

Carr Hill High School and Sixth Form Centre

Royal Avenue, Kirkham, Preston, Lancashire PR4 2ST

Inspection dates

13–14 December 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils, including the disadvantaged and students in the sixth form, have not made the progress, or achieved the examination results, of which they are capable.
- Some of the actions which leaders and governors have taken have been hasty and ill-considered and have had a negative impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Most school plans lack timelines and precise criteria by which leaders, including governors, can judge the pace and impact of their actions.
- The behaviour of a minority of pupils disrupts learning in some lessons.
- For pupils who start secondary school with low levels of literacy and numeracy, leaders have not used funding well. Consequently, these pupils have not caught up with their peers.
- The quality of teaching, including in the sixth form, is not consistently good. Some teachers plan learning which does not take enough account of what pupils have already achieved or what they have not yet mastered.
- The overall attendance of disadvantaged pupils and students in the sixth form has improved but some still do not attend regularly enough.

The school has the following strengths

- More recently, leaders and governors have made decisions which have improved quality and standards. As a result, pupils, including sixth-form students, are now making better progress.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils has improved in most year groups. In key stage 3, disadvantaged pupils are now outperforming their peers.
- School leaders have put in place a more challenging curriculum which gives pupils the opportunity to achieve better overall progress scores.
- Across most subjects there are pockets of very strong teaching.
- Staff keep pupils safe and care for them well. Pupils respect cultures, faiths and lifestyles different from their own.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that all improvement plans are precise enough to allow leaders and governors to judge the pace of change and to review the impact of their decisions on pupils' outcomes
 - making sure that funding is used effectively for Year 7 pupils who need to catch up with their peers in literacy and numeracy.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - ensuring that all staff have the skills and confidence to apply the school's new policy effectively when the behaviour of some pupils disrupts learning
 - continuing to improve the attendance of students in the sixth form and that of those disadvantaged pupils who do not attend school regularly.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment information to plan learning which matches pupils' prior attainment and capabilities so that all can reach their full potential
 - making sure that teachers in subjects other than English and mathematics systematically develop pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy
 - sharing good practice so that all teaching in the school matches the best.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The actions of school leaders, including governors, have resulted in pupils making weak progress across a range of subjects. Inconsistency in the quality of teaching, the design of the curriculum and pupil groupings, and ill-considered decisions about examination courses and entries have prevented pupils from achieving the examination results of which they are capable.
- Leaders have now revised examination-entry policies and the curriculum. They have also changed the composition of teaching groups. More and more pupils opt to study three sciences and more than one modern foreign language. More pupils now study the subjects which make up the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). The curriculum is broad and balanced and still offers pupils the opportunity to benefit from the school's strengths in visual and performing arts.
- School plans are not precise enough to be effective. They do not indicate the expected pace of actions and improvements. They lack measurable criteria by which leaders, especially governors, can review the impact of their decisions and policies.
- Leaders have not targeted support or funding effectively for those pupils who arrive at the school with low scores in English and mathematics. Plans for the spending of catch-up funding are not focused on improving literacy and numeracy. Leaders did not review the impact of spending in 2016/17 and, as a result, they are replicating the same lack of focus in 2017/18.
- Last year's focus on developing teachers' questioning of, and feedback to, pupils has brought about improvements in the quality of teaching.
- The move away from the 'cluster' system of management of subjects has allowed subject leaders to play a more effective role in monitoring teaching, learning and pupils' progress. Subject leaders have a good grasp of developmental needs and play an increasingly effective role in making sure that more and more teaching is at least good.
- Leadership has begun to have an impact on the progress and attendance of disadvantaged pupils. In recent years, this group has made considerably less progress than others nationally. However, the school's information now indicates clearly that disadvantaged pupils are catching up with their peers. Leaders have targeted funding well on academic and pastoral support as well as initiatives such as the 'late bus' which allows disadvantaged pupils to stay after school for activities, including the homework club. Funded initiatives like the breakfast club have had a very positive impact on the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, although there are still some with attendance below 90%.
- Leaders and governors ensure that they focus spending well for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. They use funding effectively on appropriate resources and targeted support from teaching assistants in class or in withdrawal groups.
- Pupils enjoy participating in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Extra-curricular provision for sport and performing arts is particularly strong. Pupils enjoy performing in

school productions and representing their school in sporting and cultural events. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, religious education, themed days, assemblies and 'mentor time' provide good opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally.

- Leaders have mapped the promotion of fundamental British values well across the curriculum. Staff and pupils celebrate equality and diversity of every kind so that the school is a welcoming environment for everyone.
- School leaders and governors have a realistic view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They continue to welcome support from local authority improvement officers and subject specialists.
- Local authority officers know the school well. They have documented their concerns about standards and quality. Their input provides the headteacher and governors with a good balance of challenge and support. This is playing an increasing role in making sure that pupils' outcomes improve.
- Leaders have fostered strong links with primary schools to ensure effective transition from Year 6. A 'summer school' for disadvantaged pupils enhances a smooth transition to Year 7 and allows staff to get to know pupils. Those pupils who attend the summer school make swifter progress than those who do not.

Governance of the school

- Governors bring a wide range of educational, professional, personal and academic skills to their role and give of their time generously. They know the school well and are not complacent. They understand that their decisions have not always had a positive impact on aspects of the school which need to improve. Minutes of governors' meetings show that in the last 18 months they have begun to be more forthright in their questioning of school leaders. They are aware that greater precision in school plans would enable them to hold the headteacher to account more effectively for the pace and impact of change. They undertake all statutory duties with meticulous care and ensure that all pupils and staff are safe in the school.
- The governors' decision to apply for the school to become an 11 to 16 institution, with no sixth-form intake from September 2018, is based on what they believe is best for the students at this school. They recognise that there are several local 16 to 19 institutions with greater financial and staffing resources to provide a much wider sixth-form curriculum.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff understand that safeguarding pupils is everyone's responsibility. Consequently, the school is a vigilant community. All staff undertake regular training and know how to recognise the signs of abuse, extremism and exploitation. School records show that staff act quickly when adults or pupils inform them of concerns and they use external expertise if needed. They keep well-organised records and are quick to follow up the actions of school and external staff.

- All required policies and procedures are in place so that pupils remain safe and feel safe. The checks that schools must make on the suitability of staff to work with children are all in place.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Across most subjects there is a lack of consistency in the extent to which teaching allows pupils to make good progress.
- In most teaching groups there is a wide range of ability, but too many teachers do not use assessment information well enough to plan activities which match pupils' capabilities and prior attainment. As a result, learning activities do not always challenge pupils to reach their full potential.
- Some teachers waste learning time when their explanations are not clear or well exemplified and when they do not check pupils' understanding at the start of tasks. As a result, some pupils spend considerable amounts of time undertaking tasks in the wrong way.
- Relationships in the school are largely good. However, a minority of pupils misbehave in class and disrupt learning.
- Teachers' expectations of the presentation and accuracy of pupils' work are generally high. Pupils' written work and notes are usually organised in a way which will be useful for revision. A minority of teachers are not tenacious enough in challenging badly organised and careless work.
- A minority of teaching fails to capture pupils' attention and interest. Teachers do not always challenge those pupils who are not listening or undertaking the tasks set.
- To improve the quality of teaching, leaders provided opportunities for teachers to develop their questioning skills. The success of this work was evident when inspectors observed many examples of very strong questioning which extended pupils' understanding and enhanced their progress.
- Leaders also prioritised the development of pupils' oracy. Inspectors saw many examples of well-structured opportunities for pupils to talk to each other. By sharing ideas, pupils improved their understanding and the quality of their work.
- Although teachers do not always make the best use of assessment information, the assessment and target-setting policy ensures that leaders set aspirational targets with appropriate milestones. Subject departments moderate teachers' assessments and make good use of the expertise of those staff who are examination markers.
- Opportunities for pupils to improve their literacy and numeracy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics are few and far between.
- To improve pupils' progress, leaders have prioritised effective feedback to pupils from teachers. Although a very small number of teachers do not apply the school's policy well, inspectors saw very many examples of pupils using teachers' written advice and guidance to improve their work and understanding.

- Some teaching across a range of subjects is very strong. Some teachers inspire high endeavour and impeccable behaviour. The teaching of performing and visual arts remains a strength of the school.
- Teachers set homework regularly. They provide opportunities for pupils to complete homework online and they monitor how often pupils benefit from this facility. Teachers and pupils use online systems for homework particularly effectively in subjects such as modern foreign languages when teachers set and monitor listening and speaking work which pupils complete at home.
- Teachers do not tolerate the use of derogatory language. In discussions with inspectors, pupils said that teachers deal well with the extremely rare instances when some pupils use insulting discriminatory language.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Most pupils, staff and parents have confidence in the school's systems to ensure that everyone is safe and well cared for. When talking to inspectors, pupils said that they know that staff always act quickly if anyone alerts them to concerns regarding safety.
- Leaders and staff provide a welcoming environment for vulnerable pupils. Pastoral staff and those involved with pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities use external agencies appropriately to address the needs of pupils who require specialist support. School staff follow up referrals and attend pupil review meetings.
- Inspectors saw Carr Hill High pupils working sensitively to support pupils from a special school in sporting activities.
- The nurture room is effective in supporting those pupils with emotional needs so that they enjoy learning and feel safe.
- A minority of parents and pupils among the relatively small number who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaires expressed some concerns about bullying. However, discussions with a large number of pupils in the school and close scrutiny of the school's records indicate that there are strong systems in place. Staff use a restorative approach to make sure that pupils understand how their actions have affected others. There are some instances of bullying, but staff deal with them well.
- Teachers deliver a well-planned PSHE curriculum in 'mentor time', during themed days, as part of lessons such as science and physical education and in assemblies. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe from extremism, abuse and exploitation online. They learn about how to keep themselves physically and emotionally healthy and how to maintain positive relationships.
- The school makes good use of independent external careers advisers to provide pupils in key stage 4 with one-to-one support. Year 11 pupils undertake work experience and benefit from links with local industry and further education colleges. The school also provides extensive guidance to key stage 3 pupils when they are choosing their

examination subjects. The percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least two terms after key stage 4 is higher than the national average.

- The school uses a range of off-site institutions to meet the needs of a small number of pupils. School records and discussions with the leaders of these institutions indicate that there is regular liaison and communication, which ensures that staff monitor the attendance and well-being of these pupils effectively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Although inspectors did not witness any disruption to lessons, discussions with pupils and responses to Ofsted's questionnaires for parents, pupils and staff indicate that a minority of pupils fairly regularly interrupt learning. Records kept by school leaders confirm this and indicate that it is mainly pupils in the current Years 8 and 9 whose misbehaviour sometimes hinders their own progress and that of their peers.
- Leaders have recently introduced a new behaviour policy which is comprehensive and clear. However, discussions with pupils indicate that its application by teachers is inconsistent. Some teachers do not follow the stages systematically and they allow low-level disruption to continue for too long. Discussions with staff and their responses to Ofsted's questionnaire indicate that some teachers believe that they need further support in understanding how to implement the new procedures.
- Leaders have ensured that the rate of exclusion from school is low by using internal systems by which pupils are out of class and isolated from their peers but still learning. The exclusion room is the first stage of internal exclusion and aims to help pupils to improve their behaviour. The school's own analysis shows that too many of the same pupils in Year 8 and Year 9 have used this room repeatedly but have not improved their behaviour. Leaders are now reviewing this strategy.
- As a result of staff determination and clear procedures, overall attendance is above national averages and continues to improve. Rates of persistent absence are low. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is now in line with that of their peers, but although persistent absence among this group is decreasing, it still remains too high.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2016 and 2017, across eight subjects at GCSE, pupils made much less progress than other pupils nationally with similar results from primary school. The progress of disadvantaged pupils was weak in comparison with that of other pupils nationally who achieved similar results at the end of Year 6.
- Inconsistency in the quality of teaching and some instability in staffing have had a negative impact on pupils' progress. Decisions related to the grouping of pupils, as well as policies related to examination courses and entries, have also played their part in underachievement.
- Leaders revised the examination-entry policies for English and science. Teachers permanently employed by the school now take mathematics classes, as happened in the past. The school's assessments and work which inspectors scrutinised indicate that

there has been improved progress across all subjects, including English, mathematics and science.

- In 2016 and 2017, the number of pupils taking GCSE in modern foreign languages was low. As a consequence, the percentage of pupils entered for the EBacc was well below the national average, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. For current pupils in Year 11, the number of pupils taking the subjects which make up the EBacc has more than doubled and for Year 10 is above the national average. This change provides opportunities for a better overall progress score for individual pupils and for the school.
- Disadvantaged pupils in key stage 3 are currently making better progress than their peers in the school. In key stage 4, disadvantaged pupils do not make as much progress as their peers, but the difference is diminishing, although more so in Year 10 than in Year 11.
- The school's long-standing strengths in the visual and performing arts have been maintained in all current year groups.
- As a result of a lack of speedy and targeted intervention, pupils who arrived in Year 7 with low English and mathematics scores have not caught up with their peers.
- Higher-ability pupils and those of middle ability enjoy reading and do so with fluency, accuracy and expression. They enjoy discussing their favourite authors and types of book and they understand nuances in the text. However, lower-ability pupils lack confidence when reading aloud and struggle to apply their knowledge of phonics.
- The school provides well for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Leaders identify needs systematically and put in place appropriate support for every individual. They make good use of external agencies when the school does not have specialist expertise. Individual case studies show that this group makes good progress.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- The progress of students studying for A levels, AS levels and BTEC qualifications has been below average for some time. Lower-than-average attendance and inconsistency in the quality of teaching have led to variable progress across both academic and vocational courses.
- Results in 2017 are better than in previous years. Value added is now positive in both academic and vocational courses. In 2017, disadvantaged students made good progress in academic and vocational courses.
- More reliable systems for monitoring progress, teaching and attendance have improved the quality of leadership in the sixth form.
- Teachers support students more quickly than previously because leaders check progress regularly using a very effective visual tracker with an at-a-glance view of the achievement of individuals and subjects.
- The monitoring of teaching in the sixth form was not very well developed but is now systematic and wide ranging. As a result, there has been some improvement in the quality of teaching.

- School strategies to improve attendance have also been effective in the sixth form. However, although students' attendance has improved, it is still low and preventing some from achieving the results of which they are capable.
- Leaders have introduced regular academic mentoring and more frequent contact with parents when attendance and progress are a concern. Students say that teachers challenge them to do their best.
- Relationships between students in the sixth form are good. Their relationships with teachers and younger pupils are also very positive.
- Students are very positive about their sixth-form experiences. They enjoy being in small teaching groups and feel that studying in a school where they are already well known by teachers has benefited their academic and social development.
- Students have access to good-quality, independent careers information, education and guidance before choosing the subjects they will study in the sixth form. There are appropriately high entry requirements for the study of A levels so that no learners undertake courses which are unsuitable for them. In 2017, the majority achieved their targets based on GCSE performance.
- Most students remain in the sixth form to complete their two-year courses. The minority who leave before completing their studies at the school benefit from further careers guidance and from links with further education colleges and vocational centres.
- The high-quality safeguarding, pastoral care and provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education evident in the rest of the school continues into the sixth form. Sixth formers benefit from opportunities to take part in a range of extra-curricular activities and work experience.
- In some teaching groups, numbers are very small, sometimes as low as one. This raises questions about the viability of the sixth form. Governors are currently consulting on the school becoming an 11 to 16 institution with no new sixth-form intake from September 2018.

School details

Unique reference number	119744
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10043222

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,157
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	97
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Marquis
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Waller
Telephone number	01772 682008
Website	www.carrhillschool.com
Email address	head@carrhill.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 October 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Carr Hill High School and Sixth Form Centre is a larger-than-average, mixed, 11 to 18 secondary comprehensive school.
- The number of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is below average.
- The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups and who speak English as an additional language is lower than national averages.

- The proportion of pupils who receive support for SEN and/or disabilities is lower than the national figure, as is the proportion of pupils who have a statement of SEN or an education, health and care plan.
- For a very small number of pupils, the school uses alternative provision at:
 - Larches High School
 - Preston Vocational Centre
 - McKee College House
 - Ashton Community Science College
 - Fulwood Academy
 - Lytham St Anne’s High School
 - Stephen Cole Hair Design
 - Milbanke Residential Home.
- The school does not meet the government’s current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils’ attainment and progress, but is not a coasting school.
- Officers from Lancashire local authority support the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and pupils' learning. They carried out some of these lesson observations jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors observed and spoke to pupils during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors met formally with four groups of pupils, including students in the sixth form. Inspectors also considered 146 responses to the Ofsted pupils' questionnaire. They held discussions with staff, middle and senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of Lancashire local authority. An inspector heard a range of pupils read.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including arrangements for safeguarding. They took account of school information about pupils' outcomes and scrutinised pupils' books.
- Inspectors considered 169 responses to Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire), including 118 free-text comments. In addition, they considered information which the school had gathered from its own parental questionnaires.
- Inspectors considered 72 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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