

# Acklam Grange School A Specialist Technology College for Maths and Computing

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111751
<b>Local authority</b>	Middlesbrough
<b>Inspection number</b>	378351
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 June 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Mick Hill

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>	1,403
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jeff Taylor
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrea Crawshaw
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 November 2008
<b>School address</b>	Lodore Grove Middlesbrough TS5 8PB
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Mick Hill	Additional inspector
Peter Bannon	Additional inspector
Anne Smedley	Additional inspector
Diane Coleman	Additional inspector
Patrick Hargreaves	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 47 lessons taught by 46 teachers. Three of these were observed jointly with senior leaders. A further two lessons were observed to note specifically the experience of a student with special educational needs. Inspectors met with six groups of students, groups of school leaders at all levels, teachers and governors. They observed the school's work, including the behaviour of students around the school, and looked at the school's self-evaluation, development plan and analyses of student data. Inspectors also looked at the 382 (27 %) completed questionnaires received from parents and carers, and questionnaire responses from 141 (10%) students and 37 (28%) of the school staff.

## Information about the school

Acklam Grange is larger than the average-sized secondary school. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly of Pakistani heritage, is similar to the national average, although the proportion whose first language is not believed to be English is above average. The proportion of students supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below that found nationally. An above-average proportion of students are known to be eligible for free school meals. The school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress, in the 2010/11 academic year. The school has the Artsmark Silver award and the International School award.

**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 the quality of teaching and students’ achievement are no better than satisfactory. 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. The school is aware that it needs to improve and has acted to secure improvements in the current academic year, especially in English and mathematics results in Key Stage 4. A positive start has also been made to improving students’ reading, writing and communication.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. There is good and outstanding practice, but also some that is inadequate. Overall, teaching is satisfactory rather than good because there are areas which still require improvement; for example in planning lessons, to reduce the amount of teacher direction so that students are more able to work at their own pace with appropriate challenge.
- Behaviour and safety are satisfactory, as are students’ attitudes to learning. The school is calm and orderly and students are well-behaved as they move around the site. Behaviour in lessons is often good, but where the pace and challenge is lower there is some low-level disruption to learning. The school has been successful in improving attendance, although this is still below that seen nationally. It has also significantly reduced the number of exclusions over the current year.
- The school’s leaders and the governing body are clear about the need to raise achievement further and the importance of managing teachers’ performance to improve the quality of teaching. The school also knows that it needs to work more effectively in partnership with parents. A very small minority of parents are not confident that the school responds appropriately to their concerns, particularly around the school’s management of behaviour.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and students' attainment and progress, especially in English and mathematics, by:
  - ensuring the best practice in teaching in the school is consistently applied
  - ensuring that fewer students miss lessons by building on the improvements in raising students' attendance and in reducing fixed-term exclusions
  - ensuring that there is a consistent approach to dealing with disruption in lessons
  - accelerating, and ensuring better consistency in, the drive to improve students' reading, writing and communication
  - planning lessons to reduce the amount of teacher direction so that students are more able to work at their own pace with appropriate challenge.
- Improve communication with parents in response to concerns raised by them over behaviour and other issues.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

The prior attainment of students is broadly average. In the key indicator of five or more GCSE grades including English and mathematics, attainment dipped in 2011, having been broadly average in previous years. Nonetheless, the school exceeded the government's floor standards for attainment. In recent years, students' progress in English and mathematics has been slow, with fewer students than anticipated making the expected progress. However, better use of data on students' achievement, early entry for mathematics and English, revision programmes and intervention with individual students through mentoring are having a positive impact on student performance. Consequently, the gap between the attainment of students in Year 11 and national averages is now closing. and all groups of students, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs, are making at least satisfactory progress.

Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire consider that their child is making good progress. Inspection evidence shows that the progress students make varies because the quality of teaching is not consistently good or better. Leaders and managers are fully aware that these inconsistencies exist and are determined to address them so that all teaching matches the best.

Students who are disabled or have special educational needs, students of Pakistani heritage and also those whose circumstances make them vulnerable progress at rates similar to those of their peers. Thorough and timely tracking of the progress made by all students, including those needing additional support, is helping to focus support where it is most needed. The reading intervention programme is making a significant difference for those students who need extra support to become confident readers and so access learning more effectively. There is also much good work being done in mainstream lessons to develop students' skills in reading, writing and communication, through the emphasising of key words, for example, but this is not consistently reinforced in all lessons. The scrutiny of

students' work, discussions with them and lesson observations all show that students of all abilities are very keen to learn, and take great pride in their work.

## Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, although there are examples of both inadequate and outstanding teaching. Some parents and carers, and students, expressed the view that there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Inspection evidence confirms this is the case.

Where teaching is highly effective, activities are geared to the needs of all learners, including those who are disabled and those with special educational needs. As a result, they make rapid progress. In a physical education lesson where teaching was outstanding, for example, Year 7 students responded with great maturity to the opportunity to reflect on their own learning, and worked in pairs coaching one another. In this they were supported expertly by the teacher, who regularly challenged them to achieve the learning objectives he had shared with them. A strong feature of teaching practice across the school is that work is regularly marked and detailed feedback explains how students can improve their work.

Where teaching is less effective, the same task is often given to all students in the class. The pace of learning is common to all, regardless of ability, because it is overly directed by the teacher. As a result, more-able students are not challenged to move more quickly and less-able students struggle to engage fully in the learning activities. In some cases students are distracted and their behaviour disrupts the learning of others. Where this occurs, the school's behaviour policy is not always applied with consistency. This is recognised by students, and by a number of staff who completed questionnaires.

The school has identified the need to improve the teaching of literacy so that students can access learning in all subjects more effectively. Reading, writing and communication are often promoted successfully, by the use of subject-specific vocabulary in lessons, for example. However, opportunities to improve literacy are not taken in all lessons. Similarly, the quality of lesson planning is variable. The standard lesson planning sheet used by teachers is a useful tool. It is particularly effective when used with the good assessment information available to teachers to plan activities to meet the needs of all students, including disabled students and those with special educational needs. However, planning is less effective when the focus is too much on what the teacher will be doing, and the tasks to be completed, and not enough on what students will learn.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

A small minority of parents, carers and students, in response to the questionnaires, expressed concerns about behaviour in general and in lessons. Inspectors carefully observed behaviour throughout the inspection and found the school to be calm and orderly. There is a very visible staff presence at all times, which students say is typically the case. The many students inspectors encountered were invariably courteous and polite. A small amount of unsettled behaviour was observed in lessons, such as talking at the same time as the teacher, which slowed the progress of others. This is, in part, because the school's behaviour management procedures, while clearly understood, are not applied consistently. However, students generally have a positive attitude to learning and behave well when the pace of learning is brisk and challenging. School records indicate that major disruptions to

learning are uncommon. An indicator of this is that attendance has improved and is approaching national levels, and the number of exclusions has significantly decreased.

The great majority of students report that they feel safe at school, and parents and carers agree. However, a very small minority expressed the concern that bullying was not always dealt with rigorously enough by the school. This view was balanced by those who reported cases that had been dealt with effectively. Inspectors looked closely at this matter. School records and the majority of students themselves indicate that the school generally responds quickly and appropriately to incidents of different types of bullying.

## **Leadership and management**

The school's leaders are clear about the need to raise achievement and are strongly committed to securing the school's future success. The school's evaluation of the quality of its work is honest and accurate. The quality of teaching and the progress that results from this are gradually improving. Very little teaching is inadequate, and there are examples of teaching that is outstanding and on which the school can build by sharing good practice. Teachers are willingly engaging with the school's processes for managing performance and providing for their professional development. As a consequence, the leadership is demonstrating that it has had an impact in improving the school and has the capacity to improve it further.

The governing body, under its new Chair, carries out its statutory duties efficiently, ensuring, for example, that all safeguarding requirements are met in full. It is increasingly providing the rigorous challenge and appropriate support needed to drive improvement and ensure that school leaders are accountable for the quality of the education provided.

Parents are interested in the work of the school, as is indicated by the many responses to the questionnaire and the larger than usual number of written comments. The questionnaire responses overall were very positive about the performance of the school, with the very large majority of parents and carers saying they would recommend the school to another parent. However, many of the additional comments raised concerns, mostly about the management of behaviour. The school needs to work harder to respond adequately to such concerns to gain the confidence of these parents.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and suitably meets students' needs. The effective provision for those students whose circumstances make them vulnerable in Key Stage 4 reflects the school's determination to tackle possible discrimination. As a result of this curriculum and the equality of opportunity which underpins it, most students move on successfully to employment, education or training. The curriculum promotes students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development well, for example through the school's well-established links with schools in Africa, which provide rich opportunities for students to develop their awareness of diversity in race and religion.

## 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.**



15 June 2012

Dear Students

**Inspection of Acklam Grange School A Specialist Technology College for Maths and Computing, Middlesbrough, TS5 8PB**

Thank you for the welcome you gave us when we visited your school and thank you to those who completed the questionnaire and spoke to us. We took careful account of your views and those of staff and of the many parents and carers who completed questionnaires and wrote comments.

We judge that Acklam Grange is providing you with a satisfactory education. The quality of teaching in your school is satisfactory overall. As a result, you make satisfactory progress. We agree with you that there is too much variation in the quality of teaching. We think the school leaders are right to focus their efforts on making all lessons as good as the best. We also think that the school can build upon the good work already done to help you with your reading, writing and communication and give you more opportunities to work independently of the teacher. We were particularly impressed by the care you take with your work and the regularity with which your teachers mark it and the helpful comments they make.

We were impressed by your behaviour around the school and by much of the behaviour we observed in lessons. Nevertheless, we recognise the concerns that many of you have about poor behaviour that occasionally disrupts your learning in lessons. We have asked your teachers to be more consistent in how they manage poor behaviour.

The school has worked hard to improve attendance and punctuality, although there is still more to do so that lateness and absence are not affecting the progress you make. You can help by attending regularly and trying your best at all times. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mick Hill  
Lead inspector

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