

# Norton College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	136728
<b>Local authority</b>	Not applicable
<b>Inspection number</b>	395367
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 June 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Adrian Gray 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>	Academy
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	897
<b>Of which number on roll in the sixth form</b>	200
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Evolution Schools Learning Trust
<b>Chair</b>	John Hudson
<b>Executive Headteacher</b>	Tony Rawdin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Phil Loftus
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Langton Road Norton Malton YO17 9PT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01653 693296
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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Adrian Gray  
Johan MacKinnon  
Sheila Kaye  
Peter Harrison

Her Majesty's Inspector  
Additional Inspector  
Additional Inspector  
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 38 lessons taught by 37 teachers, spending about 19 hours in the classrooms. An assembly and some tutorial sessions were visited. Inspectors spoke to two external course providers and two parents. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection. They observed the college's work, analysed responses to the staff and students' questionnaires, and took into account the 127 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

## Information about the school

Norton College is a smaller than average 11-18 secondary school that became an academy in May 2011, overseen by the Evolution Schools Learning Trust in which it is, at present, the sole school. The proportion of students supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is average, as is the proportion of students from a minority ethnic group; almost all students are of White British heritage. In 2011 the college did not meet the current floor standard, the government's minimum expectation of students' attainment and progress. From 2008 to 2011 the former Principal acted as a National Leader of Education; he and other senior staff supported other schools. An associate Principal was appointed in 2009 and became headteacher in 2010, whilst the former Principal is now executive headteacher. There have been several other recent changes in senior personnel.

The college opened a sixth form in 2008.

**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>4</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>4</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

- In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to attainment and the progress of students in Years 7 to 11, in writing, and in post-16 advanced level courses.
- The college is not satisfactory because, following a very successful inspection in 2007, it failed to sustain high levels of attainment; students' achievement was inadequate in 2009 and 2011 in English and mathematics. Whilst indications are that attainment and progress have improved in these subjects for the current Year 11, the legacy of underachievement remains, especially in Key Stage 3. Students' writing skills are underdeveloped and this hinders their learning in other subjects.
- The college has been through a period, up to September 2011, where a substantial proportion of its leaders have been engaged in supporting the work of other schools. During this time middle managers and other senior leaders were unable to sustain improvement in key subject areas. Some management appointments were unsuccessful. As a result, policy developments were not always seen through and achievement fell to inadequate. Weaknesses identified in the previous inspection, in literacy and in communication with stakeholders, were not addressed effectively. Senior leaders and the governing body failed to ensure the progress of the school up to that time.
- Although some subjects have been well taught over the last few years, others have not. Effective steps have been taken to address the weak teaching since September 2011. Leaders have refocused their attentions on their own college, made some significant improvements in areas including English, and tackled ineffective teaching robustly. The headteacher, who has not been involved in external support, has provided good challenge to the staff. He leads the improvement of teaching well so that good teaching is increasingly evident, as a result of effective professional development. However, whilst improvements have been made to governance, greater rigour is needed by the governing body in holding senior leaders to account.

- The college's vision to increase the proportion of local young people staying in full-time education was reflected in the opening of the sixth form in 2008, but outcomes in advanced level courses, and especially at AS level, show that students' achievement was inadequate in 2010 and 2011. Overall, the sixth form is inadequate.
- Inspectors agree with some parents, carers and students that behaviour is not as good as it should be in all lessons; too often, teachers accept satisfactory rather than demanding good behaviour. Too little contribution is asked of students towards their own learning, especially in homework, and there is too little evidence of good attitudes towards learning. The college is only partially successful in promoting students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; students have too little understanding of the faiths that can be found in Britain today.

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

- Improve achievement in all year groups by:
  - consistently and robustly monitoring the quality of teaching in lessons to improve learning
  - improving teaching of advanced courses so that sixth form students achieve in line with national expectations
  - holding middle managers and leaders to account for the professional development of their teams and the consistent application of college policies, including the setting of homework
  - developing a rigorous plan for improving literacy, especially students' writing
  - ensuring that teachers' planning, including the setting of objectives, always provides for the full range of abilities in their classes
  - ensuring that all lessons contribute appropriately to students' spiritual, moral, social and especially cultural development.
- Improve the processes by which the governing body holds senior leaders to account by:
  - setting specific targets and actions for senior leaders and holding them more rigorously to account
  - ensuring that senior leaders are only released to work in other schools if this can be done without any negative impact on Norton's students.
- Promote higher expectations of students' attitudes to and involvement in their learning by:
  - ensuring that all students are set meaningful homework regularly, appropriate to their age, some of which will develop their extended writing skills
  - providing consistently helpful reference criteria and guidance on learning objectives for students working on self- and peer-assessment
  - increasing the level of challenge required of students in oral and interactive lesson activities
  - helping students to understand the differences between satisfactory and good behaviour, so that they foster an effective learning culture in all classes.

## **Main Report**

### **Achievement of pupils**

Achievement is inadequate. Over the last three years the achievement of students has been inconsistent; in 2009 and 2011 it was inadequate in English and mathematics, whereas it was much better in 2010. However, attainment of GCSE grades in other subjects has been in line with or better than the national figures. The gap in the attainment of disabled students and those with special educational needs compared with all students is narrower than in many schools but, in general, they make similarly inadequate progress to their peers. The quality of teaching and hence progress of the lower ability sets is inconsistent.

Achievement has also been inadequate in the sixth form because attainment and progress on advanced level courses have been weak and declining. Better teaching and better use of tracking data have enabled some improvements in recent months, so that progress is now stronger. Achievement on post-16 vocational courses has been much more positive. The college is now setting clearer and more appropriate criteria for entry onto its advanced level courses.

The progress that students make in Years 7 to 9 reflects the weak learning over the last few years. Although achievement in English is improving, the quality of writing is a clear weakness and means that many students struggle to express their full understanding of issues when doing written work in other subjects. The college's focus has been on reading and word acquisition, which is helpful, but this needs to be extended to writing. Opportunities for extended writing are too few, with restrictions imposed by worksheets, such as in science, and missed opportunities to extend tasks into meaningful homework. Progress in mathematics in Years 7 to 9 has also been inadequate. In general, learning is stronger in Key Stage 4 where the teaching is often better.

Interventions in the current Year 11 have succeeded in raising achievement, as indicated by validated external assessments, so that attainment and progress in GCSE English and mathematics are likely to be in line with national averages. Inspectors saw evidence of improved progress in English and mathematics lessons, but this is less secure with lower ability groups and with younger classes. Learning is not rapid enough for all students, most notably where a broad ability group receives teaching directed at those of middle ability. Students sometimes judge their progress through the completion of tasks rather than the development of their understanding, often because lessons move smartly through a series of activities without emphasising or assessing what is being learnt.

### **Quality of teaching**

Improvements in the quality of teaching are now starting to be evident following the changes made to leadership and professional development processes. Teaching is now satisfactory overall in the areas that were previously weak and increasingly good elsewhere, although the legacy of inadequate teaching is still evident in the weak quality of students' writing and inconsistent personal study skills, including in the sixth form. Students agree that teaching is improving and most parents and carers are positive, although a few are concerned about the impact of too much teaching by temporary staff.

The strengths of teaching currently include, in the better lessons, some skilful questioning of students which draws out their understanding and reinforces learning. Many lessons move at a brisk pace but on occasion this results in missed chances to check or consolidate learning and prevents students from taking sufficient responsibility for their own learning. Most teachers are making efforts to include students in learning activities and to reduce their own dominance of the lessons. This sometimes works well, but is best when, in subjects such as history, high expectations are placed on students by providing them with complex tasks that require thoughtful and cooperative working. The college has made efforts to encourage peer- and self-assessment in lessons; this works well when linked to clear outcomes, such as GCSE grade criteria, but too often students lack an informed understanding of how they can progress in their subjects.

Although lesson planning has improved, in too many cases it does not focus sharply on the gains in learning to be made by students. Often, objectives and outcomes are too broad to provide a good level of challenge to all students in the class. Too many lessons finish without the teacher really knowing what students of differing abilities have learned, and learning is not consolidated or checked through homework.

Since September, leaders have robustly addressed weaknesses in teaching through performance management and a better structure for professional development. College assessment procedures are providing better challenge and support for Key Stage 4 courses. Staff spoke highly of new structures that encourage the sharing of best practice between subject areas. The team of middle leaders now includes several with strong professional development skills. Consequently, some teachers who were formerly considered to teach inadequate lessons have made significant improvements. Teaching is also improving in the sixth form, although only limited observations were possible during this inspection since Year 13 students have completed their courses. However, there remains some evidence that not enough has been demanded over time of students both intellectually and in the responsibility they take for their own learning, so that some ground still needs to be caught up.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Behaviour and safety are satisfactory. Students say they feel very safe in the college and this is supported strongly in the questionnaire from parents and carers. They are mostly aware of the risks that affect both their safety and the safety of others. They provided examples from lessons in physical education, design technology and science where they are taught safe practices. If students have concerns they are aware of whom they should contact in the college and are confident these concerns will be dealt with quickly.

Students are well aware of the college's behaviour system which is consistently applied by staff. There have been many incidences of low-level disturbances and particularly passive learning in classes over recent years, notably where substantive teachers are absent, but the trend is improving. In discussion with students and in questionnaires completed by parents and carers, a number of concerns were expressed about low-level disruption in lessons and how effectively the senior leadership team deals with this. For example, some students reported they could not get help quickly enough from the teacher as he or she was concentrating on individuals who required their frequent attention. The school is providing professional development support to staff to help them manage weaker behaviour more effectively.

The behaviour observed by inspectors during the inspection both in class and around the school was good. Students were orderly, respectful to staff and each other, and welcoming to visitors. There was no overt poor behaviour, although in a few lessons some students spent too much time off-task or became restless. Relations were very positive in many lessons, but some teachers do not take full advantage of this to place greater demands on students.

Cases of racist incidents, homophobic, physical and cyber bullying in the college are rare. When they do occur they are dealt with quickly and effectively by managers. Fixed-term exclusions have risen due to an increased intolerance of unacceptable behaviour. Permanent exclusions have been consistently low over recent years.

Attendance is showing an improving trend and is above the national average. The college is successful in working with parents and carers to address persistent absenteeism as seen in the significant fall in persistent absence over the last three years. Punctuality to lessons is good.

## **Leadership and management**

Leadership and management are now satisfactory, but the current legacy of inadequate achievement is a reflection of the poor performance of leaders and managers across the college over the last few years.

Leadership and management were inadequate up to September 2011; leaders had failed to secure high standards in the development of the college over the last few years. Management of sixth form courses has also been inadequate over the same period. Consequently, leaders have failed to promote an adequate equality of opportunity for the students, although any discriminatory behaviour is addressed when it arises. The issues raised at the last inspection, literacy and parental engagement, are still comparative weaknesses and the change in approach to uniform has not won the support of some parents and carers. Leaders accept that attempts to appoint cover for staff working on projects in other schools, including some as National Leaders of Education, were unsuccessful, and the governing body accepts its share of the responsibility for this.

Although leaders have demonstrated a vision for the college to provide a high quality post-16 centre, they did not ensure high enough expectations of students and teachers over the three years to 2011. Despite some external support, managers did not have the right balance of experience and teachers began advanced level teaching with too little skill in this area; courses continued to underperform at this time because firm management processes were not in place.

Leaders now have a sound understanding of most of the college's strengths and weaknesses; although quite perceptive overall, leaders have been slower to prioritise improvements in homework and writing. College self-evaluation is honest and insightful, but the process itself does not sufficiently engage the staff and governing body in the process of reflecting upon performance and setting priorities.

Teaching and learning have been through a period of decline in key subjects. The college has responded to this energetically since September 2011 with performance management processes, a better structure for continuous professional development, changes to middle management roles and strong new appointments. This has resulted in some improvement to



teaching and strong intervention to address deficiencies, especially in English. However, there remains a legacy of underperformance, as reflected in writing.

The curriculum meets the needs of students in terms of content but its delivery is inconsistent. It does not support the full educational potential of students: for example, how it is delivered means that it does not make high enough demands of students in terms of what they might contribute to learning, especially through homework. Its contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is inconsistent. Some students know very little about other cultures and too few activities place them in genuinely challenging situations where they must think, reflect or interact.

There is some feeling among parents, carers and students that senior staff are too remote; in some cases they remain to be convinced about behaviour and expressed concerns about staff leaving. However, the large majority of parents and carers would recommend the school to others.

During the period of decline, the governing body did not provide effective challenge to senior leaders, although a few governors questioned the extent of the college's commitments in supporting other schools. Minutes do not provide a robust audit trail to underpin accountability. For example, there is no record of leaders being held to account for the progress students make in Years 7 to 9. The governing body is now very aware of the reasons for the college's decline and of the importance of maintaining closer accountability of leaders in the future.

Since September, leaders have tackled the college's problems conscientiously and energetically. There is a determination by senior staff and the governing body for the college to improve to good again within two years. Changes have been made to roles and personnel at senior level, an effective structure for improving teaching performance has been introduced, and several teachers are being taken through performance management processes. Staff commented that they now feel more fully supported in their professional development and that links between subject areas are yielding benefits in promoting good practice. Recruitment policy has targeted the needs of advanced level courses in the sixth form. The impact of these changes is clear evidence that the college has the capacity to improve, providing that its own needs are prioritised by its own staff. The college's arrangements for safeguarding students meet requirements.

## 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.

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## 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.**



18 June 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Norton College, Malton, YO17 9PT**

I would like to thank you for the welcome and help that you gave the inspection team during our visit to your college. We inspected a lot of lessons where we talked with you and looked at your work, and a number of you gave up your time to talk with us at lunchtime. We also talked with the college leaders about last year's disappointing results. They agreed with us that improvements are needed in how well you achieve and in the teaching you receive. We found that leaders have already taken steps to help you make better progress in the future. The college has been given a notice to improve. Some of the things we have asked the college to do are:

- improve the way teachers' planning helps you to understand your progress, by being clearer about what it is you should be learning in each lesson
- develop a better structure for improving writing
- give you more regular homework, which is an important way of developing and consolidating your learning
- ask more of you in terms of what you can yourselves contribute to the learning, for example, in the types of activity in which you are asked to take part
- raise expectations of your behaviour in classrooms; some of you told us that behaviour could be better
- make improvements to arrangements for advanced level courses in the sixth form.

Inspectors will come back to Norton College in the next few months to see how much progress is being made in these areas. You can all contribute to improvements by taking more responsibility for your learning, completing homework to the best of your ability, and behaving as well as possible.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Gray  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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