

# Cannock Chase High School

Inspection report - amended

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124466
<b>Local Authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	328146
<b>Inspection date</b>	19 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Richard Masterton

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>	Secondary
<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)	1556
Sixth form	240
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Barbara Lomas
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nicholas Hooper
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 March 2006
<b>School address</b>	Hednesford Road Cannock WS11 1JT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01543 502450
<b>Fax number</b>	01543 577528

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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
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## **Amended Report Addendum**

Report amended due to factual inaccuracy

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. During a one-day visit, the inspectors evaluated the overall efficiency of the school, including its sixth form, and investigated the following issues:

- the significant trends in school standards and whether all students achieve as well as they can
- students' maturity, behaviour and enjoyment of their experience at school
- factors that have held back achievement in English and the progress of some boys
- the work of school managers in sustaining school effectiveness in the period since the previous inspection.

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

## Description of the school

Cannock Chase High is a larger than average comprehensive secondary school with a sixth form serving the town and surrounding district of Cannock. It has specialist status in both science and mathematics. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is average. The proportions of students from minority ethnic groups and with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are below average. The school participates in the Chase Collegiate, a consortium of local schools and the local Further Education College to extend curriculum provision in both the main school and the sixth form.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Cannock Chase High is a good school. Under strong vision and direction, leaders and managers at all levels know their school well and work cohesively to develop its provision and standards.

Students enjoy and value their time in school. They work hard and have a positive attitude to school and their studies. A high proportion of them give voluntarily of their time and effort to making a positive contribution to the community. School 'champs' work enthusiastically to help younger students and provide mentoring support for them. The 'student voice' is strong and students from all age groups are keen to represent the views of their peers. Work in the community is strengthened through students effectively supporting work in science and sport in local primary schools as part of the outreach of Cannock Chase High, arising from its specialist designation. Students acquire good skills and knowledge that will equip them well for future study or employment. They value the opportunities provided to put these into practice through enterprise activities in school and work experience. Students' attitudes towards health issues are satisfactory. They are aware of the value of exercise but some of them are not as involved in voluntary sports activities as they could be. Similarly, although they are conscious of the case for healthy eating and the risks of smoking, this does not dissuade all students from bad habits in these respects. Students have a strong sense of right and wrong, they cooperate readily together both in their lessons and in other activities and enjoy learning about different cultures and beliefs in citizenship and religious education lessons. Their spiritual development is also good. Students are open to new ideas and they learn to treat difficult moral issues with sensitivity. They value the way the school helps them to discuss matters and develop individual points of view, and show a confident approach in doing so.

Just over a quarter of parents who responded by returning questionnaires, expressed concern about behaviour. Associated with this, the level of school exclusions has been high in recent times. The school has good new procedures to deal with serious indiscipline. Students encountering behavioural difficulties now remain in school continuing their studies in a separate unit for a few days. As a result, the level of exclusions has dropped significantly and no one's learning is interrupted through missing school for this reason. Behaviour in classes and around school is good. For the vast majority of students attendance is satisfactory and they turn up at school regularly. However, the statistics are coloured by a very small minority whose record is poor. Because non-attendance is rigorously followed up, the school is successfully reducing the level of persistent absenteeism shown by a few individuals.

Good leadership and management sustain the school and inspire an ordered community in which students develop high levels of maturity. There is strength at all levels. The headteacher and senior managers promote good practice and effective self-critical review throughout the school. This means that middle managers add value so their planning and development builds on the framework of the overall school improvement strategy. An example is the way that department teams tailor the innovative school marking strategy to match their subject teaching. Ambitious target setting is well established, informing students' aspirations and progress. It powerfully drives improvement to overall school standards and provision. Managers ensure that all groups of students make good progress and that school resources are used carefully. Governors' work is good, with careful scrutiny and challenge of the work of the school viewed against students' outcomes. Governors consider in detail the reports and presentations from managers, but are not sufficiently involved in the direct monitoring of work in school and in dialogue with students. Community cohesion is suitably promoted and students' understanding

of their place in the world is satisfactory. However, they lack sufficient opportunities to engage with their peers from different social, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds and this limits their social and cultural understanding and awareness.

Students enter the school with prior attainment slightly below average and achieve average, and in some cases good, standards at GCSE. Progress is therefore good. Results showed a dip in standards in 2008 caused by an anomalously larger group of students whose attendance was poor and who needed an alternative curriculum carrying less accreditation. The school worked effectively to help these students achieve as well as possible in these circumstances. The progress of current students is good and this was evident in the ranges of classes inspected and the work seen. Standards for students aged 14 meet national expectations and indicate good progress. However, there is underperformance by some students in English resulting from a succession of staffing difficulties which are not yet fully resolved. Managers have implemented a full range of measures to boost teaching as far as possible, but students' progress in English has fallen behind that in mathematics. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, especially those with statements of special educational needs. As noted nationally, boys' standards lag behind those of girls, but the school uses a good range of teaching strategies to counter this.

Teaching and learning are good. Managers accurately monitor the quality of teaching and learning and expect high standards. Detailed lesson planning takes full account of the prior learning of students. Lessons are interesting. Teachers use varied techniques to engage students, particularly boys, in the work provided. This involves many active-learning tasks that promote participation in ways matching their preferred styles of learning. The school has developed a highly innovative and structured scheme for marking. Standards and progress are checked every three weeks and grades are recorded electronically. Students receive regular quality feedback on their work, together with good advice on what they need to do to improve. The school curriculum is outstanding. School provision is enhanced by opportunities afforded by the Chase Collegiate. The school also offers very extensive enrichment giving many opportunities for students to work in different ways and to participate extensively in visits and travel. Very effective use is made of time spent with form tutors to develop the 'theme of the week' covering a wide variety of topics. The care, guidance and support that students receive are good. Transition from primary schools and into the next stage of education or employment works well. Students know their targets and the electronic system of recording marking means that they are very carefully tracked. Students value the regular updates on their progress and the help they receive if they fall behind. Full safeguarding procedures are in place.

A very large majority of the many parents who replied to the questionnaire have confidence in the school and are pleased with the progress their sons and daughters are making.

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 3**

Students entering the sixth form have average levels of attainment at GCSE, the school requiring at least four GCSEs with grades in the range A\* to C to start A-level courses. The sixth form curriculum is good and offers a wide range of A-level subjects. Prior success at GCSE has led additional students to try the sixth form but some of the conventional A-level subjects have not sufficiently catered for their requirements. In consequence, school managers have introduced vocational A levels and Level 3 Business and Technology Education Council courses. These are proving very successful. Overall pass rates at A level are broadly average indicating that achievement is satisfactory. However, the proportion of higher grades A and B is lower than

average. Sixth form lessons are characterised by lively, interesting teaching, but in evaluating it as satisfactory overall, school managers have correctly recognised that teaching does not yet develop students sufficiently to realise their full potential, particularly to reach higher grades. The support students receive is good. They are carefully guided through their studies and the majority of applicants gain admission to their first-choice university. The maturity of sixth formers is good and many make a strong contribution to the work of the school. Overall leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory.

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

- Raise standards and achievement in English to match those in mathematics.
- Improve students' cultural awareness by giving them opportunities to meet and work with their peers from other ethnicities, faiths and cultures.
- Increase the proportion of higher grades at A level through teaching that extends critical

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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**

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	3
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?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	3

**Achievement and standards**

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	3
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	2	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2	

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<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	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
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	2	
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	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	3
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
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**

20 March 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Cannock Chase High School, Cannock, WS11 1JT

My colleague and I greatly enjoyed our visit to your school. It was very interesting to see the school at work, and look at the quality of education you receive. Our meetings with you were invaluable as you gave us some of the most important information that we needed. Thank you for your great courtesy, assistance and being so ready to share your experience.

You attend a good school. The headteacher, together with his staff, provide good leadership and management. They know the school well and in consequence develop the teaching and support that you need to succeed. Teaching is good. You are given good guidance at all stages as you progress through the school. Your work and progress against your targets are carefully noted. The school has created a very good structure for your work to be marked and for you to receive advice on how to improve. The curriculum is outstanding. You have a wide choice of options that the school has developed together with other local schools and the college along with many other opportunities for enrichment. You make good progress both academically, reaching average standards for GCSE, and in development of your personal maturity. Many of you make a most important contribution to the well-being of others but you do not have sufficient contact with your peers from other ethnicities and cultures. Not all of you are sufficiently health conscious.

Those of you in the sixth form make satisfactory progress. While overall pass rates are average and you are able to make a good start towards your future careers, not enough of you are reaching the highest A-level grades and this is restricting some opportunities.

To secure further improvement, I have asked the school managers to get standards in GCSE English up to those of mathematics, to give you the opportunity to meet students from different backgrounds to your own and to provide the challenge that will help more A-level students reach the highest grades.

Please help play your part by trying as hard as you can and advising your teachers where their methods are most successful.

Yours sincerely

R Douglas Masterton

Lead inspector