

George Pindar School

Moor Lane, Eastfield, Scarborough, YO11 3LW

Inspection dates 9–10 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- School leaders have not ensured that the quality of teaching and students' rates of progress have improved fast enough since the previous inspection.
- Recently introduced changes are beginning to have a positive impact but have not been in place long enough to show they can secure sustainable improvement in key aspects of the school's work.
- Frequent changes of teaching staff have led to inconsistencies in students' progress in a range of subjects.
- Senior and middle leaders do not effectively use information they gather about the impact of teaching to ensure students make rapid progress.
- Not enough teaching is good. Consequently, in all year groups, students are not making consistently good gains in their learning and many have the potential to secure higher grades in a range of subjects.
- Teachers' assessments of students' work are not always accurate. This means teachers do not always plan work that is matched precisely enough to what students need to do to make good progress.
- Many staff are successfully encouraging students' positive attitudes to learning, although this behaviour is not evident in all classrooms.
- Students' progress is often held back by weaknesses in literacy, particularly their writing and the way they speak.

The school has the following strengths

- Governors know the school well. Changes in governance arrangements are offering leaders' strong challenge and support.
- Staff provide good care and support to students. They work effectively with other services to keep vulnerable students safe.
- Some Year 7 students, who are weak at reading, make good progress and improve their reading skills.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 34 lessons; these included joint visits with senior leaders and a joint learning walk with the headteacher. The lessons involved Year 7 to Year 10 students and subjects in all faculties. Inspectors spoke with staff and students, the Chair of the Governing Body, two governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the 70 responses on Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire for parents, and the 25 responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff.
- The inspection team observed the school’s work and examined a range of documentation including the school’s own records of students’ learning and progress, the checks made on the quality of teaching and performance of staff, and those relating to behaviour, attendance, child protection and safeguarding.
- Inspectors scrutinised students’ books in lessons and jointly with middle leaders. Assessments of the students’ work were reviewed and the checks undertaken to review the accuracy of teachers’ assessments.

Inspection team

Susan Hayter, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Gina White

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Derek Barnes

Additional Inspector

Patrick Hargreaves

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most secondary schools. The number of students attending the school has reduced since the previous inspection.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds, and a very small number of students are from a range of other ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported by pupil premium funding (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- A small number of students in Key Stage 4 attend courses at three places away from the school: Scarborough Pupil Referral Service, Futureworks and Yorkshire Coast College.
- The school is being supported by a National Leader in Education and by Wakefield City Academy Trust.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for students' attainment and progress.
- There has been a significant change in staffing, including at senior and middle leadership levels, over the last two years.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency and quality of teaching in order to increase students' rate of progress by ensuring:
 - teachers' assessment of students' work is accurate and used effectively to plan the next steps for learning
 - teachers make absolutely clear to students what they need to do to improve their knowledge and understanding, in each subject they are studying
 - weaknesses in writing and the way students explain their thoughts and ideas are addressed in all lessons.
- Improve leadership and management at all levels by increasing the pace and effectiveness of school improvement work and ensuring:
 - staffing changes are managed well and the impact on students' learning is carefully checked so students' learning flourishes and attainment rises
 - checking and evaluation of all aspects of the school's work are used effectively to further improve students' progress and attainment in all subjects
 - the excellent practice taking place in some classes is shared and used effectively by senior and middle leaders to improve the quality and consistency of teaching.
- Improve the behaviour of the students by ensuring:
 - all staff consistently implement the school's policies to improve students' attitudes to learning
 - teachers plan lessons that entice and engage students.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher and senior leaders did not respond with enough speed and determination to weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report in 2013. They have not managed well enough staff absence or the changes they have introduced to ensure students in all year groups make good progress.
- Following additional monitoring from Her Majesty's Inspector, and a local authority review in October 2014, senior leaders have focused more sharply on the school's improvement. The results of this essential work are beginning to have a positive impact, particularly on the progress of students in Year 11.
- Leaders', including middle leaders', checking of all aspects of teaching and students' achievement is not consistently effective. Leaders do not always consider the impact of the teachers' work on students' progress so do not give specific guidance to teachers on how to improve.
- Recently appointed leaders for English and mathematics are beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching, resulting in improved progress for students mainly in Year 11.
- A quarter of the parents who responded to Parent View in the last year raised concerns about the leadership and management of the school, a concern that was also reflected by some staff in the staff survey. During the inspection, a number of staff and students who spoke directly with inspectors shared a positive view of recent changes.
- The school is using the additional funding it receives to provide extra support to disadvantaged students in a wide range of activities. However, leaders do not fully understand the impact of the range of activities on the progress of disadvantaged students. Arrangements are in place for an external review of the use of the funding by the end of the summer term.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and learning about British values, is a strength across many subjects. For example, in a religious education lesson students discussed the role of humans in the universe; in English, students reflected on the values of democracy and tolerance when discussing what would happen in society if there were no laws.
- Leaders ensure that curriculum choice meets the differing needs of individual students equally well. They also intervene appropriately on the rare occasions when some students make comments that undermine the confidence of others. Senior leaders and staff do not tolerate discriminatory comments.
- Arrangements to support students' moving from primary to secondary school, especially for those whose reading skills are not well developed, are effective. Similar weaknesses in the use of mathematics and the students' skills in expressing their thoughts and ideas, either verbally or in their writing are not addressed as effectively.
- Advice and guidance given to students about what they need to do to achieve their own ambitions are strong features of the school. Students speak highly of this aspect of the school's work. Students look forward to work experience opportunities which they know will help them to make choices for their futures. School leaders ensure students do not lack aspiration when choosing subjects for Key Stage 4.
- Leaders ensure that the small number of students enrolled on alternative, off-site provision are safe, attend well and are making good progress.
- Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and are effective. Staff and governors are trained in a range of safeguarding issues relevant to the school's community. This includes the dangers of extremism and radicalisation, and child sexual exploitation.
- The local authority has provided a high level of support to the school since September 2014. This involves regular visits by a lead advisor and others working with the school to address weaknesses in leadership and teaching. This support can be directly linked to the recently emerging improvement in the overall quality of teaching. Within the last 12 months, the school has also secured the support of Wakefield City Academy Trust to promote developments in leadership, teaching and achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Since the last inspection of the school and an external review of governance, there has been a significant improvement in the work of the governing body. Governors now have the skills and knowledge to appropriately challenge senior leaders about the information they receive relating to the quality of teaching and students' achievements.
 - Governors have taken decisive and robust action about performance-related pay for teachers and leaders. They closely monitor the implementation of more stringent performance management procedures that reflect the higher standards the school expects of all teachers. Governors do this through regular checks using anonymised samples of teachers' performance management plans. Governors are now confident to ensure ineffective performance at all levels is not rewarded.

- Governors manage the financial resources of the school effectively and consider the impact spending plans will make on the achievement and welfare of students.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. This is because students do not consistently display positive attitudes to learning in all subjects and with all staff. Some students are not engaged in learning because work planned for them is not well matched to their needs or interests. Students commented about behaviour not being good enough 'by a long chalk' in lessons that did not interest them.
- Around school, students' behaviour is varied. Many students respect and care for each other, they are polite to adults and take care of the school environment. Students dress smartly and bring the right equipment to their lessons. At break and lunchtimes, and when moving between lessons, behaviour is generally calm; however, the boisterous behaviour of a small number of students is unsettling for others.
- School records show that behaviour is improving and instances of exclusions are reducing. However, just over a quarter of parents who completed the online questionnaire were not satisfied that behaviour in school is good. Staff made a similar response in their inspection survey.
- Leaders have very recently introduced higher expectations of students' conduct. A clear and detailed behaviour policy and a system of rewards and sanctions have already helped to establish a calm and purposeful atmosphere in most lessons. Students who spoke with inspectors appreciated the need for change and welcomed this development. Not all staff and students are used to working to these higher expectations. Inconsistent use of the school's rewards and sanctions causes some students to react inappropriately when staff challenge poor attitudes.
- The school has struggled to raise attendance over the last two years and it is below the national average. Attendance fell further earlier this year. Systems for checking absences have been strengthened recently and, with focused work by the pastoral team, the attendance of disabled students and those who have special educational needs has improved. Actions are now beginning to focus more firmly on tackling the increasing absence of disadvantaged students.
- Students' punctuality to school at the start of the day is generally good. Some students move unenthusiastically between classes so they miss the start of the lesson.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students who spoke with the inspectors said they felt safe. They are confident that if they were worried or felt bullied they know staff would 'sort it out'. A very small number of students felt that name-calling was not dealt with quickly enough.
- Students learn about how to keep themselves safe online and in a range of social situations. Students talk about the dangers of sexting and trolling, taking a very strong moral position: 'you don't make anyone unhappy as it's bullying'.
- Leaders ensure activities in and out of school are thoroughly risk assessed so that staff and students know how to manage themselves safely, including when travelling abroad.
- Students show a good understanding of safety rules in design and technology lessons using personal protective equipment and following basic hygiene rules.
- Staff responsible for leading safeguarding have a robust and tenacious approach to working with other services to keep the students safe. They do not shy away from difficult and complex issues and ensure all staff are trained to be aware of signs that students are caught up in risky behaviours.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teachers do not always use their knowledge of students' starting points and information from assessments well enough to be clear about what they expect students to know and understand at the end of each lesson.
- Some teachers' marking and feedback are precise and tell students what they need to do to get to the next level. Students are explicit about how helpful this guidance is, particularly in English and mathematics. This best practice does not yet extend across all subjects. In many mathematics lessons, students very quickly get all the problems correct. This indicates that the work is too easy and does not challenge students. Students say they do not get many word-based problems to encourage them to think deeply and extend

their understanding of mathematical concepts.

- Students have the opportunity to read widely. In a catch-up intervention group, students who read to an inspector, did so with confidence and demonstrated they understood what they were reading.
- Inspectors observed strong teaching in history, drama, physical education and religious education. In these lessons, precise assessment and excellent questioning were key features. Students' rapid progress over time was clear in their books which were reviewed by inspectors. Questioning in a drama lesson ensured students made good progress in developing their skill and understanding of what they need to do to engage the audience.
- Inspectors observed some effective teaching where students were encouraged to discuss issues so they could develop the way they put their thoughts and ideas into words. For example, in a history lesson, students discussed terrorism across the world in relation to British values, concluding that terrorism does not work. Students commented they loved history because 'it really makes you think'. In the same way, in a childcare lesson, the teacher planned an activity that successfully challenged students to think deeply about the long-term impact of child neglect and abuse.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs benefit from teaching that is planned around the help they need. Some teaching in small groups, and work with individual students, uses targeted questions to make sure students can explain their ideas and make progress.
- The impact of teaching assistants and other adults in lessons is variable. Some provide excellent support to groups and individuals. A few teaching assistants were observed slowing students' progress by providing answers to questions without challenging students to think for themselves.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In 2014, the proportions of students at the end of Key Stage 4 making expected progress or attaining five good GCSEs were below average. The Year 11 cohort in 2014 entered school with attainment typical of 11-year-olds, although in other year groups currently, attainment on entry was significantly below average. Frequent change of teachers is hindering the learning and progress of all students.
- As a result of additional teaching and revision sessions this year, Year 11 students are making faster progress in English and mathematics. School data forecast much improved results for GCSEs. Early indications through externally moderated course work and early entry in English go some way to support the school's view.
- The current achievement of students in other year groups and different subjects remains too variable as a result of teaching that requires improvement. Key Stage 3 students are making swifter progress in English and science as a result of better teaching. Their attainment is close to expectations for their age. However, students' progress in English and mathematics is slower in other year groups.
- The most able students, who enter school with above average achievement, do not always make the progress expected of them due to the lack of challenge in some lessons. This pattern is reflected across most subjects. Training is enabling teachers to increase the level of challenge by planning lessons more effectively. This is starting to improve students' knowledge, understanding and skills. In English, for example, a more extensive vocabulary is evident in students' writing.
- The school's data demonstrate the early entry policy did provide motivation and opportunities for most of the students involved, so they gained higher grades on their second attempt at the examination. The school no longer uses early entry for mathematics due to improvements in the way mathematics is taught.
- The gap in attainment between the disadvantaged students in the school and other students nationally was just over one GCSE grade in English and nearly two grades in mathematics in 2014. The school's data show, across all year groups, the gap in progress of the disadvantaged students compared to their classmates is closing. This is due to better use of assessment data to identify barriers to students' learning and more focused use of additional staff.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make variable progress in common with other groups of students. Most of these students in Years 7 and 8 are making good progress, especially in English. This is because they benefit from a 'catch-up programme' in reading. Some students have made the equivalent of 15 months gain in their reading age over a seven-month period.
- Students attending courses at places away from school are making good progress. Their work is monitored to ensure they remain on track to achieve the work-related qualifications for which they are studying.

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 checking 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 checking by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	121674
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	462226

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	691
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tom Fox
Headteacher	John Senior
Date of previous school inspection	12 June 2013
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