

Inspection of Penketh High School

Heath Road, Warrington, Cheshire WA5 2BY

Inspection dates: 25–26 February 2020

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

What is it like to attend this school?

The headteacher and trustees promote the highest of ambitions for all pupils. They are determined to provide the best for them. The hard work of staff contributes to the good quality of education that pupils receive.

Pupils' learning is strong across the curriculum and this helps them to do well in their examinations. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Disadvantaged pupils have recently done much better in their GCSE examinations than those in previous years. Over time, their results are catching up with those of other pupils nationally.

The pupils that we spoke to said that they feel safe in the school. They are confident and happy. Bullying is rare. If this does happen, it is sorted out quickly. Pupils say there is always an adult to talk to if they need help or support.

Pupils are prompt for lessons. They feel that staff care about doing a good job, so they teach them well. Pupils try hard and conduct themselves sensibly in class.

Pupils also behave well at break and lunchtime. They enjoy socialising or taking part in the many clubs that run. Staff ask pupils about their interests and hobbies, such as yoga, performances, and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, to make sure there is something provided for everyone.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Parents and carers, pupils, and staff say the headteacher has transformed school leadership. He and many other leaders have been appointed to their roles since September 2017. This has made a big difference to pupils' experience at school. The expectations of pupils are higher. Pupils now benefit from a good quality of education, day in, day out.

Trustees and the chief executive officer understand and fulfil their roles well. Their focus is on securing positive experiences for pupils, in lessons and other activities. They support staff to investigate new ways to improve pupils' education. Some staff are undertaking a research project with Oxford University. This is to better support pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, to excel in languages and science. Leaders want to prepare more pupils for study at Oxford, Cambridge and other prestigious universities.

The education pupils receive is, almost always, well planned and delivered. Where the curriculum is delivered at its best, teaching is well organised so that pupils' knowledge is built up in a helpful order. Teachers help pupils to remember by placing emphasis on ambitious and interesting activities. These opportunities stretch and excite pupils' thinking, so they achieve especially well.

In the past, the curriculum at key stage 3 left pupils short of important knowledge about their different subjects and to help them have a wider understanding of the world. Subject leaders have used their expertise to overcome this weakness in the curriculum. They have designed new plans with the breadth and ambition which pupils need. These plans are now in place in all but a few subjects.

The school provides pupils in key stage 4 with a suitable range of courses to match their interests and help them to achieve their ambitions. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with SEND.

Leaders have tackled disadvantaged pupils' weak attendance and poor achievement. Many disadvantaged pupils are attending more regularly and being more successful. However, some disadvantaged pupils continue to be absent too often. They miss out on important learning.

Leaders provide effective education for pupils with SEND. This includes those who are part of the specialist-resourced provision. These pupils enjoy learning with one another and with other pupils. They also benefit from the strong wider curriculum which they are offered. The well-planned activities, which include more than 50 clubs and trips, meet such pupils' interests and needs. They help pupils to be successful once they have left the school.

Pupils' personal development is an important part of the curriculum. Pupils are provided with time and opportunities to find out about and think about the society in which we live. They learn how to become involved in and make a positive difference to the things that they care about, locally and more widely.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff take pupils' safety and emotional well-being seriously. Leaders provide regular training, so that staff know what to look out for if pupils might be at risk. Staff know how to deal with safeguarding concerns. Leaders ensure that, when such concerns are identified, vulnerable pupils and their families receive appropriate support. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. They know who to contact if they are unhappy or are worried about others.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have taken action to overcome previous weaknesses in the key stage 3 curriculum. The key stage 3 curriculum in English, mathematics and the English Baccalaureate subjects now provides a broad and ambitious experience. However, the key stage 3 curriculum does not yet fully match the requirements of the national curriculum in a few other subjects. These include art, performing arts and technology-based subjects. This means that pupils do not develop their

knowledge and skills in these subjects as well as they should. Leaders must complete their review and implementation of the key stage 3 curriculum, so that it meets all pupils' needs and entitlement in all subjects.

- Most pupils attend school regularly. This helps them to achieve well. The attendance and achievement of disadvantaged pupils has increased markedly since September 2018. However, a minority of disadvantaged pupils do not attend regularly. This means that they miss out on important learning. Leaders should continue to improve the attendance of these pupils, so that they attend regularly and achieve well.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	145157
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	10122145
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	877
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Howard Platt
Headteacher	John Carlin
Website	www.penkethhigh.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Penketh High School opened on 1 May 2017. It is part of The Challenge Academy Trust. It had previously been a stand-alone academy.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at New Horizons.
- The school includes a specialist-resourced provision for 20 pupils aged 11 to 16. This provision supports pupils with cognition and learning difficulties.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We held meetings with the headteacher, senior and subject leaders, the chair of trustees and other trustees, the chief executive officer of the trust, and a representative of the local authority.
- We reviewed the school's records of safeguarding checks and referrals to the local authority. We spoke with staff about how they keep pupils safe. We also asked the pupils how they keep themselves safe and what to do if they have concerns.

- We took account of the views of the 102 pupils who responded to Ofsted’s online pupil questionnaire.
- We held discussions with staff and considered the responses of 55 staff to Ofsted’s online staff questionnaire.
- We considered the views of the 42 parents who completed Parent View, Ofsted’s online survey, including the 25 free-text responses.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: art, English, history, mathematics and science. We discussed the arrangements for the curriculum and teaching with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers. We visited lessons and then talked with pupils about what they had learned. We looked at examples of pupils’ work in their exercise books and folders in these subjects.

Inspection team

Stephen Ruddy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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David Roberts	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Bailey	Ofsted Inspector

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