

Monkwearmouth School

Torver Crescent, Seaburn Dene, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR6 8LG

Inspection dates 22–23 October 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, ably supported by a determined team of leaders, has strengthened leadership and brought about improvements in the quality of teaching and students' achievement. Procedures for checking the quality of teaching and the progress of students are strong. Plans to improve the school are focused closely on raising achievement and the school is improving.
- Students' achievement has been improving year-on-year and is good. The number of students gaining five good passes at GCSE, including English and mathematics, is well above the national average.
- Teaching is good and improving as a result of the school's focus on learning and progress. Strong relationships and high expectations contribute significantly to a positive culture.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Students are very keen to learn and this plays a large part in them achieving well. They feel happy and safe at school. Equal opportunities are well supported. There is a positive ethos and students are proud of their school.
- Perceptive and knowledgeable governors effectively support and challenge the school's performance. They have a very clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school as well as the quality of teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not yet sufficient outstanding teaching and a small number of lessons require improvement.
- Teachers do not consistently provide work at a level that ensures students always progress at a fast pace. Questions are not sufficiently probing and students do not always have enough opportunities to work independently.
- Achievement, especially in geography and German, is not yet consistently outstanding especially for the most-able students.
- Opportunities for writing across the range of subjects are not fully exploited. Students do not always give enough attention to presenting their work neatly and ensuring accuracy in their basic literacy skills.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 35 lessons, of which four were joint observations with the headteacher and members of the leadership team.
- Discussions were held with senior staff, subject leaders, teaching staff, members of the governing body and a local authority representative.
- Inspectors spoke to students in lessons and at breaks and during lunchtimes. They also listened to students read in Year 7 and spoke formally to two groups of students.
- Inspectors viewed the school's work and checked work in students' books. They looked at a range of documentation, including that relating to students' progress over time, the school's view of its own performance, and improvement planning and safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors took account 129 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- There were 42 staff questionnaires returned and considered by the inspection team.

Inspection team

David Griffiths, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Graeme Clarke

Additional Inspector

Julie McGrane

Additional Inspector

Sonya Williamson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students who are from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are both below average.
- The number on roll has fallen since the previous inspection.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority, is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion who are supported at school action plus and those who have a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school uses alternative provision at a pupil referral unit and a skills centre in Sunderland for a very small number of students.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which sets out the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the consistency of the quality of teaching so that all is good and more is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that all teachers make effective use of information about students' progress to set work that fully challenge students of different abilities, especially the more-able
 - ensuring that teachers give all students enough time to work, independently or in groups, to enable them to deepen their knowledge and understanding
 - using questions more effectively to extend students' thinking and grasp of new concepts.
- Further improve students' achievement, especially in geography and German, by:
 - accelerating consistently the progress of the more-able students in order to increase the number who get A*-A grades at GCSE
 - continuing to embed the teaching of writing across all areas of the curriculum and insisting students take greater care with presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students enter the school with standards of attainment that are slightly above the national average. All students make good progress from their individual starting points. Progress in English is outstanding. Good achievement was seen during the inspection in many subjects. The school's unvalidated data indicate that progress and achievement, including at Key Stage 3, has risen further in 2013.
- Achievement over time in English and mathematics has been good and inspectors observed good teaching overall in these subjects during the inspection. As a result, students were found to be making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- By the end of Year 11 students' attainment in mathematics, English literature, physical education and information and communication technology, among other subjects, is well above average.
- In 2013, 71% of students achieved at least five passes at GCSE grades A*-C, including English and mathematics. This is well-above national averages. Attainment in writing although above average is not consistently high across the school. Teachers do not always insist that students present work well and apply their basic writing skills successfully.
- Overall the more-able students make good progress from their starting points and there has been a good increase in the number of students achieving the highest grades of A* and A at GCSE. However, this improvement is not yet evident in all subjects where too few reach the highest grades. This is especially evident in geography and German and attainment is not as high as other subjects. Teaching in these subjects does not always challenge these students to ensure they make enough progress.
- Students known to be eligible for free school meals and supported through the use of the pupil premium make progress similar to other students in school. They achieve standards that are, on average, three quarters of a grade lower per subject than other students in school. The progress they make when compared to similar students across the country, is better than it is nationally. This means that the school is providing well for these students and promotes successfully equality of opportunity.
- Students with disabilities or special educational needs make good progress because of the school's strong support and inclusive ethos. Extensive data are used well to identify and quickly address any underperformance. As a result of this, an increasing number achieve challenging targets due to the effective support they receive.
- Students who are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium receive additional support to develop their literacy skills. As a result, they are beginning to make good gains in reading and are closing the gaps in the achievement of their peers.
- The very few students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to their classmates.
- Students are entered early for GCSE in mathematics at various times from Year 10 onwards. Early entry has contributed positively to the proportion of students attaining higher grades by the end of Year 11.
- Students who attend the Pupil Referral Unit and Skills Centre in Sunderland make expected progress. They are increasingly making good progress to reach their individual targets. As a result, they are more prepared for learning when they return to school.
- Students are guided on to appropriate courses. In 2012 only a very small number of students were not in education, employment or training when they left Year 11.
- The quality of teaching and students' good behaviour both contribute to high academic standards. Students go confidently into the next stage of employment or education.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- A large majority of teaching in the school is now good and a small amount is outstanding. This improvement is reflected in the increased progress students are making. Staff have responded positively to the challenge from senior leaders to improve the quality and consistency of their teaching.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is universally strong. Teachers plan lessons that are organised and well resourced. As a result of this in most lessons, the pace of learning is brisk and students' attitudes to learning are very positive.
- Lessons are characterised by positive and supportive relationships between staff and students. Where teaching assistants are present in lessons, they mostly offer effective and well-targeted support.
- Marking is generally good across the school. Teachers keep a close eye on how students are achieving; students work is marked frequently and teachers give clear feedback on how students can improve their work, pointing out where they have been successful. In the very best marking students are expected to respond to the good advice they are being given. Not all teachers, however, have high expectations for good presentation and spelling, punctuation and grammar are not consistently corrected.
- In the best lessons, students make rapid progress and show a real thirst for knowledge because teachers make very effective use of information about students starting points to plan activities that challenge students of all abilities. In these lessons, teachers intervene promptly to ensure that students understand clearly what they need to do in order to improve their work and achieve their ambitious personal targets.
- In a successful history lesson, for example, students made good and sometimes rapid progress because the teacher uses assessment information well to organise work and groups which promoted challenge. As a result of this all students engaged well and benefited from the opportunity to explore ideas with each other.
- Mathematics is taught effectively. In an outstanding mathematics lesson no time was wasted because the teacher planned the lesson and materials very carefully to allow students to work independently. The teacher observed closely how well they were doing and intervened skilfully when they needed further explanation or challenge. In other mathematics lessons opportunities to extend skills in meaningful situations were less obvious.
- In some lessons, especially in geography and German, teachers do not yet make sufficient use of information about the starting points of students to plan lessons that fully challenge all students, particularly the more-able. Consequently, the progress made by these students, although good, is sometimes slower than their peers.
- In many lessons teachers' use questioning very skilfully to develop students' knowledge and skills. In the very best lessons the quality of discussion is modelled well by the teacher. As a result students express their own ideas, discover solutions for themselves and challenge the thinking of their classmates. This is inconsistent across subjects and year groups, however, and questioning is used less effectively to extend thinking and time is not always provided for students to deepen their knowledge.
- The teaching of reading is good and extra teaching sessions and strategies are in place to extend literacy skills. This is having a positive impact on progress. However, some opportunities to write at length in different subjects are missing.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**are good**

- In lessons students behave very well and show keen interest in their work. They respond well to their teachers, and cooperate well with each other. Around the school students are polite, courteous, and show respect to each other. For example, behaviour at break and lunch is mature and sensible. Parents, students and staff say that behaviour is good, and that behaviour seen during the inspection is typical.

- Behaviour is not outstanding because students, in some lessons, are passive learners. This limits their opportunities to make outstanding progress.
- Students say they feel very safe at school and the overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the Parent View survey agree. Few incidences of bullying occur and, if they do, students are confident that they would be dealt with promptly and effectively. Students understand what constitutes bullying, including homophobic, racist and cyber bullying.
- During the inspection, as part of well-being day, Year 7 students were trained by Year 11 peer mentors on the dangers of cyber-bullying and the strategies they might use to keep themselves safe. This not only raised awareness of an important issue but resulted in high quality discussion amongst the younger students and further strengthened the good relationships that already exist across the school.
- Attendance is average. It has improved steadily over the past three years and compares favourably with similar schools or colleges. The proportion of students who are persistently absent from school is falling as a result of the school's effective monitoring and liaison with parents and carers. Students arrive to lessons on time.
- The school successfully identifies potentially challenging behavioural issues and positively supports students to work out solutions for themselves. As a result of this, rates of exclusion are extremely low and instances of permanent exclusion very rare.
- One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) visited the school on 7 November 2013 to investigate a complaint made by a parent which was not made known to the inspection team during the on-site phase of the inspection. The findings confirm the judgement already reached by the inspection team.

The leadership and management

are good

- The headteacher provides strong and pragmatic leadership. He is ably supported by members of his senior leadership team who are leading effectively in their areas. Together they show great determination in driving forward improvements.
- As a result of this, strategic planning is well considered and strategies to raise achievement, while maintaining high levels of support for students' personal development, are carefully planned and subject to rigorous monitoring. Self-evaluation is honest and accurate.
- The progress of students is closely monitored and interventions in place where they are most needed. Attainment is rising especially with the increased attention given to more-able students although this is not yet consistent in all subjects.
- Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching closely and have a precise understanding of the strengths and areas needing improvement. As a result of this standards of teaching are improving rapidly. The few aspects that require improvement are being addressed by the senior team and this ensures no teaching is inadequate.
- There are robust and rigorous systems in place to manage the performance of staff, which link to their progression through pay scales. Support programmes and wider professional training are closely matched to the needs of the school and individual staff. Teaching staff spoke highly during the course of the inspection of the excellent professional opportunities that are made available to them and the impact this is having on their teaching.
- The school makes good use of alternative provision to provide appropriate courses and support for a very small number of students that enable them to be successful. The school takes all reasonable steps to ensure that these students behave well and are safe.
- The curriculum is constantly being evaluated and refined to ensure a suitable range of courses, meeting the needs of all students, so they make increasingly strong progress. Curriculum changes have led to specific improvements, such as the introduction of a reading programme in Key Stage 3, which is having a significant impact in the progress students are making in literacy. Sometimes, opportunities to extend writing across a range of subjects are not promoted.
- There are opportunities for students to take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, although data provided by the school shows that uptake is not as high as might be expected for

a school of this size.

- Many staff completed the voluntary questionnaire for the inspection. The level of pride and enthusiasm was impressive and testimony to the sense of purpose and ethos that senior leaders have created.
- The school benefits from the light-touch support provided by the local authority.
- The school meets statutory responsibilities for safeguarding.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is strong and provides good support and challenge to senior leaders and managers. Governors have a good understanding of the school's performance over time, especially the quality of teaching and students' achievement. They analyse data and are actively involved in the school's very rigorous diary of events to ensure they have first-hand experience of what is happening. Consequently, governors have a good perception of what needs to be done to improve the school further. Governors use performance management systems to set appropriate and challenging targets. They understand the connection between the quality of work that staff do and the arrangements for pay progression. They manage the school's finances well and ensure the allocation of pupil premium supports a range of activities and opportunities to develop the English and mathematical skills of those students at risk of falling behind. Governors directly monitor all aspects of the school, including through meetings with staff, students and parents.

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	108859
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	425872

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	963
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Cogdon
Headteacher	Stephen Wilkinson
Date of previous school inspection	7 December 2011
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