

High Tunstall College of Science

Elwick Road, Hartlepool, County Durham TS26 0LQ

Inspection dates	23–24 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Good leadership and high ambition have successfully brought about improvements in pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the college.
- The management of teachers' performance focuses successfully on improving pupils' outcomes. It supports a well-developed, planned training programme that is valued by teachers and that is making a positive difference to pupils' learning experience and their progress.
- The headteacher, governing body and leaders at all levels work effectively to ensure that teaching continues to improve and enables pupils to make better progress than previously.
- Pupils currently in the college are making strong and sustained progress across a wide range of subjects over time.
- The college has a very effective pupil tracking system which enables leaders and also governors to monitor pupils' progress and to identify which pupils require extra support.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the college is good. Low-level disruption is uncommon and where it does occur, it is dealt with swiftly.
- Programmes to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness are impressive and a real strength of the college.
- Pupils are very well cared for and feel safe and secure in the college. They trust the teachers and adults who support them.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers' expectations of how pupils present their work vary. This is because teachers do not ensure that pupils develop their handwriting and use literacy skills to develop their work further.
- Teachers do not consistently follow the college's marking and feedback policy, with the result that some pupils do not learn from their mistakes.
- While pupils' attendance rates are average overall, the weaker attendance of some disadvantaged pupils has a negative impact on their learning and progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that all pupils reach the highest standards that they are capable of by making sure that:
 - pupils' literacy skills are developed so that they can use punctuation, spelling and grammar correctly in order to improve their extended writing accurately and precisely
 - pupils have a sense of pride in the quality of work that they produce in lessons and in their exercise books
 - teachers' questioning challenges pupils to deepen their understanding and draws out what pupils know and understand before moving learning on.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - improving attendance, especially for disadvantaged pupils
 - ensuring that teachers follow the college's marking and feedback policy consistently to enable pupils to make greater progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, senior staff and governing body have a very clear and focused commitment to ensuring that all pupils achieve well and are safe, secure and supported across the college. Leaders at all levels are highly effective in driving forward developments that have led to the college's ongoing improvement. These have had a direct impact on the quality of the pupils' learning experience and have led to rapid improvements in teaching, and pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance.
- The management of teaching is effective. Lesson observations by college leaders lead to targeted and appropriate support and training that link well with whole-college priorities. Performance management systems are robust and linked to pupils' progress and outcomes. Newly qualified teachers are exceptionally positive about the support they receive.
- Middle leaders are an impressive group and support senior leaders in addressing key priorities for college improvement that are clear and precise. They have a growing confidence in what they do and have direct links with the governing body. These approaches have helped ensure that intended plans and improvements have supported faster pupil progress in their areas of responsibility.
- Leaders have ensured that all teaching teams are fully staffed following a period of recruitment difficulty. In English, they have acted swiftly to appoint experienced staff and have strengthened teaching capacity.
- External consultancy has been used to review and inform the work of the college and this has contributed to the improved outcomes across the college. Timely interventions and support to pupils in key stage 3 are now ensuring that lower attaining pupils are making rapid progress.
- The curriculum prepares pupils well for their future education and training and a good range of subjects are taught. The college has a very clear ethos and approach to developing pupils' scientific, technological, engineering and mathematical skills. It has received recognition for this nationally through STEM Assured accreditation.
- Pupils benefit from a wide choice of extra-curricular opportunities that include music, drama and sport, which help them to widen their horizons and build confidence in what they do.
- A strong sense of community exists across the college as a result of a recently introduced house system that supports pupils' pastoral development as well as monitoring individual pupils' progress and performance.
- Leaders check carefully the impact of additional funding and have used the Year 7 catch-up funding (additional government funding for those pupils who did not reach the expected levels in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6) to support pupils mainly in Year 7 and, for some pupils, into Year 8.
- Well-targeted use of the pupil premium funding has had a positive impact. Gaps between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the college are now closing.
- Leaders have not ensured that teachers consistently follow the college's marking and feedback policy, meaning that sometimes pupils are not sure how they can improve their learning and repeat common errors.
- Relationships with parents and carers are good. The response to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey of parental opinion, was positive overall, with parents showing particular appreciation of how well their children are cared for by staff at the college. In addition, college communication is very effective and allows parents to be kept informed of what is going on for their children.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body is very well informed about the college's strengths and weaknesses because governors regularly receive high-quality information about the college's performance and can also access and monitor the college's pupil progress data online.
 - Governors are an effective group and have a desire to improve further. They have an accurate sense of how additional funding is spent, including the pupil premium, and understand the overall positive impact it is having on pupils' progress.
 - Governors find out about the college's work in greater depth as subject leaders regularly meet with them to discuss pupils' progress. They take part in subject reviews, with outcomes then shared with all governors.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All policies related to safeguarding are up to date and safeguarding practices are well understood. Pupils at the college are listened to and have confidence in the adults they work with. Staff training is comprehensive and covers a wide range of risks and has also taken into account a recent difficult and challenging community issue. The college has recently employed additional staff to support actions to improve pupils' attendance and to provide support for pupils who face additional challenges in getting to college. This is helping to improve attendance rates overall. Multi-agency work is well led and coordinated to support pupils and their families in times of great need.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Most teaching is effective because teachers plan work that builds on what pupils already know and understand. In some lessons, inspectors saw a genuine excitement about learning even when the class was dealing with a challenging topic. For example, in a Year 7 English lesson that was tackling a William Blake poem, pupils responded with real enthusiasm and were all highly engaged.
- Good teaching, learning and assessment are supporting pupils' good outcomes. Lessons start briskly and pupils are quick to get involved in their learning. Pupils know what is expected of them and teachers have high expectations about pupils' behaviour and the contribution they make to the lesson.
- Good-quality professional development has enabled teachers to refine and develop their classroom practice as well as setting higher targets for pupils in order to raise their levels of knowledge and understanding.
- The college has developed, in partnership with its primary schools, a very well-considered assessment system to support assessment without levels. This has been skilfully led by senior and middle leaders, but has yet to be securely introduced across the college.
- The college's 'Tunstall Twenty' initiative makes it very clear what teaching is expected to be like in the college and also what is expected of pupils. This approach has raised the expectations of teachers and pupils alike and has secured greater consistency. Nevertheless, there is still some variation in the quality of teaching across the college, especially where there have been changes in staffing.
- The quality of pupils' presentation is mixed across both key stages. In a number of lessons, there are marked differences in the quality of handwriting and the pride in presentation between boys and girls. Some pupils cross out their mistakes and make repeated errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- The most able pupils make particularly strong progress because lessons are interesting. Teachers have worked well together to introduce the new curriculum so that the most able pupils are increasing their mastery of topics in mathematics and their knowledge and understanding in English and science.
- Pupils arrive to lessons quickly and with the correct equipment. On occasion, some pupils can work too slowly and as a result make less progress than they could.
- Regular homework reinforces what pupils have been learning in class. However, inspection evidence and parental comments indicate that it does not fully challenge and prepare pupils well enough, in some cases, for future work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The college's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils and their parents are universal in their praise for the college's work in this area.
- The importance the college places on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is clearly evident in the care and concern for all pupils' individual development and welfare. Pupils are very well supported at all stages of their education. They develop into confident and mature young people who have positive attitudes towards learning and who want to do well.
- Careers guidance is well delivered and pupils talk confidently about visits to workplaces and college providers. This is also well supported with residential trips and visits both locally and internationally that have a focus on careers opportunities in science and technology.

- Pupils understand that discrimination and bullying can take many different forms, including cyber- and homophobic bullying. Pupils talk confidently about how the college deals with issues of bullying quickly, and they feel safe in college.
- The personal development curriculum ensures that pupils are well informed about risks and know how to protect themselves. The college has adapted the programme to respond to identified needs in order to support the needs of pupils fully, and this has been well supported by the recently introduced pastoral house system, which pupils speak very positively about.
- Pupils are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles through the food offered at the college, the wide range of sporting activities on offer and through citizenship lessons and form-tutor activities. Year 10 pupils spoke very positively about their learning and the opportunities for independent research and study in a citizenship lesson that dealt with ethical issues.
- The college works with two alternative providers that are used with a very small number of pupils. Pupils are well cared for and staff are vigilant about pupils' welfare and safety. College staff check pupils' attendance, progress and safety regularly. As a result of effective work between the college and the provider, pupils' personal development and welfare have improved.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are courteous and polite and take an interest in visitors. Their conduct in lessons is usually good and any rare low-level disruptive behaviour is linked to teaching that is not well matched to pupils' needs. At breaktimes and during lunchtime, pupils remain calm and move around the college in a sensible manner.
- Pupils want to learn. They follow the instruction of their teachers and are keen to share ideas to support their learning.
- Staff and parents that responded to Ofsted's surveys all indicated that they feel the college manages behaviour well.
- The college is rigorous in its approach to managing attendance of all pupils, and staff follow up absence very quickly. As a result, attendance has improved. It is now broadly average, and persistent absence continues to fall. Leaders track and analyse attendance data well and are able to target particular groups whose attendance is low, such as disadvantaged pupils in key stage 4, more closely. However, this work is not fully secure. Punctuality to college and to lessons has significantly improved.
- The small number of pupils who attend alternative provision programmes behave well and talk positively about their learning opportunities and the courses they follow.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' progress has improved since the last inspection. Leaders' determined focus and drive have improved teaching across the college. Pupils enter the college with average levels of attainment, and pupils in different year groups currently make strong and sustained progress across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. The college has been through a period of significant change as leaders worked to raise expectations and to ensure that staffing had a positive impact on the progress of all pupils.
- Achievement in mathematics is improving but it is not as strong as in English and science. Outcomes in key stage 3 are improving more rapidly than in key stage 4, where the legacy of weaker teaching remains. Current assessments show clear signs of improvement in all year groups and indicate that the proportion of pupils on track to attain five GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics in 2016 is likely to be above the 2015 national average.
- The proportion of pupils on track to make expected or better progress in English and mathematics has improved and is now in line with that seen nationally. The college has recently completed externally marked and reviewed assessments in English, mathematics and science with other schools to standardise work and to ensure the accuracy of teachers' assessments.
- Disadvantaged pupils enter the college with levels of prior attainment well below that of other pupils. Leaders' relentless focus on this group of pupils has ensured that current performance information shows that previously wide gaps between these pupils' achievements and those of their peers are continuing to narrow quickly.

- Pupils' progress across key stage 3 and key stage 4 is much greater than it was at the time of the last inspection because teaching is more geared towards pupils reaching higher standards than previously. A scrutiny of pupils' work in the current Year 8 and Year 10 showed strong and sustained progress.
- The college provides significant support for pupils whose reading ages are below their chronological age. This includes intense support for pupils with very low levels of reading and comprehension skills. These pupils are supported well by an accelerated reading programme, which is tailored to their needs. Pupils are positive about the impact that this has had on their reading. The college's current assessment information shows that a large proportion of pupils receiving this support make rapid progress. The college promotes the importance and value of reading, and Year 7 pupils have been involved in a world-record reading event.
- Most pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making progress that is as good as that of others in the college. However, in some lessons observed by inspectors, not all teachers engaged teaching assistants to their best advantage or took into account the starting points of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- In the college's independent learning unit, 'The Hub', pupils' learning needs are clearly identified and supported well by skilled teachers and effectively deployed teaching assistants. This enables pupils to make good progress and supports them in their other, timetabled lessons.
- The most able pupils make good progress overall and many are now attaining the highest grades possible in science and also in English, information and communication technology and physical education. They engage well in lessons and talk confidently about moving on to post-16 colleges and into future employment.
- The proportion of pupils that secure sustained places in further education, employment or training is in line with that seen nationally. Most pupils transfer to local further education colleges or move to other sixth forms. Pupils also spoke about accessing apprenticeship courses as a result of the college's work to promote their understanding of opportunities in science and technology.

School details

Unique reference number	111748
Local authority	Hartlepool
Inspection number	10002544

This inspection 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	961
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marion Agar
Headteacher	Mark Tilling
Telephone number	01429 261446
Website	www.htcs.org.uk
Email address	htadmin@hightunstall.hartlepool.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–5 June 2014

Information about this school

- High Tunstall College of Science is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. Almost all pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils entitled to support through the pupil premium (additional government funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children looked after by the local authority) is average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.
- There is a specialist resource unit for up to 20 pupils with medical and physical needs and autistic spectrum disorder, known as 'The Base'.
- A very small number of pupils attend vocational courses off site at The Welly at the Throston Youth Centre.
- A small number of pupils are educated off site at the Hartlepool Pupil Referral Unit.
- The college meets statutory requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The college meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- There have been many changes to staffing since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 42 part-lessons, a number of which observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. During these observations, inspectors sampled pupils' books and talked to pupils in order to evaluate the quality of current work.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work in workbooks and folders was undertaken alongside senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, governors and also the local authority and school improvement partner.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including information on pupils' outcomes, the college's self-evaluation, monitoring records, improvement planning, minutes of meetings, behaviour and attendance records, and records relating to safeguarding and child protection.
- Inspectors took note of recent external reviews of the college's performance.
- Discussions were held with groups of pupils about the quality of their educational experience and the standard of behaviour in lessons and around the college.
- Inspectors took account of the 46 responses to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) and the 31 staff online questionnaires.

Inspection team

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