

# The Canterbury High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118893
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	313140
<b>Inspection date</b>	2 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Robert Ellis HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Modern (non-selective)
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	1150
Sixth form	207
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Debbie Wells
<b>Headteacher</b>	Philip Karnavas
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 November 2004
<b>School address</b>	Knight Avenue Canterbury CT2 8QA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01227 463971
<b>Fax number</b>	01227 762801

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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector. The school was visited for one day.

Inspectors investigated the following issues in detail: achievement and standards, teaching and learning, leadership and management, the curriculum and the sports specialism. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation form (SEF), national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, curriculum and planning documents, observation of the school at work, discussions with staff, governors and students and the parents' questionnaires.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

The Canterbury High School is a slightly larger than average secondary modern school for boys and girls in Canterbury, which is federated with Beauherne Primary School under one governing body and one headteacher. The two schools form part of the Canterbury Campus and the federated schools became a Trust in April 2008. The school is a specialist sports college and is oversubscribed. Entry to the school is after county selection procedures, where approximately one third of students from local primary schools go elsewhere to selective schools. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The school has an integrated speech and language unit and there are significantly more pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than in other schools, many of whom have moderate learning difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The proportion of pupils with a formal statement of special educational needs is also well above average, partly as a result of having a speech and language unit on site.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

The Canterbury High School provides an outstanding standard of education and care for its students. Most students have positive attitudes to learning and are rightly very proud of their school. The school has a very inclusive ethos and is clearly intent on enabling an appropriate balance of excellent academic achievement and the personal and social development of all students. Despite the large size of the school, students say that their teachers know them well and there is a strong emphasis on meeting their individual needs. Students feel safe and well cared for and many commented on the good relationships they enjoy with each other, their teachers and the other adults who work with them.

Parents are supportive of the school and especially value the support that their children receive, particularly through the mentoring system and the additional time that teachers give to help students who are struggling. A typical comment from a parent was, 'I am particularly pleased that there is a drive and determination to improve examination results whilst continuing to work creatively with the whole child.'

Students enter the school with well below average attainment. They make excellent progress and attain examination results at the end of Year 11 that are mostly in-line with the national average. Results in examinations have shown steady improvement in recent years and in 2007, the school was ranked in the top 1% nationally for student achievement. The great majority of students reach or exceed the challenging individual targets they are set. There is appropriate provision for gifted and talented students and some are entered early for tests and examinations with a high level of success. The progress of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is at least in line with that of other students as a result of the good support they receive. Although improving, standards in literacy and numeracy have not improved as rapidly as in other subjects. The outstanding achievement of students results from a combination of good teaching, an excellent innovative curriculum and outstanding care, guidance and support.

The school provides outstanding care, support and guidance to students, emphasising its strong commitment to treating each child as an individual, and enabling all students to achieve well. Progress is checked with exceptional care, so that any student who shows signs of underachieving is quickly identified and support put in place. All students meet regularly with their learning mentors to review their progress towards their targets. The school is very effective in informing students as to how they can improve. Students appreciate the support they receive from staff and readily identify many potential sources of help if they have any concerns. Those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive high quality support and make excellent progress to meet their targets. All requirements for safeguarding students and ensuring their well-being are met.

Students' personal development is good. They behave well in lessons and around the school. Students are polite and they are generally considerate and take care of each other and their school. There is a clear intolerance of bullying which students say is very rare. The Learners Parliament provides students with opportunities to take responsibility within and beyond the school community, and enables good account to be taken of students' views. They make a positive contribution to the community and are engaged in a variety of charitable and other ventures, including interaction with 'Over 50s', working at a local nursery, leading coaching sessions in junior schools, organising sports events for disabled children and involvement in

various cultural events, such as The Canterbury Festival. Attendance is average but is improving because of the strong systems in place to encourage students to attend regularly.

The school's curriculum is outstanding. Its major strengths are that it is well planned, innovative and tailored to meet the needs and interests of individuals. It is frequently reviewed to take account of students' views and preferences. If any student is seen to be at risk of disaffection prompt action is taken to re-engage them with their learning. The school has increased student enjoyment by providing a wide range of enrichment opportunities, and encouraging all students to take part in extra-curricular activities.

Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers have confident subject knowledge and have high expectations of their students, employing effective questioning strategies. Lessons are carefully planned, with an interesting range of good activities to engage learners and, in many cases, make learning fun. Assessment is thorough, accurate and embedded in the school's culture. Assessment techniques are used well, enabling students to contribute confidently to their learning, evaluating their own work and progress. In a minority of lessons, teachers direct students too much in their learning and do not create opportunities for them to solve problems independently.

The sports specialism is evident throughout the school and it is having a very positive impact in terms of improved accommodation and resources, the take-up by students of physical education courses, participation in sport and physical recreation, the development of student self-esteem and good opportunities for students to develop leadership skills and contribute to the wider community. It has also provided opportunities for students to try out a wide range of different sports, and develop a very strong awareness of how to live healthily. The high numbers of students going on to successfully participate at county, national and international level reflect the school's success in sport. The school is exceeding its specialist targets and it is providing effective support for a large number of other local schools.

Those responsible for leading the school are committed to maintaining an equitable and inclusive school, in which each individual matters and has a voice. Managers at all levels undertake rigorous self-evaluation of their areas of responsibility and use the findings effectively to address any evident weaknesses. The monitoring and tracking of students' progress are rigorous and there is timely and effective intervention when there is evidence that students are underachieving or at risk of underachieving. A strong commitment to staff development is reflected in the good professional development opportunities available to all. Support staff are deployed well to make learning more effective. The school is at the heart of its community and through its outstanding community provision, inclusive ethos, celebration of other cultures and promotion of equality makes a very positive contribution to community cohesion. The federation partnership is starting to have a positive impact, particularly in raising attainment and developing and sharing expertise across the two schools. The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified by the last Ofsted inspection. Senior leaders know the school well and recognise where further improvement can be made and demonstrate a strong capacity to achieve this.

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

The leadership and management of the sixth form are good and the collaborative arrangements with other schools, to widen the range of courses offered to students, provide a good mix of academic and vocational courses. The sixth form has grown rapidly and has become a more

attractive option for students; as a result, more than half of Year 11 transferred to the sixth form at the end of the last school year. Many students start their sixth form courses with standards that are generally lower than those typically found in sixth forms. They make good progress and achieve examination results that are similar to those found nationally. The proportion of students completing their courses and continuing from Year 12 to Year 13 is improving as a result of better advice and guidance being provided to help them select programmes of study, and a wider range of choices being offered, at different levels, so that there is a better match of courses to students' abilities and prior attainment.

Sixth form students are actively involved in many aspects of school life and provide excellent role models and mentors for younger students. Many students take advantage of the very good range of additional activities offered to enrich their experiences. Students say that they are well informed and well supported to make informed choices about their next steps into employment or further study. An increasing proportion of students gain places at university or go on to further study elsewhere.

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

- Build on existing practice to raise standards, particularly in numeracy and literacy.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	1	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	2

## Achievement and standards

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

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



## Personal development and well-being

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

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2	2
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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

3 October 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of The Canterbury High School, Canterbury, CT2 8QA

Thank you for contributing to the inspection of your school and a particular thank you to the student representatives who took time to speak to us and tell us about your school. This letter provides a brief summary of our findings but I hope you will take time to read our full report.

- The school provides an outstanding standard of education and it is continuing to improve and develop new ideas about making learning more interesting and relevant.
- Examination results are improving because of good teaching, an excellent innovative curriculum and the outstanding care, guidance and support you receive.
- You have good opportunities to develop as considerate and responsible young people and you make a positive contribution to the school and the local community.
- Many of you participate in the good range of clubs and activities that are available and you have an excellent understanding of the need to keep fit and healthy.
- You told us that you feel safe, get on well with other students and the adults who work with you and you know who to turn to if you have a problem.
- You have an outstanding choice of subjects to study and the school has worked hard to provide courses that match your skills and interests.
- The school is very well led and those responsible for leading and managing the school are always looking for ways to make it better.

The senior leadership team knows the school well and has some good ideas about what needs to be improved to make your school even more successful. We have asked the staff to focus on improving your skills in English and mathematics so that you do as well in those subjects as you do in the other subjects you study.

I am sure that you will want to continue to have the right attitudes to learning, work hard and play your part in making your school even more successful.

Yours sincerely

Robert Ellis Her Majesty's Inspector