

Harton Technology College

Lisle Road, South Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE34 6DL

Inspection dates

9–10 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Harton Technology College has maintained its outstanding provision since its previous inspection in 2006.
- Students make rapid progress in their learning because teaching is of a consistently excellent standard.
- Students of all abilities receive extremely well focused and targeted support from staff, who know exactly how to support and challenge them to achieve the highest possible standards.
- The students are developing into well rounded individuals who know very clearly how well they are doing and what else they need to do to improve further.
- The level of courtesy and respect shown by all in school, but especially the students, is exemplary. As a result, students are extremely positive in their attitudes to school.
- Senior leaders, including the executive headteacher and governors, know very clearly what else the school needs to do to make continuous improvement. This includes quick and decisive action to address any dips that may occur in its provision.
- Despite only running for two years, the school's sixth-form provision has many outstanding features. The school is aware that an even greater emphasis is needed to develop the students' skills as independent learners, as preparation for when they leave school and go into further education, employment or training.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 41 part-lessons, of which one teacher was seen twice. Almost all teachers accepted the offer of feedback from inspectors. The executive headteacher and deputy headteacher joined inspectors for some observations. Almost all subjects were observed during the inspection.
- The lead inspector looked at Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, prior to and during the inspection. In total, there were 74 responses at the conclusion of the inspection. The main findings from these responses were shared separately with the senior staff and at the formal feedback meeting at the end of the inspection.
- A range of documents was read and meetings held with the executive headteacher and other members of the senior management team, two members of the governing body, including the chair, and two officers from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with a significant number of students and staff during lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors read 152 paper based questionnaires returned by staff at the school.

Inspection team

Brian Blake, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Patrick Hargreaves	Additional Inspector
Brian Hill	Additional Inspector
Alexandra Hook	Additional Inspector
Julie McGrane	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Harton Technology College is larger than the average-sized secondary school. It has opened a sixth form since the previous inspection.
- The proportion of students who need extra help with their education, through school action support, is just above the national average; it is broadly in line for those students requiring support at school action plus. The proportion of disabled students and/or those with a statement of special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average.
- Students eligible for free school meals, those who have been in care for more than six months and those whose parents are currently serving in the armed forces are eligible for additional funding called the pupil premium. The proportion of these students currently in school is higher than average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards.
- Thirty-five Year 11 students attend South Tyneside College for one day each week and two Year 10 students currently receive part of their education at St Mary's alternative education provision in South Tyneside.
- Since the previous inspection the school has gained 'teaching school' status and, because of the executive headteacher's experience and expertise as a 'national leader of education', he has been co-opted to work in a formal capacity with two other schools, one within the same local authority and a second in a neighbouring authority.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to improve the learning of sixth-form students further, the school should:
 - ensure that teachers provide them with the necessary skills, time and resources to research aspects of their work that they, rather than the teachers direct. This should include opportunities in all lessons to acquire the higher order learning skills that they will need as they progress into further education, employment or training.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- The achievement of students is outstanding because of the rapid progress that they make during their time at the school. This is the direct result of consistently high quality teaching, which generates students' interest and motivation to learn, and a desire to achieve to the best of their ability.
- Although only two years in existence, there is strong evidence in the sixth form of rapid improvements towards good attainment and outstanding achievement.
- Students' progress slowed a little in some subject areas in 2012, particularly in modern foreign languages, but the school has responded quickly and decisively to address identified issues and the rate of progress is now moving swiftly back to that seen in previous years.
- The students are given opportunities to develop and apply a wide range of key literacy and numeracy skills in all their learning and, as a result, they are very well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.
- The school is extremely successful in ensuring that students of all abilities make excellent progress against some very challenging personal targets. The strategy for ensuring that these targets are both challenging and realistic for individual students is helping to narrow the gaps in performance between different groups. For example, the average point score for students in receipt of the pupil premium is now 39.77 and, although below the school average, it is almost two points above the national average.
- Attainment of those students with identified learning needs is broadly in line with the national averages, although some are above. Overall, however, their achievement is similar to the rest of the students; namely, outstanding overall. Those students receiving part of their education off site are also achieving equally well.
- The robust collection, analysis and use of student performance data are fundamental parts of the excellent teaching seen throughout the school, thus ensuring that the rate of progress for all students is being maintained at a very high level.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The quality of teaching is outstanding because it is an essential element of why students' achievement is outstanding.
- In the very best lessons, which inspectors saw consistently over the two days in school, the students work very well because they show many characteristics of independent learning; for example, they explore ideas while being challenged with probing teacher questions to test their ongoing understanding.
- The excellent working relationships in lessons create the foundation of a very positive work ethic upon which the students are developing a personal confidence to work individually or independently, or with others, to complete their work. In whatever ways the students work, their pace of learning is generally excellent.
- Teachers use praise well, which underpins the high levels of enjoyment shown by students in lessons.
- Teachers lead by example, both in the way they use their very good subject knowledge and in the way they create an atmosphere of mutual respect between themselves and the students.
- Standards in teaching are maintained and further improved as a result of the ongoing emphasis on improvement brought about, in part, by robust performance management but also because all teachers have a desire to continually improve their practice; this latter area relates crucially to the 'teaching school' status and exemplifies the excellent self-review that the school undertakes of its quality of teaching.
- The quality of teaching support provided for those with identified learning needs, namely, those

students with special educational needs, is also outstanding. Targeted support, provided by a staff team with a variety of specialisms, enables it to address the wide range of needs within the broad student population very successfully. Focused support work, such as the accelerated reading programme and the targeted mathematics programme, are exceptionally well organised and contribute significantly to the students' progress across the school.

- The quality of teaching in the sixth form generally reflects that seen in the main school, although the school is aware that an even greater emphasis is needed to develop further aspects of the students' independent learning, as a preparation for when they leave school and go into further education, employment or training.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of the students is consistently outstanding, not only because they show courtesy and respect towards staff and peers in lessons and when moving around the school, but also because their attitude to learning is exemplary.
- Parents responding to the online questionnaire are also extremely positive about behaviour in school.
- The school's systems to promote positive behaviour are working very effectively, and students appreciate that the well known rules are applied consistently and fairly. This ensures that all students know exactly what is expected of them when they are in school and clearly goes some way to influencing their attitudes towards the broader community in which they live.
- The climate in lessons is very positive, with students' punctuality excellent.
- The students have developed a good range of personal and social skills which enable them to work successfully as individuals, with a partner or in a larger group. The students' ability to engage productively in discussion makes a positive contribution towards their outstanding progress.
- When students are given the freedom to work independently, by developing aspects of their learning that are not directed by the teacher, they make exceptional progress. Teaching practice of this quality is seen across the school but some sixth-form teaching is yet to make full use of such strategies on a regular basis.
- Students' enjoyment of school makes a significant contribution towards the quality of behaviour shown; it also make a very positive contribution towards their moral and social development, alongside their developing self-awareness and self-esteem.
- The students feel safe in school and report that incidents of bullying are rare and, when they do occur, are dealt with promptly and effectively.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leadership and management of the school are outstanding because the executive headteacher, senior leaders and governors know exactly what the school needs to do to keep getting better. They eloquently share these intentions, beliefs and values with all staff and parents, thereby ensuring that the work of the school is focused clearly on helping all students make the best possible progress in their learning. This is one of the prime reasons why the school is so successful.
- Despite its short existence, leadership and management of the sixth-form provision are also outstanding for the same reasons.
- Senior leaders and managers are outward looking in their striving to be an outstanding school and, through its status as a 'teaching school'; links with other schools underpin this open and receptive approach to its work ethic.
- Senior staff and others with management responsibilities throughout the school are very aware why teaching in the school is so successful. They support teachers to get even better by

observing their work on a regular basis and by helping them participate in relevant professional training courses aimed at improving the quality of their teaching as an aid to improving their students' attainment and progress. Staff enthusiastically participate in the life of the school and indicate that they enjoy their responsibilities because they share a common belief and purpose in ensuring that all students achieve the best of which they are capable.

- The curriculum is carefully reviewed to ensure that it is up to date so that it provides students of all abilities with opportunities to develop their intellectual, personal and social qualities. The breadth of the broader curricular provision, delivered via an extensive extra-curricular programme, greatly enhances the learning opportunities for the students. The school is making very good use of early entry for a small number of students, with lesson work building successfully on their prior attainment.
- The local authority has supported the school effectively, which offers the school an insightful, external view of its overall effectiveness. It keeps in contact at suitable times and is rightly allowing the school to develop at a pace, which continues to build upon its many successes.
- Very effective links have been established with other schools, which is helping senior managers and governors to assess the quality of its provision relative to other providers locally and further afield.
- Although a very small number of parents expressed some disagreement with aspects of the school's work when responding to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, other school-based surveys carried out reflect the overwhelming view from parents that they value all that the school does for their children.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body takes an active and very successful role in the life of the school. Governors know clearly how well the school is doing, not just in terms of the examination successes of the students but across all the separate areas within which the students play an active part, for example the achievement of students in extra-curricular activities, visits abroad and links with the local community. A series of well planned meetings for both full and sub-groups of governors help them to maintain a robust but balanced overview of the effectiveness of the school. The governors and senior managers, especially the executive headteacher, have a strong mutual respect for what each is doing to help the school improve. The governors find the quality of the executive headteacher's termly reports particularly helpful for them in identifying emerging issues and in deciding how best they can help the school to address these. Formal governing body meetings are used to help monitor progress in all areas, including the school's use of the pupil premium and performance management. Governors are provided with clear information about the overall performance of those students in receipt of the pupil premium, including a breakdown of performance for each of the separate groups. The governors have a very good understanding of how well teachers are doing in terms of the progress that their students make. This helps the governors to accurately assess teachers' performance against the pay they receive.

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	108726
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	409878

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
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	1,600
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	253
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Scott Duffy
Executive Headteacher	Ken Gibson
Date of previous school inspection	2 November 2006
Telephone number	0191 427 4050
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