

Haughton Academy

Salters Lane South, Darlington, County Durham, DL1 2AN

Inspection dates

5–6 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- The progress of students with disabilities and special educational needs and those for whom the pupil premium funding provides support is not yet good.
- Achievement in science and a range of foundation subjects including modern foreign languages requires improvement.
- Opportunities for students to develop their skills in literacy and numeracy are too often missed by teachers.
- Some middle leaders are not yet ensuring that there is sufficient focus on raising standards of teaching and improving achievement in their curriculum area.
- Although the quality of teaching is improving there is still not enough good and outstanding teaching to ensure rapid progress for all students.
- Some lessons are not motivating and assessment information is not always used to set work that moves students' learning on at a quick pace.
- A small number of older students behave badly in lessons and around school. Where this occurs in lessons it disrupts the learning of other students.
- The attendance of students at school, though improving, is still not good enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching and achievement in English, history, religious education and geography are good. In mathematics teaching and achievement though not yet good are improving rapidly.
- Strong senior leaders have focused effectively on rapidly improving teaching and achievement.
- Governors have played a major role in supporting and challenging senior leaders in bringing about significant improvement at the school.
- Students have good awareness of how to keep safe and the school's work on e-safety is very strong.
- Parents and professionals speak positively about the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 33 lessons of which three were jointly seen with the Executive Principal, Principal and another member of the senior leadership team. The team also looked carefully at students' work, the quality of teachers' marking and the extent to which this was helping students to improve. The team also engaged in a joint tour of the school with a focus on spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- Inspectors listened to students read and met with six groups of students to discuss their experience of school with a particular focus on their learning and the extent to which they feel safe.
- Inspectors met with representatives of the governing body, senior leaders and teachers with significant responsibilities.
- Inspectors took account of 20 responses from the online questionnaire. The team also considered 43 responses to questionnaires completed by staff.
- The inspection team looked at a number of documents including school improvement plans, data on students' current progress, minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

John Townsley, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Pankaj Gulab	Additional Inspector
Linda Davies	Additional Inspector
Peter Harrison	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds.
- A high proportion of students are eligible for the pupil premium (the extra money provided by the government to support children in care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and children of parents in the armed forces).
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school receives catch-up premium funding for a small number of students in Years 7 and 8.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- A small number of students in Years 10 and 11 attend alternative provision through a range of local providers. Those providers are Rise Carr College, The Coleridge Centre, Arco and Home & Hospital.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good and outstanding by:
 - ensuring that all lessons are engaging, challenging and motivating for students
 - making sure that students' work, and the levels at which tasks are set, are rigorously assessed and that this information is used to move students' learning on at a quick pace
 - using questioning more effectively to assess students' understanding in lessons and to help them to think more deeply
 - increasing opportunities for students to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects
 - improving the quality of teaching in science.
- Further accelerate the progress of students who are eligible to be supported by the pupil premium and those with disabilities and special educational needs so that it is at least good through:
 - making sure that improved systems are used well by all leaders to monitor the progress of all groups of students and to check the impact of pupil premium funding more effectively
 - making sure that teachers plan work that is at the right level to get the very best out of all students including those who are supported using the pupil premium and those with disabilities or special educational needs.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

- Improve the behaviour of a small group of older students who currently disrupt too many lessons through:
 - leaders closely monitor the effectiveness of the school's work in addressing poor behaviour
 - ensuring that all teachers apply the school's behaviour policy in a consistent manner.

- Improve attendance so that it is in line with the national average.
- Further improve the quality of leadership at subject level, especially in science and modern foreign languages, so that all middle leaders are:
 - focused on bringing about improvement in the key areas of teaching and achievement
 - leading improvement through their own example of excellent teaching.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students join the school with below-average levels of attainment though the current Year 11 group joined the school with attainment in line with the national average. Even though there has been improved progress in 2013 and students' attainment is rising, standards overall are still below average in a significant number of subjects including science and modern foreign languages. Also, the achievement of some groups of students still requires improvement.
- The gap between the performance of students supported through the pupil premium and other students is too wide. Though the school's internal data and some externally validated early examination entries show the gap is narrowing, the attainment of students who are eligible for support through the pupil premium was over a grade behind other students in GCSE examination results in both English and mathematics in 2013. Leaders are now focused on ensuring that funding is being used more effectively to narrow the gap in performance between students who are eligible for pupil premium support and those who are not.
- The proportion of students gaining five A* to C GCSE passes, including English and mathematics, rose significantly in 2013. Achievement in English is good and although achievement in mathematics is improving rapidly it is not yet good. Externally verified grades already secured by the current Year 11 group show that achievement and attainment in these key areas will continue to rise.
- Achievement in history, religious education and geography is good because of significant improvements in the quality of teaching. In a number of subjects such as science and modern foreign languages students' progress requires improvement.
- While the impact of good teaching in English and increasingly strong teaching in mathematics is clear, there is insufficient focus on developing students' skills in reading, writing and mathematics across all subjects. When this is done effectively, for example in a Year 8 geography lesson, excellent modelling of extended writing techniques by the teacher ensured that students made rapid progress.
- Progress is slower for all students with disabilities and special educational needs compared to similar groups nationally. The achievement of students entering the school with lower levels of attainment in English and mathematics is often undermined by poor behaviour in lessons, particularly in the lessons involving older students.
- The most able students achieve well in English and mathematics, but less so across the wider curriculum. Currently, fewer students than would be expected achieve higher grades in science and mathematics.
- The Year 7 catch-up premium funding is used very effectively to improve literacy and numeracy for those falling behind. Funding has impacted with great success on students' reading.
- The small number of students educated off-site achieve well. Students are happy in that provision and are making good progress, including in English and mathematics.
- Current Year 11 students were entered early for examinations in English and mathematics. The results for both show continuing improvement in achievement and attainment. Early entry has been of importance in accelerating progress in English; many students spoke of their increased level of focus in preparing for the examination early.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Too much teaching at the school is not yet good and a small amount is inadequate. Very little teaching is outstanding. Not enough lessons are interesting and motivating for students and this holds back their achievement, especially in science and modern foreign languages.
- Not all teachers make good use of the assessment information that they have on their students to plan challenging work that will help students to make good progress.

- Questioning is not always used effectively to assess what students understand or to deepen their thinking around a subject. On these occasions students are given insufficient opportunities to reflect on each other's ideas or to justify their thinking, and teachers look for and accept simple answers. Teachers fail to check the learning of their students in some lessons; consequently, they are not able to quickly adapt their teaching to address gaps in students' understanding.
- The quality of marking is good and expectations of students' presentation of their work are high. Some marking does not check students' technical accuracy in their writing with sufficient care and, as a result, grammatical and spelling errors undermine the quality of written work.
- The majority of lessons are characterised by positive relationships between the teacher and the students.
- In those lessons where students make excellent progress, teachers display good subject knowledge. For example, in an outstanding religious education lesson, the teacher's clear and enthusiastic explanation helped to give students confidence as they prepared to consider a range of very challenging concepts.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants who demonstrate a warmth and enthusiasm for their role and work effectively alongside classroom teachers. This support is now being combined with more successful planning by teachers to ensure that students with disabilities and special educational needs and those supported by the pupil premium make better progress. However, the work teachers set does not help these groups of students to learn well in every lesson.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. In most lessons students behave appropriately and apply themselves well to the task in hand; however, a small number of older students are disruptive in lessons.
- The school has implemented a range of targeted strategies to improve attendance and leaders are proactive in tackling the attendance of students who are persistently absent from school. Data for this academic year show significant improvement regarding attendance and exclusions for all groups of students. Nevertheless, attendance remains below the national average and while there are signs of improvement, the impact of current initiatives is yet to be fully measured.
- Students' attitudes to learning are not consistently strong and are linked to the quality of teaching they receive and the teacher's consistent application of the school's behaviour policy. Where teaching is less effective a small but significant group of older students disrupt lessons through poor behaviour. This was observed directly by the inspection team and commented upon in some detail in discussion with student groups. Parents also expressed some concerns regarding behaviour.
- In some subjects, students are slow to settle to work and do not come prepared to learn. In one English lesson several students arrived late and some were not equipped with pens.
- Where teaching is more effective students behave well. In a Year 11 English lesson lower ability students remained highly focused during a challenging and motivating lesson on character analysis.
- In general, students wear their uniform with pride though uniform standards are less impressive among some older students.
- Overall students behave well at breaks and lunchtime. They are polite towards each other and towards staff and visitors. A small number of older students do not model the standards of behaviour that the school is seeking to establish for all.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Students speak knowledgeably about risks that they might encounter such as cyber-bullying. The school ensures that students behave safely when using the internet and its work on homophobic bullying is a strength.
- Students make good contributions to the academy. They show initiative in hosting events and raising money for a range of charities. Students are respectful and very caring towards the wider

learning community of students from the primary school and the special school who share common areas of the building.

The leadership and management are good

- Staff are increasingly clear about their role in the school's journey of improvement. The Executive Principal, Principal and senior leadership team provide a strong strategic lead to researching and introducing initiatives in a way which is enabling improvement to become deeply embedded in school practice. The senior leadership team is successfully focused on rapidly improving teaching although they know that there is more to do to monitor the effectiveness of the school's behaviour policy.
- Senior leaders and governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses well and are robust in tackling areas of less effective performance. Most middle leaders check performance well in their areas and use the information to focus development where it is most needed. This approach has yet to be developed in science and modern foreign languages and therefore the improvement in the key areas of teaching and achievement is slower in these subjects. Additionally, not all subject leaders are able to model outstanding teaching.
- Senior leaders have used their observation of inconsistent practice in teaching to bring a more coherent approach to improving classroom practice across the school. As a result of clearly established expectations, a great deal of inadequate teaching has now been eradicated. The school's records show that the proportion of good and outstanding teaching is increasing. Staff are positive about training opportunities for sharing ideas and researching good practice.
- Leaders at the school have not checked with sufficient thoroughness the progress of students supported through the pupil premium and those with disabilities or special educational needs. Better systems are now in place and the school is able to show some improvement to the achievement of these key groups although they know that there is more to do to promote equality of opportunity.
- The curriculum is increasingly well adapted to meet the aspirations and interests of students while developing their independence and raising their achievement. The school is well prepared for the future challenges of performance measures and students enjoy an increasingly broad range of experiences, preparing them well for the next stage of learning for life in the wider world.
- The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural developments well. International links play an important part in preparing students for life in a global society.
- Safeguarding arrangements, including those for students who attend alternative provision, are thorough and meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is effectively challenging the school. Governors keep themselves up to date and are well informed about the school's work through the incisive governing body committees. They set a clear strategic brief and are able to provide good examples of where they have challenged or modified the strategic direction of the school. For example, governors were aware that pupil premium funding was not being used exclusively on students for whom it was supposed to support and have played a key role in significantly improving the way the money is spent.
 - Governors are secure in their understanding of the quality of teaching and performance management and have ensured that teachers' pay awards are dependent on effective performance over time. They have provided strong support for senior leaders in tackling underperformance.

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	138089
Local authority	Darlington
Inspection number	425889

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	717
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	James O'Neill
Principal	Rachel Ireland
Date of previous school inspection	28 September 2011
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