

Inspection of The Heath School

Clifton Road, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 4SY

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel safe and happy at this school. They told inspectors that it is a welcoming place. Pupils support each other well. They said that bullying does not happen often. If it does, teachers act quickly to stop it. Pupils told inspectors that there are trusted adults in school that they can talk to if they have any worries.

Teachers expect high standards of behaviour. Pupils usually behave well, which means that learning is rarely disrupted. They have strong relationships with their teachers. Pupils respect each other.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities and clubs. These include taking part in the school musical, sporting activities and trips abroad. Pupils have a strong voice in school. They said that some clubs were set up at their request because they had a passion for an activity, for example knitting. Pupils also have opportunities to hold positions of responsibility. They join groups like the junior leadership team or they become anti-bullying ambassadors.

Leaders have begun to improve the curriculum. They have raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve. In some subjects, this has resulted in carefully designed curriculums to help pupils learn and remember more. However, in other subjects, leaders have not clearly identified the important knowledge that pupils need to learn.

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

Leaders want all pupils to be well prepared for life in modern Britain. Therefore, leaders have recently made changes to the curriculum to make it more ambitious. Pupils have access to a varied curriculum offer. This includes an appropriate range of arts subjects at key stage 3, including dance and drama. Pupils in key stage 4 follow a suitably wide range of academic and vocational qualifications that have been carefully selected to meet their needs.

Leaders have taken action to support and train subject leaders to design their curriculums more effectively. As a result, in some subjects, leaders have clearly identified the topics and concepts that pupils need to learn. This means that pupils can build upon what they already know and are well prepared for their future learning. However, other subject leaders are still in the process of thinking about the important information that pupils must learn. As a result of this weakness, some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge.

Teachers have strong knowledge of their subjects. They use this to help pupils understand their learning. Leaders have introduced some new ways for teachers to check what pupils have learned. However, some teachers do not fully understand how to use these strategies to check pupils' knowledge and understanding. This

means that sometimes pupils' misconceptions are not addressed as effectively as they could be. This hinders pupils' learning.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils usually learn the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders ensure that pupils' additional needs are identified effectively and that plans are in place to support them. However, not all teachers use this information as well as they should when they adapt the delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND. Consequently, some of these pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Leaders are developing a programme to support pupils who are struggling to read. The programme identifies pupils in key stage 3 who cannot read well. However, leaders do not carefully check the impact of the support that they give to key stage 3 pupils who find reading more difficult. Furthermore, this programme is not used widely at key stage 4, which means that some older pupils do not get the support that they need to catch up with their reading. This hinders how well some pupils access the wider curriculum.

There are clear systems in place to support pupils to behave well. Most teachers use these systems consistently well. As a result, pupils can focus on their learning in lessons.

Leaders have created a strong programme of personal development. This includes teaching pupils about healthy relationships and how to keep themselves safe in an age-appropriate way. Pupils value this and remember their learning well.

Pupils experience a suitable careers programme. This supports them to access appropriate routes into further education, training and/or employment when they leave school. Year 10 pupils take part in well-designed work experience placements to help them make the right decisions about their future.

Staff enjoy working at this school. Their morale is high. Most staff feel that leaders are considerate of their well-being. Governors are appropriately challenging and supporting leaders to improve the quality of education for pupils, including the curriculum design.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have identified local safeguarding risks. Pupils are taught about these as part of an age-appropriate programme. This is appropriately delivered through the personal, social and health education lessons, assemblies and form time. The pupils who spoke with inspectors said that unwanted sexual behaviours are not tolerated in school. Where this does happen, pupils said that leaders deal with it effectively.

Leaders know pupils well. They identify pupils who may be at risk of harm quickly and effectively. Leaders work with outside agencies to provide appropriate support

to pupils who need it. Staff know how to report any concerns about pupils. Staff have appropriate safeguarding training and receive regular updates on this. Leaders have ensured that strong pastoral care is in place to support pupils well.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders have not identified the important knowledge that pupils must learn. This means that some pupils do not build on their prior knowledge as well as they could. Leaders should finalise their curriculum thinking to ensure that staff know exactly what pupils must learn in every subject.
- Some teachers do not understand how to use leaders' new assessment strategies. This means that some pupils have misconceptions or gaps in their knowledge that are not addressed. Leaders should ensure that teachers receive the training and support that they need to use the new assessment strategies effectively.
- Some teachers do not use the information that they receive about pupils with SEND to adapt the delivery of the curriculum effectively. This means that some pupils with SEND do not achieve as highly as they could. Leaders should ensure that all staff are appropriately trained to use the information they have to adapt the delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND.
- Leaders approach to identifying and supporting pupils who are struggling to read is under-developed, particularly in key stage 4. This means that some pupils do not receive the timely support that they need to catch up quickly with their reading knowledge. Leaders should ensure that they develop the support that these pupils receive so that they can read fluently and access the curriculum.

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.

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	136779
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	10241423
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	1205
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Helen Stevenson
Headteacher	Jamie Jardine (executive principal)
Website	www.heathschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 and 13 September 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- School leaders make use of one registered alternative provider for a small number of pupils.
- 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

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

- This was the first routine inspection that 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 spoke with the head of school, executive principal, other leaders and staff.

- Inspectors spoke to the vice-chair of the local governing body, the chief executive officer and a consultant working with the trust on school improvement.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, English, history, modern foreign languages, drama and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, including the school's single central record. Inspectors met with leaders, staff and pupils to check how effective safeguarding is in the school. An inspector spoke on the telephone with a representative of the alternative provider.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation document, improvement plans, records of governing body meetings and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses shared through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Sally Rix, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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Andy Cunningham	His Majesty's Inspector
Paula Crawley	Ofsted Inspector
Amanda Downing	His Majesty's Inspector

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