

Cramlington Learning Village

Highburn, Northumberland, NE23 6BN

Inspection dates 29–30 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Leadership and management at all levels, other than in the sixth form, including governance, are inadequate. Since the last inspection, the school's effectiveness has declined rapidly. Leaders' views of the school's performance are inaccurate. They have failed to take appropriate action to tackle students' underachievement, weak teaching and poor behaviour, and to ensure students are safe.
- The school's work to ensure that students are safe is inadequate. Leaders fail to ensure that students in Key Stages 3 and 4 are supervised effectively outside of lessons. Students do not conduct themselves safely around school.
- Students' achievement is inadequate. Given their starting points, standards by the end of Year 11 are too low. In Key Stages 3 and 4, too few students make at least the expected rate of progress particularly in English and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged students, disabled students and those with special educational needs also underachieve.
- The school's use of the pupil premium to support disadvantaged students is ineffective. Gaps in the attainment of disadvantaged students compared to others in school and nationally, are too wide and not closing quickly enough.
- Students' literacy and numeracy skills are underdeveloped and some students are not adequately prepared for the next stage in their learning.
- Expectations of what students can achieve are too low. Work is not matched well enough to students' varying abilities and lacks challenge. Marking has too little impact on improving students' work over time.
- The behaviour of students is inadequate. Lessons are often interrupted by poor behaviour. Teaching does not engage students and the management of behaviour is ineffective. Too much unruly and disrespectful conduct exists.
- Governors have failed to hold senior leaders rigorously to account for students' achievement, the quality of teaching, behaviour and students' safety.

The school has the following strengths

- Provision in the school's sixth form is good. Students achieve well and benefit from good leadership and effective, specialist teaching.
- Students are positive about the school's work in helping them understand the importance of Britain in a global society.
- The school's work with students on internet safety is robust and effective.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed a range of teaching across all year groups in school. Four observations were jointly undertaken with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors visited tutor groups, support sessions and the Year 7 and 8 development programme, known as Challenge Wednesday. Inspectors also conducted a range of walks to observe learning around the school.
- Inspectors met with eight groups of students, including in the sixth form, regarding their progress in lessons and their views about the school’s effectiveness.
- Inspectors held meetings with representatives of the governing body, senior leaders and middle leaders. The inspection team also looked carefully at the school’s own view of its effectiveness, its development planning and a range of school policies. The inspection team also examined a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered 134 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 34 inspection questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors looked carefully at students’ books and files in lessons and engaged in a detailed analysis of students’ work in partnership with school leaders.
- Two of Her Majesty’s Inspectors visited the school on 11 June 2015 to gather additional evidence.

Inspection team

John Townsley, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Janice Gorch	Additional Inspector
Kevin Broadfoot	Additional Inspector
Andrew Williams	Additional Inspector
Anne Smedley	Additional Inspector
Phil Smith	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Jane Austin	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

- Cramlington Learning Village is significantly larger than the average-sized secondary school. The school converted to an academy in September 2011.
- Almost all students are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those students who are in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is below average.
- The school uses four off-site alternative providers of education for a very small number of students in Years 8 to 11. These are Northumberland College, Learn Fit, Choices and Skills4U.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress at the end of Year 11.
- The headteacher is a national leader of education and, as a National Support School, Cramlington Learning Village has supported 15 schools since 2013 and has trained and developed 38 specialist leaders of education.
- The sixth form, known as the Advanced Learning Village, is an integral part of the school. The Advanced Learning Village is located in a separate building on the school site.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently and significantly improve the effectiveness of leaders at all levels, including governance, in order to ensure that students are kept safe, and that the quality of teaching, students' behaviour and their achievement rapidly improves and are all consistently good by:
 - ensuring that students in the main school are well supervised outside of lessons, are required to follow clear guidance regarding areas which are out of bounds and unsuitable and unsafe for them to be in and always conduct themselves safely around school
 - establishing a precise view of the school's work that forms the basis for bringing about the required improvements in the quality of teaching, students' achievement, behaviour in classrooms and across the school
 - using the pupil premium funding effectively to quickly improve the achievement of those students it is intended to support
 - improving the achievement of disabled students and those with special educational needs by improving the quality of teaching, including the support from learning support assistants, and improving the behaviour of other students in their classes, particularly lower-ability students
 - robustly supporting and challenging the work of subject leaders in overcoming the impact of weak teaching over time on students' achievement, particularly in mathematics
 - developing the skills of governors so that they hold senior leaders rigorously to account for students' achievement, behaviour and safety and the quality of teaching they receive.
- Take action to improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good and supports all students to make good or better progress, particularly in English and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that teachers take into account the varying needs and abilities of students to set work that is well matched to their capabilities and which is appropriately challenging
 - making sure that all students are engaged well in their learning, are required to answer challenging

questions and to show their understanding of what they are taught

- establishing greater consistency in the marking of students' work so that they receive and act upon guidance which is of a high-quality across all subjects
- making sure that teachers' expectations of students' achievement are consistently high and that they insist all students' work is completed and presented well
- consistently developing students' extended writing skills and their ability to confidently use mathematics across all the subjects they study.

■ Urgently improve students' behaviour by:

- making sure all staff deal consistently and effectively with poor behaviour within lessons
- ensuring that students are required to concentrate well in lessons, and to contribute and participate in the learning they need to make
- requiring students to wear the correct uniform, and to engender their pride in wearing it
- ensuring that standards and expectations of students' behaviour around school are consistently high.

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 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 are inadequate

- The school's performance has declined dramatically since the last inspection and is now inadequate overall. Senior leaders and governors have not ensured that the high standards in achievement, teaching and behaviour and safety have been sustained.
- Leaders are inaccurate in their assessment of the school's performance and have not made a rigorous analysis of its areas of strengths and weakness that need to be robustly tackled. As a result leaders have failed to address the significant areas of underperformance seen in students' achievement in examinations in Year 11 in 2013 and 2014.
- The leadership of teaching is weak. Checks by leaders on the quality of teaching and its impact on students' achievement lack rigour and are inaccurate. Senior leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching and its impact on students' achievement are overgenerous.
- Leaders do not ensure that students enjoy equality of opportunity in their learning. There are too many inconsistencies in the quality of teaching they receive. For example, disadvantaged students, disabled students and those with special educational needs achieve significantly less well than other students nationally. Senior leaders and governors have failed to ensure that pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged students is used effectively. Wide gaps exist in their attainment compared to others in the school and nationally and these are widening.
- Subject leadership is too variable in quality. Although there is evidence that the recently improved leadership in English is beginning to have an impact on students' achievement, this is not the case in mathematics. This is confirmed by an external review of mathematics commissioned by the school in late November 2014, which expresses serious concerns about the leadership of mathematics and its capacity to secure necessary improvement.
- While arrangements to manage the performance of staff are taken seriously, including by the governing body, the inaccurate and overgenerous view of the effectiveness of leadership and teaching at the school has resulted in these processes having too little impact.
- Some aspects of the curriculum work well. The school's work to prepare students for life in modern Britain is effective in some respects. For example, students speak very positively about their work in understanding the importance of Britain in a global society and its impact on democratic development across the world. Discrimination is not tolerated. However, overall the curriculum is ineffective because too many students fail to develop the literacy and mathematical skills they need for the future. The school is too reliant on providing reactive catch-up and support programmes to students in Year 11 in order to support students in making expected progress, particularly in mathematics.
- Students' behaviour has deteriorated markedly since the last inspection. Leaders are failing to deal consistently and robustly with low-level disruptive behaviour in the main school, which is impacting negatively on learning in some lessons. As a consequence, good relationships are not always effectively promoted.
- Although arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements, they are overall ineffective because leaders fail to ensure that students conduct themselves safely around school. Leaders are not ensuring that students in the main school behave safely beyond lessons. Groups of students are allowed to congregate in areas which are clearly out of bounds during the school day.
- Older students are very positive about the quality of advice and guidance that they receive as they prepare for their futures. However, the impact of this work in preparing some students for their next stage of learning is hampered by their weaker literacy and numeracy development by the end of Year 11.
- Arrangements to monitor the progress, attendance and behaviour of students on alternative placements have recently strengthened and are increasingly more effective as a result.
- Inspectors strongly recommend that the academy should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is ineffective. Although closely involved in the work of the school, governors have failed to impact positively on improving the quality of teaching, student achievement and behaviour. Furthermore, they have failed to ensure that students are kept safe.
 - Governors accept too readily explanations given by senior leaders for the significant underperformance of students and do not challenge leaders robustly in formal meetings. Records of governing body meetings show a lack of understanding of how well the school's performance compares to similar schools nationally.
 - Governors fail to ensure that school leaders are using the pupil premium funding, or the funding to support weaker readers, effectively. Governors do not ensure that leaders fulfil their responsibility for

adequately developing students' literacy and numeracy skills.

- Although governors ensure that performance management systems are in place, which seek to reward good teaching and to tackle underperformance, the inaccurate and overgenerous view of teaching and leadership that has been accepted by the governing body has resulted in performance management being ineffective overall.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are inadequate

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is inadequate. Too many students in Key Stages 3 and 4 show a lack of engagement in lessons and low-level disruptive behaviour often impacts negatively on learning. Staff fail to deal with poor behaviour in a consistent and effective manner. However, students in the sixth form behave well and show good attitudes to learning.
- Behaviour in lessons in the main school is poor, particularly in lower-ability teaching groups. This has a significant detrimental impact on the learning of all students in those groups. Students say that poor behaviour is commonplace in such teaching groups.
- Students' attitudes to learning are too variable. In some lessons, students fail to respond positively to teaching. Some do not pay attention while others remain quiet but complete little work. This lack of a focus on learning by students hinders their progress.
- Around school a significant minority of students behave in an unruly and disrespectful manner. For example, several students spoke in a discourteous manner to members of the inspection team during the inspection.
- Uniform standards at the school are poor. A significant minority of students do not follow the uniform code and this is largely unchallenged by school leaders.
- A quarter of parents who completed the online questionnaire (Parent View) either disagreed or strongly disagreed that the school makes sure its students behave well.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is inadequate. Leaders have failed to ensure that students in the main school conduct themselves safely, particularly during break and lunchtime. Students were observed in areas which school policies clearly show are out of bounds.
- Students' poor behaviour around the site contributes to inadequate standards of safety. Students show a lack of regard and concern for the safety of other members of the school community. For example, inspectors observed food being deliberately thrown by students on the floor in the canteen, causing a potential safety hazard.
- Students talk confidently about bullying and what to do if it occurs. They believe that bullying is dealt with robustly when it takes place. This is confirmed by the school's own behaviour records.
- Students have a good understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet. This, they say, is due to the good information they receive in their lessons and in assemblies.
- Students attending courses away from the school site are kept safe. Stronger practical arrangements to check on their overall welfare and to ensure they behave well are in place; records show that students now behave well while on alternative placements.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Students make inadequate progress, particularly in English and mathematics, as a result of inconsistent and weak teaching over time. Teaching fails to ensure that students, including the disadvantaged, the disabled and those with special educational needs, make at least adequate progress.
- The work set for students is often not carefully enough matched to their ability and there is often a lack of pace in learning. Teaching is insufficiently challenging and does not make students think carefully or extend their knowledge and understanding. Teachers' low expectations result in poorly presented or careless work remaining unchallenged.
- Teaching has an inadequate impact on the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills over time. Although there is some evidence of improved provision in English, it has not impacted on examination outcomes. Year 7 Catch Up funding is being used to improve students' reading ages. In mathematics, teaching is inadequate because too often it lacks challenge. The development of students'

confidence in using and applying their numerical and extended writing skills across the curriculum is inadequate.

- A detailed analysis of students' work and inspectors' checks on the work in students' books show that the quality of marking is too variable. Teachers do not always check students' work regularly or offer specific guidance on how work should be improved. Even where marking provides good advice and guidance, for example in some English and mathematics books, some teachers do not check that students have acted to improve their work, and this hampers students' progress.
- Students say that there is inconsistency in the quality of teaching. They acknowledge, as inspectors found, that teaching is often weaker in lower-ability teaching groups. Learning support assistants have too little impact on the progress of students with special educational needs. Too much time is spent dealing with poor behaviour in lower-ability teaching groups.
- Approximately 20% of parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, either disagreed or strongly disagreed that their children are taught well at the school.

The achievement of students

is inadequate

- From their different starting points, too many students make inadequate progress over time. Students' progress in Key Stages 3 and 4 in a range of subjects, including in English, mathematics, modern foreign languages and humanities is weak due to inadequate teaching. Students' skills in reading, writing and numeracy are underdeveloped.
- Students enter the school in Year 7 with standards which are often significantly above average. When they leave at the end of Year 11, standards are below average in many subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection the achievement of students has weakened significantly and in 2013 and 2014 it was inadequate. This is not acknowledged in the school's own evaluation of its performance. School data showing the predicted results for Year 11 in 2015 suggests a stronger picture of achievement. However, significant weaknesses observed by inspectors in mathematics and in the performance of disadvantaged students, disabled students and those with special educational needs resulted in inspectors having little confidence in the school's predictions.
- From their different starting points, disadvantaged students make inadequate progress and underachieve. By the end of Year 11 in 2014, in English, students attained a full grade lower than other students at the school and other students nationally. In mathematics, their attainment was almost two grades lower than other students in the school and nationally. These gaps in attainment are wider than the previous year, particularly in mathematics. Data presented by the school suggest an improved performance for disadvantaged students in Year 11, in 2015, in mathematics, but inspection evidence of their achievement found this to be unconvincing. Many lessons are disrupted by poor behaviour and the school's efforts to ensure that students make adequate progress rely on extensive extra support which takes place outside normal lesson time.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs underachieve. In 2013 and 2014 they made significantly less progress than their peers nationally. The most able students sometimes do better than other students at the school and, as a result, achieve at a level which is broadly in line with similar students nationally. However, too few make good progress because work still lacks challenge.
- Students who are educated in alternative provision off-site underperform. This is because until recently many of the courses that they followed have not prepared them effectively for the next stage in their learning or employment. The school now monitors more carefully the progress being made by those students.
- In 2014, 54 students were entered early for GCSE mathematics in the summer of Year 10. A further 77 were entered early in the winter of Year 11. This policy restricted the progress of a large number of students and contributed to the inadequate achievement in mathematics. The school no longer enters students early for GCSE mathematics.

The sixth form provision

is good

- As a result of good teaching over time and positive attitudes to learning, achievement in the sixth form, known as the Advanced Learning Village, is good. In the majority of academic subjects, students achieve at least as well as the students nationally, and above in science and applied learning.
- Specialist teachers use very good subject knowledge to plan work to cater for the different abilities across groups and subjects. This ensures that progress rates are similar for all groups, including those from

disadvantaged backgrounds.

- The curriculum is broad and provides academic and vocational courses to cater for students' different interests and abilities. It meets the requirements of the 16 to 19 programmes of study and prepares students well for work and future learning. Those students who enter the sixth form with a GCSE qualification in English and/or mathematics that is below grade C have made better progress in 2015 than was previously the case in 2013 and 2014.
- Behaviour in the Advanced Learning Village is good. Students are well motivated and consistently show a high level of engagement in their learning. In private study sessions they are well focused and conscientious and around the sixth-form area they conduct themselves in a mature and very well disciplined manner.
- Students behave safely at all times within the Advanced Learning Village. They are able to talk with confidence about the importance of behaving safely both within the sixth-form area and out of school, including in their use of the internet.
- The leadership of the Advanced Learning Village is good. Leaders have an accurate view of achievement and ensure that specialist teaching within that part of the school is at least good. As a consequence, students make good progress over time. Students receive high-quality support and careers guidance from a range of professionals and retention rates are improving. Attendance and punctuality are good. Leaders ensure that students in the Advanced Learning Village are kept safe.

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	137457
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	462674

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,998
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	330
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jeff McCartney
Headteacher	Wendy Heslop
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2013
Telephone number	01670 712311
Fax number	01670 730598
Email address	admin@cramlingtonlv.co.uk

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