



Cannock Chase High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124466
LEA Staffordshire
Inspection number 281731
Inspection dates 15 March 2006 to 16 March 2006
Reporting inspector David Anstead HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Hednesford Road
School category	Foundation		Cannock
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		Staffordshire WS11 1JT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01543 502450
Number on roll	1775	Fax number	01543 577528
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Barbara Lomas
Date of previous inspection	11 September 2000	Headteacher	Mr Nicholas Hooper

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 18	15 March 2006 - 16 March 2006	281731

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Cannock Chase High School is a much larger than average sized school and has a substantial sixth form. It is split across two sites which are about ten minutes walking distance apart. This is the second year of its specialist science status. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is average whilst the proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds represent a much lower proportion than the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school that its overall effectiveness is good. The curriculum is outstanding in ensuring all students have opportunities to follow courses that meet their needs and aspirations. Students appreciate the good teaching they receive which is lively, fun and enjoyable. The progress made by individual students is monitored closely and the school provides highly effective support when necessary. Students are given detailed guidance on how to improve in some subjects such as mathematics but this is not consistently happening in all subjects. Achievement is good overall and particularly strong in the school's specialist subjects. Girls make better progress than boys. However, whilst most students enjoy school life, they told inspectors that the misbehaviour of a minority meant that the toilets were often left in an unsatisfactory state. Achievement has improved rapidly in the last few years as a result of good leadership and management throughout the school and the outstanding leadership of senior staff. The school's specialist science status has enabled it to improve its accommodation and to improve the science provision in partner schools. Issues from the last inspection have mostly been dealt with although the school has plans to improve punctuality to lessons further. The school has a strong capacity to continue to improve. It gives good value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

Inspectors judge the overall effectiveness of the sixth form to be better than the school's self-evaluation. The sixth form is outstanding. As a result of rigorous monitoring and evaluation, the school has widened the range of subjects on offer and made them accessible to the full range of students' abilities. Challenging targets are set for students which contribute to the outstanding progress they make. Students appreciate the exemplary package of support and guidance which helps them through difficulties and extends their personal development significantly. A key strength is students' understanding of how to improve their own learning. Leadership is highly effective.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure precise guidance for students on how to improve is consistently given in all subjects.
- Further improve the achievement of boys by implementing teaching strategies that better meet boys' learning needs.
- Improve the condition and the acceptability of the toilets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students have broadly average attainment on entry. They make good progress in mathematics and science during Key Stage 3. Progress in English has been slower and is satisfactory. By the end of Key Stage 3, standards are broadly average and progress is satisfactory. At Key Stage 4, girls make better progress than boys but both groups make better progress than is expected nationally. Progress in the school's specialist subjects is a strength and, in mathematics, it is outstanding. Lower achieving girls and students with learning difficulties and disabilities make outstanding progress. Consequently, the proportion of students achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A* to G is above average. There is no underachievement amongst any particular group of students and equality of opportunity is extremely well promoted. Standards in GCSE examinations have been broadly average and are rising. In many subjects standards are good. Progress overall is good. In the sixth form, students make outstanding progress and standards in A level examinations are good. The statutory targets set by the school for 2005 were challenging, considering its performance at that time. It has exceeded those targets and revised the targets for next year upwards as a consequence. Specialist science status targets have been met.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school's good ethos and good relationships contribute significantly to students' good personal development and well-being. Most enjoy school and are keen to learn. Attitudes to learning are good. Students say they feel safe because any bullying is dealt with effectively both by staff and by trained peer mediators. Some younger students, however, do not feel comfortable about a small minority of older students who occasionally misbehave in the toilets. A minority of parents raised concerns about behaviour but that of most students during the inspection was good, both in lessons and around the site. Students are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles, although many still do not take the school's advice about eating healthily at lunchtime. They have a good awareness of issues affecting their personal safety. The school has worked hard to raise levels of attendance and this has improved. It is now good with unauthorised absence being low. A programme of themed assemblies, together with contributions from curriculum areas and elements of teaching in several subjects, ensures that spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. Students appreciate the excellent programme of extra curricular sport and other activities, and the visits to places in this country and abroad. Good opportunities for work related learning and well focused advice from staff and external services enable students to make a positive contribution to the community and prepare them extremely well for the world of work. In the sixth form, personal development and well-being are exemplary.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Teaching and learning are good. In the sixth form they are outstanding. Most teachers plan lessons well to ensure good progress and interest. Some lessons are outstanding in the energy and engagement they generate, particularly in the sixth form. Some less successful teaching leaves students uninvolved, particularly boys, because there is too little pace or purpose to the work. Students' work is marked regularly. They know what level they are at but teachers' written comments do not always identify precise targets for improvement. The assessment policy has been updated to improve consistency in the setting of challenging but realistic targets. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities are enabled to make outstanding progress through exceptionally well managed teaching and support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It fully meets statutory requirements and takes creative account of students' needs and aptitudes. Specialist status has led to improved provision within the school, particularly in science and mathematics, and to collaboration with partner primary schools and the wider community in order to share the benefits of the school's facilities and expertise. There is a notable focus on vocational education, particularly in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form. The Chase Collegiate arrangements ensure that all students, including those unmotivated by a conventional school curriculum, have opportunities to follow courses which match their interests and ambitions. Students come to understand their rights and responsibilities through an exemplary citizenship curriculum and they have many opportunities to develop responsibility and to show commitment in and out of school. The exceptional range of extra curricular activities is a feature of school life which students very much appreciate and participation rates are very high.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Procedures for ensuring students' safety are very effective and reviewed regularly by both staff and governors. The school rightly prides itself on an excellent pastoral system run by staff with a high level of commitment. Arrangements to ensure that students are able to meet their academic and personal potential are extensive and effective. The anti-bullying policy, in particular, is a model of good practice. Students who are vulnerable are well supported by a good range of expertise, and the school draws considerably from the community in order to provide additional support. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities receive excellent support to enable them to achieve extremely well, and their progress is

carefully monitored. The citizenship and careers programmes help students to make well-informed choices about their future options.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Leadership and management overall are good. Leadership of the sixth form is outstanding. The headteacher and senior management team are providing outstanding leadership and management and are having a marked impact on the rapid improvement of the school. Middle managers are held accountable for improving standards in their areas and are extremely well supported by senior staff. Rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and the work of individual departments ensure that the school's view of its performance is accurate. Evaluations of teaching and learning conducted by senior staff closely matched those of inspectors during joint lesson observations. Parents and students are regularly consulted and most say their views are listened to and acted upon. For instance, the school recognises that it needs to improve the toilet facilities for students and has embarked on a rolling programme of refurbishment. There is very effective planning. The school improvement plan clearly identifies key areas for development. It has exacting targets for improvement with criteria to measure when these targets have been achieved. The governors are well informed and supportive of the school. They are effectively developing their role of challenging the school. Specialist science status has had a positive effect. Standards in mathematics and science have improved significantly. Accommodation for science and mathematics has been refurbished and information and communication technology (ICT) resources have been extended. The community aspects of the work of the school and its collaboration with other schools and organisations are strengths that have benefited partner schools and local community members. The key points for improvement identified in the last inspection have been fully addressed, apart from punctuality to lessons. Much has been done to improve this and good progress has been made. However, the school has rightly identified additional measures which it intends to implement next year and which are designed to improve punctuality further. The senior management team has demonstrated its strong capacity to continue to improve the work of the school through the marked rise in achievement over the last three years.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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

Dear Students Following our visit to inspect your school, I am writing to tell you about our findings. I would like to thank you for your friendly and honest responses to our questions. We found this helpful in deciding what is good about your school and what needs to be improved. We think the education you receive at your school is good and it is outstanding in the sixth form. These are the strengths of your school. • The choice of subjects available to you is outstanding. • Teaching is good in the main school and outstanding in the sixth form. • The range of after school clubs and activities is outstanding. • The school cares for you extremely well and you told us you feel safe. • Your headteacher and senior staff lead the school extremely well. There are some aspects of the school's work which we think can be better. You told us the toilets were unpleasant and we agree. The school already has plans to refurbish all the toilets as money allows. In some lessons, boys do not make as much progress as girls. We have asked your headteacher to help all teachers prepare activities that motivate boys to do as well as girls. We have also asked that you receive better guidance on what you need to do to improve to achieve your target grades. You can help by using the toilet facilities responsibly and by acting on the advice you are given on how to improve. I wish you every continued success in the future. Yours faithfully David Anstead HMI Lead Inspector