

Inspection of Norton Canes High School

Burntwood Road, Norton Canes, Cannock, Staffordshire WS11 9SP

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 March 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Norton Canes High School is an inclusive school. Leaders and teachers are proud to serve their community. Pupils report that they feel safe at school. Teachers and pupils generally have positive relationships. Pupils say that teachers and other staff work hard to help them.

The school is generally a calm and orderly environment. Most pupils behave sensibly when they are in lessons and when they are moving around the school site. However, there are a small number of pupils who do not behave well enough. This can lead to some learning being disrupted. Parents, pupils and staff all share a concern about this. Leaders have introduced new approaches to managing behaviour recently which is helping to improve the behaviour of pupils. Bullying can take place, but this is rare and staff deal with it. Pupils say that teachers are always available to help them if they have a problem.

The new headteacher knows that the school needs to improve. Leaders have made changes that are already improving the school.

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

Most subject leaders plan an ambitious curriculum. Generally, pupils learn in a clear and structured way. Most teachers have secure subject knowledge and check how much pupils have learned and can recall. This helps pupils to remember knowledge and skills over time. However, this is not consistent across all subjects. Some subject leaders have only recently been appointed. In some subjects, the school relies on supply teachers. This means that curriculum planning in some subjects is not complete and the delivery of the planning is inconsistent. In these subjects, pupils make less progress.

The curriculum covers a range of subjects. In key stage 3, pupils follow the national curriculum subjects. However, in key stage 4, some pupils are not able to follow all the GCSE courses they want to. For example, as all pupils have to study for an information and communication technology qualification, it reduces the time to study other subjects. In addition to this, the most-able pupils are not able to study more challenging science courses. This reduces the options these pupils have when they progress to post-16 education. Leaders are reviewing the key stage 4 curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of all pupils.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. Leaders identify the needs of these pupils. These pupils follow the same curriculum as their peers and progress well. Teachers make adjustments in lessons to help pupils learn. A small number of pupils attend a specialist base for those with autism spectrum disorder. They are very well integrated into the school.

Pupils' attendance has improved but is still too low. Leaders are aware of this. The pandemic has affected attendance. Leaders are working with specific groups of pupils to ensure their attendance improves.

Some pupils do not behave as well as they should because behaviour is not managed in a consistent way by all staff. There has been a large rise in fixed-term exclusions recently. Leaders have introduced new approaches to address this, which is starting to improve behaviour management across the school.

There has been a range of leadership changes in recent years. The headteacher has a clear vision about how to improve the school. Able senior leaders support her with this. They understand what the school does well and what it needs to do better. Staff wholeheartedly support the headteacher. Staff say they enjoy working at the school.

Governance of the school is not fully effective. Governors do not systematically challenge leaders to check that their actions are improving the school. Governors are aware of this weakness but do not currently have plans in place to improve this.

Pupils have a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. There are lots of clubs and activities available. For example, pupils can explore astronomy or photography, as well as represent the school in sports. These activities contribute to supporting pupils' personal development. Pupils receive extensive information about future careers. They learn about a range of options available to them when they leave school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff understand how important safeguarding is. Leaders plan and deliver training to help ensure that everyone knows how to respond to concerns. Leaders ensure that safeguarding checks are carried out when new members of staff are appointed.

Vulnerable groups of children are supported well. School leaders work with external agencies to help keep pupils safe.

Pupils understand how to look after themselves. They are taught what they need to do if they are worried about themselves or their peers. Personal, social, health and economic education is effective. Pupils trust that school staff will help them if they need support.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subject leaders have not devised planning that outlines clearly what pupils should learn and how teachers should check what has been learned.

Consequently, pupils do not make as much progress in these subjects. Subject leaders must ensure that planning sets out clearly what knowledge and skills pupils should learn and in what order and how teachers should check what pupils know and remember.

- Governors do not evaluate the effectiveness of leaders' actions carefully enough. This means that they do not have a secure oversight of whether leaders' actions are improving the school and are unable to hold leaders to account for this. Governors should take action to improve their ability to evaluate the impact of leaders' actions so that they can hold them to account for school improvement.
- Pupils in key stage 4 are not always able to follow the courses most suited to their needs. This means they are not as well prepared for their next steps after Year 11 as they could be. Leaders should review the key stage 4 curriculum design to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils.
- Some groups of pupils do not attend school often enough. As a result, they miss too much learning. Leaders must ensure that steps continue to be taken to improve the attendance of all pupils.
- A small number of pupils are disruptive. This leads to some learning being interrupted. Leaders must ensure that all members of staff follow a consistent approach to managing and improving pupils' behaviour.

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

Unique reference number	124395
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10210926
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	490
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	55
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Leslie Bullock
Headteacher	Sarah Diggory
Website	www.nortoncaneshighschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 and 18 May 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed permanently in January 2022, having previously been the acting headteacher.
- 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.
- The school uses four alternative providers for a small number of its pupils. Three of these are registered (Chaselea Pupil Referral Unit, The Bridge and Nova Training) and one is unregistered (Reflective School Support Ltd).

Information about this inspection

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

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders, including curriculum and pastoral leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors also talked to teachers and members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, history, geography and science. For these, inspectors met with subject leaders and teachers, visited lessons, spoke to pupils and also considered their work.
- Inspectors met with members of staff individually and in groups and spoke to pupils in formal and informal situations.
- The views of staff, parents and pupils were also taken into account through the Ofsted surveys that were completed during the inspection.
- Inspectors considered school records of bullying, behaviour, attendance, punctuality and safeguarding.
- Safeguarding arrangements were scrutinised through the consideration of the single central record and policy documents, and through discussions with the designated safeguarding lead.

Inspection team

Thomas Walton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Feldman	Ofsted Inspector
David Hermitt	Ofsted Inspector

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