

Whitley Bay High School

Deneholm, Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear, NE25 9AS

Inspection dates 1–2 May 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

- Whitley Bay High School provides an outstanding education for its students. It seeks to help students develop into confident, sensitive and reflective adults, and it is successful in this aim.
- Students, staff and parents hold the school in great esteem. Comments such as, 'I am proud to be a member of the school community.' from a student, and 'I have loved every day of my career at this school.' from a member of staff, illustrate this well.
- All groups of students make outstanding progress from their starting points, so that they leave Year 11 with standards that are well above those found nationally. They are fully prepared for their next steps.
- The sixth form provides a wide range of courses, and students benefit from first-rate advice, guidance and care. As a result all students go on to higher education, training or employment. The sixth form is good because the progress students make from their starting points is not consistently outstanding.
- Teaching is outstanding. There is an absolute determination amongst all staff to ensure that lessons are exciting and effective. Teachers are committed to improving their craft as professionals, and this leads to an excellent level of consistency in the quality of teaching.
- One striking feature of the quality of teaching is the way in which teachers encourage students to explain their thinking. This develops both communication skills and subject knowledge and understanding.
- Students are committed to learning. In lessons their enthusiasm and interest is high. They work together extremely well and this helps them make outstanding progress. Behaviour around the campus is excellent.
- The executive headteacher, his leadership team and the governing body are highly successful. They set themselves high standards. Procedures for checking the quality of teaching and the progress students are making are very strong. The school continues to improve.
- The executive headteacher and the head of school have a clear vision, and both staff and students are 'on board'. As a result the school is one where all students make excellent progress in their personal development and academic achievement.
- Equality is central to this vision. Differences in ethnicity, gender, sexuality or ability are celebrated, as the school aims to develop 'gifted all-rounders'. The school is a place where everyone's talents are found, nurtured and shared.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 46 lessons and parts of lessons. Four observations were conducted jointly with four members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspectors observed students during tutorial, registration, assembly, break times, and around the site.
- Discussions were held with the executive headteacher, the head of school, members of the leadership team, two groups of teaching staff (including middle leaders) and two governors: the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body.
- The inspectors talked to school improvement colleagues from the local authority, and with the school improvement advisor.
- The inspectors spoke to many students in lessons, and they spoke formally to six groups of students on the first day of the inspection.
- The inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the school's improvement plan; the school's own evaluation of its work; the school's data for tracking students' progress; the work students were doing in their books; the school's documentation relating to safeguarding; documents relating to the monitoring of the quality of teaching; and information about teachers' professional development.
- The inspectors took into account the responses to the school's own surveys. There were 71 responses from parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also took into account the responses from the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Michael Wardle, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Frank Cain	Additional Inspector
Diane Coleman	Additional Inspector
Jim Hall	Additional Inspector
Neil Mackenzie	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is larger than the average-sized secondary school. It is deemed to be a secondary school, but students enter the school in Year 9 rather than in Year 7.
- The sixth form is larger than average with approximately 80 students each year joining in Year 12 from other schools.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is low. The pupil premium provides additional funding for children in local authority care, those whose parents are in the forces and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of students identified with special educational needs and supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There is specialist provision at school for 10 students with moderate learning difficulties.
- Some students access alternative courses from a range of different providers, including the Barnardo's Palmersville Programme, Moorbridge, PALS (personalised achievement through learning support) and the Whitley Bay Student Support Centre.
- The school was awarded Teaching School status in July 2011. Whitley Bay High School is the lead school in its Teaching School Alliance. As such, the school is involved in regional and national developments in teaching and learning and professional development.
- The executive headteacher is a National Leader of Education, and is supporting one other school in the pyramid within which Whitley Bay High School is part. The school deploys Specialist Leaders of Education to support improvements in other schools. The school is a National Support School.
- The school has a variety of awards, including Investors in People (gold award).

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the number of students making outstanding progress in the sixth form by:
 - ensuring that the ways in which teachers assess standards and check students' progress is as effective as that seen in the best sixth-form lessons.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students start school in Year 9 with standards of attainment that are above the national average. Excellent induction procedures, and exciting themes and programmes at the beginning of the year help them to settle quickly, focus on learning and make a confident start. All students make outstanding progress, so that by the end of Year 11 students' attainment is significantly above that found nationally on many indicators. Progress in English and mathematics is outstanding.
- Attainment in science, English literature, art, computing, history, geography and physical education, among other subjects, is high.
- Students known to be eligible for free school meals and supported through the use of pupil premium make progress similar to other students in school. They achieve standards that are, on average, half a grade lower per subject than other students in school. The gap between how well these students do when compared to similar students across the country is not as wide as it is nationally. This means that the school is providing very well for these students.
- Students who are disabled and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress in school. This includes those students who access the specialist provision. In lessons, these students were fully involved in their learning and making excellent progress.
- Outstanding achievement was seen during the inspection in many subjects. The school's current data indicate that progress and achievement are set to rise further this year. The school enters some students in some subjects early for GCSEs. This is done carefully so that it maximises achievement, including for the more-able students.
- Students who are educated off-site are monitored carefully by the school. They make outstanding progress.
- Progress made by students in the sixth form is good taking into account their starting points. Their rate of progress is improving strongly. They reach high standards and are strikingly successful in gaining places at university, training or employment. Progress in history, English, media studies and art is particularly strong. Progress in applied subjects is outstanding. Personal development in the sixth form is a major strength, and the sixth form helps students develop into confident, sensitive and reflective adults.
- The library plays a pivotal role in the life of the school. Events such as 'national poetry day', and the 'literary festival' promote a love of reading. A wide variety of clubs and groups, led by the library team, support literacy across the school.
- The school successfully blends excellent teaching with innovative aspects of the curriculum; this, combined with a desire on the part of the students to make progress, leads to outstanding achievement. School leaders are focused on continually improving teaching, and therefore, achievement continues to improve.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teaching is exciting and innovative. Students and staff alike understand that the development of teaching is at the heart of the school. As such, there is a 'buzz' amongst adults and students in the classroom. Teachers plan interesting lessons, and students match this commitment by taking their responsibility to learn very seriously. This is the case in all areas of the curriculum, including in literacy and mathematics.
- Respectful relationships and the way teachers organise their classrooms help students to learn well. Teachers plan their lessons to make sure all students are given work that gets the best out of them. Teachers ask students very searching questions to get them thinking and to see how much they have understood. They expect the best from students, whatever their ability. This includes students with special educational needs, and those who access specialist provision.

- Parents, students and staff say that teaching seen during the inspection was typical.
- Teaching rightly has a focus on ensuring that students think deeply and justify their thinking. As a result their communication skills are excellent. For example, in a Year 9 critical thinking lesson, students were defining concepts such as inference, correlation and causation, and challenging each other to ensure the words were being used correctly. In a Year 10 English lesson, deep discussion as how to represent the structure of a novel was observed.
- Similar techniques were seen in lessons in the sixth form. Here, good strategies for teaching and learning were combined with high-level subject matter which ensured that students made strong progress. In a Year 13 mathematics lesson, students were explaining their thinking to each other very well, describing complex mathematical concepts. The ways in which teachers assess standards and check students' progress in sixth form is more variable, and not yet consistently outstanding.
- Teaching assistants and other non-teaching staff are very committed and well deployed in school. They support students with special educational needs particularly well in lessons.
- The leadership of the school has created an ethos where discussing and developing teaching is the norm. This contributes greatly to the quality of teaching at the school being outstanding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The way in which students work with other adults and each other to make progress is exceptional. Classroom relationships are based on respect and a thirst to learn.
- Parents, staff and students express few concerns about behaviour. Inspectors saw behaviour in lessons and around the school that was excellent. Students are courteous to each other and to adults. They are orderly, respectful and polite. They enjoy coming to school and are proud of their school.
- Students have an excellent understanding of the difference between right and wrong, and are often given the opportunity to reflect upon their relationships, opinions, behaviour and beliefs.
- They have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and they say they feel very safe in school. Their awareness of personal safety (for example, sex and relationships, and drugs issues) is raised through assemblies, the tutorial programme and visiting speakers.
- Students have an awareness of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying about which they have few concerns. They say they value diversity and celebrate difference. Students have created their own advertising campaign around school to ensure that everyone feels valued: all different – all equal.
- Attendance is above the national average and improving, and students arrive to school and lessons on time.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The executive headteacher leads an inspirational senior team. Together with the governing body, he has a very clear view of how successful the school can be and has very high ambitions for the students in his care. Improving the school for the benefit of the students is at the heart of everything the school does.
- There is a clear focus on the quality of teaching, and on ensuring that the curriculum is innovative and exciting. For example, weeks designed to develop learning skills at the beginning of Year 9, the choice of interesting courses in Year 9 such as jewellery, robotics and philosophy, and a very wide range of courses on offer in sixth form also capture the imagination of the students. The curriculum also supports the excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students.
- The school ensures that all staff in positions of leadership develop their skills as leaders, and are prepared for the next stage of their career. As a result of this focus, middle leaders make a

valued contribution to the drive for excellence at school.

- The school's procedures for checking the quality of teaching and the progress that the students are making are very strong. Advice given to teachers to help them continue developing their skills is outstanding and, as a result, the quality of teaching is continually improving. A 'gallery' classroom, where teachers can observe lessons without drawing attention to themselves is well used to develop teachers' skills. The best teachers benefit from helping others in different schools through the work of the Teaching School Alliance.
 - Time is set aside each week for training teachers to help them continue developing their skills. Teachers and school leaders say that this has had a very positive impact on the quality of teaching.
 - The school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance are strong. As a result, areas where improvements can be made are correctly identified, and plans put in place to ensure that this occurs. This, combined with continued high standards throughout the school, indicates that there is capacity for the school to improve yet further.
 - Senior leaders have used performance management and the appraisal process to challenge areas of underperformance. As a result teachers currently at school meet the Teachers' Standards comfortably. They understand that advancement up the pay scale is closely linked to students' achievement.
 - Many staff completed the voluntary questionnaire for the inspection. The level of pride and enthusiasm was exceptional, a testimony to the positive ethos senior leaders have created.
 - The school meets statutory responsibilities for safeguarding. Child-protection procedures are exemplary.
 - The local authority provides timely and appropriate light touch support to the school. The school, through the work of the Teaching School Alliance, helps the local authority support schools in the area.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are aware of the strengths of the school, including the quality of teaching. They have helped create the ethos of the school. They support the executive headteacher and the senior team, and ensure that they are challenged to keep the school improving. They have high expectations of members of staff and they have a good understanding of the progress the students are making. They track the impact of pupil-premium funding. They ensure that the training and the performance of teachers are well managed so that salaries and promotion reflect performance. They are committed to giving teachers further access to training to keep their skills high.
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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	108638
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	413305
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	13–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,609
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	551
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Mitchell
Executive Headteacher	Adam Chedburn
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2010
Telephone number	0191 2008800
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