

# Great Sankey High School

# NEWSLETTER



May 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

I am delighted to be able to share the Ofsted inspection report for Great Sankey High School following our two day inspection in March. The report confirms that Great Sankey **continues to be a Good school**. This reflects the positive attitudes of the overwhelming majority of our students, as well as the hard work, dedication and commitment of our staff. Here are a few highlights of the report;

- “Pupils, and students in the sixth form, spoke positively about their time at Great Sankey High School.”
- “Relationships between pupils and staff are respectful and caring. Pupils said that bullying is not tolerated and, that when it does happen, it is dealt with well. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and happy in school.”
- “Recently, leaders have transformed the culture in school by raising staff’s expectations of pupils’ behaviour.”
- “Leaders expect pupils to succeed. Pupils, including those in the sixth form, benefit from a well thought out curriculum. Pupils, including those with SEND, achieve well.”
- “Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum from key stage 3 to the sixth form.”
- “Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They use their expertise to deliver the curriculum consistently well.”
- “Leaders identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly and accurately. Staff are suitably trained to support these pupils well. The well designed curriculum also helps pupils with SEND to learn successfully.”
- “Leaders provide pupils with a range of wide and diverse experiences to enhance their learning of the curriculum.”
- “Pupils benefit from taking part in many different activities, trips and experiences. Added to this, leaders provide a wealth of opportunities for pupils to have an active voice in the school, for instance through the junior leadership, school leadership, and college presidential teams.”

It means a lot that the work that we do in school is recognised but my message to staff, students and to you is that we don’t stop there and we do not rest on our laurels. I believe there is still much for us to do in order to ensure our school continues to make the necessary improvements to be truly exceptional.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those parents who contacted me directly during the inspection to express their support for what we are trying to achieve here. It really did mean a lot. The full report is available on **Pages 3-7**.

After the half term holiday, we are making some minor changes to the school day. This will not affect the start or end times of the day. Here is a summary of those changes;

- We have listened to the concerns raised by our students and some parents, in relation to the length of break, and the access to catering facilities and/or toilets at morning break. In response to this, **morning break will be extended by five minutes**. This will now be 20 minutes in length, to ensure students have time to have a snack and visit the toilets as required.
- Again, in response to the concerns raised by students regarding the congestion on corridors and around the social areas/toilets at break-time, **we are introducing a split break**. This means that only certain year groups will take their break at the same time (a split lunch break is already in place). This will halve the number of students who take their break at break at any one time and will help create a less congested environment around the school.
- In order to maximise learning time, **we will extend most lessons by five minutes**. On such a large

site, travel time between lessons can impact on learning time in lesson so this will help address that. Students are still expected to get to lesson as quickly as they can and learning starts immediately with a Do Now activity that is available on entry to the classroom.

- The changes above will be facilitated through the removal of the afternoon PDR session, which will no longer take place. This 30-minute period delivered in forms, currently takes place every day and is used to deliver the school's PSHE and RSE curriculum. This crucial area of the curriculum will be delivered in morning Form time as well as through lessons throughout the year.
- We are aware that the changes of lessons can be busy times on our corridors. To address this, we are introducing a new Staff Rota for lesson changeovers and during lesson to ensure a smooth transition between lessons and to provide students with supervision in areas that can be busy. More staff will be around school during lessons to supervise and support our students.

Please find below an overview of the revised school day.

Years 8, 10 & 12					Years 7 & 9	
8.20am	8.45am	Registration			8.20am	8.45am
8.45am	9.45am	Period 1			8.45am	9.45am
9.45am	10.05am	Break	Period 2		9.45am	10.50am
10.05am	11.10am	Period 2	Break		10.50am	11.10am
11.10am	12.10pm	Period 3			11.10am	12.10pm
12.10pm	12.40pm	Lunch	Period 4		12.10pm	1.15pm
12.40pm	1.45pm	Period 4	Lunch		1.15pm	1.45pm
1.45pm	2.50pm	Period 5			1.45pm	2.50pm

Y11 & 13 will be in examinations and exam booster session after the holiday so will take break and lunch to fit around these.

### Great Sankey High School Expectations

In January, I shared the school's expectations for behaviour in and out of lessons. We believe these expectations are reasonable requests to make of students in and around school and the vast majority of students respect these every day. However, it is important to remind our students about these expectations, and to reinforce these regularly.

Our expectations are centred on the importance of students being **Ready, Respectful and Safe** around school and in lessons. You can find the school's new Behaviour Policy [HERE](#). In the policy, you will see the posters that are on display in classrooms and around school which set out our expectations. I would like to draw your attention to the following specific aspects of the behaviour policy and ask that you discuss these with your child, particularly if you are aware that these have been raised as a concern with you previously:

**Be Ready:** Students will arrive to lessons on time – we do our best to ensure all students are encouraged to get to lessons on time so that they can engage in their learning as soon as they arrive. Learning will start as soon as possible after the bell. The school will ensure there will be consequences/sanctions for any student who persist in choosing to arrive late to lessons.

**Be Respectful:** If a staff member asks to speak to a student anywhere in school, we expect students to stop and listen. Where students choose to ignore these reasonable requests, students will be challenged and a consequence may be issued.

**Be Safe:** Students are not allowed to use their mobile phone/headphones in school – a growing number of students are wearing airpods or similar wireless devices around school and this is against school policy. Students who choose to use their mobile phones and airpods should expect to have them confiscated. I agree that phones are important for you to know your child is safe before and after school but there is no need for them to be used during the school day. Again, your support with this would be welcome.

If I can count on parental support on these simple matters, the learning environment of the school will continue to improve and all students will be able to thrive.

The school's sporting excellence has been at the fore recently - Our Year 11 RFL team became double champions winning both the National and North West Trophies and our Year 7 footballers won the National Cup Final this week. I was so proud to watch all three finals. There have been many other achievements in sport and other areas that we will celebrate in our next newsletter in a couple of weeks' time. School reopens after the half term holiday at 8.20am on Monday 5th June. I hope you all enjoy the break.

Yours faithfully

Mr G Evans—Headteacher

# Inspection of a good school: Great Sankey High School

Barrow Hall Lane, Great Sankey, Warrington, Cheshire WA5 3AA

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Inspection dates:

28 and 29 March 2023

## **Outcome**

Great Sankey High School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, spoke positively about their time at Great Sankey High School. Relationships between pupils and staff are respectful and caring. Pupils said that bullying is not tolerated and, that when it does happen, it is dealt with well. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and happy in school.

Recently, leaders have transformed the culture in school by raising staff's expectations of pupils' behaviour. The vast majority of pupils strive to live up to these expectations. There are clear and consistent routines in place which contribute to the calm atmosphere in classrooms.

Leaders expect pupils to succeed. Pupils, including those in the sixth form, benefit from a well-thought-out curriculum. Pupils, including those with SEND, achieve well.

Leaders provide pupils with a range of wide and diverse experiences to enhance their learning of the curriculum. For example, pupils spoke excitedly about the upcoming trips to Galway and Belfast, as part of a combined leadership programme.

Leaders foster pupils' community spirit. For instance, pupils described how they took part in a recent commemorative service for the victims of the Warrington bombing. This helped pupils to collectively remember members of their community who died.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum from key stage 3 to the sixth form. In most subjects, leaders have created well-organised curriculums that support staff to design learning well. This helps pupils to focus on the knowledge that is important for future study. Over time, pupils benefit from many opportunities to deepen their learning. Pupils successfully build a rich body of subject knowledge as a result.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They use their expertise to deliver the curriculum consistently well. Teachers provide clear explanations and helpful examples so that pupils can acquire new knowledge easily. Added to this, teachers ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to practise and consolidate earlier learning. Most pupils, and students in the sixth form, learn well.

For the most part, teachers skilfully use assessment strategies to check how well pupils have learned curriculum content. Many teachers use this information well to make sure that any gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding are addressed quickly. However, on occasion, some teachers do not identify pupils' misconceptions swiftly enough. This means that some pupils develop gaps in their learning.

Leaders identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly and accurately. Staff are suitably trained to support these pupils well. The well-designed curriculum also helps pupils with SEND to learn successfully.

Leaders have placed reading at the core of all learning. Skilled staff quickly identify and support those pupils who are behind with their reading knowledge. This helps these pupils to catch up quickly and ensures that they can fully access the wider curriculum.

Leaders' recent improvements to the behaviour system have helped to secure a purposeful environment in lessons where pupils can learn without disruption. Teachers feel well supported by leaders to deal with any poor behaviour quickly and effectively. However, there is still a small minority of pupils who do not rise to leaders' high expectations of their conduct during social times.

Pupils benefit from taking part in many different activities, trips and experiences. For example, those sixth-form students studying geography have visited Iceland. Year 7 pupils attend a residential where they camp, participate in team building challenges and learn how to cook outdoors. Added to this, leaders provide a wealth of opportunities for pupils to have an active voice in the school, for instance through the junior leadership, school leadership, and college presidential teams. Pupils participate in a wide variety of clubs including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Relationships between leaders, staff and pupils are positive. Staff feel listened to by leaders and feel well supported to further develop their teaching expertise. Staff value leaders' consideration of their workload and well-being.

Governors and trustees have a clear, strategic oversight of the school and are aware of the strengths and leaders' priorities for further development. They support and challenge leaders effectively.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff receive regular and up-to-date safeguarding training. Staff are equipped well to spot any concerns that they have about a pupil's welfare. They report these concerns diligently.

The safeguarding and pastoral teams are knowledgeable and experienced. Leaders keep detailed safeguarding records and use them to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders work closely with external agencies to secure timely and appropriate support for pupils and their families when necessary.

Pupils know who to speak to if they have any concerns. They are confident that staff will listen to them and look after them well.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- On occasion, some teachers do not identify pupils' misconceptions quickly enough. As a result, from time to time, some pupils develop gaps in their learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers use assessment information effectively to quickly identify and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- Some aspects of leaders' work to improve pupils' behaviour are relatively new. A small number of pupils do not behave as well as they should during social times. Leaders should ensure that staff implement behaviour strategies equally well outside of lessons so that these pupils are supported to improve their behaviour.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2017.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139152
<b>Local authority</b>	Warrington
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240162
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	2,118
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Andrew Bent
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gary Evans
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.greatsankey.org">www.greatsankey.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	20 and 21 September 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Leaders use one registered and one unregistered alternative provider for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other leaders, staff and pupils. Inspectors also spoke with members of the local governing body, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, and members of the trust board, including the chair of trustees.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, history, science, performing arts, and art and design. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning, looked at samples of pupils' work and met with teachers.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from Years 7 to 11, and with students in the sixth form. Inspectors also observed pupils' movements around school.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding procedures and the checks made on staff. Inspectors met with leaders, staff and pupils to evaluate the culture of safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, the school self-evaluation documents, the curriculum, minutes from meetings of the governors and behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors considered the views of the parents and carers who responded to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and Ofsted's online survey for pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Phill Walmsley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Gil Bourgade	Ofsted Inspector
Joe Barker	Ofsted Inspector



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