

# Inspection of a good school: Carnforth High School

Kellet Road, Carnforth, Lancashire LA5 9LS

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Inspection dates:

8 and 9 December 2021

## **Outcome**

Carnforth High School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Leaders and staff are ambitious for pupils at Carnforth High School. They expect pupils to behave and achieve well. Pupils typically model the school's values of confidence, purpose and respect.

Pupils said that this is a happy school. They feel safe. Pupils told inspectors that staff are friendly and approachable. They trust staff to help them with any problems.

Staff support and encourage good behaviour. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around school. Pupils typically enjoy a calm and orderly education. They are respectful and want to do well. A minority of pupils sometimes disrupt others. Teachers challenge pupils effectively when their behaviour is not as it should be.

Pupils treat each other with kindness. They said that they very rarely see any bullying or other hurtful behaviours. Pupils are very confident in how staff deal with these occasional incidents of unacceptable behaviour.

Staff encourage all pupils to participate in the wider life of Carnforth High School. Pupils participate in an extensive range of additional opportunities, including The Duke of Edinburgh's and Carnforth High School Awards. In particular, boys and girls spoke proudly of contributing to the competitive sporting reputation for which the school is well known.

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

Trustees, governors and leaders work effectively together. Their combined efforts to strengthen the quality of education and pupils' attendance and behaviour have been successful.

Leaders have appropriately redesigned the curriculum. The curriculum provides pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), with a broad and balanced education. Pupils of all ages study the full

curriculum in sufficient depth. Increasingly, pupils are studying a more ambitious range of appropriate subjects.

Leaders have secured demonstrable improvements to subject leadership. They act promptly to ensure additional support is used to strengthen subject leadership where necessary.

Subject plans ensure that pupils study suitable content. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Typically, they use it effectively to present subject matter clearly and to check what pupils can do. This means that most pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with SEND, know and remember more subject content. Over time, pupils achieve well.

Some subject plans are clearer about the knowledge that pupils should learn. In these subjects, teachers provide activities for pupils that more closely match the aims of the curriculum. These teachers have greater guidance on how to check what pupils have learned. Pupils make stronger gains in what they know and remember in these subjects. Conversely, pupils' progress through the planned curriculum is less secure in a minority of other subjects. This is because teachers do not have the information that they need to select the most effective activities or assessment strategies.

Leaders carefully identify pupils' reading abilities when they join the school. They provide well-matched support for pupils at the earliest stages of learning to read. These pupils successfully improve their reading knowledge. All pupils benefit from opportunities to read for purpose and pleasure. Staff throughout the school contribute well to modelling and encouraging good reading habits for pupils.

Leaders have a good understanding of emerging behaviour trends. They work effectively with staff to sustain a positive culture of behaviour for pupils. As a result, pupils usually study without being interrupted by low-level distractions.

Pupils' personal development is skilfully planned. Specialist staff confidently deliver weekly 'Life Skills' lessons. These provide pupils with opportunities to explore personal qualities, relationships, safety, careers and their futures. Leaders make informed use of information about pupils' behaviour and safety to provide focused assemblies, form time and enrichment days. Pupils value and enjoy all of these opportunities. They told inspectors they are always useful and help them to feel confident about the future.

Leaders use a range of suitable information to quickly identify pupils' additional needs. They ensure that staff have the information and skills they need to support pupils with SEND well in lessons. Specialist staff provide an extensive range of additional support for pupils with SEND. These support strategies help pupils to overcome specific barriers or strengthen their knowledge of English and mathematics. Staff work closely with parents and carers, who are highly complimentary about the support that their children receive.

Leaders are mindful of the pressures that staff experience. They carefully consider the workload of staff and generously support this where possible. Leaders provide a range of

additional professional services to promote and support staff's well-being and welfare. The vast majority of staff feel valued and well supported by leaders.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders thoughtfully design their safeguarding practices around the most common risks that pupils experience. They ensure that pupils are taught well about avoiding risk and staying safe.

Leaders ensure that staff are knowledgeable about the risks that pupils may experience. They train staff well so that they confidently report concerns about pupils' safety.

Staff use well-honed practices to quickly provide pupils with support that is well matched to their needs. They deftly identify where pupils need further support. They work effectively with external professionals to enhance the support that some pupils need.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Some subject plans are not as clear as they should be about the knowledge that pupils should learn. In these subjects, the activities that pupils complete and the assessment strategies that teachers use are not as focused on the intended learning as in other subjects. Consequently, in these subjects, some pupils do not make the same gains in their learning as they do elsewhere. Leaders should ensure that all subject plans set out the important knowledge that pupils should learn. They should ensure that teachers confidently use this knowledge to deliver subject content and check what pupils know and remember.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Carnforth High School, to be good in April 2013.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	145082
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10216085
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	647
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Mike Dudfield
<b>Principal</b>	Tim Iddon
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.carnforthhigh.co.uk">http://www.carnforthhigh.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Carnforth High School converted to become an academy in June 2018. When its predecessor school, Carnforth High School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- Carnforth High school is part of The Bay Learning Trust, a local multi-academy trust.
- The school does not make use of any alternate provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the principal and senior leaders. They met with representatives of the academy trust, governing body and local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's records of safeguarding checks and referrals. They met with leaders who have overall responsibility for safeguarding. Inspectors spoke with staff and pupils about the school's work to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders responsible for SEND and reading. They also looked at information about the support for pupils who have additional needs.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in class and around the school site. They also scrutinised behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils from all year groups and considered the responses of the pupils who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff and the responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff were considered.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including the comments received by Ofsted's free-text facility.

### **Inspection team**

Michael Pennington, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Stephen Ruddy

Ofsted Inspector

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