

North Shore Health Academy

Inspection report

Unique reference number	136146
Local authority	n/a
Inspection number	393236
Inspection dates	18-19 January 2012
Lead inspector	Andrew Johnson HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Academy sponsor-led
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	666
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Prest
Principal	Christopher Coady
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
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Age group	11-16
Inspection date(s)	18-19 January 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Andrew Johnson

Her Majesty's Inspector

Wendy Ripley

Her Majesty's Inspector

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 as a second academy monitoring inspection. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act. The academy was given a day's notice of this inspection. Inspectors observed 17 lessons taught by 15 teachers and one teaching assistant. They spent approximately 9 hours in lessons. They spoke to students in and around the academy and held meetings with them. Inspectors observed the behaviour of students both in lessons and at lunch- and break-times. They spoke to the Chair of the Governing Body, who is also a representative of the trustees. Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, managers and teachers. They looked at the Ofsted on-line questionnaire (Parent View); however, no responses had been recorded. Inspectors also scrutinised a range of documentation, including the academy's self-evaluation, development planning, assessment data and documents relating to safeguarding. They examined a sample of the students' work, including English and mathematics books, and spoke to a group of students about the opportunities they were given to develop their reading and writing skills. During the first monitoring inspection, between 28 and 29 November 2011, a similar range of activities took place, including the observation of 21 lessons.

Information about the school

The academy is sponsored by the National Health Service (NHS), Stockton-on-Tees, the Stockton College Consortium and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council. It has a specialism in health-related subjects. It is smaller than average and replaces two previous schools, Blakeston School Community Sports College and Norton School Humanities College. The Principal has been in charge since it opened in September 2010. Together with the vice-principal and director of finance, they were the only new members of staff appointed to the academy. Almost all teaching and support staff transferred to the academy from the predecessor schools. Since that time staff turnover has been high, as have levels of staff absence. As a result, many lessons are taught by supply teachers. The academy operates from the buildings of one of its predecessor schools. A major building programme to provide new premises is due to start in February 2012 and is scheduled for completion in March 2013. The number of students on roll has declined from the combined total enrolled at the predecessor schools and is well short of the proposed 1050 capacity of the new academy. Almost all students are of White British heritage. The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is high, although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is average. Many students have been identified by the academy as having behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and significant difficulties with literacy and numeracy. A high proportion of students are known to be eligible for free school meals. Government floor standards were not met last year.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
 Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	4
Achievement of pupils	4
Quality of teaching	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils	4
Leadership and management	4

Key findings

- In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its students an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.
- The academy’s overall effectiveness is inadequate. The behaviour of a significant minority of students is very poor. This has a detrimental effect on their learning and on the progress of their better-behaved classmates.
- A large number of students were removed from lessons last year due to serious incidents of verbal or physical abuse against staff or other students. This number has been reduced, but poor behaviour continues both in lessons and around the academy. A minority of students are openly disrespectful to staff. The number of students removed from lessons or excluded from school remains high.
- Overall, attendance is well below average and the number of students who are persistently absent is very high.
- In the lessons observed, students made too little progress in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding. Most underachieve and are unable to catch up. Students complained to inspectors about the quality of lessons, particularly those taught by supply teachers. They feel that the frequent changes of teaching staff have a detrimental impact on their learning and behaviour. A significant minority of parents and carers have expressed some concerns about the behaviour of students.
- Managers realise that the quality of teaching is not good enough. The support

they have provided to teachers has proved to be ineffective in several cases and it has taken a long time for appropriate performance management procedures to be carried out. Further significant staff changes are planned this year. Staff told inspectors that morale is low.

- In 2011, only 32% of students in Year 11 attained five or more equivalent GCSE grades at A* to C including English and mathematics. This is broadly in line with the results of the predecessor schools. This year, the academy expects that students' achievement will improve; however, inspectors were not provided with convincing evidence that this goal will be achieved.
- The Principal has worked hard to tackle the most difficult problems and does not deny that significant weaknesses remain. Improvement has begun in a few areas, for example improvements to the curriculum in Key Stage 3, but the most serious challenges remain. Based on its track record, the academy's leaders have not demonstrated that it has the capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve students' behaviour and the impact this has on learning by:
 - enabling teachers to take a consistent and suitably robust approach to improving discipline
 - introducing an effective strategy for behaviour management
 - ensuring that the work of the internal exclusion unit has a successful and sustained impact on students' attitudes to learning.
- Improve students' attendance by:
 - analysing the reasons for poor attendance and evaluating whether academy policies are being implemented robustly
 - analysing students' views about their enjoyment and engagement in lessons and the impact of their experiences on attendance and punctuality
 - taking more robust action to ensure persistent absence is reduced.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - building upon the successful curriculum initiatives in Key Stage 3 to enable more students to enjoy lessons
 - giving teachers more time to share good practice
 - ensuring that teachers plan and deliver learning activities effectively so that they meet the needs and interests of different groups of students, especially those who have specific weaknesses in their literacy skills
 - further reducing the proportion of lessons taught by supply or temporary staff.
- Develop the academy's capacity to improve by:
 - ensuring that the governing body and trustees challenge the performance of leaders more robustly
 - establishing a more cohesive and effective leadership team with clearly-identified roles, responsibilities and performance targets that have direct links to outcomes for students

- building upon the improvements made to the quality of middle leadership to devise a more effective curriculum at Key Stage 4
- identifying a new lead trustee so that the long-term future of the academy is assured.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Attainment is low and shows little sign of improvement. Examination results in 2011 show that the proportion of Year 11 students who made the expected progress from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4 in English, mathematics and science was significantly lower than the national average. Attainment was low in many subjects, including art and design, core science, design and technology, English language, geography, history, and mathematics. There was a significant gap between the attainment of those students known to be eligible for free school meals and that of their peers. Girls outperformed boys in most areas except in mathematics where the position was reversed. In the academy's specialist science and health-related subjects, attainment is much lower than the national average although in physical education outcomes were good. In 2011, more-able students underperformed. Very few students gained a grade A* or A in their GCSE examinations.

Learning and progress in lessons are inadequate in many subjects across both key stages. Students enter the academy with levels of attainment that are often below average. Due to this poor progress, the gaps are not closing between the performance of different groups of students or with all students nationally. The academy believes that the quality of students' learning is improving this year, but inspectors disagree. In many lessons observed, due to the poor behaviour of a minority of students, the learning of the majority was inadequate. According to teachers' assessment and the academy's data, the proportions of students making expected levels of progress have improved. However, the academy's data system is not robust and teachers' assessments are often overly optimistic. Academy leaders are unsure if teachers' assessments are accurate and have plans to improve the data tracking system.

For many students, their communication skills, including their reading and writing and proficiency in mathematics, do not prepare them for the next stage of their education or training, despite the current support they receive. Students with disabilities and those with special educational needs also underachieve.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is inadequate and, as a result, too many students make inadequate progress. Many teachers are unable to impose sufficient order in the classroom. Others do not have sufficiently high expectations of students' behaviour. Learning fails to excite, engage or motivate many students, particularly those in Key Stage 4. Inspectors did observe some good teaching and learning, particularly in physical

education lessons, but they also observed a high proportion of lessons in which teaching was inadequate. There are many reasons for this. Most commonly, it is because students are not interested or engaged in learning. Punctuality to lessons is often poor. When students arrive in lessons they often do not have basic equipment such as pens or pencils. Several are openly disrespectful to teachers. The current behaviour management system is inadequate and teachers do not use it consistently enough to take the appropriate sanctions in response to students' negative attitudes. Various attempts have been made to improve behaviour, but they have failed. As a result, for many students, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is inadequate.

In the small number of good lessons seen by inspectors, students from across the ability range behaved well and relationships between students and teachers were good. In Key Stage 3 there is evidence that students respond well to interesting learning activities that are personalised to meet their needs. They enjoy practical and challenging independent learning activities. For example, in one physical education lesson, students had a sensible debate about the 'respect' agenda in relation to the role of a football referee and in a geography lesson they analysed the impact of tourism on the environment in the national parks. Even in the lessons where students behave well there are often other weaknesses evident in teaching. For example, teachers' lesson planning does not always focus on what students of differing abilities will learn or the needs of pupils who experience difficulties with reading and writing.

Levels of absence are high amongst teaching staff and many supply teachers are employed. This lack of stability has resulted in the marking and assessment of students' work often being inadequate because the academy's procedures are not implemented rigorously enough. There is also some unnecessary repetition of work evident in students' books. On occasions teachers and students were unaware of each others' names. Inspectors saw few examples of additional support staff being used effectively in lessons to help engage students in their work. The frequency with which homework is set varies; often it has little impact on learning. In addition, too few parents or carers are actively engaged by the academy to help develop their children's learning. Students have progress sheets fixed into their exercise books and usually know what their predicted grades are. However, this has little impact on motivating students to work hard or helping them focus on where they need to improve. Communication skills, including reading and writing and mathematics are taught inconsistently across the curriculum. The new Key Stage 3 curriculum is effective and has a better impact on outcomes for students than that at Key Stage 4, where the curriculum is inadequate.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is inadequate and a significant minority of students show a lack of respect for each other and the staff. Parents, carers, students and staff raised well-founded concerns about poor behaviour with inspectors, which they consider is not being tackled successfully.

Attendance currently stands at 90.1%, although it is lower in Years 10 and 11 and for groups of students whose circumstances make them vulnerable, including

disabled students and those with special educational needs. The proportion of students who are persistently absent has been reduced but remains very high when compared with most schools. Strategies to improve attendance have not brought about significant improvement. Punctuality in arriving at lessons remains poor.

Fixed-term exclusions remain high as do internal short-term isolations from lessons. A large number of students are referred to the academy's internal support zone each day. This has little impact on improving behaviour and many students are referred on multiple occasions. In higher sets, students' behaviour is more positive and constructive; however, even in these classes a significant minority of students engage in off-task chatter or are too passive and bored by their work. The academy has placed great emphasis on implementing better behaviour management strategies during lesson changeovers, lunch- and break-times. Despite the increased presence of pastoral staff, behaviour around the site remains poor.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are inadequate because the steps taken to secure improvements have been largely ineffective. Since his arrival, the Principal has faced many strategic challenges. Much of his time has been devoted to ensuring that the new building programme is successful. Attempts to improve students' behaviour and attendance have largely failed; this reflects the leadership's poor track record and inadequate capacity to improve these most important areas.

Many of the other serious challenges faced by the academy are delegated to the vice-principal and director of finance. Leaders' capacity to improve standards of teaching has been severely restricted by the tight deadlines imposed when the academy was established. While leaders are gradually building capacity amongst teachers and middle managers, and new appointments have been made, much work remains to be done.

The Key Stage 4 curriculum is inadequate because it does not meet the needs and interests of all groups of students. Curriculum developments, such as the 'Inspiring Healthy Minds' and 'Learning Live' initiatives, are improving students' engagement and enjoyment, particularly in Key Stage 3. However, it is too early to see any impact of these developments on raising academic achievement. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is inadequate as reflected in the poor behaviour of a significant proportion of students.

The systems used to track students' progress are inadequate. It is, therefore, very difficult for academy staff to identify underperformance accurately and put appropriate interventions in place. More robust systems to collect data are planned. Considerable professional development has been put in place to improve the quality of teaching but this has had too little impact. Measures to ensure equality of opportunity are inadequate because the gaps in achievement between different groups are not closing.

The academy has yet to develop a robust system to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses fully. However, all leaders agree that the weaknesses are very significant. The 2010-11 development plans failed to bring about the desired

improvement in several key areas. Procedures to ensure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place when appointing staff meet government requirements and give no cause for concern.

The lead sponsor's role at the academy will cease in March 2013 and the trustees are considering potential succession arrangements. Members of the governing body continue to be very supportive of the academy, but have not been robust enough in the challenge they have provided. They agree that there is a long way to go to overcome the academy's serious weaknesses and to achieve their ambitions for students.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add up exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 January 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of North Shore Health Academy, Stockton-on-Tees, TS19 9DL

Thank you for the welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your academy. There are some important things that the academy needs to improve and we have judged that it requires special measures. This means that the academy will be inspected again soon to make sure that it is improving quickly enough. We are asking the Principal, the staff and governors to do a number of things to ensure that you make better progress and achieve higher levels in all your subjects. You can read more about them in the full report. The most urgent actions are to:

- improve the behaviour of a significant number of students, both in lessons and around the school
- improve achievement and the quality of teaching in many subjects
- improve the attendance and punctuality of many students
- improve the impact of leadership and communication with parents or carers.

You can play your part by helping the staff try to improve things so that you will enjoy learning, achieve better results in examinations and be better prepared for your future.

I know that many of you try your best, sometimes in difficult circumstances. We trust that the inspection outcomes will help to improve North Shore and we wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Johnson
Her Majesty's Inspector

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