

Gosforth Junior High Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	136348
Local authority	Not applicable
Inspection number	367723
Inspection dates	19–20 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Moira Fitzpatrick

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

Type of school	Middle Deemed Secondary
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	398
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Goodfellow
Headteacher	Hugh Robinson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 21 lessons taught by 20 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff, including senior managers based at the partner academy high school. The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including data relating to pupils' progress, improvement plans, attendance data and documentation relating to safeguarding. The team took account of questionnaires returned by staff and pupils and 251 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether equality of opportunity is outstanding and how this is reflected in the outcomes for the many different groups of pupils in the academy.
- What impact the federation with the senior academy has had upon the academy's effectiveness and improvement since the previous inspection.
- Whether the provision for learning and pupils' well-being has improved sufficiently since the previous inspection to have crossed a grade boundary.
- How well leaders and managers, including members of the governing body, contribute to improving the academy.

Information about the school

The academy is smaller than average size for its type. It serves a richly diverse community and draws pupils from a wide area across the city. About one third of pupils in the school are from minority ethnic groups; the rest are of White British heritage. The main minority ethnic groups are from Indian and Pakistani heritages. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is high, with the number of languages spoken by pupils often exceeding twenty. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average; so too is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is an above-average number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The school hosts the local authority's visual impaired unit. Each year, there is a sizeable influx of pupils into Year 7, as parents and carers choose to send their children to the academy at this point.

The school acquired academy status in December 2010, having formed a 'hard federation' with Gosforth High School in January 2007. Since then, the two schools have had a shared leadership team and a single governing body. The Director of the Junior School is responsible for the running of the academy on a day-to-day basis. The Principal of the federation has been in post at the parent academy since 2003.

The academy maintains close and effective links with the local authority education service. During the last two years, the school was subject to some upheaval while a new school building was erected on site. That opened at the beginning of the current term. The number of pupils on roll has increased since the previous inspection.

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: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Gosforth Junior High Academy is an outstanding school. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well from a wide range of starting points. By the end of Year 8, pupils' attainment it is at least above, and sometimes well above, what is expected for their age. This is especially so in English and mathematics. The academy is, rightly, ambitious to accelerate pupils' progress further in Key Stage 2 by identifying and tackling any gaps in skills more quickly when pupils start Year 5. Pupils have an excellent sense of safety and well-being at school, partly because they are cared for and guided exceptionally well, but also because of their excellent relationships with each other and their outstanding behaviour. Their spiritual, moral social and cultural development is outstanding. Together, pupils create an exciting, diverse and harmonious community where all are eager to contribute to making the academy even better. That generates the warm, happy and positive atmosphere that pervades the academy. When they leave in Year 8, pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of learning.

Teaching and the curriculum are outstanding. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make at least good and sometimes better progress from broadly average starting points. That is because teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do and teachers are skilled at making learning exciting and enjoyable. Teachers set challenging work to match pupils' needs and give them great encouragement to learn independently, as well as from each other. The curriculum provides excellent opportunities for all pupils, regardless of ability, to succeed. It is adapted skilfully to ensure that pupils develop very well both academically and personally. Staff go to great lengths to demonstrate to pupils that they are valued highly. The excellent care, guidance and support underpin the school's highly successful inclusion practices. Excellent links with external partners ensure that pupils with specific needs are supported very well to take their place alongside their peers in the life of the academy.

Inspirational and astute leadership by the principal, ably supported by a dedicated team of directors, has transformed the academy's performance since the previous inspection. The drive for excellence is evident everywhere in the academy's work; it is supported highly by staff, the governing body, pupils, parents and carers. Self-evaluation is incisive and accurate. Governance is outstanding; the governing body is passionate about making the academy the best it can be in its service to pupils and parents and carers. Excellent links with parents and carers and external providers

enhance and support outstanding outcomes for pupils. The academy demonstrates an excellent capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and increase pupils’ achievement further, particularly at the end of Key Stage 2 by using assessment information more effectively so that gaps in skills, which might impede learning for individual pupils, are identified and tackled quickly when they enter the school in Year 5.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and their attendance is above average. They work hard and with obvious enjoyment, working independently or with a partner and relish the challenges that teachers set for them. That keeps the pace of learning brisk and convinces pupils of their ability to succeed. Pupils benefit greatly from teachers’ high expectations. For example, in a Year 8 English lesson pupils worked with verve and determination to master themes in ‘Jane Eyre’, present these to the class, and impress their teacher with their efforts too! Pupils’ excellent behaviour and respect for each other makes an outstanding contribution to their learning and to their strong feelings of safety and security in the academy. They say they feel very safe and know how to assess risks to themselves. They adopt healthy lifestyle practices readily, eat sensibly and take plenty of vigorous exercise. Pupils welcome responsibility and are justifiably proud of the service they give to the academy and wider community. It is outstanding because pupils know their responsibilities to others and have been convinced of their rights to influence decisions. When they leave, pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the future with an extensive range of skills and the ambition and determination to succeed.

The school has worked effectively since the previous inspection to ensure that all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and /or disabilities, those with English as an additional language and those who move into the school at the start of Year 7, make at least good progress from broadly average starting points. The work seen in pupils’ books from the last school year indicates that the school’s actions are having the planned impact, with more pupils in Year 6 on track to exceed the expected level by the end of the year.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	1

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

High-quality teaching is based on excellent subject knowledge and a shared ambition amongst all staff for every pupil to achieve their best. The high level of consistency in planning and lesson structure makes a significant contribution to how well pupils learn in different subjects. Teachers plan a wide variety of activities from which pupils learn independently and they create many opportunities for pupils to learn from each other. Those approaches motivate pupils very well so that they listen closely, tackle their tasks with energy and make very good use of time for learning. The brisk pace of learning is supported very well by teachers and teaching assistants who are constantly checking that pupils are succeeding with tasks. Prompt intervention and support for all groups, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, ensures that progress is at least good for all groups of pupils. Marking and feedback to pupils on how to improve are good and ensure that there is continuous improvement in pupils' work. However, teachers do not always use assessment information to identify gaps in pupils' learning quickly enough when they start in Year 5.

The finely tuned curriculum is matched well to the diverse and sometimes complex needs of pupils. Since the previous inspection, the gap in achievement between groups has been reduced, attendance has risen and persistent absence has been reduced dramatically as a result of the excellent curriculum. All pupils are provided with 'pathways' to success in basic skills and with topics that fire their enthusiasm and allow them to develop individual interests and talents. Planning ensures that outstanding links are made between subjects so that pupils have plenty of opportunity to use and apply new skills and knowledge. Extra-curricular activities abound and because the school is vigilant in monitoring which groups of pupils access these it is able constantly to extend and enrich opportunities so that there is something for everyone. Pupils are highly appreciative of these activities and their success is seen in high uptake and involvement.

Outstanding care, guidance and support provide the foundation of pupils' achievement in this vibrant, successful school. Staff are unflinching in their commitment to helping pupils to succeed and ensure their sense of well-being. Pastoral staff make excellent links with external providers to provide prompt, high-quality support for individual pupils and their families. It provides excellent support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and pupils whose circumstances may make them potentially vulnerable. The visually impaired pupils are integrated effectively into mainstream classes and participate fully in school life. They, too, make at least good progress. Transition arrangements for pupils joining the school in Years 5 and 7 and for those moving on to the senior academy at the end of Year 8 are excellent. They are planned meticulously to take account of all

needs, provide exciting activities which allow pupils to make new friends and make sure that any anxiety about moving on is minimised.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers at all levels demonstrate the ambition, drive and expertise to improve the school continually. Close partnership with the parent academy has been fundamental to improving the academy since the previous inspection. Since then, teaching has improved significantly because a collegiate ethos has developed. Professional dialogue and sharing good practice are the norm, creating a vibrant and challenging environment where staff look continually for ways to improve. That and the excellent development of the curriculum is fuelling improved progress and rising attainment for pupils. Self-evaluation is delegated extremely well, accurate and rigorous.

The governing body makes an excellent contribution to the work of the academy. It is robust in its challenge to the school and dedicated in its service to the community. Its relentless pursuit of better accommodation for pupils and staff has been realised this year with the completion of a new building. The building provides excellent facilities to develop learning opportunities even further. The governing body's role in strategic development is outstanding. It ensures that safeguarding procedures are met well and that the well-being of staff and pupils is a priority for the academy. It ensures also that equal opportunity is promoted very well in this highly inclusive school and that discrimination in any form is not tolerated. Community cohesion is outstanding. The academy knows and meets its own community's needs and aspirations very well. It has an excellent understanding of national and international communities through numerous links, which provide excellent opportunities for pupils to contribute to community development.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1

The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1
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Views of parents and carers

A larger-than-average proportion of parents and carers returned questionnaires and these were overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Many parents and carers provided written comments praising staff for the way they care for their children, help them enjoy school, make learning exciting and help their children to succeed. Some parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities wrote positively about the support they and their children receive from the school. Many of the comments reflect the views of one parent, 'A fantastic school that puts children first!' A few parents and carers expressed concern about communication between home and school, while one or two were anxious about bullying.

Inspectors found much to support parents' and carers' positive views and these are reflected in the report. There was no pattern to the negative views expressed. Pupils were confident that rare instances of bullying are dealt with swiftly by staff. As one boy put it, 'They just get nipped in the bud.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gosforth Junior High Academy to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 251 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 398 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	125	50	121	48	5	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	129	51	119	47	2	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	101	40	132	53	8	3	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	94	37	139	55	7	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	104	41	134	53	5	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	87	35	132	53	18	7	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	73	29	153	61	13	5	2	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	93	37	132	53	4	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	105	42	124	49	7	3	3	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	108	43	114	45	17	7	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	78	31	130	52	14	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	119	47	117	47	3	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	130	52	112	45	6	2	1	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



21 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gosforth Junior High Academy, Gosforth, NE3 1EE

Thank you all very much for making us so welcome when we inspected your academy recently. Despite starting a new term, lots of new people about and a wonderful new building to enjoy, you found time to be kind and helpful to us and tell us what you think of your academy. We are delighted to tell you that it is outstanding. Here are the reasons why. First, your excellent behaviour, hard work and kindness to each other made a very big impression on us. We could see that you are tolerant, respect each other and want to make your academy better by helping where you can. You make good progress in your learning through your hard work and because your teachers do an excellent job. We could see how much you enjoy your learning, especially when you work with a partner. Some of you told us that all adults in the academy would be there to help if you needed it. You feel very safe and secure because staff take exceptionally good care of you and guide and support your development extremely well. You have a very exciting curriculum, with plenty of visits and extra-activities to discover new interests and talents. Your learning is well planned so that every one of you is successful.

The academy is exceptionally well led and managed and adults are determined to get the very best for you. The governing body has worked very hard to help get the lovely new buildings for you. It has excellent skills to help the academy go even further. We have suggested helping you to make even better progress in Years 5 and 6 would be one way of doing this. You can help by working as hard as you do now, by continuing to make your academy such a happy place and by mentioning to teachers when you need help to get on more quickly.

Very best wishes to all at Gosforth Junior High Academy for a successful year.

Yours sincerely,

Moira Fitzpatrick
Lead Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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