

Haltwhistle Community Campus Upper School

Park Avenue, Haltwhistle, Northumberland, NE49 9BA

Inspection dates

12–13 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
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 requires special measures.

- The achievement of pupils is inadequate, particularly in writing and in mathematics. At the end of Year 6, far fewer pupils than nationally make or exceed the expected progress in these subjects. This is particularly the case for pupils supported by the pupil premium funding.
- The most able pupils underachieve because teachers' expectations of what they can accomplish are too low and the work they are given is not challenging.
- Teachers do not demand enough of pupils and too readily accept pupils' work that is of poor quality or is incomplete. Marking is infrequent and, at times, inaccurate in many subjects.
- Leaders have not ensured that the assessment by teachers of pupils' work in all subjects is accurate. Until recently, procedures for tracking pupils' progress and providing additional support for those who need it have been ineffective. This has limited their progress.
- Leaders, including governors, have not focused their efforts on improving the quality of teaching in order to raise pupils' achievement.
- The school's systems for evaluating the quality of teaching are ineffective and so leaders and governors have an overly positive view of the quality of teaching in the school. Performance management arrangements have too little impact.
- Governors have not challenged school leaders effectively and have been too reliant on senior leaders for information on how well the school is doing.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed headteacher has begun to take steps to make the required improvements.
- Pupils say they feel safe at the school and know how to keep themselves safe.
- In some lessons teaching is good and occasionally it is outstanding.
- The majority of parents are very supportive of the school.
- Pupils behave well in most lessons and social times are orderly and calm.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 13 lessons and part-lessons in a range of subjects across the age range of the school.
- Meetings were held with the deputy headteachers of the upper and lower schools, middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, the vice-chair and two other members, and the Commissioner for Curriculum and Learning for Northumberland local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and scrutinised a range of documentation including the school’s view of its own performance, monitoring records, information about pupils’ progress, improvement planning, minutes of meetings of the governing body, records of behaviour and attendance, and records relating to safeguarding and child protection.
- Inspectors looked at the work pupils were doing in lessons and over time in their books.
- Discussions were held with three groups of pupils about the quality of their educational experience and the standard of behaviour in the school. Inspectors also spoke with pupils in lessons and at various times during both days of the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of parents’ views through the 44 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also considered 29 responses to the staff inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

David Brown, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Belita Scott	Her Majesty’s 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 special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- Haltwhistle Community Campus Upper School converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2013. When its predecessor school, Haltwhistle Community Campus Upper School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- This school caters for pupils aged from 9 to 13 years old and is smaller than the average-sized middle school and much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is close to the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- No pupils attend any off-site alternative provision.
- Few pupils leave or join the school other than at the beginning and end of the school year.
- The school's accelerated learning centre provides a high adult to pupil ratio for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in English and mathematics.
- The school, in partnership with the lower school, is part of the Haltwhistle Community Campus multi-academy trust. The two schools have the same headteacher and one governing body.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2014. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher was absent from school.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching so progress is at least good in all subjects for all pupils by ensuring that:
 - accurate assessment is used by teachers to plan and to teach lessons at the right level for different groups of pupils
 - teachers mark pupils' work more frequently and more accurately so pupils are aware of the next steps they need to take to improve
 - there is a stronger and more consistent focus on encouraging pupils' enjoyment of writing and mathematics.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by ensuring that:
 - school development plans are based on a thorough and accurate evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the school
 - clear timescales and deadlines for improvement, together with well-defined targets by which to measure success, are set so that the pace of school improvement increases
 - inconsistencies in the quality of leadership and teaching are tackled through more rigorous performance management and stronger accountability of staff
 - middle leaders are fully involved in evaluating pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility, so that they are held accountable for tackling any identified weaknesses
 - the curriculum meets the needs and interests of all pupils so that all are well prepared for their future studies
 - funding provided through the pupil premium is used effectively in raising the achievement of

disadvantaged pupils, including the most able

- governors understand and use a range of evidence about the school's performance to enable them to provide an appropriate level of challenge to senior leaders and hold them to account
- parents have access through the school's website to all the information the school is required to make available.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Senior leaders and governors have not shown sufficient capacity to address the continued decline in pupils' progress in writing and in mathematics and the inadequate achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Actions taken have been too slow or ineffective.
- School leaders have an inaccurate view of the school's effectiveness. Self-evaluation is overgenerous and is based on an inflated view of pupils' performance.
- The recently appointed headteacher is clear about what needs to be done to drive improvement and has made some important decisions about what is required. However, the school development plan fails to focus specifically enough on actions which will close gaps in performance. Insufficient success measures and too few milestones make it difficult to ensure that senior leaders, staff and governors have a clear overview of the progress being made over time.
- The school has an effective system for collecting and analysing pupils' assessment information but the accuracy of data collected by teachers is variable. As a result, it is difficult for the school to provide additional support where this is most needed and target its work and resources to improve teaching.
- Leaders have an inaccurate and overly positive view of the quality of teaching. Senior and middle leaders rely too heavily on observations of teaching in lessons and not enough on understanding the impact that teaching over time is having on pupils' learning to make their judgements. They do not check well enough on the quality of pupils' work, including making sure that work is marked regularly and to a consistently high standard. Middle leaders have not been adequately held to account for the impact of their actions by senior leaders or the governing body.
- Actions to improve the quality of teaching have not been focused closely enough on the strengths and weaknesses of the school and of individual teachers. As a result, leaders have not done enough to secure good teaching of pupils and groups of pupils, including the most able and disadvantaged pupils.
- Systems for managing the performance of teachers are inadequate. Targets are not precise enough to hold staff to account for pupils' performance or to drive up the quality of teaching and learning. There is currently little link between salary progression and pupils' achievement.
- School leaders have used the pupil premium money to provide additional support for disadvantaged pupils but they have not checked closely enough on the impact this funding is making and so are not aware of which strategies are making the most or least difference. The governing body does not challenge school leaders robustly about how this money is spent and the school's website does not meet requirements in the way it reports the impact of this funding.
- The school does not promote equality effectively because there are unacceptably large gaps in achievement between groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and most able pupils.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. However, there are some concerns, particularly for those Year 8 pupils who spend one afternoon each week supporting physical education and sport lessons at the lower school campus and miss the majority of their lessons in humanities for the whole school year.
- An appropriately designed assembly programme keeps students abreast of contemporary, local and world affairs and ensures that they are aware of British values.
- The school currently receives additional funding as part of the government's physical education and school sport initiative. The provision for sport in the school is good but the impact of this additional funding has not been evaluated.
- Inspectors strongly recommend that the school should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have been ineffective in challenging the performance of the school. They have taken too much on trust from senior leaders and have only recently, following the appointment of the headteacher, appreciated the extent of the decline in achievement.
 - Minutes of governing body meetings show that some issues, such as financial matters, are discussed thoroughly, but governors do not meet frequently enough to monitor and challenge the work of the school. Therefore, governors are unable to check if the quality of teaching is improving. Systems to ensure pay is linked to the improvements in pupils' progress and to make certain that underperformance is tackled rigorously are weak. A number of governor sub-committees have not met for over 12 months.
 - The governing body has been ineffective in making sure that the expenditure of the pupil premium has had a direct bearing on improving the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
 - Governors ensure that systems for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. At the time of the

inspection, the school met all government requirements in relation to safer recruitment.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Behaviour in lessons is often good but, in a small number of lessons, weak teaching does not challenge or engage pupils, resulting in behaviour that disrupts learning.
- Pupils do not take enough pride in their work. Too often it is untidy, poorly presented, unfinished and inaccurate.
- Pupils behave well around the school and play enthusiastically during breaks. They act responsibly and safely between lessons both in narrow corridors and staircases and in the canteen at lunchtime.
- Pupils take on responsibility in a number of roles. The school pupil forum is active and effective, and pupils regularly help in assembly and support pupils at the lower school. This makes an effective contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school has well-established procedures to promote good attendance. Attendance has improved in recent years and is now very close to the national average.
- Punctuality to school and to lessons is good and reflects well on pupils' positive attitudes towards learning and their enjoyment of school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- The majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire consider the school to be safe and pupils' behaviour to be good. Pupils confirm that the school's rules are applied consistently and fairly and any incidents of misbehaviour are recorded and followed up swiftly.
- Incidents of bullying are rare and pupils are well prepared to deal with all types of bullying and name-calling. Pupils stressed that if any unpleasantness does occur, the staff deal with it quickly and effectively. Pupils are aware of different forms of prejudice-based bullying. There are no recorded incidents of racist behaviour.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of what makes an unsafe situation. They are able to explain the school's work to promote e-safety and the potential dangers of social media.
- Procedures and policies for safeguarding are fully in place and are reviewed regularly by senior leaders and the governing body. Staff receive appropriate training in safeguarding.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching has not enabled pupils to make the progress they should in writing, in mathematics and in several other subjects. The quality of teaching varies across, and sometimes within, subject areas. Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching lack rigour and judgements reached are too generous.
- Teaching in writing is inadequate which means that many students are not developing writing skills well enough. In particular, spelling, punctuation and grammar are not checked or taught consistently well in all subjects. The teaching of mathematics and reading is variable and not consistently good for all groups of students.
- The majority of teaching is not adapted well enough to suit the needs and abilities of pupils. Teachers do not use their knowledge of pupils' prior learning to make sure work is set at the right level. As a result, many lessons are based on all pupils completing the same task rather than in making sure that pupils are sufficiently challenged with the work they are given. The most able pupils are held back because teaching does not move them on quickly enough to more challenging work.
- Where teaching is at least good, teachers build upon pupils' previous learning and plan lessons to make sure that all pupils are given work that is not too difficult and not too hard. The range of activities that pupils undertake interest and challenge those who are keen to learn and do their best.
- The quality of marking varies significantly across the school and inspectors saw numerous examples of pupils' work that had not been marked for several weeks or where marking consisted of only ticks and crosses. Too much marking in pupils' books is superficial and does not indicate clearly how pupils can improve their work. Assessment of pupils' work is often overgenerous, leading to both teachers and pupils having an inaccurate view of pupils' current performance. In some lessons, teachers do not insist that

pupils present neat and tidy work.

- The standard of in-class support for pupils who have special educational needs varies considerably. The teacher in charge of supporting these pupils is not involved in monitoring this aspect of provision. Not all teaching assistants are deployed to good effect by classroom teachers.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- The achievement of pupils, and in particular disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils, is inadequate, because teaching is not good enough. Achievement across all year groups and for most groups of pupils in writing is inadequate and shows little sign of improvement.
- Pupils join the school in Year 5 with levels of attainment in writing, reading and mathematics that are broadly average. In the national Key Stage 2 tests in 2014, a significant proportion of pupils failed to reach at least the expected level in writing and in mathematics. Attainment in reading rose sharply to become broadly average. Overall, pupils' attainment was over one term behind other pupils nationally and, in writing, pupils were two-and-a-half terms behind.
- In 2014, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 achieved levels in reading and mathematics which were around one year behind other pupils in the school. In writing, disadvantaged pupils were over a year behind other pupils. In comparison with non-disadvantaged pupils nationally, the attainment of disadvantaged Year 6 pupils was around a year behind in reading and mathematics and over two years behind in writing. There is some evidence in pupils' books that these gaps are beginning to close.
- The school's assessment data indicate that pupils make better progress in their two years in Key Stage 3 than in Key Stage 2. However, inspection evidence indicates that this acceleration is not rapid enough to make up for lost ground in Key Stage 2. This applies particularly for the most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and for the majority of pupils in writing.
- The most able pupils make slow progress because teachers do not plan work which challenges them. Pupils spend too much time working on tasks and activities which they can already do or which they finish quickly because the work is too easy.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is variable and there remain gaps between the achievement of many of these pupils and others. However, a recently appointed leader has begun to address this issue. These pupils benefit from the additional support offered in the accelerated learning centre where their needs are identified and they receive good quality support.

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	140132
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	461870

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lawrence Thompson
Headteacher	Paul Frost
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
Telephone number	01434 320491
Fax number	01434 320411
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