

Carleton High School

Green Lane, Carleton, Pontefract, West Yorkshire WF8 3NW

Inspection dates

4–5 July 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have significantly improved the school since the previous inspection. Accountability for improving pupil achievement is a golden thread that runs through the work of the school.
- Leaders have a good handle on what is working well. They have created succinct and highly relevant priorities for further improving the school. These are frequently reviewed, and appropriate adjustments are made.
- The trust has been instrumental in driving these improvements at a dizzying pace. Sensible decisions have been taken to improve the school's leadership, behaviour, teaching and curriculum.
- Local governors provide good levels of challenge and support. They ask relevant and appropriate questions and have a good grasp of their strategic role.
- The quality of teaching and learning has significantly improved. Through effective training, support and advice, teachers are more skilled and adept at teaching and helping pupils learn.
- Pupils' progress over the previous two years has been disappointing. Most groups of pupils are now making stronger progress.
- More pupils are following the English Baccalaureate. All pupils in Year 8 have taken either history or geography as one of their options.
- Dedicated time is put aside to encourage pupils to drop everything and read. For many, this is helping them enjoy the pleasures of reading.
- Behaviour is a real strength of the school now. There has been a step-change in the way pupils behave. Behaviour routines are well embedded and conducive to learning throughout the school. Pupils feel safe in school.
- Pupils' attendance is improving. Overall figures are now better than the national average. The attendance of some groups of pupils still needs to improve further.
- Through an effective and comprehensive careers programme, pupils are well informed about the next steps in their education, employment or training.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning further by making sure that teachers:
 - support some disadvantaged pupils, lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to make consistently good progress
 - further develop their ways of assessing pupils, especially those with low levels of attainment, to find out exactly what they have learned and remembered
 - all pupils fully engage with reading a range of appropriate books to help them fall in love with reading.
- Continue to improve leadership and management by making sure that:
 - more pupils take a modern foreign language at GCSE to help improve further the numbers taking the English Baccalaureate
 - effective checks are made on whether former pupils are successful on appropriate post-16 courses.
- Continue to improve attendance, including some disadvantaged pupils, lower-attaining pupils and those with SEND.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Despite significant staffing changes, leaders and managers have shown a steadfast determination to improve the school. Leaders have built a climate in which consistently high expectations for both staff and pupils are now the norm. Teachers are in no doubt that they, along with other leaders, are accountable for pupils making good progress. This is the bedrock on which the school's improvement is built.
- The quality of teaching, learning, behaviour and attitudes has significantly improved. Outcomes lag a little way behind, in part due to the legacy of weaker teaching, but they too are improving across the school.
- Leaders know their school inside out. They are aware of what is working well and why. They have an impressive track record for improvement. Leaders are highly visible in, and around the school, regularly visiting classrooms. This provides them with good opportunities to 'take the pulse' of what is happening in classrooms daily.
- School improvement plans are clear, succinct and well focused. Leaders ensure that they check the impact of their actions regularly. This is helping them tweak and amend their next steps, making sure that the school improvement journey does not get derailed.
- The leadership of teaching and learning goes from strength to strength. Teachers are full of praise for the training that is helping them improve their teaching. Weekly meetings help all teachers, including those newly and recently qualified, to develop their teaching repertoire further and learn from each other. Staff morale is high.
- Middle leaders have benefited from a wide range of support and coaching. As a result, they are now effective, in not only checking that basic school expectations are being met, they also go that stage further. They effectively check and improve the quality of teaching, learning and progress that pupils are making. Middle leaders now provide good levels of additional capacity for improvement.
- Leaders in both the trust and the school have made very sensible decisions to align their curriculum with that of the other secondary school within the trust. This ensures that teachers' expertise can be pooled. Collaboration is key and helps to make sure that the curriculum offer is broad, balanced and increasingly meets the needs and interests of pupils.
- The trust and school leaders have taken sensible decisions to improve the number of pupils following the English Baccalaureate. All pupils in Year 8 have taken either history or geography as one of their options. Leaders recognise that more needs to be done in encouraging pupils to take a modern foreign language as one of their options.
- The curriculum provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Leaders are not complacent when it comes to this important area of the school's work. They have rightly focused in developing pupils' cultural awareness, including respect and tolerance for those of different faiths, backgrounds and countries.

- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Through a range of assemblies, curriculum days and in daily school life, pupils show good levels of mutual respect, understanding of the rule of law, and individual liberty.
- Leaders carefully evaluate how additional funding is used. As a result, this funding is having significant impact. For example, in Year 7, literacy interventions have raised pupils' reading ages, enabling them to access the school curriculum better. Leaders are also seeing the impact of pupil premium funding in improved attendance.

Governance of the school

- The trust has created clear lines of accountability between themselves and local governors. This means that everyone is clear about who does what. The performance management of the head of school is carefully and regularly reviewed. The targets are well aligned to the school improvement plan. This joined-up approach is helping to improve the school further.
- Local governors provide good levels of challenge and support. They ask pertinent questions during their meetings. They have a good grasp of how well pupils are achieving, the use and impact of additional funding and where further improvements are needed.
- Governors are benefiting from succinct and comprehensible reports and plans that are presented to them during meetings. This helps them to see the strategic big picture of what is going on in the school.
- The chief executive of the trust has been proactive and highly visible in and around the school. Pupils and staff agree that there has been a significant change in the way the trust operates. The rebranding of the school has been successful. Along with a change in the school name, the trust has ensured that classrooms have been repainted, new carpets have been laid and there are inspirational and attractive posters encouraging pupils to achieve.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a culture of vigilance when it comes to keeping children safe in school. Staff consistently spoke about how training, support and regular briefings help them see that safeguarding is everybody's business.
- Staff are clear and confident in how to go about reporting concerns they may have. They have also benefited from training which has looked at child sexual exploitation, the dangers of radicalisation, extremism, and female genital mutilation.
- School staff make regular checks on pupils who attend alternative provision. They check that pupils are regularly attending and reassure themselves that these pupils are safe. Staff also work well with other agencies and professionals.
- Governors and staff take effective steps to check that staff are suitable to work with pupils in school. The records of these checks comply with legal requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers now have high expectations of all groups of pupils, in terms of what pupils can, and should be able to, achieve.
- The quality of teacher explanation and questioning are strong. Teachers use questioning carefully and in a directed manner to check whether pupils have really understood what is being taught. Pupils value the ways in which their teachers explain and re-explain things to them when they are unclear.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how well they are doing and how they need to improve. There is regular dialogue in lessons, between teachers and pupils, as to how work can be improved. A review of pupils' work over time shows that this is helping pupils make better progress.
- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and use formal and informal ways of assessing how well pupils are doing. Teachers often listen to discussions, read emerging answers that pupils are writing to catch misconceptions early.
- Parents receive clear and easy to understand reports. These highlight the progress pupils are making and whether they are on track to achieve the challenging targets they have been set.
- Teaching assistants and other adults provide positive support for pupils in lessons. They are clear about their role. They usually ensure that the pupils they are supporting do the thinking and hard work, rather than be spoon-fed the answers.
- Teachers make sure that pupils develop their literacy skills. Pupils have a wide variety of opportunities for extended writing and there are a range of initiatives to encourage pupils to read. The 'Drop Everything and Read' initiative is helping some pupils, particularly those in Year 7, develop their love of reading. There are times when some pupils, especially older pupils, read books that are not well matched to their reading ability.
- Leaders and teachers recognise the importance of all pupils having equal opportunities. As a result, teachers have clear and easy to understand information on pupils' abilities and whether they are at risk of underachievement. This is helping to meet the various needs of pupils over time.
- Teachers recognise that some of their assessments are not as useful as they could be. Sometimes, end of unit tests do not help teachers pinpoint how best to help some pupils to improve, including lower-attaining pupils and some with SEND.
- Due to a legacy of weaker teaching, some pupils, including lower-attaining pupils, some disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND are only now benefiting from consistently good-quality teaching. As a result, they are now making stronger progress.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils take a real pride in their school. They look smart in their uniforms, with shirts tucked in, and arrive to lessons having the right equipment, ready to learn.
- Pupils' exercise books are well maintained and looked after. A wide range of staff, including lunchtime supervisors, cleaners and administrative support colleagues, confirm that pupils are respectful to them and towards each other.
- The school pervades an air of calm and orderliness. Pupils respect their school environment. They usually take the time to clean up after themselves at lunchtime and there are no signs of graffiti in or around the school site.
- Pupils repeatedly confirmed that there is a wealth of emotional and academic support should they require it. One pupil spoke for many when they said, 'You get loads of support if you need it.'
- Leaders have provided a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These include academic support, music, drama and sport. Leaders want all pupils to broaden their interests and so all pupils regularly participate in at least one activity.
- Younger pupils rightly confirm that they have been given good advice and guidance in helping them make the right choices at key stage 4. The well-planned careers programme has local colleges and employers come to school to talk to pupils about the range of pathways available to them.
- As a result of this high-quality careers programme, the number of pupils not in education, employment or training has significantly fallen and is now below the national average. Leaders recognise that further work is needed to check on whether former pupils successfully complete appropriate post-16 courses.
- Leaders have developed comprehensive and effective links with other agencies and professionals. For example, leaders ensure that the police regularly attend school and work with families to help resolve issues beyond the school gates.
- In the main, parents are highly supportive of the school. They recognise that the rapid and successful changes that have been made to behaviour and value the information they receive on their child's progress and attainment. They rightly sang the praises of the school's work with those pupils who wish to go to one of the country's leading universities.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Leaders have worked hard to make sure that the behaviour system is consistently followed by all staff. This is now well embedded across the school.
- Pupils are courteous, polite and welcoming. Lunchtime staff spoke about how pupils regularly say 'please' and 'thank you'. Pupils move around the school in a calm and sensible manner.

- A number of staff spoke about the pride that they have in their school. They are rightly delighted to show parents and other visitors around the school without the worry of pupils wandering the corridors.
- In classrooms, pupils behave well. They are respectful of each other, get on with their work and little time is wasted. This helps pupils concentrate and get on with their work. Time and again pupils and parents spoke about the significant improvements that have been made to behaviour.
- Leaders have worked hard to improve attendance. It has been a team effort in which teachers and support staff have worked tirelessly. Student liaison officers have been instrumental in helping certain pupils realise the importance of regularly attending school. Consequently, current attendance levels are above the national average.
- The attendance of all groups has risen, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. However, leaders have rightly identified this as an area that remains a priority for further improvement.
- After a significant spike in fixed-term exclusions earlier in the year, they have now plummeted. The number of pupils permanently excluded from school is also very low. Teachers' expectations for pupils in isolation, often for poor behaviour, have also risen. These pupils now have meaningful work to do while they are away from their peers.
- Pupils feel safe in school and are well looked after. Parents, teachers and other adults all confirm this to be the case. There are good levels of staff supervision in and around the school. This makes pupils feel safe and reassured. Leaders tackle bullying effectively. Pupils were clear and forthright that bullying would not be tolerated, and that staff would take concerns seriously.
- Pupils have good understanding of the dangers and risks associated with social media and cyber bullying. They also have a good awareness of how to keep themselves both physically and mentally healthy.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision. School leaders keep in regular contact with these providers to make sure that pupils are attending regularly and achieving. Leaders sometimes make unannounced visits to these providers just to reassure themselves that all is well for the pupils that attend. As a result, this small group of pupils are improving their attendance and achievement.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils lag slightly behind the improvements made to teaching, learning and assessment. There is evidence that school leaders are rapidly improving outcomes across the school.
- The progress Year 11 pupils made in 2017 and 2018 was below average. This was in part due to weaker teaching and inaccurate views of how pupils were doing. In 2018, the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and those with low prior attainment was also below average.
- The current progress of some pupils requires improvement. Some disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND and some lower-attaining pupils have not made consistently good progress across a wide range of subjects.

- However, there are clear signs that rapid improvements are successfully being made. Leaders are quietly confident that outcomes in 2019 are set to improve. Recent feedback from some examination boards suggest that secure and strong improvements are being made. Current progress across the school is improving in most subjects but remains uneven.
- Across the rest of key stage 4 there is improving progress across a range of subjects. For example, Year 10 pupils are now making stronger progress in English and history. Disadvantaged pupils are doing well in English and mathematics. While improving, the progress that pupils make in science lags behind due to a legacy of weaker teaching over time.
- At key stage 3, outcomes are improving. In Year 7, pupils, including disadvantaged and those with SEND, are making good progress in English, technology and physical education. Pupils' progress is also improving in mathematics and science. Year 8 pupils also show a similar trend of improvement. Progress is strongest in history and mathematics. It is also improving rapidly across a range of other subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils, lower-attaining pupils and those with SEND are now making better progress because of consistently good teaching. However, leaders have rightly identified that improving the progress of these groups remains an area for further improvement.
- The small group of pupils that attend alternative provision have seen both their attendance and achievement improve. This group of pupils are improving their literacy and numeracy skills. These providers also make sure that pupils experience a broad range of subjects, helping pupils keep in touch with what is happening in school. This is helping reintegrate pupils back into school when they return.
- Leaders have taken effective steps to prepare pupils for the next steps in their education, training and employment. School staff have been working with pupils and a range of other agencies to support pupils in making appropriate decisions. Leaders have provided opportunities for college and training providers to talk to pupils about their next steps. Consequently in 2017/18 the proportion of pupils progressing to an appropriate destination was above the national average.

School details

Unique reference number	139501
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10080708

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	890
Appropriate authority	The Pontefract Academies Trust
Chair	Elaine Shepherd
Head of School	Jo Cross
Telephone number	01977 781555
Website	http://carletonhigh.co.uk/
Email address	admin@carletonhigh.patrust.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	25–26 January 2017

Information about this school

- Carleton High School is a smaller than average-sized secondary school. Since the previous inspection there have been a number of significant staffing changes including a new head of school.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Pupil mobility is below the national average.
- The school uses two alternative providers for a small group of pupils, the UCAN centre and Action 2 Change.

- The school is part of the Pontefract Academies Trust.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a wide range of evidence during inspection, including observations of teaching, some of which were undertaken with senior leaders.
- Inspectors carefully scrutinised pupils’ work over time in English, mathematics, science, history and modern foreign languages.
- Inspectors held meetings with school staff, including the head of school and the trust’s chief executive officer and the executive director for secondary education. Meetings were also held with other senior leaders and staff in charge of aspects of the school’s work. Inspectors met with a group of middle leaders, teachers including newly and recently qualified teachers. They also had phone conversations with a governor, a local authority officer with responsibility for children looked after.
- Phone discussions were also held with staff in the UCAN centre and Action 2 Change.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils during formal interviews, during lessons and informally. Informal discussions were also held with parents, lunchtime supervisors, kitchen staff, cleaners and administrative staff.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation related to the school’s work, gaining the school’s views of its performance and information concerning pupils’ attainment, progress, attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors scrutinised records concerning safeguarding, pupils’ behaviour over time and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Inspectors analysed 117 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire and 83 free-text responses from parents. Inspectors also analysed 43 written responses from staff. In-school pupil surveys were also considered.

Inspection team

Phil Smith, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Stuart Cleary	Ofsted Inspector
Marc Doyle	Ofsted Inspector
Garry Stout	Ofsted Inspector

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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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