

Catcote School

Catcote Road, Hartlepool, TS25 4EZ

Inspection dates 19–20 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors provide a clear and purposeful sense of direction. This is in their drive to improve the quality of teaching and students' achievement. Additionally, all the areas for improvement set at the last inspection are securely met.
- Overall the school has improved well since the last inspection. In some areas this is significantly so.
- Students of all ages and abilities make good progress from their starting points. Some students make outstanding progress. This is in reading, writing, mathematics and communication.
- Parents are happy with the provision and outcomes for their children and are supportive of staff.
- Outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is provided by the school. Carefully crafted experiences to participate in a variety of activities promote cultural knowledge and acceptance of difference.
- A variety of detailed and carefully planned curriculum routes meet students' needs exceptionally well.
- The quality of education provided in the 'sixth form' is good. Students participate in varied, interesting, and relevant activities that support them well for life after school.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Students say they feel safe and that staff are 'awesome'.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some students persistently do not attend school.
- The quality of teaching is not yet consistently outstanding for all students.
- There is inconsistency in the quality of support for students' learning provided by teaching assistants.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 13 lessons, three of which were joint lesson observations with senior staff including the headteacher. They also made a number of other short visits to classrooms.
- Discussions were held with members of the governing body, pupils, senior leaders and staff. A conversation was held by telephone with a representative of the local authority.
- A range of school documents were examined including the school improvement plan, the school's data of pupils' achievement, records relating to behaviour, safeguarding, attendance and the minutes of the governing body meetings.
- Inspectors took account of the 16 responses from parents to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), letters and information that were sent to the inspectors and responses from the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Michele Crichton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sally Hicks	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Catcote School Business and Enterprise College caters for secondary and post-16 students. There is on-site provision for students aged 19- 25 years that is managed by the governing body.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school caters for a wide range of need including for students with profound and multiple learning difficulties, those who have an autistic spectrum disorder and those with identified behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD).
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is well above the national average.
- Most students are of White British origin.
- The school has links with Nacro and Hart Farm, both in Hartlepool, where student's access specialist curriculum provision.
- Since the last inspection the school has maintained its impressive number of vocational, national and local awards. They have also added the International School award and the Margaret Demidecka Fairtrade Award.
- In February 2013, the school applied for academy conversion. This is due to take place in July 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attendance further and reduce the proportion of BESD students who persistently do not attend school by:
 - ensuring greater liaison with students' previous school to gain knowledge on their pattern of attendance and strategies already used
 - working in partnership with families, especially those who are more hard to reach.
- Ensure teaching is more consistently outstanding in order to accelerate students' progress, especially those with BESD, by:
 - ensuring that all support staff are deployed well in lessons
 - ensuring all support staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to develop students' learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- All students arrive with levels of attainment that are well-below national expectations. Students within the school have a wide level of need and are increasingly attending with more complex difficulties. They make good progress from their individual starting points. For some students, this is outstanding.
- School progress data show that the earlier students arrive at Catcote's school and the longer they remain, the better are their progress and achievements. This is especially so for pupils with BESD.
- There are particular strengths in the progress made by students who receive the pupil premium, almost all of whom are those who are known to be eligible for free school meals. Additional learning support, including one-to-one support if necessary, accelerates their rate of progress in mathematics, reading, writing and communication.
- Reading, writing and mathematics are developed consistently across all key stages and this continues into the further education section of the school. Students' prior knowledge and practical experiences are systematically built upon over time.
- Teaching staff ensure that reading, writing and mathematical activities are meaningful and relevant to students' needs and abilities. Mathematics is developed, for example, through practical problem solving such as working out the bill for customers in the school's own café that is open to everyone, including the public.
- For students in post-16 provision, frequently success is in entry level functional skills or in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. Very recently, developments have also been made for pupils who are more able to access GCSE level qualifications. Their experiences prepare them well for life after school.

The quality of teaching is good

- The school's own documents show a record of good and outstanding lessons across a number of areas within the school. Although much improved since the last inspection, this consistently high quality of teaching is not yet fully embedded across the school. This lack of consistency is more noticeable in the teaching of BESD students.
- Staff understand students' needs very well and everyone is personally known as an individual. Staff create a very positive and supportive atmosphere for learning and ensure behaviour is appropriate for the lesson. In an outstanding reprographics lesson, the teacher pitched questions to students at different levels to make them think and work out where and how mistakes were made in their work.
- In some lessons support staff are not always deployed well or selective enough in their approach to the wide range of students' needs within the school. Occasionally, their focus is on behaviour rather than on developing students' learning. While this might be needed for some students at times, there are more students who do not need this type of intervention.
- Checks on students' learning and progress are well focused and teachers' subject knowledge is very secure. Students' work is always regularly marked. Teachers use a good range of resources and activities that involve 'hands-on' practical tasks to make learning meaningful and relevant.
- Specific students benefit greatly because of access to specialist provision. This supports re-engagement with learning as well as providing a wealth of practical skills.
- Reading, writing, communication and mathematics are developed well individually and across different subject areas throughout the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students can arrive to Catcote's school at any stage of their learning. Sometimes a new arrival can cause ripples of disruption to behaviour and learning until the positive, secure and systematic ethos of the school takes effect.
- Students are very supportive and tolerant of each other as each individual's development unfolds. Examples were observed in lessons of student's helping, praising and encouraging each other without any adult prompts. For example, in an outstanding 'kwik cricket' lesson, pupils worked easily as a team and cooperated exceptionally well together while improving their skills and techniques because of excellent teaching.
- Students learn to self-monitor their behaviour. This promotes independence and social skills, and prepares them well for the next steps in education, training or employment.
- Pupils' attendance is average overall. It is not higher because the attendance of some BESD students is stubbornly low. This affects their progress and achievements at school.
- The vast majority of parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Parents took the time to write directly to the lead inspector to relay how their children have progressed. Particular praise was given to the many opportunities for personal development provided by clubs, activities after school and in the school holidays.
- Typical comments were, 'the dedication of staff is evident', 'they only have the best interests of children at heart', or that 'staff are willing to give up their own time to give our children the opportunity to have such wonderful experiences, alongside their friends'.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors are passionate about school improvements. They have worked determinedly to ensure that all areas from the last inspection have been met. Systems used to check the school's performance, including the use of data are thorough and rigorous.
- All students, regardless of ability have equal opportunities to learn. There is a vast range of activities and learning opportunities at every stage of learning that are tailor-made to the individual.
- The curriculum is outstanding. Students benefit very well in their personal, social and communication development from the high quality skills that staff have, for example, in horticulture, media and reprographics. Accreditation routes are successful for students whose abilities reach this level.
- The headteacher and the school are highly regarded by the local authority, which provides light touch support as a result.
- Staff provide support for other special and mainstream schools on a range of issues relating to the school's specialism. This is through 'Young Enterprise' and 'Beespoke Enterprises' for which a number of individual students, as well as the school, have gained recognition and awards.
- Leaders and managers have successfully tackled the majority of poor attendance. There continues to be very small groups of students who are persistent in not attending. More could be done in linking with a student's previous school and working in partnership with families, especially those who are harder to reach.
- Newly appointed teachers have settled well and benefit from the experience of leaders and colleagues. The quality of teaching is managed effectively through regular checks on lessons by senior leaders. This same rigour is not consistently applied to the quality of support staff. This results in these staff not having the necessary skills and knowledge that is required to support all learners' needs.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. This is because there are many opportunities to develop confidence, self-esteem and give aspirations for their future.

■ The arrangements for safeguarding students meet all current requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance is good. The governing body challenges and supports the school in equal measure. Governors are knowledgeable about data and the progress and achievement that take place across the school for all student groups. They understand the value that money from the pupil premium brings to students. Governors understand the importance of improving the quality of teaching and good teachers are rewarded through the school's performance management structure. Any underperformance is tackled through additional training and regular monitoring. Governors are fully prepared to go through other appropriate procedures to secure only high quality teaching within the school. They have helped shape the school's future with the staff and are in full agreement with the next steps to move to academy status.
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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	111784
Local authority	Hartlepool
Inspection number	401200

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	132
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	33
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Gordon
Headteacher	Alan Chapman
Date of previous school inspection	22 June 2010
Telephone number	01429 264036
Fax number	01429 234452
Email address	head.catcote@hartlepool.gov.uk

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