

# Inspection of Central Lancaster High School

Crag Road, Lancaster, Lancashire LA1 3LS

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Inspection dates: 26 and 27 September 2023

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

The executive headteacher of this school is John Cowper. This school is part of The Bay Learning Trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Sally Kenyon, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Crewdson. The executive headteacher is responsible for this school and one other.

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

Pupils at this school benefit from a high-quality education. The staff have the highest expectations for pupils to behave well and succeed in their learning. Over time, pupils have risen to these expectations. They are achieving more highly than in the past.

Pupils behave well. They typically treat each other with respect. A small minority of older pupils are less positive about school. They are taking longer to meet the school's high expectations.

Most pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils in Year 7 get off to a confident and positive start at high school. A group of pupils who have recently arrived from overseas told inspectors that the school makes them feel welcome.

Pupils know who to turn to if they are worried about anything. This helps them to feel happy and safe at school. When pupils report bullying, leaders usually deal with it quickly and effectively. Despite this, a small number of pupils lack confidence that staff will deal with their concerns.

Many pupils enjoy participating in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. For example, they perform with their peers in drama club and learn how to express their views constructively in the debating society.

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

Support from the trust has ensured that there is strong leadership at all levels of this school. Governors work closely with the trust to provide suitable challenge and support to the school. Their partnership has helped to bring about recent improvements, including realising a shared vision to provide an ambitious curriculum for all pupils. An increasing number of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are studying the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects.

Across all subjects, thoughtfully designed curriculums set out a precise order for pupils' learning. Typically, these curriculums are delivered well by staff who know their subjects in depth. Staff explain new ideas clearly and check whether pupils have grasped them before moving on. This helps pupils to build their knowledge step by step. In the main, pupils remember what they have learned.

The school is quick to spot pupils who are struggling with their learning. This includes pupils who may have SEND as well as those who find reading difficult. There are rigorous systems for identifying these pupils' needs. Most pupils with SEND receive effective support. They succeed in the classroom. A small number of pupils who need extra help are supported by well-trained staff. This helps them to return quickly to learning the curriculum alongside their peers. Most pupils who receive help with their reading are catching up to their peers. They are reading with increasing

accuracy and fluency.

Recent work to address poor behaviour has been successful. Staff apply the behaviour policy fairly. Pupils follow the routines that staff have introduced. This helps to create a calm environment for learning. On the few occasions that disruption happens, staff deal with it effectively.

The school is working closely with parents and carers to help pupils see the benefits of attending school. This includes helping families to access support from external agencies. As a result, increasing numbers of pupils attend school regularly. However, there are still some pupils who often miss school. This hinders how well these pupils learn the curriculum.

There is a comprehensive programme to support pupils' personal development. Some parts of this programme, such as the careers guidance that pupils receive, are well established. Other parts have developed more recently. This includes the curriculum for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE). The school has improved this curriculum. However, on occasions, it is not delivered as effectively as it needs to be. A small number of pupils have difficulty remembering this important learning.

Many staff told inspectors how the support they receive from leaders, including support for their subject specialisms, has helped them to fulfil their roles more effectively. They feel valued in their work.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Over time, a minority of pupils have not experienced the high-quality PSHE education that the school intends. This is because some of the staff responsible for delivering this curriculum do not have the subject knowledge that they need. The school should ensure that these staff receive effective training which equips them to teach the PSHE curriculum as effectively as other subjects.
- Some pupils do not attend school as often as they should and too many are persistently absent. This means that they miss out on learning and on the wider experiences provided by the school. The school should bolster efforts to engage positively with parents so that these pupils receive effective help to attend school regularly.

## **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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	147260
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10294414
<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>	598
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	John Crewdson
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Sally Kenyon
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Cowper
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.lancasterhigh.lancs.sch.uk">www.lancasterhigh.lancs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Central Lancaster High School converted to become an academy and joined The Bay Learning Trust in September 2019. When its predecessor school, Central Lancaster High School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The current executive headteacher was appointed in September 2021. Since then, several other senior and middle leaders have also been appointed. A new local governing body was established in 2022.
- Leaders make use of two registered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the executive headteacher, the head of school, other senior leaders, subject leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector also met with members of the local governing body and with officers of the trust, including the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in these subjects: English, science, mathematics, history and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation document, leaders' improvement plans, minutes of local governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff.

## Inspection team

Ben Hill, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Rochelle Conefrey	Ofsted Inspector
Dympna Woods	Ofsted Inspector

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