

Clayton Hall Business and Language College

Clayton Lane, Clayton, Newcastle-under-Lyme, ST5 3DN

Inspection dates 12–13 June 2013

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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The executive and associate headteachers, governors and senior leaders all share an unwavering commitment to improving the school so that all students achieve the best they can.
- Students' achievement has improved significantly since the last inspection. Students reach standards well above the national average in their GCSE examinations including in English and mathematics.
- Good systems check the progress students are making and effective support is provided quickly to any student who falls behind.
- Teaching is typically good. It has improved since the last inspection because leaders have taken effective action to challenge ineffective teaching. Staff have benefited from the extensive support available to them.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Students have a very positive attitude to learning and work very well together in lessons. Staff and parents fully endorse this view.
- Students say that bullying is rare. They feel very safe in school and appreciate the range of opportunities and support that are available to them.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Students do not have enough opportunities to work independently.
- Teachers do not always show students how to improve their work or give them the time to make the necessary improvements.
- While many students make outstanding progress in some subjects, some groups of pupils are not making as much progress as they could.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 38 lessons including 6 joint lesson observations with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the executive and associate headteachers, the senior team, middle leaders, members of the governing body including the Chair of Governors and other nominated staff. Inspectors also talked to groups of pupils in meetings and informally around the school and in classes.
- Inspectors reviewed a variety of school documents, including the school’s evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses and the school development plan. In addition they looked at behaviour records, safeguarding records, minutes to governing body meetings, and documents relating to the management of teachers’ performance.
- Inspectors reviewed the 38 responses to the Ofsted on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and also considered the views expressed in 68 questionnaires returned by school staff.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty’s Inspector

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Her Majesty’s Inspector

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Full report

Information about this school

- Clayton Hall Business and Language College is an averaged-sized comprehensive school. It was Federated with NCHS–The Science College in 2010 forming the South Newcastle Federation.
- The Federation shares an executive headteacher and governing body. The associate headteacher took up post in 2010.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for particular groups, which in this school applies to students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and the very few looked after by the local authority) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Nearly all students are of White British heritage and speak English as their home language.
- The school meets the government’s current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students’ attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 4.
- At the time of the inspection three students were placed in alternative provision provided by the local authority.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by ensuring that all teachers:
 - challenge all students to improve their learning in all subjects by providing regular opportunities for them to develop their thinking and independence in lessons
 - give detailed written feedback to students on the quality of their work including how they can improve their learning, and provide time for students to make the necessary improvements.
- Make sure that governors sharply focus on the impact of pupil-premium funding, and closely monitor the progress of students entitled to this extra support.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The majority of students join the school with attainment that is well above average. Results in their GCSE examinations show that they achieve well. Students leave with results that are high in comparison to the national average in both English and mathematics as well as across a broad range of other subjects.
- The proportion of students achieving 5 GCSE passes at grades A* to C inclusive of English and mathematics was well above average in 2012 and is likely to improve again this year. This represents a substantial improvement in standards since the previous inspection. The rate of improvement is well above that achieved nationally.
- In English and mathematics, students' progress overall is faster than their peers nationally. Students in those groups that face particular barriers to their learning made strong progress in their GCSEs in 2012. Whilst students eligible for support from the pupil premium made less progress than other students in the school, their achievement was above the national average in both English and mathematics.
- In addition, students who were identified at school action and school action plus reached standards that were broadly in line with similar students nationally. Similarly, students with a statement of special educational needs achieved well in the same year.
- The close monitoring by the school of the progress current students are making has identified a widening of the gaps in the achievement of some groups. Achievement is not yet outstanding overall because the quality of teaching is not yet of a high enough quality to ensure that these students learn exceptionally well across many subjects.
- Early entry for all students in the GCSE examinations in English and mathematics has proved to be successful in raising achievement. Students receive targeted support if they need to retake the examinations and the school takes care to give students that are more able the opportunity to reach standards suitable for progression to further study.
- A special reading intervention programme funded by the Year 7 catch-up premium has had some impact on improving the skills of students with low reading ages. However, students do not have enough planned opportunities to apply and develop their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.
- The school carefully monitors the progress of the very small number of students who attend alternative provision. The school checks that they attend regularly and make good progress, so that they achieve well overall.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good in the majority of lessons and it is sometimes outstanding. School leaders are dedicated to improving the quality of teaching as they rightly see this as the crucial factor in making sure that all students succeed during their time at the school.
- All teaching and support staff have benefited from extensive opportunities to improve their practice. Skilled teaching staff, who work with others to share the best practice that is in the

school, lead a coaching programme and as a result, teaching has improved since the last inspection. Only a small proportion of teaching observed by inspectors still requires improvement.

- Teachers share the ambitions leaders have for the school. They have a clear view of the quality of their own teaching and want to become outstanding practitioners. Nevertheless, the commitment from the school to improving classroom practice has not yet resulted in enough outstanding teaching across a range of subjects.
- In the best lessons, for example in the humanities and creative arts subjects, teachers have high expectations of how rapidly and independently students can learn. Their thoughtful planning ensures that students work towards achieving challenging outcomes. Teachers astutely question students to build understanding. For instance, in a history lesson, students were encouraged to evaluate the range of practical and economic factors involved in the Cuban Missile Crisis. In these lessons, students are encouraged to think deeply and to express and explore their own ideas. As a result, they make outstanding progress.
- Teachers create a very positive atmosphere for learning in all lessons. Considerable thought has been given to ensure that classrooms are attractive spaces that will help students enjoy their lessons.
- Teachers have a good understanding of the progress students make and use this to check on learning in lessons. They are more confident in identifying when students are underachieving and, as a result, these students are supported more quickly. However, because teachers do not always give students enough time to develop their understanding during lessons, they do not always make the progress they could.
- Teachers are effective in helping students to assess their own work and that of others. However, there is wide variation in the quality of teacher's marking across the school. It is not always frequent enough, nor of a good enough quality to ensure students make the progress they can across all subjects.
- Sometimes, although the school's extra support for those who struggle with reading is broadly effective, students are not always able to apply the approaches they have learned and this hampers their progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent. They are unfailingly polite and welcoming to visitors. They have excellent relationships with each other and with staff. As the executive headteacher put it, 'We like them and they quite like us too!'
- Students' attendance is consistently higher than the average for secondary schools and it is improving further. Students are punctual to class because they enjoy their lessons. They readily follow expectations for good behaviour and adults rarely need to remind them of these. The school's behaviour records reflect this. Frequent rewards clearly show the positive contributions students make to school life. Sanctions for poor behaviour are few and are declining over time.
- Students say that bullying is rare and they have confidence that, should it happen, their teachers would act quickly to deal with it. Adults work hard to ensure that students have a very good understanding of the different types of bullying including homophobic and on-line bullying. Students state they feel safe in school and their parents and teachers agree.

- Students' conduct outside lessons is outstanding. Adult supervision is low-key as students socialise extremely well together and make excellent use of the communal spaces around the school.

The leadership and management are good

- The executive and associate headteachers are unashamedly passionate about wanting to achieve an outstanding education for all the students at the school. They work with their talented wider leadership team to articulate a philosophy that 'nothing but the best will do' and to challenge underperformance at all levels. As a result, standards have quickly and securely improved.
- School leaders have an accurate view of the school's performance, its strengths, and its weaknesses. Systems for tracking students' achievements have instilled a sense of corporate responsibility and as a result, staff identify additional support at an early stage. These early interventions are contributing significantly to the progress students are making. However, leadership and management are not yet outstanding because they have not yet secured outstanding achievement.
- Regular monitoring of teaching secures good outcomes because leaders support teachers to improve their work. There is no inadequate teaching. School leaders closely monitor those teachers who are not yet consistently good, and provide them with additional support. Teachers speak very positively about the help they have been given.
- Opportunities to access training to develop teaching expertise are frequent and designed to meet the needs of the teaching community including teaching assistants and other support staff. Consequently, the proportion of good teaching has improved. However, these strategies have not yet been able to increase the amount of teaching that is outstanding.
- The management of staff performance is good. Staff are set annual targets that clearly connect to the school's improvement priorities and school leaders hold them to account for the progress their students make. Teaching performance clearly informs decisions about increases in pay.
- The curriculum offers a broad range of a choice of courses at Key Stage 4, which meets the needs, interests and aspirations of the students. The curriculum plainly benefits from the federation arrangements, with students having access to a broader range of vocational courses at its partner school. Closely monitored provision for the few students educated by the alternative provider ensures they make good progress.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding and child protection meet national requirements.
- The school receives light-touch support from the local authority. This includes a termly visit to provide external validation of the progress the school is making in line with its improvement priorities.

■ The governance of the school:

–Governors know the school well through a good system of committees that meet at least each half term to receive regular reports from school leaders on all aspects of the school's work. This includes the quality of teaching and the impact it is having on pupil progress. Consequently, they make informed decisions about the pay progression for teachers. Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and actively monitor the school's performance through an

operational plan that supports them in challenging school leaders. They know what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance. Governors manage the school finances well. However, governors have not yet fully realised their responsibilities for ensuring pupil premium funding has an impact on raising the achievement of all eligible pupils.

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	124412
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	400386

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	991
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Porter
Headteacher	Mark Heuston (Executive Headteacher) Julian Morgan (Associate Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2010
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