriculum, for example in French.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have been successful in securing improvement in some aspects of the school since the previous inspection. These are evident in the standards of pupils' behaviour; the quality of the 16 to 19 study programmes; outcomes for disadvantaged pupils; outcomes for pupils in science; and the achievement of those pupils who join the school with average and lower-than-average starting points. Pupils, parents and carers and staff have confidence in school leaders and are positive about the school's future.
- Some of the improvements that leaders secured in progress and attainment for pupils in 2017 have not been sustained. For example, many boys who left the school in 2018 did not make enough gains in their learning. Outcomes for pupils in some subjects have been affected by staffing instability and sometimes by weaknesses in leadership. For example, instability in staffing had a negative effect on pupils' achievement in mathematics at key stage 4.
- Several recent appointments have strengthened the leadership of the school. Senior and middle leaders have an accurate understanding of those aspects of the school that continue to require improvement. Plans to improve the school are fit for purpose. Leaders check regularly that their actions are having a positive effect and amend their approach if necessary. Leaders' actions are securing improvements in the progress made by current pupils. For example, improvements in the quality of teaching have ensured that current pupils make good progress in English at key stage 4.
- The headteacher has made sure that leaders' responsibilities are clearly defined. For example, senior leaders hold middle leaders to account for the quality of teaching in their subjects. Some middle leaders have had a positive impact on the quality of teaching in their subjects, for instance in science. However, others have been less effective in improving the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility.
- Senior leaders have acted to strengthen the systems that they use to check the quality of teaching. This is having a positive effect, particularly in the sixth form and at key stage 4. Teachers have benefited from relevant training. This includes working alongside teachers in other schools and opportunities to develop their subject knowledge. Staff are confident that training is helping them to improve their practice.
- There have been weaknesses in how well leaders have used additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils. Following a review of this area, senior leaders are using additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils more effectively. Closer attention is paid to the barriers that these pupils may face. Leaders check regularly that they are using the additional funding to good effect. Nonetheless, the progress made by this group of pupils in some subjects is hampered by weaknesses in the quality of teaching.
- Senior leaders are ambitious for pupils. To this end, pupils access a broad and largely academic curriculum. A wide variety of extra-curricular activities complement the curriculum. Pupils appreciate the wealth of opportunities and clubs on offer. Leaders have made some changes to the curriculum to increase the number of vocational subjects on offer. However, it is too early to say whether these changes will have a positive effect on the progress that pupils make.

- Leaders ensure that teachers and teaching assistants understand the needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders monitor the progress made by this group of pupils. Those pupils who fall behind in their learning receive targeted help. However, weaknesses in the quality of teaching mean that some pupils with SEND do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders have worked successfully to improve relationships between staff and parents. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Almost all parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, would recommend the school. Furthermore, most parents agree that the school provides valuable information about their children's progress.
- Leaders effectively promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Pupils appreciate the opportunities on offer. Through the religious studies curriculum, pupils learn about religions different from their own. They can also develop their leadership skills, for example by being a 'sports leader' or a 'literacy leader'. Well-established clubs, such as the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender group, help to support the school's inclusive ethos and prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders use catch-up funding effectively to support those pupils in Year 7 who join the school with weak literacy and numeracy skills. For example, additional support with reading is helping more pupils to access the curriculum at key stage 3.

Governance of the school

- In the past, governors have not held leaders fully to account for all aspects of their work. Following the previous inspection, there was an external review of governance, which has prompted governors to take appropriate action to improve their effectiveness.
- There have been several new appointments to the governing body, including a new chair of governors. Members of the governing body bring a broader range of skills, knowledge and expertise to their roles.
- Increasingly, the strengthened governing body is holding leaders to account more diligently, for example with regard to the use of the pupil premium. Governors ask challenging questions of leaders to check that aspects of the school are improving. For example, governors have challenged leaders about pupils' rates of attendance and the quality of teaching in science. Leaders have secured improvements in both areas.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders' systems to check that adults are safe to work with pupils are secure. Staff receive regular safeguarding training. They understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. If staff have concerns about a pupil, they know the procedures that they must follow.
- Staff are quick to respond to concerns about those pupils who may be at risk. Leaders maintain accurate and sufficiently detailed safeguarding records. They have established strong links with a number of external agencies and draw upon this expertise where appropriate. This ensures that vulnerable pupils access suitable support.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved since the previous inspection. More pupils benefit from teaching that is routinely good. This is especially the case in science, a subject in which inspectors previously identified a weakness. Nonetheless, variations in the quality of teaching within subjects and across year groups remain, for example in French.
- Some teachers are highly skilled in identifying pupils' errors and misconceptions. Through effective guidance and support, pupils overcome the difficulties that they face during learning. Where this is the case, pupils make good progress over time. However, this is not done consistently well across year groups and within subjects. For example, at times pupils' errors are left unrectified. This prevents them from learning from their mistakes.
- There are times when teaching is well matched to the needs of pupils with SEND. For example, work in pupils' books shows some pupils can confidently apply their prior learning to more difficult activities. However, some teachers do not use information to plan learning that meets the needs of pupils with SEND. This hinders the progress of this group of pupils.
- Some teachers have high expectations of pupils. Where this is the case, pupils respond positively, rise to the challenge and produce work that is of high quality. However, there are times when teachers do not expect the best from pupils. Consequently, pupils, particularly boys, produce work that does not reflect the high standards of which they are capable.
- Teachers are enthusiastic and committed. They have a strong knowledge of their subject. They use this knowledge to ensure that learning is sequenced well. However, occasionally some teachers move on before pupils' learning is secure. As a result, some pupils have a fragile understanding of the concepts that they will need for future learning.
- Teachers have forged strong and supportive relationships with pupils. Older pupils are particularly positive about the extra help they receive from teachers to prepare them for their examinations.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Most pupils are proud of their school, show positive attitudes to their learning, respect the views of their peers and take pride in their work.
- Pupils feel safe. Pupils whom inspectors spoke to explained that members of staff listen to them if they have concerns or worries. All pupils, but particularly those pupils who are vulnerable, benefit from effective pastoral support.
- Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn about the dangers of knife crime and how to stay safe online. Pupils learn about how to look after

their mental health.

- Pupils explained to inspectors that bullying is rare. The overwhelming majority of pupils and parents are confident that staff will deal effectively with any incidents.
- Older pupils describe the school community as 'tolerant and diverse'. They report that they can be open about their sexual orientation or gender identity. They consider the use of racist or homophobic language to be extremely rare. Pupils are confident that use of such language would be dealt with quickly and appropriately by staff.
- Pupils benefit from a range of good-quality careers information, advice and guidance to prepare them for the next stage of their education. The proportion of pupils moving on to further education, employment or training has increased steadily since the previous inspection.
- Leaders check the welfare and attendance of those pupils who attend alternative provision.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most pupils, parents and staff share this view. For the most part, pupils' movement around the school is calm and orderly. Pupils are considerate and polite. They show respect for staff and visitors to the school.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils and teachers report that low-level disruption during learning is rare. The clear systems for managing pupils' behaviour are well understood by pupils and teachers. Most teachers use them well. Staff feel that leaders support them well to manage pupils' behaviour effectively.
- Rates of attendance are improving for all pupils, but this is especially the case for boys and pupils in key stage 3. The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school is now in line with the national average. Fewer disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND are regularly absent from school than at the time of the previous inspection.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have raised their expectations of pupils' behaviour. The proportion of pupils excluded from school has increased slightly yet remains below national averages.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils excluded for a fixed period has reduced steadily and is lower than at the time of the previous inspection. This group of pupils benefits from additional support if they struggle to manage their behaviour.
- Leaders use permanent exclusion only as a last resort. The proportion of pupils excluded from school permanently is in line with the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Following the previous inspection, leaders secured several improvements in the progress made by pupils at key stage 4, for example in English and science. However, leaders were unable to sustain some of these improvements. Consequently, overall, pupils who left the school in 2018 had not achieved as well as pupils who left the year before. This was especially the case for boys.
- The progress made by current pupils is improving. This is particularly true in English at

key stage 4. Leaders' actions to stabilise staffing in English have been successful in improving the quality of teaching in this subject. Following a decline in pupils' progress in mathematics at key stage 4, there is evidence that current pupils are making greater gains in their mathematical learning. This is because teachers use assessment information effectively to identify and address the gaps in pupils' knowledge.

- Leaders have been able to sustain the improvements in science. Pupils make good progress in this subject. This is also the case for disadvantaged pupils. The proportion of pupils who achieved a standard pass in 2018 was in line with the national average in this subject.
- Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils benefit from carefully targeted support with their learning. This is having a positive effect on the progress made by this group of pupils in both English and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils make greater gains in their learning than at the time of the previous inspection. In subjects where teaching is routinely good, disadvantaged pupils make progress in line with other pupils nationally.
- The progress made by pupils with SEND varies across subjects and year groups. Some teachers use information effectively to plan for the needs of this group of pupils. As a result, these pupils overcome misconceptions and make good progress. However, too often teachers do not use this information effectively to meet the needs of this group of pupils.
- The proportion of pupils who go on to further education, employment or training is higher than the national average. Nonetheless, many pupils have not achieved the high standards of which they are capable at key stage 4. This places some restrictions on the choices open to them when they leave the school.
- Leaders check on the progress made by those pupils who attend alternative provision. They also ensure that courses lay the appropriate foundations for the next stage of their education.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leaders have taken effective action to improve the quality of the 16 to 19 study programmes. For instance, the proportion of students who stay on to complete the second year of their study programme, identified as a weakness at the previous inspection, has increased and is now in line with the national average.
- Students in the sixth form make progress in line with other students nationally. Leaders' assessment information and students' work show that current students make good progress in their academic qualifications. For instance, students make good progress in Spanish, chemistry, biology and English language.
- Leaders in the sixth form monitor students' progress closely. Those students who fall behind in their learning are identified quickly. They receive from staff carefully planned support that allows them to catch up with their peers. The progress made by those students who are disadvantaged is improving.
- Teaching supports students to use their knowledge and challenges them to apply this to more complex tasks. Teachers provide clear explanations for students about how to improve their work. There are strong and supportive relationships between teachers

and students.

- Students value the strong and individualised study programmes that the sixth form offers. These programmes build on students' previous experience and prepare them well for the future.
- Students are proud to act as role models for younger pupils. Students benefit from the wide range of opportunities and leadership roles on offer. These include supporting younger pupils in the school and volunteering in the local community. For example, some students receive training to enable them to support younger pupils with their emotional well-being.
- Leaders ensure that students who do not achieve a standard pass in English or mathematics at key stage 4 receive appropriate help and support. Those students who did not achieve a standard pass in English and mathematics make good progress on these courses in the sixth form.
- Leaders have high expectations of students. There are robust procedures in place to ensure that rates of attendance in the sixth form are strong. Students have consistently positive attitudes to learning.
- Students appreciate the support they receive to make choices about the next stage of their education. In 2018, effective careers guidance, advice and support ensured that all students continued to higher education, employment or training.
- Students report that they feel safe. Safeguarding in the sixth form is effective.

School details

Unique reference number	104698
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10057911

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
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	1,428
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Blanchard
Headteacher	Lee Ratcliffe
Telephone number	0151 724 2087
Website	www.calderstones.co.uk
Email address	admin@calderstones.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–6 November 2016

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school, and has a sixth form.
- Since the last inspection, there have been significant staff changes, particularly at senior- and middle-leadership levels.
- There have also been significant changes to the governing body, including the appointment of a new chair of governors.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is slightly above the national average.
- The proportion of boys is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly in line with the national average. The

proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is below the national average.

- The school currently makes use of the following alternative providers for 22 pupils: Prudentia; Harmonize AP Free School; Aspire; Employability Solutions Ltd; Evolve Merseyside; New Heights High School; and Alder Centre Education.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning and scrutinised pupils' work across year groups and subjects. Inspectors spoke with pupils during social times and between lessons. They also spoke formally with four groups of pupils and one group of sixth-form students.
- Inspectors considered 197 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents. This included written responses from parents to Ofsted's free text facility. They also considered 82 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 38 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- The inspection team considered a wide variety of documentation. This included the school's improvement plan, the school's own information about the progress of current pupils, pupil attendance information and documentation relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, a group of subject leaders, a group of pastoral leaders, a group of teachers, a group of teaching assistants and a group of newly qualified teachers. They also spoke with other members of the school staff. An inspector spoke by telephone to members of staff from some alternative providers used by the school.
- The lead inspector met with two representatives of the local authority and four members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.

Inspection team

Emma Gregory, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Paula Arrowsmith	Ofsted Inspector
Osama Abdul Rahim	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Bather	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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