

Teesdale School

Prospect Place, Barnard Castle, County Durham, DL12 8HH

Inspection dates 27–28 January 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Over time, progress has not been good and remains weak in some subjects especially in mathematics.
- Students of average ability are not making enough progress in mathematics in Years 10 and 11 to ensure that they achieve high enough grades. Expectations of what students can achieve are not high enough especially in Years 7 to 9 and progress in mathematics is too slow.
- The teaching of mathematics is not fully effective because teachers do not use information about what students already know and can do to ensure tasks match their ability. There are not enough opportunities for students to develop mathematical knowledge and understanding and apply their skills.
- Teaching in other subjects requires improvement because tasks at times lack challenge and do not match students' ability.
- Marking and feedback in students' books does not always help them to improve their skills.
- The actions leaders have taken to ensure consistent improvement over time in students' progress in mathematics have not been effective enough.
- Leaders have not held some teachers to account rigorously enough over slow progress in mathematics over time.

The school has the following strengths

- Students' progress and attainment in English are good.
- Leaders and governors are bringing about improvements to the overall quality of teaching especially in English, science and modern foreign languages. They have also ensured improvements in the achievement of disadvantaged students.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Students have positive attitudes to learning and treat others with respect. They know how to keep themselves safe.
- The sixth form is good. It provides students with a good quality education and enables them to do well in AS, A-level and vocational courses. It prepares them well for their next stages in education, training and employment.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 23 lessons or parts of lessons. Two observations were undertaken jointly with members of the senior staff group.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documentation, including that relating to students' attainment, progress and behaviour. They considered minutes of governing body meetings, school publications, safeguarding documentation and other key policies and procedures. They also looked at the school's view of how well it is doing.
- Discussions were held with the vice-chair of the governing body and other governors, senior and middle leaders and teachers.
- Meetings were held with three groups of students and inspectors spoke with other students in lessons and around the academy at break and during lunchtimes.
- Inspectors examined the work in students' books and listened to a group of students in Years 7 and 8 read.
- The 79 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were considered, as well as the 185 responses from parents in surveys carried out by the academy in 2014 and the 128 responses from parents in 2013. Inspectors also looked at the 49 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Anne Smedley, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Graeme Clarke | Additional Inspector |
| James Hall | Additional Inspector |
| Neil Mackenzie | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is smaller than the average sized secondary school and has a sixth form.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic heritages is small, as is the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students, those supported by the pupil premium, is below average. The pupil premium funding supports those known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- The academy makes use of the YMCA and Bishop Auckland College to provide part-time education for a small number of students.
- Teesdale School converted to become an academy in August 2011. When its predecessor school, Teesdale School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The senior leadership of the school is made up of three co-principals and two vice-principals. The co-principals each become the named co-principal for the school on a termly basis.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve progress, particularly in mathematics by:
 - raising expectations of what students can achieve
 - planning learning by more effectively using information on what students can already do, in order to build on their learning
 - ensuring that students are given more opportunities to develop better mathematical knowledge and understanding which enables them to apply their mathematical skills more widely.
- Improve the quality of teaching across all subjects further by:
 - ensuring that teaching is sufficiently challenging and matches more closely students' abilities, especially in Years 7 to 9, so that they make good progress
 - sharing the most effective practice in the school to ensure that all marking and feedback helps students to improve more consistently.
- Improve leadership and management by using current systems for holding some teachers to account with more rigour, so that more timely and effective action is taken where the progress of students needs to improve, particularly in mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management are not good because currently and over time progress in mathematics is not good, and measures have not been effective enough to secure consistent improvement. However, leaders are currently demonstrating the capacity to secure improvement in the school especially ensuring students move on successfully to further training or employment and in raising outcomes for disadvantaged students.
- Self-evaluation is not fully accurate especially, in relation to mathematics. Improvement planning needs to be more robust in relation to securing better progress in mathematics.
- Teaching is improving as a result of effective performance management, professional development matched to individual needs and accurate monitoring. Middle leaders are being developed well in their role as leaders of teaching and learning. However, more needs to be done to ensure that all planning for learning is more closely matched to students' abilities, so that they make good progress, especially in Years 7 to 9.
- Literacy provision is well managed by middle leaders so students make at least good progress. More needs to be done to develop numeracy so that students can apply mathematical skills more widely.
- Students are provided with a curriculum that appropriately encourages their wider interests. It ensures that they find out about the world around them; for example, the school has a partnership with a girls' high school in Abbottabad in Pakistan, and students benefited from a recent visit from a teacher from there, as they learned about life, education and the culture of that region. During the inspection, teachers from Chile were helping students not only to improve their Spanish language, but also to learn about the culture and traditions of their country. A wide range of cultural, artistic and sporting opportunities extend students' experience and they learn effectively about the importance of tolerance and democracy and other elements which prepare them well for life in modern Britain. For example, students participate in a democratic election to choose their head boy and girl. However, the mathematics curriculum does not promote achievement effectively enough.
- School leaders ensure that discrimination in any form is not tolerated. They strongly promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and its impact can be seen in the good behaviour, positive relationships and respect that students show towards each other and to adults. This creates a strong sense of community within the academy. For example, during the inspection almost 600 students walked, reflecting in silence for 500 metres, carrying the photograph and story of a holocaust victim to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day. The event reminded students of the importance of tolerance and diversity, and was organised by a sixth form student, a regional ambassador for the Holocaust Education Trust. The school rejects discrimination in all its forms and places emphasis on fostering good relations.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to target improvement in the progress of disadvantaged students. The impact is clear in English where these students attain better than other students nationally. This is less evident in mathematics where progress is slower than that of other students nationally. However, the gap in their attainment has closed rapidly and is now in line with other students in school and nationally.
- Careers information, advice and guidance are strong and almost all students progress successfully into further and higher education, training or employment.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and are strong. Systems for monitoring attendance and behaviour are robust: attendance continues to be above average and is improving, and exclusions are below average. The attendance, achievement and behaviour of the small number of students attending part-time alternative provision are monitored rigorously.
- The academy regularly seeks the views of parents and others to identify ways to strengthen and improve its effectiveness. In surveys carried out by the school and in Parent View, most parents confirm that the academy responds well to their suggestions and most would recommend the academy to others. It has also continued to work with the local authority since it converted to academy status, to improve aspects of teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has an accurate view of the academy's performance; it is well aware of the weaknesses in achievement in mathematics and has taken action to secure future improvement. The governing body has reviewed its roles and responsibilities recently, and has strengthened its composition by appointing governors with considerable expertise to move the school forward. Governors are regularly given information on students' progress and other aspects of the academy's work and they challenge leaders and expect improvement. They have high, but realistic, ambitions for the academy, and are committed to providing the best quality provision for students by building on the

improvements already secured in the quality of teaching. They ensure that teachers, including senior leaders, are held to account through effective performance management, and they are fully involved in the salary progression of teaching staff. Governors have a firm grasp of the impact of pupil premium funding and have secured good attainment for disadvantaged students. They ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met and that all are safe on the premises.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Most behave well in lessons. They arrive well prepared and on time, bring the right equipment and follow instructions from teachers. They settle quickly and work hard, independently and when asked to work with others.
- Most students show pride in their work, as seen in the neat presentation in their books and in the quantity and range of work they produce. When given the opportunity, they are keen to improve their work, and respect the advice given to them by their teachers.
- Students behave well around the academy. They are mostly considerate, sensible and welcoming, because the academy expects this, and because they are well prepared through the effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural programme. Positive relationships are promoted through the tutorial system which ensures that students of all ages from Year 7 to 11 mix and learn together well to build a secure atmosphere and sense of community within the academy.
- The care provided for students is strong. Parents report high levels of satisfaction with the support given to their children so that they can succeed and enjoy their time at the academy.
- The academy has effective systems in place to manage behaviour. As a result, exclusions have reduced and are below average.
- The behaviour of the few students in part-time alternative provision is good.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students say they feel safe, and in surveys parents also say their children feel safe.
- They are fully aware of different types of bullying, the risks associated with e-safety, and how to make the right decisions about their health. This is because the academy teaches students effectively so that they know how to keep themselves safe in all circumstances.
- Bullying is rare and is dealt with quickly and effectively by the academy.
- Attendance is above average and is improving.
- Effective arrangements are in place to ensure that the few students in part-time alternative provision are safe.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- While there are strengths in some subjects, especially English and modern foreign languages overall teaching requires improvement because it does not consistently challenge all students to ensure they always make good progress.
- The teaching of mathematics is not good because for too many students, progress over time is not good enough. There are low expectations of what students can achieve, especially in Years 7 to 9 and for average ability students in Years 10 and 11; planning for learning does not effectively use information about what students already know or can do to ensure that they make good progress. There are not enough opportunities for students to develop mathematical knowledge and understanding of new concepts and methods, or to think and reason mathematically for themselves. This means that too many students struggle to apply their mathematical skills.
- In other subjects, some students repeat similar work with no increase in challenge, or activities are too advanced for them, because planning does not use information well enough to create activities that move learning on and support, stretch and challenge students to make better progress, especially in Years 7 to 9.
- Marking and feedback does not always foster progress because it is inconsistent. Feedback is not always specific enough to help students to improve, and students are not always given the time to make improvements to their work. Where progress is strong, praise is given so students know precisely what

they have done well, and advice on how to improve is specific. Students are expected to respond to this advice, time is given for them to do so, and their work is checked.

- Teaching has improved in several subjects. English is taught well based on a more informed understanding of students' ability and activities engage students so that learning is more effective. Progress in science has improved linked to stronger teaching.
- Teachers create a positive atmosphere for learning based on good relationships and respect and as a result students try hard to do their best.
- Questioning draws students into discussions and helps inform teachers about students' understanding. It also deepens understanding and fosters improving oracy skills.
- Although not consistently so, expectations can be high. The teaching of modern foreign languages is improving. For example, in French, Year 8 students were spoken to and expected to speak in French from the moment they arrived, and they participated in a wide range of activities to encourage them to learn about the topic of 'jobs'. They enjoyed participating in a quiz to learn vocabulary, investigated different jobs through information in a range of texts while listening to a French song which supplied a time limit, then used that information to work out how to tell someone else what they are going to do for a job. These students thrived because they enjoyed the variety of activities and resources, they were challenged well to learn and make progress, they practised their French with confidence, and their progress was monitored expertly, with timely prompts and questioning to help them to learn. Here and in some other instances, teachers insist that students think deeply about their responses, both orally and in writing, and that they give detailed explanations.
- Students with special educational needs learn well because support is tailored effectively to help them.
- Students who participate in part-time alternative provision make good progress because they are taught well, and because the academy regularly tracks their progress, the quality of teaching and its impact on their learning.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Although overall achievement requires improvement there is an improving picture in some subjects. In English and science progress is good and in modern foreign languages where progress is accelerating rapidly. However, the progress across years and in subjects, especially mathematics, is not yet good.
- Currently some students are making better progress in mathematics, but overall, their achievement in this subject requires improvement. While the most able and the least able now progress well in Years 10 and 11, the majority of those of average ability do not. Also, the progress of students in mathematics in Years 7 to 9 is slower than it is in Years 10 and 11.
- From each different starting point, the proportions of disadvantaged students making and exceeding expected progress in mathematics are below others nationally. In English, these proportions are above average. Gaps in attainment have narrowed in English and there is now no gap between this group and others in school. Compared with other students nationally these students achieve half a grade higher than others. In mathematics, gaps have also closed and now there is no difference between their attainment compared with students in school and nationally.
- In GCSE mathematics in 2014, disadvantaged students attained the same as other students nationally and in school. In English, they attained almost half a grade higher than other students nationally, and the same as other students in the school, whose attainment was higher than others nationally.
- The proportion of students attaining an A* to C grade in English is significantly above average, and the proportions making good or better progress in English from their starting points are well above average. While the proportion attaining an A*C grade in mathematics is above average, the proportions making good or better progress in mathematics from their starting points are well below average. This means that the grades students attain in mathematics are not as high as one would expect given their starting points.
- Almost all of the most able students attain five or more good GCSE grades, including English and mathematics. Over time, in English progress is similar to other students nationally but in mathematics has lagged behind others. These students make good progress in English in response to stronger teaching. However, these students are not always challenged enough, especially in mathematics, to ensure they make consistently good progress.
- Over time, the achievement of disabled students and those with special educational needs is similar to that of other students.
- Students whose attainment is lower than that of their peers when they enter the school make good progress in English and mathematics. They have been supported well by the school with their reading, and they now read well and often. Levels of literacy are good and students are given opportunities to

practise and improve these skills in all subjects. However, their numeracy skills require improvement, as students are not always able to apply mathematical skills when they need to.

- No students were entered early for GCSE in 2014 in English. A few students were entered early for mathematics and attained high results. Currently, students are not entered early for examinations.
- The few students who attend part-time alternative provision at Bishop Auckland College and the YMCA achieve well.

The sixth form provision

is good

- Attainment on entry to the sixth form is below average because a significant minority of the most able students leave the academy at the end of Year 11 to attend sixth form provision elsewhere. However, students are taught well over a wide range of courses and they make good progress. Retention rates are good and a strong feature of the sixth form is the very large proportion of students who see their courses through to completion at the end of Year 13.
- Students perform equally successfully on both academic and vocational courses. At A level, progress is above average in a wide range of courses including biology, chemistry, physics, geology, mathematics, further mathematics, computing, business studies, history, English language, English literature, sport and product design. At AS level, progress is above average in biology, chemistry, geology, computing, business studies, geography, sociology, English literature, sport, general studies and product design. In vocational courses, progress is good in BTEC diploma and certificate courses.
- Current students are making good progress in improving their GCSE grades in English and mathematics to at least a C grade because teaching has improved.
- Attendance and behaviour in the sixth form are good. Students say they feel safe and they know how to keep themselves safe because the academy teaches them how to do so through effective pastoral provision. Sixth form students are good role models for younger students.
- The leadership of the sixth form is good. Students' progress is monitored well and if students start to underperform appropriate action is quickly taken, including personalised support, to get them back on track.
- Students speak very highly of the personalised information, advice and guidance they receive and this, together with good results, ensures that almost all move on to appropriate next steps, including university, further education and training, apprenticeships and employment.
- Their personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well fostered through a wide range of leadership and support roles.
- The curriculum offers a wide choice of subjects as well as an exciting range of opportunities such as internships in medicine, veterinary medicine, journalism, law and engineering. Students can also participate in activities such as sports, foreign travel, foreign exchanges, talent shows, and the regional engineering challenge.

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

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| Unique reference number | 137153 |
| Local authority | Durham |
| Inspection number | 449691 |

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

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| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 11–19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 632 |
| Of which, number on roll in sixth form | 150 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Stuart Metcalfe |
| Headteacher | Clare Ellis |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected |
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