

Seaton Burn College, A Specialist Business and Enterprise School

Seaton Burn, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE13 6EJ

Inspection dates 21–22 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students achieve well and nearly all make good progress from their starting points. Their attainment has improved well over the last three years in the main school and the sixth form.
- Teaching is good overall, with a substantial proportion that is outstanding. Students are expected to work hard and the vast majority do. Teachers' knowledge of students' needs is well used to set good levels of challenge and support in lessons.
- Students enjoy school and are proud to be a part of it. They say they feel safe and their parents unanimously agree that they are. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are good, and sometimes outstanding.
- Leadership at all levels demonstrates the ambition and determination to drive improvement and raise students' achievement further. The principal inspires staff and students to be the best they can. The management of teachers' work is highly effective at increasing the proportion of teaching that is good or better.
- Members of the governing body provide excellent support and challenge for the strategic development of the school.
- Provision in the sixth form is good. It is well enhanced through partnership with two neighbouring schools to ensure students' aspirations and needs are met. Students achieve well; teaching is consistently good and prepares students well for the next stage of their lives.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teaching is good, and there is scope to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching, so that students' achievement becomes outstanding.
- In a few lessons, students' behaviour deteriorates because the work is too easy. The most-able boys sometimes become bored when they are not challenged enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 41 lessons, and 39 teachers were seen. Two lessons were shared observations with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body, a Foundation governor and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also held meetings with senior and middle leaders and groups of students.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents. These included students' work in the current year, the school's most recent examination results, information on students' progress in the last school year and the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. Records on safeguarding procedures, behaviour and attendance were also examined.
- Inspectors took account of 28 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and of the 30 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Moira Fitzpatrick, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Diane Coleman	Additional Inspector
Jim Hall	Additional Inspector
Anne Smedley	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average secondary school.
- The vast majority of students are of White British heritage.
- Very few students are from minority ethnic groups or speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students who are eligible for pupil premium (additional funding allocated for students in the care of the local authority or in receipt of free school meals) is above average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is above average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school has met the government floor standard, which is the minimum expected for students' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection the school has become part of a charitable trust, and has a long-standing collaborative arrangement with two neighbouring schools to extend curriculum provision in the sixth form.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve all teaching to good and increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding, so that students' achievement becomes outstanding by:
 - developing further the culture of sharing good practice and raising expectations of teachers through observation and professional dialogue
 - developing in-class assessment methods so that teachers are always aware of when students need more challenge or support and provide this to accelerate learning further.
- Improve the achievement of the small minority of the most-able boys by:
 - monitoring their progress and output in lessons more frequently
 - taking action, where necessary, to support staff in providing work that challenges and engages the boys, so that their behaviour is consistently supporting learning for the whole class
 - raising the teachers' expectations of these students, and students own aspirations, so they are ambitious to do their best in all lessons.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The proportion of students achieving five or more A* to C grades, including English and mathematics has risen again, to reach the national average this year. On a number of other indicators students' attainment exceeds the national average. For example, students' point score for their best eight subjects, and for the proportion of students gaining the English Baccalaureate (i.e. achieving A* to C in science, a humanities subject, a modern language, as well as English and mathematics). The proportion of A* and A grades doubled this year. However, the school is not complacent and further improvement to these grades is a priority. Performance in geography, history and science is consistently high. Many more students study a modern foreign language than is found in most schools.
- School data show that students' progress from when they enter the school, through Key Stages 3 and 4, compares favourably with national averages. Good systems for recording and tracking students' learning are now embedded in departments. Any gaps in learning are spotted early and extra support is given to prevent any student from falling behind. Improved progress at Key Stage 3 is preparing students well for the rigours of GCSE work in Key Stage 4 and contributes to rising attainment and achievement.
- The school is successfully reducing differences in achievement between students who are eligible for the pupil premium and other groups of students. Recent data show that the achievement of these students has been above the national average for their group. This is because of the additional provision the school makes, such as intensive one to one support in English and mathematics, and making specific provision for vocational learning in Key Stage 4. Disabled students and those with special educational needs are well supported by class teachers and teaching assistants, who understand and plan well for their needs so that they make the same, and sometimes better, progress than other students.
- The vast majority of students make good progress in most lessons. However, in some lessons the most-able boys are not always sufficiently challenged. They either complete tasks very quickly because they are too easy, or do not attempt them with the same enthusiasm and effort as other students in the class. In either situation their progress is not at the brisk rate they are capable of achieving.
- Students' achievement in the sixth form is good. From their different starting points students make good progress and reach their targets in most subjects. This year's students' point score was above average, continuing the trend of improvement after a slight dip in 2011.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers make increasingly effective use of new strategies, so that students experience a consistency of approach, which is accelerating their progress. The vast majority of parents agree that their children are well taught.
- Learning is successful because teachers make good use of their knowledge of students' needs to set a good level of challenge. Good support is also provided by skilled teaching assistants and often by use of well-planned resources which assist and accelerate learning. Students in many lessons are seen working with great enthusiasm and at an excellent pace because of the well-structured opportunities to 'find out' for themselves. Such opportunities for learning abound across the school.
- 'Cooperative learning activities' and 'talk for learning' are other strategies that are well used by staff in all departments. In most classrooms there is a steady buzz of talk as students work together to solve problems, investigate and plan how they will present their learning. Students report that they enjoy this way of learning because it makes new learning easy to remember. 'You always feel successful.' one Year 10 student commented in a mathematics lesson.

- Teachers make good use of questions to prompt and deepen students' thinking, so that they are constantly encouraged to think for themselves. Good examples of this were seen in many lessons, where students were led to solve a problem, decide a strategy or work out how to phrase a sentence through careful, step by step questioning by the teacher. One student commented, 'You don't get told the answer – you have to work it out for yourself from the questions – but then you remember it.'
- The school's drive to improve literacy in all subjects is bearing fruit. Productive links between the English and science departments are making a real difference to the quality of students' writing in science. Year 8 students were provided with key words and phrases to link cause and effect and wrote with great clarity about the formation and properties of igneous rocks.
- Where teaching requires improvement it is usually because teachers do not effectively assess students' learning as the lesson progresses. They do not spot where students are 'switching off' because the work is too easy, or are distracting others because the work does not capture their interest.
- Teaching in the sixth form is consistently good and improvements here are reflected in the students' rising attainment and improving achievement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' behaviour makes a significant contribution to the calm, happy atmosphere found all around the school. Students are respectful of themselves and others and are polite and courteous to adults. They are especially welcoming and helpful to visitors. School records confirm that behaviour over time is good and that exclusions are rare. In very few lessons is there a distraction to learning because of misbehaviour.
- Students say they feel safe, their parents unanimously agree they are safe, and the school goes to considerable lengths to ensure they are safe and secure on site. Students show a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe both in and out of school. The curriculum ensures that students are introduced to the potentially harmful effects of drugs and alcohol, and students of all ages were able to explain the risks of internet use and cyber-bullying. Students are adamant that bullying is not a problem and that they are encouraged to report any behaviours that are potentially harmful or deliberately hurtful.
- Good links with outside agencies and other centres provide off-site courses for some students in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. Frequent liaison with these centres ensures that the care and welfare of students off-site matches that provided by the school.
- Attendance continues to improve, albeit slowly. The main cause of below average attendance is the number of parents who take their children on holiday in term time.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders at all levels, including governors, share a vision for continuous improvement. The principal is relentless in her drive to raise aspirations. She is very well supported by a skilled and dedicated senior team, who under her leadership gather a comprehensive and accurate picture of what the school needs to improve further. The school has gone from strength to strength since the previous inspection. Students' achievement, the quality of teaching, the range of courses offered and governance have all improved significantly since then, demonstrating the school's capacity for further improvement.
 - Teachers' work has been effectively monitored and improved through high quality training. This has led to a rapid increase in the proportion of good and better teaching and more consistent use of the school's policies and procedures. Staff morale is high. They acknowledge their accountability for students' achievement and unanimously agree that the school is well led and
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managed.

- The range of courses available is flexibly planned to meet the diverse aspirations and needs of students, thereby ensuring equal opportunities for all to achieve. Productive links with partner schools have been highly effective in creating an extensive range of pathways at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. While the school maintains a strong focus on academic subjects, this is not at the cost of vocational opportunities. For example, provision has been made this year for a group of Year 10 students to study for hair and beauty qualifications, while in the previous year a motor vehicle engineering course was provided. Links with partner schools have created a wide range of A-level and vocational courses for the sixth form, so that they have excellent choice and good preparation for further and higher education. Students who attend alternative provision achieve well and their progress is well monitored by school staff.
 - Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the heart the school's drive to develop well informed, tolerant, caring young people. It is promoted through the many activities and opportunities that are embedded in the curriculum and extracurricular activities.
 - The school effectively allocates funding to support students who are eligible for the pupil premium, by providing one to one tuition and additional staffing to ensure the difference is narrowing between their performance and that of other students.
 - Procedures for safeguarding meet requirements; record keeping is exemplary.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is highly effective and ambitious for students to be the very best they can be. Governors bring high levels of commitment and expertise to the service of the school. They have forged links across the local authority and with local businesses to ensure that students have access to the widest possible range of choice. Together with the principal, they have successfully reduced a long-standing budget deficit and strengthened the school's finances.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	108647
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	405186

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	650
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pam Bridges
Principal	Alison Shaw
Date of previous school inspection	22 November 2010
Telephone number	0191 236 1700
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