

# Monkwearmouth School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108859
<b>Local authority</b>	Sunderland
<b>Inspection number</b>	377832
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 December 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Andrew Johnson HMI

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

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<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>	1,111
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Cogden
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephen Wilkinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 February 2009
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. They observed 42 lessons taught by 39 teachers. Two school assemblies were visited. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors, and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and examined the self-evaluation report, improvement plans and lesson observation records. They scrutinised the 162 parental questionnaires, 310 student and 42 staff questionnaires that were returned.

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

- How well teachers personalise learning to meet the needs of students with different abilities.
- Whether all departmental managers monitor and improve the quality of teaching to reach high standards.
- How successfully the curriculum has been developed since the previous inspection.

## Information about the school

Monkwearmouth is a specialist arts college. The roll has fallen by around 12% since the last inspection, but it remains larger than the average school. There is a very low proportion of students from minority ethnic groups and lower than average proportions are known to be eligible to free school meals. Comparatively low numbers have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the number with a statement of special educational needs is very low. The school holds the gold Artsmark award. Plans to rebuild significant parts of the school were made last year, but due to the withdrawal of national funding, they will not come to fruition. Significant changes to the staffing of the school have taken place since the previous inspection and at the time of this inspection a review of management responsibilities was underway.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

Monkwearmouth School provides a satisfactory level of education. Most students join the school with average attainment levels in English and mathematics. Over the last three years, broadly average proportions of students have gained five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics. Given students' starting points, this represents satisfactory progress overall. Mainly due to the development of a wider, more vocational curriculum, students' overall attainment has risen and is above average. Considerable variation remains in levels of achievement between academic subjects and among different groups. For example, girls' achievement tends to be higher than boys; attainment in information and communication technology and science is generally higher than in mathematics and modern foreign languages. Students who are known to be eligible for free school meals tend to do less well in examinations than their peers. The school has recognised the gaps in performance of different groups and variation between subjects and in some areas managers have taken successful action to close them. Students who have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress academically, but good progress in their wider personal development. Students' learning and levels of enjoyment have been enhanced by the school's specialist arts status, although their achievements in arts subjects are broadly average.

The quality of teaching and learning has improved in several departments since the previous inspection, but remains satisfactory overall. However, significant variation remains in the success teachers have in promoting skills, knowledge and understanding. Accurate assessment is used in the best lessons to personalise learning. However, in too many cases, a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to lesson planning is used. This means the more-able are not sufficiently challenged and those with lower attainment do not make up ground on their peers. The curriculum is very broad and represents a key strength of the school. Most groups of students enjoy participating in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Care, guidance and support systems are good. Students feel safe because of the good pastoral support they receive and the vast majority respect staff and behave well. They enjoy school and attendance levels are above average; although despite its best efforts, the school continues to have a few students who are persistently absent. Students' social, cultural and moral development is good, as reflected in their attitudes and behaviour in assemblies, although their spiritual understanding is less well established. Parents and carers are very positive about the education provided for their children, although

a few expressed the view that more could be done to support them to improve their child's learning. Inspectors agree with this and the school is about to put new systems in place.

The headteacher has accurately identified the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Changes made to the curriculum have successfully improved outcomes for students. The impact that middle leaders have on key areas, such as the quality of teaching and learning, has improved. However, variations remain. Although the lesson observation system presents broadly accurate results, in some cases observers focus too heavily on teaching techniques, rather than the quality of students' learning. Key aspects of lessons such as enjoyment and the development of deeper understanding are not always given sufficient weight. Governors are extremely supportive of the school. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place in relation to key aspects of its work, such as equality, diversity and safeguarding. However, the governing body does not always evaluate the impact these policies have on the quality of education and outcomes for different groups. Given its track record in improving achievement, the school has proved it has a satisfactory capacity to improve and provides satisfactory value for money.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Improve achievement in all academic subjects to match the levels attained in vocational areas by;
  - building upon existing developments to ensure middle leaders act as confident role models to produce excellent teaching
  - examining why individual students develop such widely different levels of understanding between subjects and take more action to close the gaps
  - providing parents with more opportunities to understand and support their children's learning.
- Improve the consistency in the quality of teaching and learning by;
  - improving lesson planning so that teachers adapt the general guidance they have been given to personalise learning to meet the needs of students of differing abilities
  - improving the impact the lesson observation system has by focusing it on the development of students' enjoyment, knowledge and deeper understanding.
- Improve the challenge provided by the governing body to ensure that school policies are applied robustly and have a measurable impact on improving the outcomes for different groups of students.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3
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When students start at Monkwearmouth their attainment in English and mathematics is broadly average. Most students enjoy school. Their achievement in both Key Stages 3 and 4 is satisfactory, although there is wide variation of progress between subjects. Progress in mathematics is improving but has been below the expected level for the last three years. Most students achieve very well in ICT and other vocational subjects. Good learning was seen in a number of lessons, where challenging and interesting subject matter fully engaged students. This enabled them to make rapid progress in developing their understanding and knowledge. On other occasions, students' learning was superficial and progress too slow because the work was not interesting or stimulating enough. Students' learning correlated closely with the quality of teaching and when they were less engaged they became passive and bored.

Students understand how to lead a healthy lifestyle but do not always choose to put this understanding into practice. Students' moral, social and cultural development is good; they have a clear understanding of right and wrong and say bullying is rare. Students contribute well to school life, for example as ambassadors at parents' evenings. They enjoy making a contribution to the wider community through charitable work. Students' excellent ICT skills and opportunities to take part in work-related events prepare them well for the next stage of their lives. Almost all students progress into further education, employment or training at the end of Year 11.

### *These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but there is wide variation in the impact this has on learning. Some teachers skilfully stimulate students' interests in subjects and this means they are well motivated to learn. For example, in one lesson, students were keen to discuss the work of J.B. Priestley and the author's views of

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

socialism. The teacher having established interest in the subject then explained how students' understanding would be assessed by examiners. In other lessons, teachers spent too long talking about assessment, objectives and methods of learning before they had developed students' curiosity or interest in the subject matter. Lesson plans and assessments identify students' current progress but are not always used to provide personalised learning activities. Marking is done frequently in most subjects and comments usually help students understand what they need to do to improve. There is wide variability in the way teachers approach the correction of spelling, punctuation and handwriting and this lack of consistency does not always help students to improve.

The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection. At Key Stage 4, students follow a broad and balanced range of academic and vocational courses. Good partnerships have been developed to provide alternative vocational courses and opportunities for work-related learning. The arts specialism has a positive impact on many subjects and helps develop students' wider cultural interests. A good range of extra-curricular activities are provided for students and participation rates are high.

Care and support for students' well-being, including those who are potentially vulnerable or those with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities, are particularly effective. Focused action has had a significant impact on improving attendance. However, support for learning in lessons is less secure as it depends largely upon teachers' ability to plan and adapt their approaches to meet the needs of individual students. Transition arrangements for students joining the school both in Year 7 and at other times are usually effective. However, a few Year 7 students commented that more could be done to help them in their first few weeks and to understand what to do if they were worried about settling in to such a big school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a very clear idea of the direction in which he wants the school to travel. This vision is shared by governors and increasingly, staff at all levels make valuable contributions to improving outcomes for students. The most effective action has been to improve the curriculum which in turn has led to higher levels of attainment in vocational subjects. There has been less success in driving improvements to teaching in some academic areas. Furthermore, some groups of students, particularly those who are entitled to free school meals, have underachieved. Nonetheless, promotion of equality of opportunity and attention to any discrimination are satisfactory. Improvement in several areas has been recognised as necessary by the headteacher and is being tackled through a variety of means. It is too soon to see the results of some of these changes, particularly to achievement levels. Appropriate links with outside agencies, staff training,

recruitment procedures, records and policies underpin satisfactory safeguarding arrangements. Members of the governing body provide effective support to the school; however, they are not always sufficiently rigorous in fully holding managers to account or monitoring the impact policies have on outcomes. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. The school is working to improve engagement with parents and carers through the development of a new website, which will provide up-to-date information about events and school life. Financial management is secure and as a result of falling rolls, difficult decisions have been handled well.

*These are the grades for the leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers returning the inspection questionnaires was below the national average. Almost all felt their children were safe and that they enjoyed school. Few of the respondents added a written comment. Issues raised in the questionnaire responses were investigated by the inspection team and their findings are reflected in the different sections of this report, some of which are included in the points for improvement.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Monkwearmouth School 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 162 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,111 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	43	27	107	66	9	6	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	51	31	103	64	5	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	54	33	98	60	8	5	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	30	99	61	11	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	39	24	106	65	7	4	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	19	104	64	16	10	4	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	15	114	70	14	9	3	2
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)	35	22	105	65	4	2	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	22	112	69	8	5	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	17	99	61	15	9	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	17	103	64	11	7	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	40	25	98	60	4	2	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	56	35	96	59	5	3	2	1

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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



9 December 2011

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Monkwearmouth School, Sunderland, SR6 8LG**

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and for sharing your views with us in meetings, lessons and around the school.

We think the school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education. The range of subjects you are offered is good. You reach average standards in GCSE examinations, including English and mathematics. In some vocational subjects, such as ICT, you attain excellent levels. Most of you enjoy coming to school and your attendance level is above average. The teaching you receive is sometimes good or better, but taken as a whole, it is satisfactory. The school realises this and is working hard to improve. The vast majority of parents or carers who returned questionnaires told us that they were very satisfied with the school. You receive good advice, guidance and support and you usually behave well and are keen to learn.

The headteacher has identified the strengths and areas for improvement of the school accurately and is very ambitious to make it better. To help, we have asked senior leaders to do the following.

- Raise achievement to make it consistently good in all subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching by making some lessons more interesting and making sure you are always challenged by your learning.
- Improve the way in which governors monitor school policies so that you can all fulfil your potential.

You can all help by continuing to work hard and contribute your views to the school to help it improve.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Johnson  
Her Majesty's Inspector

