

# Allertonshire School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121678
<b>Local authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	380299
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30–31 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Joan Hewitt 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>	11–14
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	697
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Judith Kilsby
<b>Headteacher</b>	Chris Byrne and Mike Holmes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 September 2008
<b>School address</b>	Brompton Road Northallerton DL6 1ED
<b>Telephone number</b>	01609 772888
<b>Fax number</b>	01609 780517
<b>Email address</b>	enquires@allertonshire.n-yorks.sch.uk

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<b>Inspection number</b>	380299



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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Joan Hewitt  
Frank Cain  
Peter Evea  
Sheila Kaye

Her Majesty's Inspector  
Additional inspector  
Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 27 teachers in 29 lessons. One inspector also conducted a series of brief lesson visits with the head teacher. Meetings were held with groups of staff, students and the Chair of the Governing Body.

Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at students' work, data and analysis, policy documents, the school's monitoring records, improvement planning and the minutes of the governing body meetings. Inspectors analysed responses to inspection questionnaires returned by staff, students and the 125 returned by parents and carers. One inspector had a telephone conversation with a parent.

## Information about the school

Allertonshire is a smaller than average secondary school. It caters for students in Years 7 to 9. Most students are of White British heritage, although other minority ethnic groups are represented. Very few students speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of disabled students and those identified as having special educational needs, including those who have a statement of special educational needs, is below the national average. The school was designated a specialist technology college in 1998. In 2006, the school gained a second specialism in applied learning. The specialisms are held jointly with the school's partner, Northallerton College.

At the time of the inspection, the school was led by two acting co-headteachers who had been in post since November 2010. Over the last two years the school has experienced significant staffing issues including some long-term sickness absence.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is not yet good because there is too much variation in the progress made by different groups of students, especially for boys and those students known to be eligible for free school meals. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Achievement is satisfactory. Many students make good progress during their time at the school but there are inconsistencies for different groups of students and in different subjects. Disabled students and those with special educational needs make satisfactory and sometimes good progress, largely because of the effective support they receive from teaching assistants. They also benefit from good-quality small group work, which focuses on providing them with detailed strategies to help them overcome specific difficulties.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall. Over half the teaching is good because teachers are working hard to improve their practice. Students enjoy most of their lessons because teachers provide activities that capture their interest. However, teachers do not always use assessment information to ensure that tasks are matched precisely to students' needs.
- Students' behaviour is satisfactory overall. They are friendly and polite around the building. In lessons, behaviour is often good, but there are occasions when students, particularly boys, become distracted and the pace of learning slows. The school has had marked success in reducing exclusions and ensuring that attendance is consistently above average.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Leaders take robust action on the rare occasions when teaching is inadequate. Teachers are supported in improving their practice through well-judged training. Leaders have sound systems to check on the quality of the school's work, but this is not always sharp enough to bring about rapid improvement.

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

- Reduce the inconsistencies in the progress made in different subjects by different groups of students, particularly boys and those students known to be eligible for free school meals so that all make good progress by:
  - improving the accuracy of teachers' assessments
  - further developing the work to improve students' reading and writing skills across all subject areas.
- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
  - ensuring that teachers use assessment information to plan tasks which precisely meet the needs of individuals and groups of students
  - providing consistent opportunities for students to collaborate in active learning tasks
  - providing systematic opportunities for teachers to share existing good practice
  - reducing low-level disruption in lessons.
- Sharpen leaders' evaluative skills by:
  - using the strong practice established with Year 9 to develop the analysis of the progress made by different groups of students in Years 7 and 8
  - further developing the monitoring arrangements to evaluate the impact of new initiatives.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Many students make good progress from their average starting points and overall attainment is above average by the end of Year 9. However, within this positive picture there are variations; for example, boys tend to make less progress than girls. It is for this reason that achievement overall is satisfactory, rather than good. Disabled students and those identified as having special educational needs make as much progress as that of their peers. Students known to be eligible for free school meals make less progress than that of other groups. Students make good progress in mathematics. Progress in English has been less positive, but this is not a clear-cut picture because teachers' assessments are not always accurate. This makes it difficult for leaders to form a clear picture of the precise progress made by students across different subject areas.

Assessment information is gathered regularly and carefully analysed. This enables leaders to intervene swiftly where individuals are identified as underachieving. In Year 9, this information is used to evaluate the performance of different groups. However, the same rigour is not used with Years 7 and 8.

Students are naturally curious and particularly enjoy active tasks. When they are given the opportunity to solve problems in small groups, they embrace it with refreshing exuberance. A significant number of students arrives with reading and writing skills below expectations. They make sound and often better progress in catching up because of the good-quality individual support provided by the school. However, work to ensure that all subject areas

support this good work is at an early stage and has not had sufficient impact. Students generally have good attitudes to learning but boys, in particular, are easily distracted and sometimes talk off-task or find ways of avoiding completing their work.

The large majority of parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted survey said their child made good progress. Students also said they learned a lot in lessons, but a minority said this was only sometimes. Inspection evidence is clear that while many students do make good progress, this is not the case for all groups of students across all subjects and achievement over time is satisfactory.

## **Quality of teaching**

Teaching is satisfactory. There is a growing proportion of teaching that is good or better. Teachers make a concerted effort to make lessons interesting. Students respond well to the open-ended questions asked in many lessons which prompt them to think hard about problems and dilemmas. For example, teaching was good in an English lesson where Year 7 was developing higher-order thinking skills in response to the teacher's careful questioning when they were analysing the features of pre-twentieth century literature. However, this level of effective skill in meeting students' precise needs is not consistent.

Where teaching is good, teachers make best use of students' lively curiosity by involving them in actively collaborating to solve problems. This is not always evident where teaching is satisfactory. For example, Year 8 played their roles as spinner and weavers with whole-hearted enthusiasm in a history lesson exploring the impact of key inventions during the industrial revolution. This also had a significant impact on students' social and moral development. This effective approach is not consistently adopted by teachers and sometimes lessons are dominated by the teacher. On these occasions' students, often boys, begin to fidget or chat.

There are examples of good-quality marking in which students benefit from helpful comments which guide them to understand what they have done well and how they can improve their work. However, this is inconsistent. Disabled students and those with special educational needs are supported effectively by teaching assistants but the extent to which teachers cater for their individual needs varies in quality.

Most parents and carers and the large majority of students say teaching is good. Inspection evidence shows that while there is a significant amount of good teaching, there is too much teaching that is satisfactory. Parents and carers expressed concern about the low frequency and quality of homework set for students. Inspectors found that the school is aware of the variability. Work to improve this has begun, but it is too soon to evaluate its impact.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Students' behaviour is satisfactory. Students are confident and enthusiastic. They are good friends to each other and maintain cheerful relationships with adults in the school. Students of different ages socialise well together and this is supported well by the all-age tutor groups. Their knowledge of different forms of bullying is good and students say bullying is infrequent. Behaviour around school is generally good, although on occasions it can be boisterous.

Students feel safe in school and they know how to reduce risks and behave responsibly. The school has a family-like atmosphere due in no small part to the good work the school does with students whose circumstances make them vulnerable and those with identified behaviour difficulties. The school works particularly effectively with a wide range of agencies in securing exactly the right support for individual students. The school has been successful in improving attendance, which is above average and leaders have had a marked impact on reducing the number of students who are persistently absent. Exclusions, too, have been reduced.

In lessons, behaviour is generally good but there is a significant number of lessons in which the pace of learning slows because of a few students chatting off-task. Students are respectful to staff and most respond promptly to adults' requests. The large majority of parents and carers says that behaviour is good but a significant minority expressed concern about students' behaviour, particularly in lessons. Inspection evidence confirms that there is some low-level disruption to lessons, but that behaviour around school, although lively, is safe and good-humoured.

## **Leadership and management**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-headteachers form an effective team and they have led the school through a difficult time in which there were significant staffing issues. There is a number of emerging strengths in leadership at all levels. The school has implemented many exciting innovations to accelerate students' achievement and promote a genuine love of learning. For example, students are encouraged to develop good 'habits of mind' in understanding how they learn and apply those skills in all aspects of their life. However, these innovations are in the early stages of development and have not had sufficient time to speed up the rate of improvement in students' achievement and reduce the low-level disruption caused by some students.

Leaders, including the governing body, have been successful in gaining the support of students, parents and staff. Arrangements to ensure that students are safe are appropriate and monitored securely. Consequently, morale is high and teachers actively seek ways of improving their practice. Inadequate teaching is rare and dealt with swiftly when it does occur. There is a well-organised programme of staff training that addresses general and individual needs. However, systematic opportunities for teachers to observe existing good practice have not been implemented. Achievement is satisfactory overall and good for many students, exclusions have reduced and attendance improved. This demonstrates the school's sound capacity to secure further improvements.

Middle leaders have developed their monitoring skills since the previous inspection and they regularly contribute to evaluating the work of the school. This increasingly effective group has developed systematic ways of using students' views to plan for further improvements. For example, each subject area has appointed 'learner voice' representatives who contribute to evaluating the work in that area. Leaders are accurate in identifying the school's strengths and equally aware of those areas requiring improvement. However, the evaluation of improvement work is not always sharp enough. For example, teachers have recently had training on planning lessons to meet the needs of all students, but leaders have not checked if this is being adopted consistently.

The curriculum meets the needs and aspirations of students. It is particularly strong in meeting the needs of students whose circumstances make them vulnerable and students

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with identified behaviour difficulties through a combination of group and individually tailored support. There is variability in the progress different students make, but the school is taking appropriate steps to reduce this and the school is promoting equality satisfactorily. The school's specialist status is used well as part of the school's extensive and effective work with its many partners to secure students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. For example, students work alongside students from a local special school in playing music together.



## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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](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.

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 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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
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.**



1 June 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Allertonshire School, Northallerton, DL6 1ED**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to me and the other inspectors when we visited your school recently. We found talking to you, watching you learn and looking at your work very helpful. We also valued reading what you had to say in the survey some of you completed for us. Allertonshire School is a satisfactory school.

Your achievement is satisfactory overall and many of you make good progress. There is a lot of good teaching in the school, but in some lessons you do not get enough opportunities to work together to solve problems on your own. Teachers and other adults work hard to make sure you are looked after. You told us you feel safe and most of you enjoy school. In some lessons you are developing good 'habits of mind' and teachers are encouraging you think deeply and solve difficult problems. You have plenty of opportunities to let the school know your views and contribute to improvements.

Your headteachers and all the staff want to work with you to improve the school quickly and to help you on your way we have asked them to do the following:

- improve your progress so that everyone makes good progress and no one gets left behind
- make sure that all the teaching is as good as the best
- improve leaders' evaluation of the quality of the work of the school.

You can make sure the school improves quickly by making sure you always work as hard and behave well in every lesson.

Yours sincerely,

Joan Hewitt  
Her Majesty's Inspector

