

# Colne Park High School

Venables Avenue, Colne, Lancashire BB8 7DP

**Inspection dates** 3–4 November 2015

**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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Pupils achieve well across a wide range of subjects, making particularly good progress in mathematics and science. As a result of an effective curriculum which meets the needs of all, the progress of pupils in Year 7 to 11 is very strong.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is a high priority for leaders, and as a result, wide achievement gaps in the recent past have narrowed.
- Most pupils benefit from good and outstanding teaching which enables them to learn effectively and be successful in their studies.
- Pupils behave extremely well around the school. They are polite and friendly. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. Pupils wear their uniform well and have pride in their school community.
- The work the school does to keep its pupils safe is exemplary. The welfare and personal development of pupils is a very high priority for all staff.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors are determined that 'no one gets left behind'. All their actions are driven by this ambition and the impact can be seen particularly in the improved achievement of many disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While significant improvements have been made in narrowing the gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers, a small proportion of these pupils are still not making the best possible progress.
- Too many disadvantaged pupils are still persistently absent from school and involved in behaviour sanctions.
- Teaching throughout the school is not consistently outstanding. Some teaching does not always motivate pupils sufficiently in order for them to make the best possible progress.
- Some pupils, particularly boys, do not always act upon advice and targets for improvement and this is not followed up by all teachers.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the significant improvements already made to close any remaining achievement gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.
- Reduce further the number of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent and involved in behaviour sanctions.
- Ensure that all teachers promote the highest achievement for all by:
  - planning lessons that motivate and engage their pupils in order to make the best possible progress
  - providing opportunities for pupils to act upon the advice given in written feedback, and following this up when it is not done effectively.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and his senior team provide very strong leadership. They know their school extremely well and are not afraid to take bold actions to address any areas which are not good enough. They are driven by an unassuming yet unswerving determination that no pupil in their school will be left behind. The impact of this is evident in the continuing improvements in the quality of teaching, pupils' outcomes and behaviour.
- While rightly proud of their successes so far, they are acutely aware of the areas where there is further work to be done. The school's 'Plan for Excellence' comprises an accurate and rigorous evaluation of what they have achieved and, more importantly, a detailed plan of how they will continue to move forward. All leaders demonstrate an eagerness to accelerate these further improvements.
- When senior leaders identify an area that requires improvement, they do not simply respond with short-term, 'quick-fix' interventions. This was evident in the way they responded to some disappointing outcomes in 2014. They seized the opportunity to take some strategic and radical decisions to bring about long-term, sustained improvement. Examples of this visionary leadership include: redesigning both the Key Stage 3 and 4 curriculum to meet the needs of all groups of pupils more effectively; timetabling reading support and extension for all Key Stage 3 pupils; appointing 12 lead practitioners and staffing each form group with two tutors to facilitate more effective mentoring.
- Senior leaders have high expectations and are not afraid to set the bar accordingly, for example with behaviour and homework. Expectations are particularly high in relation to homework, with clear consequences for pupils if this is not completed to the required standard. Leaders are aware that for some pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs, they need to provide study support within this system. However, while high expectations pervade all levels of leadership, not all teachers are challenging pupils to meet these standards. This is evident in the quality of work and presentation in some pupils' books, particularly boys.
- Senior leaders have designed an inclusive curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. It is underpinned by a genuine commitment to encourage and enable all pupils to aspire and achieve. For example, the majority of pupils study separate sciences. The curriculum is organised into personalised learning pathways in both key stages, enabling pupils to be appropriately supported and challenged. This has been instrumental in improving the progress of all groups of pupils. All pupils are educated on site, however, they do have access to a range of vocational courses as part of a wide after-school enrichment programme. The school only uses alternative provision for health or medical reasons. On the few occasions where this happens, individual teachers maintain ongoing contact with their pupils through email communication.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a very high priority in the school and is led very effectively. Much of this development takes place through the personal development programme and four personal development days throughout the year. Leaders recognise that the school is located in an area that is not culturally diverse, and have placed a great emphasis on creating opportunities for pupils to broaden their horizons. For example, some pupils are working collaboratively with pupils from another school in the local authority that has a much larger minority ethnic cohort. Leaders are keen that pupils are prepared effectively for life in modern Britain, and respect for diversity in all forms is at the heart of this. All pupils in Key Stage 3 have a 'Personal Development Passport' which encourages them to complete a range of activities, which will broaden their horizons as well as developing them personally. Again, leaders are aware that they must provide opportunities for all pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, to access such activities and experiences.
- Curriculum and pastoral leaders are empowered to take responsibility for their own areas. Developing their capacity is a high priority, and many middle leaders are working towards national leadership qualifications. The projects they are undertaking for these qualifications are having an impact on pupils' outcomes across the school. Middle leaders are driven by a determination to ensure that all pupils achieve their potential and are clear about the role they play in bringing this about. Where pupil achievement is not good enough, middle leaders are supported and challenged appropriately to bring about improvement.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is strong. Senior leaders are unequivocal in their drive to continually improve the learning experience for all pupils. The impact of the range of professional development and effective quality assurance procedures can be seen in the continuing improving profile

of teaching across the school, which is now predominantly good or better. Appropriate programmes of support and development are securely in place for the small number of teachers where this is not yet the case. Evaluations about the quality of teaching and learning are informed by formal pupil panel meetings. Procedures for managing teachers' performance are rigorous and robust, and used effectively to drive up standards in teaching and improve outcomes for pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged.

- Senior leaders are determined that disadvantaged pupils should achieve as well as their peers. They have used the pupil premium funding effectively to narrow the majority of achievement gaps between these pupils and their peers, particularly for those pupils with low prior attainment. Leaders are aware that the least impact has been with those pupils who arrive at the school with middle prior attainment and have focused their actions accordingly. Robust in-school achievement data indicate that, in 2016, these gaps will markedly reduce for all ability groups.
- The views of staff, parents and pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the way the school is led. There is a tangible team spirit among the staff as they strive to do their best for their pupils. Many parental comments offer high praise for the school, speaking of how their children have flourished here. The local authority representative is also very impressed with the leadership, describing the school as, 'self-improving'.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The work the school does to keep its pupils safe is exemplary. Leadership of this area is very strong. Staff engage effectively and appropriately with parents, carers and other stakeholders to make sure that all pupils are supported and safe. Procedures to ensure that all staff receive relevant training are robust, as are the protocols and practice for record-keeping. Staff have received a range of training on potential areas of risk for young people, including from the Lancashire 'Prevent' team, who also recently ran workshops for pupils.
- **The governance of the school**
  - The governance of the school is of a very high quality. Governors possess the required skills and expertise to robustly challenge senior and middle leaders. They know the school well, and are focused on their core purpose of ensuring that all groups of pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, achieve their full potential. This is summed up in the Chair of the Governing Body's assertion that, 'we are serious about getting the best for all our children'. Governors work closely with senior leaders, both at a strategic and a 'hands-on' level, on areas such as teachers' performance management and pupil behaviour.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Most pupils are benefiting from good and outstanding teaching, which enables them to make good progress. The very positive relationships that exist between staff and pupils, based on mutual respect, clearly make a contribution to the learning in the vast majority of lessons. Teachers know their pupils well, and the high expectations they have of them builds their confidence and self-esteem.
- In most lessons, teachers use their expertise and passion for their subject, coupled with their knowledge of their pupils, to enthuse and involve them in their learning. They use questioning skilfully to check and extend pupils' understanding. Teachers assess their pupils' progress effectively and use this information to plan the next stage of their learning. Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils.
- When, as happens in the majority of cases, teachers plan lessons that stimulate and engage their pupils, their attitudes to learning and application to their studies are exemplary. However, in a minority of lessons, teaching does not always motivate pupils sufficiently to enable them to make the best possible progress.
- In pupils' books there is evidence of teachers giving helpful feedback on how to improve their work. When pupils respond to this it helps them to make progress. Not all pupils are doing this, however, and some teachers are willing to accept this, alongside untidily presented work. Consequently, marking does not always help pupils to produce work of a higher standard. This is particularly the case for boys.
- In the majority of cases, the most-able pupils are being challenged to achieve the highest possible standards, and consequently they are making good progress. This is particularly the case in mathematics. The critical thinking lessons in Key Stage 3 also provide challenge for the most-able pupils, developing a range of skills including oracy (the ability to express oneself fluently and grammatically in speech) and problem solving. However, inspectors did observe a few occasions in lessons where the most-able pupils could have been stretched further.
- All staff are committed to developing pupils' literacy skills. In the two and a half hours' dedicated time

each week, pupils in Key Stage 3 are involved in a range of activities aimed at improving their reading skills. The sessions are personalised to support and challenge pupils accordingly.

- In most subject areas, teachers set regular and appropriate homework that contributes well to pupils' learning. Each pupil is provided with a personal revision programme to help them consolidate their learning and prepare effectively for formal assessments.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Staff know and care for their pupils well. There is a nurturing ethos in the school that creates an environment in which pupils can thrive.
- The personal development programme reflects the high priority that senior leaders give to this aspect of each pupil's education. Parental comments provide clear evidence of how much they value the care, support and guidance that their children receive from all staff. Many parents believe that they have their children's interest at heart, which brings out the best in them. Pupils are very well cared for. Staff work extremely well with parents and external agencies to make sure pupils' welfare needs are managed sensitively so that they can flourish.
- Pupils spoken to during the inspection say that bullying is rare. On the few occasions when it does occur, they are confident that staff will sort it out quickly. Although senior leaders encourage respect for sexual diversity, including sessions with outside speakers, pupils say that the use of the word 'gay' in a derogatory way still occurs occasionally.
- On the very few occasions when pupils attend alternative provision for medical or health reasons, staff in school maintain close contact with them, and their welfare is given the highest priority.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite, friendly and behave extremely well around the school. They wear their uniform well and have pride in their school community. During breaktime and lunchtime, whether socialising inside or outside, pupils' behaviour is mature and calm. The numerous staff and Year 11 prefects on duty use this time to engage with pupils in a positive way.
- In lessons, pupils show respect to their teachers and each other, which creates a positive atmosphere for learning. Pupils enjoy their learning and are keen to do well.
- The leadership of behaviour and attendance is strong. Effective action, including financial investment in staffing and infrastructure, has brought about improvements in these areas. Overall external and internal exclusion and absence figures have reduced significantly. For the last two years, overall absence has been below the national average. However, senior leaders are well aware that behind the headline figures there is still concern about the attendance of some disadvantaged pupils. Staff are now, quite rightly, focusing their actions on reducing further the number of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent and involved in behaviour sanctions.

## **Outcomes for pupils are good**

- In recent years, overall progress and attainment measures, by the end of Year 11, have been broadly in line with or above national averages. Pupils achieve well across a wide range of subjects, with progress in mathematics and science being slightly better than in English.
- In-school data indicates that the impact of recent actions will lead to a significant further improvement in pupils' attainment and progress in 2016. Senior leaders are very confident about how robust this information is as it is based on a range of moderated assessments and the previous years' predictions have been accurate.
- In response to disappointing outcomes in modern foreign languages in 2015, senior leaders took urgent and decisive action. In a short amount of time, there is already evidence of the impact of this, and staff in this department demonstrate a determined desire to ensure that their pupils achieve well in this subject.
- The most-able pupils make good progress overall. This is particularly the case in mathematics, as a result of teaching which challenges pupils to reach the highest possible standards. Pupils who arrive at the school with low prior attainment make good progress as a result of appropriate curricular provision. Pupils

supported by the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium make accelerated progress during the early stages of their secondary education.

- There is clear evidence that recent wide gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers have narrowed, and the outcomes for this group of pupils are improving over time. However, disadvantaged pupils who have middle prior attainment are not making good enough progress. Leaders have focused their actions on supporting these pupils and predictions for 2016 indicate that the impact of this will be seen in a further narrowing of gaps, with some closing altogether.
- A recently appointed special educational needs coordinator has brought very strong leadership to this area. The new systems she has introduced will take longer to embed, but they are already having a positive effect on outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs. In 2015, the proportion of pupils making expected progress and attaining five A\*–C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, increased. The 2016 predictions indicate that progress and attainment gaps between these pupils and their peers will continue to reduce. Pupils spoken to during the inspection speak very highly of the support they receive.
- Year 11 destination information indicates that pupils are being very effectively prepared to progress to further education, training or to enter full-time employment. Alongside a curriculum which meets their needs, pupils receive effective careers information, advice and guidance.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110719
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10001338

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	980
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Harry Devonport
<b>Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge</b>	Dr Paul Parkin
<b>Telephone number</b>	01282 865200
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.park-high.co.uk">www.park-high.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:info@park-high.co.uk">info@park-high.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	24–25 November 2010

## Information about this school

- Colne Park High is an average-sized school.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and therefore supported by the pupil premium is broadly in line with the national average. The pupil premium is funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and for looked after children.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and, consequently, few are at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- The school only uses alternative provision for medical or health reasons for a very small number of pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in lessons across a range of subject areas, of which eight were joint observations with senior leaders. They also carried out a book scrutiny jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors met with three groups of pupils and talked to others informally during breaktimes. Discussions were held with staff, including senior and middle leaders. A meeting was held with three members of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of the 72 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and of the 86 questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents. These included information on the school's own view of its performance; achievement, behaviour and attendance information; and a range of policies.

## Inspection team

Anne Seneviratne, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Paul Chambers	Her Majesty's Inspector
Elizabeth Kelly	Ofsted inspector
John Leigh	Ofsted inspector
Steven Caldicott	Ofsted inspector
Paul Edmondson	Ofsted inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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