

Netherwood Advanced Learning Centre

Dove Valley Way, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S73 8FE

Inspection dates

8–9 July 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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- The quality of teaching varies and is not good in all subjects. Sometimes, the work which students are given is too hard for some and too easy for others.
- As a result, students' achievement requires improvement. Not enough students make more than the expected rate of progress in English, mathematics and science. Consequently, they do not achieve the GCSE grades of which they are capable.
- By the end of Year 11 in 2013, students eligible for the pupil premium did not do as well as other students.
- For a small number of students, poor attendance is adversely affecting their progress.
- A minority of students do not complete enough work or take sufficient pride in their work. Sometimes this is because they lose interest or because the teachers' expectations of their work and behaviour are not high enough.
- There are a very few students who show a lack of self-control or respect for others.
- The school's plans for improvement are currently too extensive to enable a precise recognition of what has already been achieved or to identify the areas which are now in the greatest need of improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- There are examples of effective teaching. A start has been made in sharing this practice more widely.
- The Principal, senior leaders and the governing body have a highly accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- They provide strong leadership and have acted decisively. This has secured some necessary improvements in teaching and in students' achievement and behaviour.
- The rate of progress of all groups of students is increasing rapidly in Years 7 to 9.
- Students' behaviour around the school is usually calm and polite. Students who spoke with inspectors say that they feel safe in school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 62 lessons. Ten observations were made jointly with members of the school's senior staff.
- The inspectors took account of 49 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and of a survey of parents' views provided by the school. They also considered letters sent in and comments made by a small number of parents and the results of a survey of students' views conducted by the school.
- Inspectors examined information on students' performance for the school year 2012/13 and detailed information provided by the school on current learning and progress. They also looked at work in students' books.
- The inspectors held meetings with the Principal, senior leaders and subject and progress leaders. They met with the Chair of the Governing Body, three representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with four groups of students and spoke informally with other students and members of staff at different times in the school day.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the school's own evaluation of its work, its plans for further improvement, information on the quality of teaching and on teachers' performance and documents relating to safeguarding, attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Liz Godman, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Pamela Hemphill	Additional Inspector
Judith Gooding	Additional Inspector
Peter McKay	Additional Inspector
Marcia Harding	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most secondary schools.
- The large majority of students come from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is broadly average.
- The proportion of students eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority) is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectation for students' attainment and progress.
- A small number of students attend courses away from the school on a part-time basis at Barnsley College and Dearne Valley College.
- The school opened in September 2012 in new purpose-built premises, following the closure of Wombwell and Darfield Foulstone Schools. The Principal took up his post at this time.
- There are plans for the school to become a sponsored academy with Navigate Academies Trust with effect from 1 September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to good or better by:
 - making sure that students complete a good amount of work in all lessons and over time
 - providing students with work which is neither too hard or too easy
 - reducing the variations in the quality of teaching in all subjects
 - ensuring that the examples of effective teaching are shared more widely so that all teachers take effective actions to increase the rate of students' progress.
- Build upon the improvements which have already been made to students' achievement and attendance in order to ensure that:
 - a greater number of students achieve the GCSE grades of which they are capable
 - there is a further increase in the rate of progress of students in Years 10 and 11 in order to make up the ground which has been lost in the past
 - students in Years 10 and 11 eligible for the pupil premium do as well as the other students.
- Make further improvements to students' behaviour in lessons in order to increase their rate of progress by:
 - making sure that all teachers provide interesting activities and have high expectations of students' work and behaviour so that students come to lessons expecting to work hard and to take pride in their work
 - making sure that all staff and students adhere to the school's expectations, which include 'respect' and 'responsibility'.
- Review the effectiveness of the school's plans for improvement, celebrate widely what has been achieved and identify key priorities for further improvement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In all subjects, including English and mathematics, too few students make better than expected progress from their individual starting points. As a result, equality of opportunity is not assured for all students.
- In general, students join Year 7 with standards that are below average in both English and mathematics, although this varies from year to year.
- In 2013, after one year at the school, the proportion of students who left Year 11 with five or more A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, was below average. The school expects a similar picture for students leaving Year 11 in 2014.
- However, extensive information kept by the school shows that from the end of Year 6 to the end of Year 11 in 2014, the proportion of students who will have made expected or better progress in English and mathematics will be closer to the previous year's national average.
- In the 2013 English and mathematics GCSE examinations, the average attainment of students known to be eligible for free school meals was the equivalent of more than one GCSE grade below that of other students in English and one grade below in mathematics. While this gap is expected to persist for the older students in 2014, the progress of students eligible for the pupil premium is accelerating rapidly in Years 7 to 9, as it is for all the younger students.
- Younger students are making good progress in improving their reading skills. The school is achieving this through its good use of the Year 7 catch-up programme, for those students who did not reach the nationally expected standard in reading at the end of Year 6.
- Many students currently in Years 10 and 11, who joined this school when it opened in September 2012, recognise there is considerable ground to make up. For example, a number of students who will be in Year 11 next school year are working hard and are delighted with their achievements. This varies between classes and between subjects and not all students show this sense of urgency. As a result, a significant minority of students are not on track to achieve the A* to C GCSE grades of which they are capable.
- The achievement of the most able students is showing signs of improvement and increasing numbers of them are making better than expected progress. Early entry for the GCSE mathematics examination at the end of Year 10 has enabled some of these students to achieve highly and to go on to study further mathematics in Year 11. Early entry for GCSE examinations is also proving successful for some students in French and German.
- Although some improvements have been made, the attainment and progress of students who have special educational needs still require improvement, particularly in English and science. Younger students who attend the nurture groups show improving reading and writing skills and confidence.
- The majority of students write and read well because of the school's strong emphasis on these skills. With the exception of a small minority, students' work also shows that many are able to write and use mathematics accurately in the different subjects, for example, science and geography. This is helping most students to feel prepared for work or the next stage of education.
- Students who attend Barnsley College and Dearne Valley College on a part-time basis are making good progress because of their interest in the work-related courses they follow.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not yet ensuring students' consistently good progress over time. There is too much variation between the quality of teaching in different classes in the same subject.
- Occasionally students are given work that is either too hard or too easy for them. Consequently, some finish their work quickly and waste time as they wait for others to catch up. Where a

choice is offered, a few students choose the easier tasks, although they are capable of more.

- Where the work is too hard, some students give up or rely on other students to do the task. Sometimes students stop concentrating on their work, because its content does not interest them or they lack confidence that they can complete it successfully.
- A minority of teachers do not expect enough of students' behaviour, achievement or the amount of work they can do. Consequently, in these classes a minority of students complete insufficient work, both in lessons and over time. Some of these students also take little pride in their work.
- Very occasionally, lessons are disturbed by unacceptable behaviour and students are rude to the teacher or to one another. However, usually teachers are insistent on ensuring that students respond to their requests or in sending for help when they need it.
- There are examples of effective teaching and a start has been made in sharing this practice more widely. However, not all teachers are responding swiftly or regularly enough to ensure that their teaching is consistently good and their actions are improving students' progress over time.
- The great majority of teachers make accurate checks on students' work and give them helpful advice. They also make sure that students respond to this advice and improve their work.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is improving. Teachers make sure that students are able to use these skills in the different subjects. The school regularly emphasises the teaching of literacy skills, but not all staff give speaking sufficient emphasis. For example, not all students or teachers use standard spoken English or emphasise the use of technical vocabulary.
- The needs of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium are identified clearly. Evidence kept by the school shows that general improvements to the quality of teaching and specific additional help are proving effective in increasing the rate of progress of these students, particularly in Years 7 to 9.
- The teaching of students with special educational need is improving, in line with improvements in the quality of teaching overall. These students are responding well to the sensitive help provided in small groups and by teaching assistants.
- The teaching of the most-able students is increasingly effective. Progress is most marked where students are expected to work by themselves or with others on challenging tasks, for example, in science experiments.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. This is because a minority of students come to lessons expecting to do very little work and without the correct equipment and this limits their progress. Similarly, some of these students show little pride in their work.
- Occasionally, lessons are disturbed by poor behaviour. In general, this involves older students who are relatively new to the school. Some of these students display a lack of self-control, show a lack of respect for others and use unacceptable language.
- The school has clear written expectations of behaviour, which include 'respect' and 'responsibility'. However, not all students adhere to these and not all staff promote them with sufficient rigour and consistency.
- The majority of students, particularly those who are younger, come to lessons eager to learn and take great pride in their work. In addition, many older students, particularly those who will be in Year 11 next school year, are also keen to undertake challenging work and are mature and sensible, showing the ability to work well by themselves or with others.
- 'Aspire' and 'Believe', established as short-term provision for students at risk of exclusion, are improving the behaviour of these students and reducing the use of exclusion.
- During the inspection, students who will be in Year 7 next year were in school for the last two weeks of the term. This is proving highly effective and is giving an excellent opportunity for the students to learn the school's expectations and to allay any fears about transition before the

holidays. These students told the inspectors how much they are enjoying this experience.

- Students' behaviour around the school, outside and in the dining area is usually calm and polite. Almost all students follow the school's uniform rules.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students who spoke with inspectors say that they feel safe in school. This is confirmed by the school's own survey of parents' and students' views and by the inspection findings, although a substantial minority of the relatively few parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) disagree.
- Students say that bullying and name-calling are rare. They have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying and know where to go for help should they need it. Younger students who spoke with inspectors said thoughtfully that 'when people say things in fun, they do not always realise how hurtful it can be'.
- In the school year 2012/13 attendance was well below average. As a result of the school's effective actions, current attendance information shows a marked improvement, but there remain a small number of students whose poor attendance is adversely affecting their progress.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leaders have not yet ensured that students' achievement and behaviour and the quality of teaching are good. However, the Principal, senior leaders and the governing body provide strong leadership which has improved teaching and students' achievement and behaviour during the two years that the school has been open.
- Leaders and governors have a highly accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have acted decisively to secure improvements to date. Leaders have identified accurately what has been achieved, but that there is still a great deal to do before the school is good. Although there have been delays in the move towards academy status, leaders have not been distracted by this.
- The school's plans for improvement have been developed in response to the weaknesses the school had identified, but as a result now contain too many actions. Consequently, it is difficult to see and celebrate what has been achieved so far or for the school to prioritise the areas currently most in need of further improvement. The plan does not give clear indications as to how success will be identified or the steps involved.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and a detailed knowledge of the progress of all groups of students, particularly those eligible for the pupil premium. They use this information well to provide additional help for students and relevant training for staff.
- There are rigorous procedures for reviewing and developing the work of teachers and a start has been made on sharing the examples of effective teaching more widely, although this has not yet led to consistently good teaching or progress for students.
- Middle leaders have a good understanding of what needs to be done. The subject leaders are starting to improve teaching and progress in their subjects. The progress leaders for each year have an in-depth knowledge of the students in their year groups and are using this well to identify and support those whose progress or attendance are at risk of falling behind.
- The courses provided meet students' needs. Flexible arrangements allow students who receive additional help in English to continue with a modern foreign language or for students to move to a higher set as their skills improve.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development requires improvement, in particular because a small minority of students do not work hard and show a lack of thought for others.
- A majority of parents who responded to the school's own survey and the parents who wrote or spoke to the inspectors are pleased with the school's work and with their children's progress and behaviour. However, the replies of a number of parents who completed the on-line questionnaire indicate that some parents are not yet fully confident about the school's work. The inspection evidence confirms that more needs to be done to secure consistently good outcomes for students.

- The local authority has provided effective support for the school, both directly from its officers and through work with other schools and external consultants.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has taken the right steps to challenge and improve the school in the two years since it opened. Governors have a wide range of expertise in education and more widely; parents are well represented on the governing body. Governors show an accurate and detailed knowledge of the quality of teaching and of students' achievements. They have responded already to an external review of the use of the pupil premium and are ensuring good use of resources. As a result, although a gap persists in the attainment of the older students eligible for the pupil premium and other students, this is closing rapidly for the younger students. Governors have made sure that only good teaching is rewarded. The governing body makes sure that safeguarding arrangements meet the government's requirements.

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	136403
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	430656

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	1,185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Bridge
Principal	Toby Eastaugh
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01226 272000
Fax number	N/A
Email address	netherwood@barnsley.org

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