



# Cansfield High Specialist Language College

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 106521  
**LEA** Wigan  
**Inspection number** 277582  
**Inspection dates** 28 September 2005 to 29 September 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Ms Honoree Gordon HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	Old Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Ashton-in-Makerfield
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16		Wigan, Lancashire WN4 9TP
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01942 727391
<b>Number on roll</b>	892	<b>Fax number</b>	01942 720711
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Eric Foster Alderman
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	20 September 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr M Southworth

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's inspectors and two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

Cansfield High is a Specialist Language College of average size for boys and girls aged 11 to 16 located in a small town. Many of the pupils come from relatively disadvantaged areas. The proportion receiving free school meals is in line with national figures and there are few minority ethnic pupils. Pupils enter the school with results slightly below the national average. The number of pupils with additional learning needs is about normal, but growing. There are more pupils with statements of educational need than usual.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 3**

This is a satisfactory school which has much improved since the last inspection. Results have risen and there are new buildings and better resources. The "culture of achievement" comes through clearly; language college status has contributed much to this. The school provides a satisfactory education with many strengths. Teaching is good and pupils are keen to learn. Standards are now in line with what we would expect to find in other schools; subject results are better and science is clearly on the way up. Pupils are now making the progress they should. Some subjects such as modern foreign languages, English and humanities are strong. Behaviour is good because the school has made its high expectations clear. Pupils say they enjoy school. They are confident and cheerful in lessons. Staff care and support pupils well but the systems the school uses for tracking the progress of pupils do not give a clear enough picture of how well those with additional learning needs are doing. There is good provision for pupils' personal development and well-being. There is a wide range and good uptake of extra-curricular opportunities. The curriculum is satisfactory and pupils acquire the basic skills they need for the next stage of education or work. They have a good choice of GCSE subjects, but as yet there are few other courses for older pupils and not enough chances for the pupils to participate in work-related learning. The school is well led and managed and provides good value for money. Parents and pupils are very supportive. The headteacher and managers have dealt with weak points and the impact can now be seen. Results went up significantly in 2005 after a few years stuck below average. The school has good capacity to improve further.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Maintain the focus on providing good quality lessons to ensure standards are kept up
- Further develop the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 to better meet the needs of all groups of pupils and strengthen their awareness of the world of work
- Review the systems for tracking the progress of pupils with additional learning needs to be able to show more clearly what they have learnt and how quickly they are progressing.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Standards are now where they should be after a few years when they had stuck below average, mainly because of poor performance in science. Science results are showing clear signs of improvement and subject results at GCSE are much better. Inspectors saw a close link between good teaching and good results, reflecting the emphasis the school has put on this. Pupils work to challenging targets. Teachers have high expectations and do much to encourage progress. Pupils enter the school at levels just below what we would tend to find nationally. They make satisfactory progress and in some cases their progress is good; for example, they do well in English. Some

other subjects stand out, such as modern foreign languages and humanities. Girls do well and boys are now doing much better than before. This is because the school has worked hard on motivating boys. Overall, pupils with additional learning needs and pupils felt to be vulnerable make satisfactory progress, but a few do not. Closer checks on their progress would help this. Pupils acquire the skills they need in English, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT). The recent 2005 results are much improved and would suggest that many pupils have progressed well.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development is good. A good tutorial programme and assemblies contribute much to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils enjoy lessons and feel teachers make learning fun. Behaviour is good. Pupils feel secure and valued. They are confident, polite and sociable. Relationships amongst pupils and staff are particularly good. Pupils look after their surroundings very well. Their safety and well-being are high priority and they know this. The school deals effectively with the few incidents of bullying. There is a wide, well-supported range of sports and other activities including extra languages, music and drama productions. Pupils learn about healthy living through the personal and social education programme. The canteen opens for breakfast and at lunch offers a "healthy choice" option. Pupils help in primary schools and the crèche and fundraise for charity, but there could be more occasions for contributing to the community. Pupils learn something of the world of work and Year 11 pupils do a work placement. Careers advice is good. Pupils now have more opportunities to take on responsibility or show initiative and there is an effective school council. Attendance is satisfactory with good follow-up procedures. The school tries hard to discourage term-time holidays.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Inspectors agree with the school that teaching and learning are good. They saw many good lessons and some outstanding ones. Teaching has improved since the last inspection. This is beginning to impact on the school's results. The school has encouraged boys to have good attitudes to learning. Boys are rapidly catching up on girls. Pupils feel that the best lessons are fun. In these lessons, teaching is energetic, stimulating, and allows pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. Well planned lessons, good pace and challenging tasks meet the needs of all pupils. Groups often do different tasks to suit their abilities. In sociology and language lessons, teachers used modern technologies well to inspire learning. In a few lessons pupils lose interest because tasks are dull, yet they continue to behave well. The school has good systems for checking on progress and keeps parents informed. Pupils have regular targets and homework. Teachers and assistants give good support to gifted and talented pupils

and pupils with additional learning needs. The school is getting departments to work together to share their ideas on what makes lessons good.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

Curriculum provision is satisfactory and some aspects are good. The school meets all the statutory requirements. In Years 7-9 the curriculum is broad and balanced and meets pupils' needs. At the start of Year 10, pupils choose freely from a range of mainly academic GCSE subjects. The school's specialist status means pupils can study up to three languages and try several others through extra-curricular activities. Some pupils undertake work experience abroad. The school has made a slow start to introducing vocational courses and enterprise education. This is an area for development. A few pupils do vocational taster courses through a link with a local college. There is appropriate provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT. Pupils can gain qualifications in these. Moreover, there is good range of extra curricular activities, including creative and aesthetic opportunities and sports

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The care, guidance and support of pupils are good. High-profile staffing around school helps create an orderly, safe environment for pupils to learn and enjoy school life. Teachers take full responsibility for pupils' learning, well-being, health and safety, including those pupils at risk. This, and the good relationships established with pupils and parents has contributed directly to the recent improvement in standards. Arrangements for monitoring pupil performance, targeting support and protecting vulnerable children are good. The school cares well for pupils with additional learning needs but could further improve this by reviewing how it tracks their progress. It needs to know more easily how much individuals are actually progressing. Pupils show respect for teachers, prefects and other pupils. Bullying or racist incidents are rare; when they do occur, staff, parents and others deal with them effectively. Good pastoral arrangements ensure pupils receive good advice on courses to follow in years 10 and 11 and advice on career opportunities or post-16 study.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The school's priority is raising attainment through improving teaching and learning and a strong stance on managing behaviour. Senior staff maintain a very visible presence around school. Pupils feel behaviour has improved a lot as a result and they like the reward strategies. The school has successfully developed its "culture of achievement". Communications within school are effective. Staff at all levels show commitment to working together to improve standards. Learning resources and accommodation have improved and are now good. The Learning Resource Centre is

well used. Good ideas in modern foreign languages and English are beginning to be shared with other subjects. The headteacher and his senior staff are driving this forward. We can see the results of all this coming together in the 2005 results, where the proportion of pupils gaining several higher grade passes rose by 13%. The management of some subjects is highly effective and other middle managers are well supported to develop their skills. For the inspection, the school provided much useful information, though it was short on analysis and outcomes. For example, it did not show what impact lessons and activities have on pupils' personal development. The school now knows where it is going and has good systems in place to evaluate how it is doing. New data will help the school pinpoint the issues to tackle next. The school seeks the views of pupils and parents. The Headteacher and senior staff have a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have built up good capacity to continue the drive forward. Governors are supportive but have few formal links with subjects. Finances are efficiently managed. The school provides good value for money.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for contributing to the recent inspection of your school. We enjoyed visiting Cansfield High. We were able to visit lessons and to talk to a number of you and to the staff. We also read the results of questionnaires completed by your parents. They were very supportive of the school. Overall, we are happy with the education it provides. There are many good features. Here is a summary of our main findings:

A lot has improved since the last time inspectors visited. We noticed the new buildings and more resources for your lessons. But, even more important was your progress. For a while your school's results were below average. In 2005 we could see a big difference and standards are now in line with what we would expect to see. We are satisfied with the progress you are making. We can see you do well in English and languages particularly. Overall, the GCSE results were much higher and science in particular seems to be better. The boys' results have really improved and are catching up on the girls'. We want to congratulate you and your teachers on this. Now you have to keep this up!

We think the school is well led and managed. Your headteacher knows what he wants to do. He believes strongly in your success and has worked hard with his staff to make sure your lessons are good and that you know what he expects in terms of behaviour. This is all paying off. Teaching is good and your behaviour is good. We saw some really good lessons. You are keen to learn in lessons and that is what is making the difference.

The school cares for you well. You told us that you feel safe at school and that any bullying incidents are dealt with quickly and fairly. Older pupils said they had seen a big improvement in all of this. We think the target setting system is well organised.

It helps you know how you are doing and encourages you to aim higher. To make this even better, we have asked the school to have another look at how it checks the progress of pupils who find learning more difficult.

The school provides well for your personal development and for your social, moral spiritual and cultural development. You and your teachers get on well; you told us you value their support. There are a good number of interesting activities for you and we are pleased to see the range of languages you can do. We think being a language college is helping you to become confident young people and you clearly enjoy the lessons.

You have a good choice of GCSEs subjects to study but there are other types of course for years 10 and 11 that the school could think about too, to make sure everyone has something to suit. These courses develop skills to help prepare you for the world of work when you leave school.

The most important thing the school has to do now is to keep up the standards, then also to think about the other suggestions in this letter. We feel confident your headteacher and staff can do this and we know you are willing to put in the hard work.