

Haltwhistle Community Campus Lower School

Woodhead Lane, Haltwhistle, Northumberland NE49 9DP

Inspection dates	3–4 March 2016
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- A lack of rigour in leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning has allowed a decline in their quality since the previous inspection to go unchecked.
- Subject leaders do not have a firm grasp of the strengths and weaknesses within their areas of responsibility. As a result, the impact of their actions on pupils' achievements is lessened.
- Teachers' expectations are often not high enough. Where this is the case, pupils do not reach the highest standards of which they are capable.
- The quality of teaching varies. Not all teaching is good. This means that not enough pupils make better than expected progress across key stages, particularly in English.
- The teaching of phonics, the sounds that letters make, is variable in quality. Pupils do not consistently reach the standards that should be expected of them.
- Teachers in the early years provision do not sufficiently provide opportunities that challenge and extend children's learning.
- Pupils are not sufficiently engaged by teaching and the curriculum. Focus is sometimes lost, progress slows and behaviour deteriorates.
- Pupils are underprepared for life in modern Britain. Although the pupil council affords pupils a voice, little understanding or appreciation of democracy exists. Pupils' awareness of equality and different cultural traditions is limited.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders and governors are honest and accurate in their evaluation of the school's position. Action plans are now focused on the correct priorities and are beginning to drive improvement.
- The school uses the extra government funding (the pupil premium) to support disadvantaged pupils purposefully. Gaps in achievement narrowed for this group in Key Stage 1 in 2015, particularly in writing.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and lively. They feel safe and are safe. Attendance is good and no groups are disadvantaged by persistent absenteeism.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness and impact of leadership and management by:
 - securing high-quality professional development and training for all staff that is linked to improvement priorities
 - monitoring the quality of teaching and learning across key stages, including the early years provision, and rigorously holding teachers fully to account for the progress of pupils
 - equipping subject leaders with the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to manage their roles and responsibilities effectively
 - increasing the accountability of the wider leadership team, making sure that actions and contributions link precisely to strategic school improvement planning
 - developing the curriculum further to promote improved understanding of diversity and the principles of British values, so that pupils are better prepared for life in modern Britain.

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning across key stages, so that pupils consistently make good or better progress, by:
 - lifting teachers' expectations about pupils' potential and capabilities, and making national standards and curriculum requirements more explicit
 - supporting and challenging teachers to plan stimulating, challenging activities that inspire pupils to successfully build on what they already know and can do
 - providing more regular opportunities for pupils to use and apply their English skills in more depth across the curriculum, particularly in writing
 - developing teachers' skills, knowledge and understanding of early reading and writing skills to support improved acquisition of basic English skills, including phonics, spelling and grammar
 - making sure that pupils are consistently challenged to produce their best work and strive for the higher standards that should be expected of them.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Instability in leadership and management has only recently been addressed, with the acting headteacher now leading developments in both upper and lower schools across the Haltwhistle Community Campus. Significant changes and uncertainty about the future have slowed the pace of improvement at the lower school.
- Leaders and governors have not acted rapidly enough to secure improvements in teaching and learning. As a result, teaching is not consistently good, outcomes for pupils are variable and too many pupils across key stages do not reach the higher standards that should be expected of them.
- The acting headteacher and deputy headteacher have introduced a range of professional development opportunities for staff linked to individual needs and school improvement plans. They are now monitoring teaching and learning more rigorously and regularly. Regular observations, learning walks, scrutiny of pupils' work and progress meetings with teachers are, however, too recent to yield significant, measurable impact on teaching quality.
- Wider leadership roles are not yet fully established. For example, the leadership of special educational needs and English are recently created posts. Opportunities to check on the impact of new leaders' work are therefore limited. As a result, leaders are unclear about which approaches or actions are making a difference for pupils.
- Leaders have implemented a whole-school assessment system that identifies precisely the progress and attainment of each individual pupil in English and mathematics. This supports teachers to plan accurately and enables open discussion about pupils' outcomes. As a result, staff accountability for the impact of their work is strengthening. Teachers' understanding of the school's and national expectations is growing.
- Senior leaders are aware of the need to develop the curriculum further and have already taken positive action. They support teachers to identify and plan opportunities for investigating and celebrating British values. As a result, pupils are usually very respectful and tolerant. However, opportunities to explore life choices, diversity, equality and discrimination are limited.
- Visitors and visits, as well as extra-curricular clubs, such as the Lego club, enhance learning in an appropriate response to particular interests and issues and enrich pupils' experiences. Leaders' drive to narrow gaps between boys' and girls' achievement in English, for example, inspired them to invite successful male role models into school to share their route to success, inspiring boys to work hard.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school. They are unanimous in their opinion that this is a safe school that they would happily recommend to others. Parents also value the care and attention their children receive and are united in their opinion that staff know pupils as individuals.
- Leaders use the primary sports funding well to raise standards in physical education and to improve pupils' health and fitness. All pupils swim regularly and take part in a wide range of sporting competitions in the local area. Good hygiene is actively encouraged through topics and assemblies.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors actively seek to improve their effectiveness. Using the recommendations resulting from an external review of their work, they are more routinely involved with the work of the school. Consequently, they are better placed to impact on improvement.
 - Records show that governors now challenge and question school leaders more robustly. In this manner, they ensure that pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils is put to good use. They speak knowledgeably about outcomes in Key Stage 1 in 2015, knowing the extent to which the gaps in achievement narrowed for disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
 - Governors now regularly visit the school to gain first-hand information and evidence of the school's work and to see for themselves what it is like to be a pupil in the school. This allows them to challenge leaders from a position of knowledge and improved understanding.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Policies are evident in practices across the school, as staff actively strive to keep pupils safe from harm. Thorough checks are made when members of staff are appointed and leaders ensure that staff receive regular, updated training in child protection and safeguarding.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about keeping themselves safe and online safety. This means that they are effectively supported to navigate safely the technological world in which they live.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time and across key stages is inconsistent in its impact on outcomes, particularly in English. As a result, pupils do not reach the higher standards that should be expected of them.
- Where teaching is less effective, teachers' expectations are too low and pupils are not regularly challenged to achieve their best. Pupils practise skills they already have, learning facts and information they already know. This means that pupils make less than good progress.
- At times, teaching assistants are not deployed effectively to support or challenge pupils, waiting for direction until teachers or pupils require their input. On these occasions, the benefit of having extra adults is wasted.
- Too often, teachers do not listen closely to pupils' contributions. This means misconceptions are missed or not tackled and teachers do not capitalise on some extremely insightful understanding held by pupils. Pupils are not, therefore, supported or challenged to move their knowledge and understanding forward apace.
- Where teachers do not intervene in a timely manner to support those pupils requiring extra challenge, those falling behind or those losing interest, pupils' behaviour suffers, as pupils sometimes become restless, learning becomes disrupted and progress slows.
- The work in pupils' books shows that they have limited opportunities to apply their writing skills at length across the curriculum. Poor presentation, spelling and grammar are not addressed in an effective, systematic manner. This limits the extent to which writing skills are developed and improved.
- Where teaching is strongest, good subject knowledge and skilful questioning allow teachers to quickly reshape tasks and amend their explanations. Pupils' existing knowledge and skills are accurately determined. Learning is explicit and central to the lesson, ensuring that pupils understand the links between new information and old.
- Teachers are now using assessment and tracking information to plan more precisely for pupils. This targeted work is beginning to enable more pupils to progress at an appropriate pace. Consequently, no pupils slip through the net, failing to move forward in their learning.
- Pupils are curious, confident and interested in the world around them. They attend well, are respectful and come to school ready to learn. Pupils apply themselves well to tasks that engage and challenge them.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. While adults are usually most respectful of pupils, treating them with kindness and consideration, occasionally matters important to a pupil are dismissed too readily by adults. When this happens, pupils feel undervalued or feel their needs are not met.
- Pupils' understanding about how to be a successful learner is inconsistent across classes. Where it is strongest, teachers equip pupils well with a range of effective behaviours for learning, for example resilience, perseverance and determination. When teaching fails to challenge or support pupils effectively, learning behaviours suffer.
- Pupils' knowledge of and respect for the beliefs and life choices of others are limited. Issues of equality, discrimination and faith are not routinely broached, meaning pupils are not fully prepared for the next stage in their learning.
- Leaders and managers take the welfare of pupils and their safety seriously, ensuring that stringent safeguarding checks are in place. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and e-safety is an important aspect of the work of the school. Parents and pupils agree that the school is a safe place to be and bullying is rare.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Attitudes to learning are less than positive where teaching fails to inspire or engage. Therefore, although pupils for the most part are respectful and polite, at times their behaviour in lessons inhibits learning. Pupils say that their learning is interrupted at times by the behaviour of others.

- The behaviour of pupils at informal times is a strength of the school. During breaktimes, pupils play and chat happily with each other. Pupils say that they enjoy these friendly, lively occasions. Those pupils with responsibilities for maintaining the safe, orderly environment take their responsibilities most seriously. Cloakroom monitors and corridor monitors, for example, work diligently in positive partnership with adults.
- Views expressed by the overwhelming majority of parents are positive about pupils' behaviour. Parents feel that the rare incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with fairly by teachers and leaders.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Outcomes are variable, reflecting the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. The proportion of pupils making expected or better than expected progress in Key Stage 2 varies by class and subject. Where teaching is strongest, pupils are challenged and supported effectively to make good progress.
- In mathematics, pupils are on track to make good progress in both Year 3 and Year 4. While pupils across both year groups are on track to reach age-related expectations in reading and writing by the end of the year, the rate of progress in these subjects is not as strong as in mathematics, particularly in Year 3.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 1 reaching the expected standard in the national phonics screening test shows a variable pattern over time. It fell below average in 2015, having been well above average in 2014. Work in lessons and the school's own assessment information show that pupils are again on track to reach the expected phonics standard this year. Leaders' actions to tackle the drop last year are showing a positive impact.
- Pupils in Year 2 resitting the national phonics screening test in 2015 performed in line with other Year 2 pupils nationally.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 have performed in line with their national peers in reading, writing and mathematics over the last three years. In 2015, however, there was evidence of a slight decline across all subjects and too few pupils reached the higher levels that should be expected of them. In recognising this, leaders have set aspirational targets to promote a rise in standards this year.
- Assessment information and regular scrutiny of work in books are supporting leaders to identify those individuals who are not on target to reach their targets. Interventions are now quickly put in place to support pupils to catch up. This said, expectations and consequently outcomes for some pupils remain too low, particularly in writing.
- Gaps between the achievement of Key Stage 1 disadvantaged pupils and other pupils reduced overall in 2015. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils reaching the higher standards in each subject area, however, continues to require attention and improvement.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disability in Key Stage 1 attained in line with or better than this group nationally, particularly in reading, and also in writing and mathematics, in 2015.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- A significant proportion of children start Nursery with skills and levels of development lower than those typically expected for their age. Particular areas of need identified are speech, language and communication skills. Effective practices and good partnership with parents mean that children catch up rapidly and therefore enter the Reception class with skills and levels of development more representative for their age.
- Children behave sensibly in the Nursery class, responding promptly to the requests of calm, positive adults, for example at 'tidy-up time'. Staff plan a broad range of exciting activities that encourage children to tackle new skills and challenge themselves to try new things. Children are eager to learn and make good progress because teaching is strong and expectations are high.
- On entry to the Reception class, most children are working at levels expected for their age. Inconsistency in practices, however, mean that their progress is less rapid. At times, particularly in writing, expectations of what children can do and achieve are too low.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development in 2015 by the end of the Reception Year fell to below the national average. Writing outcomes for boys and disadvantaged children were weaker than those nationally. Current assessment information shows an improving picture and suggests that the proportion of children reaching a good level of development will match the current national

average.

- Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development due to careful planning. They take turns politely and share resources happily. They move about the environment calmly and look after resources and each other. Staff take particular note of parents' and children's concerns, developing strong, enabling partnerships.
- Access to outdoor provision is restricted at times, meaning children's options are limited rather than enhanced. Where children do get to work outside, they flourish and develop wider skills.
- Safety and child protection are taken extremely seriously and staff in the early years provision are vigilant. Good links with families, external agencies and the parent support partner mean that practices are regularly updated to reflect shared information and the most recent guidance.

School details

Unique reference number	140131
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10010973

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

Type of school	First
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy Saunders
Acting headteacher	Sandra Graham
Telephone number	01434 320491
Website	www.haltwhistlecommunitycampus.co.uk
Email address	office@haltwhistlecommunitycampus.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 September 2010

Information about this school

- Haltwhistle Community Campus Lower School is larger than the average-sized first school. The school converted to an academy in September 2014. It is part of a multi-academy trust, with the Haltwhistle Community Campus Upper School being the other half of the academy partnership. Both share the same acting headteacher and governing body.
- An average proportion of disadvantaged pupils is supported by the pupil premium.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is smaller than average. There are currently no pupils for whom English is an additional language. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- There are no pupils with education, health or care plans. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disability receiving support, however, is higher than the national average.
- The school has low mobility of pupils and serves an area of low deprivation.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. Observations on the first day of the inspection were carried out jointly by the lead inspector and the acting headteacher. Inspectors also observed behaviour during lunchtime and breaktime, and observed attitudes to learning as well as behaviour in classes.
- Meetings were held with governors (including the Chair of the Governing Body), the acting headteacher and the deputy headteacher, as well as the special educational needs coordinator and the early years coordinator. The English and mathematics subject leaders from the upper campus, who lead their subjects across both settings, were also involved in discussions.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of school documentation, including performance management information and records of the monitoring of teaching and learning, attendance and safeguarding information, minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school's own analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, school improvement plans and the school's own information about the progress and attainment of current pupils across the school.
- Pupils' and children's work in books and on display was scrutinised. This included work from all classes, including those in the early years provision.
- Discussions were held with groups of pupils, formally and informally, during lessons and breaktimes. Inspectors listened to pupils read and considered the school's information about the views of pupils.
- The views of 50 parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account. Inspectors also spoke with several parents at the beginning and end of the school day.

Inspection team

Fiona Manuel, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nicola Nelson-Taylor	Ofsted Inspector
Lynda Florence	Ofsted Inspector

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