

# Norham High School

Alnwick Avenue, North Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE29 7BU

**Inspection dates** 12–13 November 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Since the previous inspection, standards of attainment have fallen and are well below average. As a result of weak teaching over time, students make inadequate achievement, particularly in GCSE mathematics.
- The gap between the achievement of disadvantaged students and their peers is not closing quickly enough in mathematics.
- Too often students' work is insufficiently challenging. The quality of teachers' questioning is variable and their expectations are frequently too low.
- Students are not consistently given good enough feedback by their teachers to help them improve their work. In some subjects students are not equipped with the skills needed to succeed in tests and examinations.
- Work in students' books is too often of poor quality, limited quantity and poorly presented. Students do not have consistently good attitudes to learning.
- Students have insufficient opportunities to develop and use their numeracy skills in all subjects. Many students have wide gaps in their knowledge in mathematics, which are only recently beginning to be identified and filled systematically.
- The leadership's procedures for checking the impact of teaching on students' progress have not been good enough. Some middle leaders and managers have not monitored the work of their areas of responsibility closely enough to bring about improvement.

### The school has the following strengths

- Through robust management of staff, the headteacher, well supported by governors, is tackling weaknesses in teaching successfully.
- Achievement in English is improving strongly.
- Governance has recently improved. Governors are well informed and have a clear strategic view of the school's future.
- Students behave sensibly around the college. They are punctual and attend regularly. Students are kept safe at school.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Students show tolerance and respect for each other and for those from other cultures within society.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons being taught to full classes and smaller groups of students of all ages and in a range of subjects, including mathematics and English. Some lessons and part-lessons were observed jointly by inspectors with senior staff. The headteacher and lead inspector made several shorter visits to classrooms. Inspectors listened to students read.
- Discussions were held with students, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at students’ books, progress data, safeguarding information and other documentation.
- Fifteen responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were considered, as well as those from the school’s own parental surveys and from school staff.

## Inspection team

Ann Ashdown, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Graeme Clarke

Additional Inspector

Barbara Waugh

Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.*

### Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and students known to be eligible for free school meals, is well above that found nationally.
- Most students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled students and those students who have special educational needs is above average.
- The school has specially resourced provision for 25 disabled students and those with special educational needs who have language and communication difficulties. At present eight students attend the provision full time, while other students attend part time according to their needs.
- Some students receive all or part of their education with alternative providers. These are Moorbridge and PALS.
- Numbers vary, but usually no more than five students attend a nearby centre, Amble Close, which is run and staffed by the school.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- In September 2014, the senior leadership team was restructured and new leaders of English, mathematics and science took up their posts.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so it is at least good, by:
  - giving students high quality feedback on how to improve their work and ensuring they act on teachers' advice
  - giving students work which is challenging and is neither too easy nor too difficult for them
  - ensuring teachers have high expectations of what students can achieve
  - sharing best practice in teachers' questioning skills, so that all teachers question effectively in order to encourage students to develop their oral responses
  - equipping students with the skills needed to achieve success in tests and examinations.
- Raise attainment and accelerate students' progress, particularly in mathematics, by:
  - giving students more opportunities to use their numeracy skills across the curriculum
  - ensuring pupil premium funding is used effectively to raise the attainment of disadvantaged students in mathematics and narrowing the achievement gap between them, their classmates and non-disadvantaged students nationally
  - raising teachers' expectations of the quality, quantity and standard of presentation of work in students' books
  - ensuring any gaps in students' knowledge are identified and filled quickly.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - developing the roles of middle leaders in monitoring the work of their areas of responsibility accurately
  - improving procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching, by checking more carefully the quality of students' work over time.

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 management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- Until recently, leaders and managers have not acted quickly enough to stop the fall in standards and the slow down in students' progress over time. The leadership of teaching, and procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and its impact on students' progress over time, has not been sharp enough.
- Leaders and managers are now demonstrating the capacity to bring about improvement. The headteacher has ensured that weaknesses in teaching are being tackled successfully through robust performance management of staff. Recently appointed leaders of English, mathematics and science are already bringing about improvements in the progress of students currently in their subject areas.
- The school's self-evaluation has been broadly accurate in most areas, but judgements about the quality of teaching have been over generous. However, priorities for improvement have now been identified correctly and the school is demonstrating the ability to achieve its goals.
- Some middle managers have not monitored the work of their areas of responsibility consistently and effectively to prevent weak teaching inhibiting students' achievement.
- Pupil premium funding has not been used successfully. Although the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged students and that of other students in English has closed, it remains too wide in mathematics and these students are underachieving.
- Leaders and managers have created a climate in school where good conduct can flourish. Attendance has risen and students' conduct around the school is good. Students show respect for each other, for staff and visitors and are tolerant towards and understanding of those who come from cultures different from their own. However, not all students have an equal opportunity to succeed. This is demonstrated by the gap in achievement between disadvantaged students and other students and the overall inadequate achievement of students.
- Staff recognise the need to accelerate students' progress and are keen to improve their skills. Teachers have access to suitable training, but it is too early to judge the full impact of this in improving results for students.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Staff are fully trained and have a good awareness of, for example, risk assessment and child protection procedures.
- The curriculum does not enable students to develop basic skills effectively, particularly in numeracy. Students have increasingly good opportunities to develop their literacy skills across all areas of the curriculum, but this is not the case in numeracy. Students are given a broad and balanced choice of courses and the curriculum makes an effective contribution to developing their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Thought-provoking assemblies and lessons in religious education and personal, social and health education ensure students are suitably prepared for life in modern Britain. Careers education is sound and enables students to make informed choices about the next steps in their lives. Students speak enthusiastically about a wide range of enrichment activities, such as sports events, dramatic productions and trips and visits they have enjoyed.
- The school has received valuable help from the local authority through the School Improvement Partner and from English and mathematics specialists, who are working within these subject departments.
- Staff monitor the progress, attendance and behaviour of students attending off-site learning provision effectively.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance has recently improved. New governors have been appointed and their expertise has contributed greatly to ensuring performance management arrangements have strengthened and are now more robust. Governors are monitoring the school's work more closely and have a clearer understanding of how weaknesses in teaching are being tackled. They are kept well informed by the headteacher and deputy headteacher about the school's performance and about staffing issues. Minutes of governing body meetings show that governors ask challenging questions about, for example, recent examination results and the restructuring of the senior leadership team. Finances are managed effectively. Governors have a clear understanding of how pupil premium funding is being spent, but recognise that the achievement of disadvantaged students is inadequate. Governors are fully involved in determining the strategic direction in which the school is going.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils** requires improvement**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. Students do not have consistently good attitudes to learning and this inhibits their progress. Work in some students' books, especially when teachers' expectations are too low, is sometimes brief or unfinished and poorly presented.
- Students' behaviour in corridors, in the school yard and in the dining area is calm, orderly and sensible. School routines are well established and, for example, when arriving at assemblies, students behave in a quiet and respectful way.
- The school has worked very successfully to improve attendance and to sustain these improvements. Consequently, attendance is in line with the national average and the number of persistent absentees has reduced. Exclusions are below average.
- Records show that incidents of bullying and challenging behaviour are reducing and are dealt with appropriately.
- Older students enjoy acting as members of the school council, which has been instrumental in developing, for example, the school's anti-bullying policy. They also act as prefects and take responsibility for helping younger students settle into the school.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students say they feel safe in school and several spoke warmly of staff they felt they could turn to if they needed support with personal difficulties. Students feel they have good personal support from staff. Students feel they are cared for well.
- The school's monitoring also shows that students in alternative provision are kept safe and behave appropriately.
- The school's own parental surveys show that parents feel that the school keeps their children safe. Routines and procedures for safeguarding are well established and are understood by students and staff. For example, visitors to the school are carefully checked and students are able to identify them clearly by the badges they wear.
- Students have a sound understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example when using mobile 'phones and the internet and of the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse. They are knowledgeable about the different types of bullying that do exist but feel that, if they do occur, any instances of bullying in school are dealt with effectively.

**The quality of teaching** is inadequate

- Work in students' books shows that all groups of students, including the most able, those that are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs, are underachieving and not making the progress over time of which they are capable. There are large gaps in students' knowledge, particularly in mathematics, and these gaps have not been identified and filled quickly enough.
- Too often, teachers' expectations of what students can achieve are not high enough. Students are given work which does not challenge them appropriately to achieve their best; it is either too easy or too difficult for them. In mathematics, students' books show that they often repeatedly solve the same type of problem correctly and are not moved on to more challenging work quickly enough.
- While examples of good marking were seen, particularly in English, the quality of marking is inconsistent both within and between subjects. Marking does not always give students clear and precise pointers on how to improve their work and take the next steps in their learning. Where advice is given, students often do not act upon it to improve their work.
- The school recognises that students have underachieved, because they were inadequately provided with the skills needed to achieve success in tests and examinations. Work has begun to address this weakness. In science, students now have a better understanding of how to answer questions which ask them, for example, to 'describe', 'explain' or 'evaluate'.
- The quality of teachers' questioning is very variable and does not always help students to develop their answers and demonstrate their understanding. Students made better progress when teachers' probing and perceptive questioning elicited more detailed answers. However, this good practice is not yet shared sufficiently across the school.
- Teaching is improving. There are increasingly frequent examples across the school of students making good progress as a result of the good teaching they receive, particularly in English. Some teachers use varied resources to good effect, present students with challenging work and engage their interest through

knowledgeable and lively teaching. Students' social, moral and cultural awareness is often well developed, for example, in geography, through the study of topics such as migration.

- For some students, small-group and one-to-one teaching of reading is helping to accelerate their progress. These students, who enjoy going to the 'reading room', benefit from the constructive and timely individual support and encouragement they receive from teachers and teaching assistants.

### The achievement of pupils

### is inadequate

- Work in students' books and their results in recent examinations both show that students underachieve.
- Students enter the school with attainment which is below, and sometimes significantly below, average. In the most recent GCSE examinations, the percentage of students gaining five GCSE passes at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, was 38%. This is below the government's minimum expectations for attainment and a drop of 9% from the previous year.
- The 2014 GCSE results show that in mathematics the percentage of students making expected progress was 36%, which is slightly more than half that found nationally, and is inadequate. Tracking shows that current students are beginning to make better progress in mathematics, but there are large gaps in their knowledge to be filled. They do not have sufficient opportunities to develop and use their mathematical skills in all the subjects they study.
- In 2014, Year 11 students' progress in English from their starting points was faster than that in mathematics and they reached average standards. However, the proportion of students making better than expected progress remains below average. The school's focus on improving students' literacy skills and the quality of teaching in English has resulted in students gaining more confidence in writing and having more pleasure in reading.
- In English, previous gaps in the attainment of disadvantaged students and non-disadvantaged students in the school closed in 2014 and attainment was close to that of non-disadvantaged students nationally. In mathematics, however, the gap in attainment remained too wide and students were half a grade behind non-disadvantaged students in the school and well over a grade behind non-disadvantaged students nationally. Their progress in mathematics was inadequate.
- The most able students underachieve. In 2014, very few students were awarded the higher A\* and A grades in GCSE examinations. The most able students are often not given sufficiently challenging work to enable them to make the best progress of which they are capable. There is often insufficient work in their books and teachers' questioning does not always encourage them to think deeply and develop their answers.
- Some students are entered early for examinations in English. School data show that this does not affect their chances of success.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs underachieved in recent GCSE examinations. Progress was slowest in mathematics, where activities are not always matched closely enough to their specific needs.
- Current students who are supported by the additional resource provision often make better progress than their peers, including other disabled students and those who have special educational needs, because they are well supported by specialist staff, including specialist teaching assistants. These students are given timely and sensitive individual help when this is needed to enable them to make expected progress. In both science and geography, they were seen making good progress and completing the same activities as their classmates successfully.
- Appropriate support is made available for students at risk of falling even further behind in their learning. The Year 7 catch-up funding is used appropriately to provide new resources, small-group and one-to-one tuition in reading and mathematics. For example, the exciting range of books provided in the reading room and the specialist help provided are helping students to read fluently from a range of texts.
- The school's tracking information shows that the small number of students educated in alternative provision make expected progress. Those students who attend the school's own centre at Amble Close, some of whom may be at risk of exclusion, are supported well by school staff to enable them to continue and succeed in mainstream education.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	108628
<b>Local authority</b>	North Tyneside
<b>Inspection number</b>	442212

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	378
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Philip Newsham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tracy Hush
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 November 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 200 5062
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