

Prudhoe Community High School

Moor Road, Prudhoe, Northumberland, NE42 5LJ

Inspection dates 21–22 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Sixth form provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Teaching is not consistently good enough to make sure that students learn well. As a result, too many students are not making as much progress as they should across all subjects in Years 9 to 11.
- Teachers' marking and feedback do not consistently help students understand what they need to do to improve their work.
- The support given to students with special educational needs and disabilities, although improving rapidly, is not yet good enough.
- From their starting points, not all students in the sixth form are making the progress that they should because the quality of teaching is too variable.
- Although students are generally well behaved, there are too many incidents of low-level disruption in lessons, particularly when work does not challenge them sufficiently.
- Students who are temporarily excluded from lessons are not always given work that ensures that they keep up with their peers.
- Although the quality and impact of the senior leadership of the school is improving rapidly, middle leadership is still not consistently good enough to ensure that all students are doing as well as they should.
- The new interim executive board, although quickly gaining in expertise and understanding of the school's performance, has not been in place long enough to have a significant impact.

The school has the following strengths

- Students feel well cared for and are safe. They enjoy coming to school.
- Students enjoy learning and make good progress when lesson content is challenging and engages their interest. They behave well in these lessons.
- Students' attendance and punctuality to lessons are good.
- The school provides well for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons, five of which were observed jointly with senior leaders. They visited a range of lessons across the school, including in the sixth form.
- Meetings were held with a group of parents, the headteacher, members of the leadership team, middle leaders, the local authority, members of the interim executive board (the governing body), including the Chair, and with the corporate health and safety manager for Northumberland local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of students’ workbooks and folders. They also looked at school documentation. This included attendance, exclusion and behaviour information and records relating to safeguarding and child protection. Recently produced documents resulting from visits to the school by external supporters, including the local authority, recent headteacher’s reports to the interim executive board and the school’s improvement planning and quality assurance documents were also analysed. Inspectors also reviewed a range of school policies.
- As well as conversations in lessons and at social times during the inspection, discussions were held with three groups of students about the quality of their educational experience and the standard of behaviour in the school.
- Inspectors took account of 49 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 10 emails sent to the school marked for inspectors’ attention.

Inspection team

Mark Evans, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Alan Parkinson	Additional Inspector
Darren Stewart	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- This school caters for students aged from 13 to 18-years-old and is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- A very small number of students attend the Education Other than at School Service alternative provision run by the local authority.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The majority of students are of White British heritage and few students speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students with a disability or special educational needs receiving extra help at the school action level of support is below the national average. The proportion of students supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for students' attainment and progress.
- An interim executive board replaced the school's governing body in July 2014. The role of the interim executive board is to ensure that all the statutory duties of governance in the school are carried out.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching so that it is always good or better, and thereby raise student achievement, by ensuring that:
 - all teachers have high expectations of students, including the most able and those who are disadvantaged, and use assessment information more effectively to plan and deliver lessons that closely match the needs and prior attainment of all students
 - all students are given clear, regular and helpful feedback on their work so that they know what they need to do to improve
 - instances of low-level disruption to learning are eradicated.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school, including governance, by:
 - tackling inconsistencies in the quality of teaching through rigorous performance management, focused training and strong accountability of all staff
 - ensuring that all middle leaders focus on students' learning and progress when making judgements about the quality of teaching and that teachers receive development points that help them to improve
 - ensuring that interim executive board members receive information about the school's progress from a range of sources and continue to develop the skills required to challenge the school.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Since her appointment, the headteacher has moved decisively and effectively to address the issues identified in the previous inspection report. She has reshaped and strengthened the senior leadership team and it now has greater capacity to make the necessary improvements. She has introduced clear processes for ensuring that the quality of teaching improves. This work is beginning to have an impact.
- Leaders at the school have reshaped and focused the curriculum so that there is a keen focus on equality of opportunity. Regular sessions both in assembly and lesson time help students explore their roles in tackling discrimination. Students report that they are increasingly playing a more active role in the life of the school.
- Senior leaders are supported by a team of middle leaders who are increasingly effective in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in their areas. However, there is too much variability in the impact of this work and middle leaders need to further develop their skills so that teaching is consistently effective in meeting students' needs.
- Pupil premium funding is used with increased effectiveness by leaders at the school. Historically the attendance and attainment of disadvantaged students has been lower than that of their peers. Senior leaders have raised the profile of this group of students and have ensured, through careful planning and training, that staff are increasingly aware of their needs. Consequently, the work they do is more focused and effective and there are now early signs that this work is having a positive impact. The attendance of disadvantaged students is improving rapidly.
- The attendance of students at alternative provision is carefully and effectively monitored by leaders.
- Decisions about pay and promotion are rigorous and made in line with records of teachers' performance and national teachers' standards. Challenge and support are provided where improvements in teaching have not met leaders' expectations. Teachers are regularly observed and receive good-quality feedback on how to improve. Staff training is carefully targeted and has led to improvements in the quality of teaching. Support for newly qualified teachers is of a high quality.
- The school's curriculum offers a broad range of subjects, is now well matched to students' needs and provides well for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is a well-planned and detailed programme of assemblies. In the curriculum and through personal, social and health education days, the school emphasises the importance of British values and gives students insights into, and understanding of, other cultures. The school has long-term links with schools in countries around the world, including South Africa and Tibet. These are helping students to understand their place in the world.
- Parents report that they are satisfied with the work of the school and particularly welcome the recent steps that the school has taken to improve communication between school and home. The responses on Parent View and other communication from parents are overwhelmingly positive in their view of the school and its leadership.
- Historically, support for the school by the local authority has been weak. However, more recently, the local authority has moved promptly to address the site safety issues identified in the previous section 5 report. The local authority is now more engaged with the school and is offering leaders additional support in, for example, the checking of the quality of teaching.
- The school's website has been redesigned and, at the time of the inspection, is not compliant in its description of, for example, the curriculum that it offers students.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Although only appointed in July 2014, the interim executive board understands the strengths and weaknesses of the school. It has a clear understanding of what needs to be done. The board is informed about the performance of the school through detailed and accurate reports from the headteacher and other senior leaders. However, it is too reliant on the headteacher for its information and should develop other ways of gaining information about the school.
 - The board has moved effectively to access up-to-date training about performance data that indicate how well students are progressing so it can challenge school leaders directly to improve teaching and students' progress. Members of the board have worked closely with the headteacher and senior leaders to review and revise the systems for managing staff performance in the school to improve accountability.
 - The interim executive board plays an active part in performance management of senior leaders and monitors performance management of other teachers to ensure that their salary progression is related to students' achievement and the quality of teaching.

- The board has worked hard to engage parents from the community so that their views can help inform their decisions. The board fully meets its responsibilities with regard to safeguarding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. While students are generally quiet and attentive in lessons, they do not always demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and some become easily distracted resulting in low-level disruption to learning. However, when teaching enthuses students and sparks their interest in the subject being taught, they demonstrate high levels of interest and are able to talk enthusiastically about their learning and how they enjoy it.
- Attendance levels at the school are above average. Historically, the absence rates of disadvantaged students were higher than those of their peers in the school. However, very recent work by leaders has had a positive impact on these students and their attendance is improving quickly. The proportion of fixed-term exclusions is below national figures. Students who are temporarily excluded from lessons are not always provided with appropriate work to do. This should be addressed as a matter of urgency.
- Students are generally punctual to lessons. The increased site security installed since the previous inspection means that students need to move promptly between lessons. Students report that they welcome this.
- Students report that inappropriate homophobic language is sometimes heard at the school but that staff usually tackle this promptly and effectively.
- The behaviour of students who attend alternative provision is good.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. The school, effectively supported by the local authority, moved quickly to address the school building and computer system security inadequacies identified by the last section 5 inspection. Students report that they feel safe and are looked after well. They show appropriate care and concern for each other. Generally, movement around the school is orderly between lessons and at breaks.
- Students report that incidents of bullying are few and when they occur they are dealt with promptly. Students are aware of the different types of bullying, including homophobic and cyber bullying. Students know how to keep themselves safe, including online. The school's work around e-safety is now good.
- The attendance of students who attend alternative provision is monitored carefully with regular, daily contact.
- The single central record is well maintained and up to date. Safe recruitment and safeguarding training are regular.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because there is still too much variability between and within subject areas and between different year groups. This variability is reflected in GCSE results at the end of Key Stage 4 in 2014.
- Over time too much teaching at the school has lacked sufficient challenge to meet the needs of all groups of students; this is particularly evident for the most able. Teachers do not consistently offer these students the chances to extend their skills, knowledge and experience. Too often, both in lessons seen and incidents reported by students, some of the most able students, who have finished, have to wait while others catch up. Overall, students do not always know what to do when they have completed their work because they are not always clear about the next steps needed to move their learning forward.
- The less able students are not always given sufficient time to complete tasks and sometimes, in the lessons seen, they reported that they were not clear what they had to do because the teacher moved on too quickly. Teachers do not always check for understanding through appropriate questioning. In the books of these less able students, much work remains unfinished.
- Although a whole-school approach to marking has been introduced, with an emphasis on improving literacy through targeted teacher comment, teachers' marking is still variable. There are examples of good feedback where, for example, students respond actively to teachers' comments and make progress in their learning and literacy. Students report that they welcome this approach because it helps them see what to do next. However, too often, in the workbooks and folders seen, marking is superficial, often just

celebratory, and does not help students to progress. Teachers' comments too often lack detail and students report that they do not always know how to respond. At times, students' misunderstandings or failure to complete tasks are not followed up by staff.

- Presentation in work books is generally good, with few examples of graffiti. However, in too many of the books seen, presentation is poor and staff do not challenge this.
- Students have more opportunities to read both in and out of school. This is beginning to have a positive impact on students' attitudes to reading.
- Students report that homework is set regularly. They say that they enjoy the 'takeaway' approach to homework being trialled in Year 9 where students choose from a range of homework tasks over a half term or longer period.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students join the school with attainment that is slightly above average and most make expected progress from Year 9 to Year 11. Achievement requires improvement because there is variability in the progress students make in different subjects across the school. This variability has meant that the proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE qualifications at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, is below what it should be considering the students' starting points. The small number of students that attend alternative provision make good progress.
- There is variation in the progress that disadvantaged students make in English and in mathematics. School data suggest that, recently, in mathematics the gap between their performance and that of their peers is narrowing. In English, although narrowing, the gap is still too wide. However, overall 2014 provisional GCSE results suggest an improvement over 2013 in English and mathematics for these students compared to other students nationally. In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged students is half a grade behind their peers in English, compared to a full grade in 2013. In mathematics, the improvement is similar, with disadvantaged students half a grade behind their peers in 2014 compared to just over a grade behind in 2013.
- There is variability in the progress of girls and boys at the school. For example, preliminary GCSE results for 2014 suggest that girls are significantly out-performing boys. School analysis has identified that not enough boys, who achieve above the average in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, convert these results into the highest grades at GCSE. Although the school has identified this as an area to improve, actions are recent.
- The most able students do not make the progress that they should because they are not given work that stretches them. Teachers do not always use the detailed information that they have about their most able students to ensure that they develop skills and knowledge quickly.
- Progress in some subjects, including science and design technology, is not consistently strong and varies according to the quality of teaching. Leaders at the school have identified this variability in teaching and its impact on progress and attainment and are addressing it through rigorous quality control, training and support. Again, work to improve matters is at an early stage.
- The progress of students with special educational needs is not improving as quickly as it should. However, leaders at the school have reorganised the support that these students receive and all staff are now more fully aware of their needs and how they can be met through clearer sharing of information and a programme of training. All staff have access to the individual education plans of these students and take account of their needs in their planning.
- There is clear evidence that the school is encouraging students to read more and more widely. Students report that they welcome the increased opportunities they have to read in school and the ways that their reading is monitored. There are times in the school week when everybody reads. There are book groups that meet to discuss their reading and regular lunchtime clubs. There is, for example, a lunchtime graphic-novel club run by sixth formers for younger students. Over the last year, book loans from the school library have increased by approximately 30%.
- The school has rarely used early entry for GCSE students.

The sixth form provision

requires improvement

- Achievement in the sixth form requires improvement because, from their starting points, not all students are making the progress that they should. Results in 2014 overall declined, despite a rise in the percentage of A* grades. Almost all of these A* grades were achieved by boys.

- Despite the recent introduction of more rigorous monitoring by leaders, there is still too much variability in the quality of teaching between subjects. This means that students do not achieve as they should.
- The school supports disadvantaged sixth-form students very effectively and there are no discernible gaps in their achievement compared to their peers.
- The sixth form meets the national 16 to 19 interim minimum standards.
- Current Year 11 students report that they look forward to entering the school's sixth form and the number that stays on is increasing. There are very effective advice and guidance systems on entry to the sixth form and to promote students' understanding of progression and destination opportunities. The school's 'Thirty day make-over' runs over the summer and prepares students for life in the sixth form and beyond.
- Sixth-form students are positive about the careers advice and guidance they receive. They report that they receive regular and detailed tutorial support and there is an effective programme of activities, including a transition week, which helps them choose and apply for their next steps in education, training or employment. Most students go on to study at university. There are close links between the school and local universities such as Durham and Sunderland. Sixth-form students visit and can attend summer school to gain insights into university life.
- Sixth formers provide excellent role models for younger students. They demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. Their attendance is above average, they get on well together and contribute greatly to supporting the school's activities in a number of ways. Examples include: listening to students read; running charity and sports events; supporting the teaching of younger students in subjects such as modern foreign languages and textiles; running lunchtime clubs for younger students; and mentoring younger students.
- Students feel secure and understand how to keep themselves safe.
- Students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural understanding is good. They are well supported and encouraged to explore key topics related to current affairs and to take part in community projects and charitable fundraising.
- Leaders and members of the interim executive board have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve the quality of work in the sixth form. They have introduced more precise tracking systems and are undertaking a review of the range of subjects on offer.

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	122351
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	450637

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	13–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	780
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	217
Appropriate authority	The interim executive board
Chair	Jane Bowie
Headteacher	Deborah Reeman
Date of previous school inspection	22 October 2013
Telephone number	01661 832486
Fax number	01661 832859
Email address	admin@prudhoe.northumberland.sch.uk

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