

Inspection of Hanley Castle High School

Church End, Hanley Castle, Worcester, Worcestershire WR8 0BL

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 March 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Hanley Castle High School benefit from an ambitious curriculum for all. Staff help pupils to develop their cultural understanding and think internationally. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, work hard and achieve well.

Leaders set high expectations for pupils' work and behaviour, and these expectations are met. Staff use praise well, and pupils benefit from a range of rewards and opportunities to celebrate success. Pupils recognise that staff want the best for them. There are warm relationships between staff and pupils. Staff implement the behaviour policy fairly. These all contribute to pupils behaving well in lessons and at social times.

Pupils respect others, including those different from themselves. They are courteous to each other and to adults. Staff take bullying seriously and resolve it promptly. Pupils know who to turn to, and they feel safe and happy.

Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, take part in a wide range of extra-curricular clubs. These include sport and creative activities. Pupils benefit from educational visits, including a sixth-form trip to Auschwitz. Pupils have opportunities to take up positions of responsibility, for example as college captains. Pupils regularly give their views on the school, and leaders act on what they say.

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

Leaders have planned a broad and ambitious curriculum. Subject leaders make sure that pupils' learning builds on what they already know. The majority of pupils follow a course leading to GCSEs in English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, humanities and science. Pupils can choose from a wide variety of other academic and technical subjects at key stage 4 and in the sixth form.

Leaders identify those who enter the school with weaker reading skills. They provide these pupils with extra help, so that they catch up well. Teachers ensure that pupils across the school read widely in different subjects.

Teachers have secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. They use this knowledge to deliver the curriculum effectively. Teachers explain new ideas and concepts accurately and precisely so that pupils build their knowledge in manageable steps. They are skilled at deepening pupils' understanding. Teachers help pupils to remember what they have learned, for example by testing their recall at the start of the lesson, and to link new knowledge to it. At key stage 3, leaders have introduced new ways for teachers to identify misconceptions in the classroom. These are generally working effectively, but some staff are not using them consistently well.

Staff are ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND follow the same curriculum as their peers, and learn well. Leaders identify their additional needs accurately, and provide clear guidance for staff on how best to meet them. Just occasionally, staff do not implement this guidance sharply enough.

Pupils develop a good understanding of personal safety, relationships and social issues as part of a well-planned personal development programme. They are taught about other cultures, for example through the curriculum in English and the humanities. The school maintains an active link with a school in Tanzania. Pupils learn to respect different groups of people and their views. Leaders ensure that elections to posts, such as head student, teach pupils about the democratic process. This helps to give pupils the information and knowledge they need to be active local, national and global citizens. Staff provide a good quality of pastoral care. Trained professionals provide effective support for pupils' mental health.

Students in the sixth form are proud of their school. They receive prompt, precise feedback on their work that helps them to extend their knowledge. Students enjoy a particularly varied enrichment programme. Most choose to support younger pupils, for example with their work in lessons or by contributing to extra-curricular activities.

Pupils receive wide-ranging and impartial careers advice. They benefit from work experience, and staff provide additional careers opportunities for vulnerable groups of pupils. Students in the sixth form meet on an individual basis with a professional from a relevant field of work. This means that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education or employment.

Leaders know the school well. They have a keen desire to improve it further. To this end, they have chosen to revisit areas of the curriculum and seek to work more closely with primary schools. Leaders make sure that staff are well trained for the jobs that they do. Less experienced staff receive effective support when they join the school. Staff say that leaders take their workload into consideration.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils learn about the risks that they may face, including those online. Leaders make sure that staff are well trained in safeguarding, so that they know how to identify pupils who may be at risk. They keep staff updated about issues that might pose a threat. Leaders support those who are vulnerable with sensitivity and tenacity. They work well with other agencies that protect children.

The school maintains the necessary safeguarding records. Leaders make the right checks on the staff who join the school.

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What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that all teachers use the school's new procedures for assessment in the classroom at key stage 3 consistently well. In these instances, teachers do not identify and address pupils' misconceptions and misunderstandings swiftly enough. Leaders should ensure that all teachers make regular and timely checks on pupils' knowledge, so that pupils learn the curriculum well and misconceptions are identified and addressed in a timely manner.
- Leaders have not ensured that all staff implement the guidance they provide on how best to meet the additional needs of pupils with SEND precisely enough. Occasionally, these pupils then lack the most effective support, and do not learn as well as they might. Leaders should make sure that all staff use the information about pupils with SEND effectively so that they can ensure that they learn 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 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	137101
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10256886
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	1106
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	205
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tim Sinden
Headteacher	Mark Stow
Website	www.hanleycastle.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Hanley Castle High School is part of the Hanley and Upton Educational Trust. The other three schools in this multi-academy trust (MAT) are local primary schools.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2022.
- The school provides full-time alternative provision for a very few number of pupils at two providers, one of which is registered and one of which is unregistered.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 11 receive information about the full range of education and training options open to them. This includes opportunities for a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils about 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 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 met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Meetings were held with curriculum leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. Inspectors also met with a range of other staff, including early career teachers. The lead inspector met with the chair of the MAT that runs the school, and the chair of the school's local governing body (LGB), to which the MAT delegates oversight of some aspects of the school's work.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils at social times, and with groups of pupils more formally.
- When inspecting safeguarding, inspectors looked at the school's procedures for recruiting and checking on staff. They also considered the effectiveness of staff training and the procedures to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including leaders' plans to improve the school, records of LGB meetings, and the school's attendance and behaviour records.
- The inspection team took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's questionnaire for parents, including narrative comments. Inspectors also considered correspondence and responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and for pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, history and modern foreign languages. In these subjects, inspectors considered the curriculum, visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' work. Inspectors also met with pupils and with teachers to discuss learning in these subjects. An inspector also scrutinised the work of some additional key stage 3 pupils.
- An inspector spoke by telephone to the unregistered provider used by the school.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Stewart Tait	Ofsted Inspector
Jacqueline Newsome	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Byatt	Ofsted Inspector

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