

Boldon School

New Road, Boldon Colliery, Tyne and Wear, NE35 9DZ

Inspection dates 26–27 March 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching, although improving, is not yet consistently good across the school. A small amount of teaching is inadequate. The skills of the best teachers are not fully shared.
- In some lessons students, particularly the most able, are not fully challenged to achieve their best and have too few opportunities to learn by working on their own.
- Students' progress in mathematics and English, although now accelerating, does not compare favourably with that of students nationally.
- Students' achievement is not consistently good across the school. In some lessons students' learning is not checked frequently enough and work is not closely matched to their needs.
- Leadership and management require improvement because the roles of some leaders and managers in checking the quality of teaching and progress of all groups of students in their subject areas are not fully developed.

The school has the following strengths

- Students behave well and feel safe in school. Most show kindness and respect for each other, staff and visitors. They are appreciative of the good personal support the school provides.
- Students have good opportunities to study a range of interesting vocational courses and to take part in the many sporting activities which this specialist sports college provides.
- Governors and senior leaders have successfully tackled some of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. Students' behaviour and the way in which teachers assess students' learning have both improved.
- Although some inadequate teaching remains, the overall quality of teaching and the achievement of current students are improving.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 38 lessons of which four were joint observations with senior staff. They also listened to students read.
- Discussions were held with students, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at students' books, progress data, safeguarding information and other documentation.
- Twenty-seven responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered, as well as those from the school's own parental surveys and from school staff.

Inspection team

Ann Ashdown, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Patrick Feerick	Additional Inspector
Mark Patton	Additional Inspector
Barbara Waugh	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is similar in size to the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, those from service families and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is above average. Currently, there are no children from service families at the school.
- A well-below-average proportion of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, and a similar proportion speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average, whilst the proportion supported at school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school has specialist status in sport.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Eliminate the remaining small amount of inadequate teaching and increase the proportion of teaching which is good by:
 - matching activities in all lessons more precisely to the different needs and abilities of all the students
 - giving students the skills and opportunities to learn independently, solve problems and think for themselves
 - ensuring that teachers consistently check students' work in lessons to quickly identify when they need further support or challenge.
- Raise attainment and further accelerate students' progress, particularly in English, mathematics and science, by:
 - ensuring all teachers have consistently high expectations of what students, particularly the most able, can achieve
 - sharing good practice in teaching more widely across the school.
- Develop the roles of leaders and managers by:
 - making sure that they check and accurately evaluate the quality of teaching across the school
 - checking on the impact of extra help given to students to make sure they all achieve well.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students' standards when they enter the school are broadly average. In the last two years the proportion of students gaining five GCSE grades at A* to C including English and mathematics has fluctuated from above average in 2011 to below average in 2012. Students achieve well in many subjects, particularly vocational courses, but their progress in both mathematics and English has not compared favourably with that found nationally for the last two years.
- The school's current data show that students' progress is now accelerating and evidence of this was clearly seen in some lessons and in some subjects. However, progress seen in lessons, particularly in mathematics and science, and in work in students' books show that students' achievement is not consistently good across the school and, consequently, still requires improvement.
- Disabled students, those with special educational needs, those from minority ethnic backgrounds and pupils who speak English as an additional language were seen making the same progress as their classmates. They receive timely and effective help from teachers and teaching assistants.
- Students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority who are supported by extra funding (the pupil premium) reached standards (as measured by the grades they gained in examinations in English and mathematics at the end of Year 11) below those of their classmates in 2012. They also made considerably slower progress in both English and mathematics than other groups of students. However, pupil premium funding has been spent wisely, for example in providing revision classes and small-group tuition, and school data show that this group of students is expected to make better progress this year.
- The school uses early entry to examinations in several subjects including mathematics. In the light of experience the school has refined its policy on entering students early for examinations to make sure that they reach their potential and gain in confidence from early examination success.
- Students perform well in vocational subjects, with many making good progress in BTEC subjects such as information and communication technology, sport and business studies.
- Students in Year 7 who find reading difficult receive good extra help to enable them to make progress and catch up with their peers. They have developed good strategies to read unfamiliar words and are proud of the progress they are making.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. A small amount of teaching is outstanding, much is good, but too much teaching still requires improvement or is inadequate. The vast majority of the weaker teaching seen was in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, although within these departments good and outstanding teaching was also seen.
- In lessons where the teaching requires improvement, students are not always challenged to achieve their best and do not make good progress. Students, particularly the most able, find work is too easy whilst others find the work too hard. In these lessons teachers do not check how well students are learning often enough, so they are not given a further challenge or extra help when they need it.
- Teachers' expectations of what students can achieve are variable. In a technology lesson, where expectations were very high, students confidently worked on their own, assessed their own progress and took great pride in their work. However, in a mathematics lesson expectations were much lower and, consequently, students did not make the progress they were capable of.
- Where lessons were taught well teachers planned work carefully and used a range of interesting resources. Varied activities and briskly paced tasks kept students interested. In an English lesson students made good progress as they confidently worked in pairs and groups to explore concrete and abstract images in poetry. Their social development was promoted well as they shared ideas and information in a balanced and mature way. However, this good practice is not fully shared

and in other lessons students had too few opportunities to use their initiative, work independently and solve problems for themselves.

- In most lessons teachers have good relationships with their students and classes are well managed. Most students want to learn, work diligently in lessons and are keen to succeed.
- In most subjects students' work is marked regularly and the system for identifying 'SWANS' (Strengths, Weaknesses And Next Steps) is used effectively to help students improve their work. This is an area which has improved since the previous inspection.
- In lessons disabled students and those with special educational needs are given constructive extra help by teachers and teaching assistants, which helps them to make similar progress to their classmates. Good-quality teaching of small groups of students in English is giving them extra help to reach their target grades this year.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students were seen behaving well in most lessons and around the school. They are courteous, kind and polite to each other, staff and visitors. Although the school's very detailed records show that there are incidents of poor behaviour in lessons, these are effectively dealt with and reflect the school's unwillingness to allow poor behaviour to go unchecked.
- A very few parents expressed concerns about behaviour but inspectors found the behaviour of most students to be good and well managed by staff.
- Attendance, although below average, is improving and the number of students who are persistently absent has reduced considerably. Exclusions have also reduced. The school has a very effective inclusion unit where staff work with students who are at risk of exclusion in order to improve their behaviour and help them make progress.
- The school works closely with outside agencies to make sure that all students, but especially those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, get the specialist help they need. Students and their families value the personal support the school gives them.
- Students say that they feel safe in school. They are knowledgeable about different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, but feel that any bullying issues will be promptly dealt with in school. Students are well informed about keeping themselves safe and have a sensible attitude to risk taking. Through work in lessons, assemblies and talks from outside experts they have a good understanding of the dangers of, for example, drug and alcohol misuse.
- Students enjoy taking on responsibilities and making a contribution to their own, and the wider, community. For example, during the inspection students raised a large sum of money for a local cancer charity by packing bags at a nearby supermarket and entertained primary school pupils with their lively performance of 'Peter Pan'.

The leadership and management require improvement

- The school is improving and has the capacity to improve further because senior leaders are aware of its strengths and are tackling its weaknesses. Improvements to the tracking of students' progress and teachers' assessment of students' work are helping to raise attainment and accelerate progress for current students.
- However, leadership and management require improvement because the roles of all leaders and managers in checking on the quality of work in their departments are not yet fully developed. The expertise of all leaders in accurately checking the quality of teaching is not yet sharp enough. The school's view of the overall quality of teaching and the impact it is having on improving learning was found to be overgenerous.
- The school promotes equal opportunities for all students and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Pupil premium funding is being spent wisely in providing extra tuition and revision classes for disadvantaged students. However, these actions are only recently beginning to have an impact on narrowing the gaps in progress between groups of students. Leaders and managers have yet to fully check the impact of the extra help being given to make sure all students achieve well.

- Teaching is now beginning to improve as a result of staff training and coaching, although the full impact of this work has yet to be felt and, consequently, teaching still requires further improvement. Much good practice in teaching exists in the school but this has yet to be fully shared between and within departments.
- Resources are well deployed but students say that staff changes, particularly in the English department, have slowed their learning.
- Arrangements for performance management are robust and are closely linked to the school's identified areas for improvement and to raising students' achievement further.
- The curriculum is broad and offers students a balance of vocational and academic courses. It effectively promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's specialist sports status has had a positive impact in providing a range of sport-related courses and activities which students speak enthusiastically about and clearly enjoy.
- The local authority provides light-touch support for the school by, for example, arranging training for staff on matters relating to teaching and analysis of school performance data.
- Safeguarding requirements are met. Staff are fully trained and knowledgeable about risk assessment and child protection issues.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school well and are both supportive and challenging. They are kept well informed by the headteacher and are knowledgeable about the quality of teaching, how the performance of staff is managed and how staff are rewarded and underperformance tackled. They are becoming increasingly aware of how the school is performing in relation to other schools nationally and have carried out their own analysis of the school's performance data. They are aware of how pupil premium funding is spent and hold the school to account for this.

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	108730
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	401003

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	874
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Berry
Headteacher	Elizabeth Hayes
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2010
Telephone number	0191 536 2176
Fax number	0191 537 4073
Email address	boldon.school@btinternet.com

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

