

Thomas Hepburn Community Academy

Swards Road, Felling, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE10 9UZ

Inspection dates

29–30 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Over time, leaders and managers have failed to ensure that all pupils make enough progress in their learning. The progress of almost all pupils in 2015 and 2016 was inadequate.
- Teachers do not use information about pupils' prior achievement to plan their learning. This means that teachers do not meet the needs of individuals, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, speak English as an additional language and pupils who are the most able.
- Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum allows pupils to learn well about spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. Consequently, some pupils are not developing skills for life in modern Britain or learning to behave with respect for other people well enough.
- Attendance is below the national average, particularly for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who are disadvantaged. The level of persistent absence is well above the national average.
- Until recently, systems for quality assurance and holding teachers and leaders to account were not good enough. Governors did not provide enough challenge to school leaders to ensure improvement.
- Pupils who have been absent from school do not catch up on the work that they have missed. This leads to gaps in their learning, which prevents them from making good progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The newly appointed executive principal and senior leaders know the school. They accurately and swiftly identify areas for improvement. Action planning is secure and they are rapidly overhauling strategies and implementing much-improved systems to improve quality across all areas of the school.
- Almost all staff support the changes that are taking place and all staff believe that the school is well led and managed.
- The impact of the work of senior leaders and the support from the trust are beginning to improve the quality of teaching and learning, the progress pupils are making and the behaviour of pupils in lessons and around school.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that the outcomes of the pupil premium review are analysed and assessed for the impact on improving pupils' outcomes, and evidence is used to carefully plan future spending to enable pupils to make better progress.
- Improve outcomes for all groups of pupils by:
 - improving attendance so that persistent absence significantly decreases and attendance rates are at least in line with the national average
 - improving the quality of teaching and learning so that teaching leads to pupils making strong progress and achieving well
 - making sure that when pupils are absent, they catch up on all work missed so that they do not have any gaps in their learning and can make good progress
 - ensuring that all pupils, including those in key stage 3, have access to good-quality careers advice and guidance so that they can make informed choices for their futures.
- Improve the quality of provision for all pupils, but especially those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, speak English as an additional language and those who are the most able by ensuring that:
 - systems for identifying needs are improved and pupils are identified across all year groups so that teachers can effectively target additional support in lessons
 - expectations are raised for what pupils can achieve
 - teachers use all available information to plan learning that challenges pupils to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Improve personal development, behaviour and welfare by ensuring that:
 - an effective programme for personal, social, health and economic education is in place that develops British values and life skills for all young people
 - all pupils develop a respect for each other and for their teachers to improve behaviour.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Additional funds, such as pupil premium funding and catch-up funding, which leaders use to enable pupils who are disadvantaged or who are behind, to catch up, have been used ineffectively. Pupils who are eligible for this funding are making the same poor progress as their peers. A spending review is under way, using expertise from across the trust. School leaders are already implementing tried and tested strategies from similar schools to raise attainment and improve progress for disadvantaged pupils. However, it is too soon to see the full impact of these strategies.
- Leaders know that the current curriculum does not ensure that pupils have enough opportunity to develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. This is in part owing to the removal of form time due to the poor behaviour of pupils.
- Leaders do not have an appropriate system to accurately identify pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Consequently, leaders miss identifying some pupils who need additional support, which prevents pupils from making the progress of which they are capable. Additional funds for these pupils have not been well spent to improve their progress.
- Leaders are delivering high-quality training sessions to improve the quality of teaching at the school and there are early signs of impact on pupils' progress, for example, in pupils' commitment to improving their work in some subjects such as English and science. In other respects, it is too soon to see whether training has successfully improved teaching and learning.
- Pastoral leaders know their pupils well. Using the new system for monitoring behaviour, leaders are able to intervene quickly to ensure that more pupils have the right support to improve their behaviour and remain in lessons. This is having the most impact on younger pupils who are not as resistant to change.
- The majority of middle leaders have the skills to help teachers in their subject areas to improve the quality of teaching. They are beginning to support teachers in using the new information systems to plan appropriate learning for all pupils. The improvements are starting to be seen, particularly in English and science.
- Teachers are in full support of the changes the leadership team is making. Teachers feel that the school is well led and managed.
- It is recommended that the school does not appoint newly qualified teachers at this time.

Governance of the school

- The trust took action to form an interim executive board and commissioned a review of the spending of additional funds, using expertise from across the trust. The interim executive board now has specific responsibilities related to its areas of expertise. Governors are linked to individual members of the senior leadership team in order to better hold them to account for their work.

- Working with the skilled executive principal, the governors have ensured that appropriate support is in place from across the trust to quicken the pace in improving the school, for example by providing support for leadership development.
- Governors are closely monitoring the impact of support for middle leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator role. They have brokered external support, for example in commissioning external reviews and a safeguarding audit. This is helping school leaders to evaluate the school's work and strengthening improvement planning.
- The governors ensure that the executive principal's achievement partner effectively challenges her. This allows her to evaluate successes and carefully plan the next steps in school improvement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The single central record is compliant.
- The executive principal is highly knowledgeable, experienced and skilled in safeguarding, as is the designated lead for safeguarding. She acknowledges that there are areas of best practice in safeguarding still to embed into the school.
- There is a culture of safeguarding in school. Staff training is up to date and staff are able to explain confidently how they would deal with safeguarding issues.
- Pupils are safe at school and they say that they feel safe. Pupils say that bullying is rare and they are confident that staff deal well with instances that occur.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teachers do not use information about pupils' needs to plan appropriately for learning. This is particularly evident for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language. This limits the progress these pupils make, as they cannot access some of the tasks as well as their peers, and overall they make inadequate progress. Recent improvements to school information systems are now equipping teachers with the information they need to improve this.
- Some teachers are not clear enough about what they expect pupils to do. As a result, some pupils do not know how to complete their work, which leads them to make little or no progress. Leaders of teaching and learning are aware of this and are implementing appropriate professional development for teachers who need it.
- Most teachers do not challenge the most able pupils to make good progress. This is because teachers do not plan well for their ability. Where teaching is stronger, teachers challenge the most able by asking difficult questions and giving tasks appropriate to their ability. This is not consistent across the school and as a result, the most able pupils make the same inadequate progress as their peers.
- When pupils return from absence, there is little expectation for them to catch up on missing work. This means that they have gaps in their knowledge and cannot successfully build on their knowledge from a firm foundation.

- Teachers are not sufficiently aspirational for all pupils. They settle too often for incomplete work or work of a poor standard. In English and science, however, this is not the case because teachers are raising their expectations.
- Some teachers lack the skills to be able to reshape the lesson according to the needs of the pupils. This means that some pupils struggle to keep up and teachers' explanations do not help them with their understanding. Consequently, pupils make inadequate progress.
- Pupils say that since September 2016, they feel that their teachers are teaching them more and some teachers give them a greater variety of things to do, which helps them to stay interested in their learning. This is evident in work in books in English.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Teachers from different subject areas occasionally teach personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education in lessons. Opportunities for this are limited, so pupils are not learning enough to prepare them fully for life in modern Britain. Leaders deliver some assemblies, which support the development of British values, such as the recent assembly about Remembrance Day. Pupils are beginning to develop their knowledge of their roles as responsible citizens with respect for the views of others.
- The recent development of 'Aspirations' lessons, which take place for Year 7 and Year 8 pupils, addresses issues such as bullying and e-safety. As a result of this planned programme, pupils in these year groups know how they can keep themselves safe. Older pupils do not have as much knowledge about keeping themselves safe because they do not have these lessons. Leaders have given insufficient attention to developing the curriculum so that they acquire this knowledge.
- The majority of pupils have a positive attitude to learning but a significant number of pupils purposely disrupt learning for themselves and others, which leads to the loss of valuable learning time.
- Pupils are taking more pride in their work and presentation is improving, as is their standard of uniform. This is due to teachers' higher expectations of what is required and is acceptable. Where uniform falls below expectations, staff are consistently tackling it.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- A significant number of pupils do not show respect for each other or for staff. Some pupils do not respond quickly and some do not respond at all to staff instructions. Some pupils are not supportive of each other.

- Not all teachers tackle pupils who are off task. This leads to disruption in learning and a lack of progress. The new behaviour policy, however, is enabling teachers to improve this and they are becoming more confident in tackling poor behaviour. So far this year, disruptions to learning are less frequent than in the last academic year.
- In lessons where teaching does not capture the interest of pupils, behaviour is poor. This leads to pupils being unmotivated and unwilling to try their best, which in turn limits the progress that they make.
- Exclusion rates are higher than national averages and are not declining. This is partly due to the raised expectations for behaviour since September 2016.
- Most pupils move calmly around the school site as they travel from lesson to lesson and they behave well during social time. This is because the large number of staff present deal swiftly with issues if they arise.
- Pupils say unreservedly that behaviour has improved since September 2016. They say that the 'whole school has changed completely' and that this is because 'leaders are stricter and have high expectations of us and for us'. They acknowledge that there is still work to do, but are pleased with the impact that the new school leaders are having on improving behaviour.
- Attendance remains too low and persistent absence remains too high, especially for pupils who are disadvantaged and for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Pupils accessing alternative provision have improved their attendance and behaviour, which is allowing them to make progress in their learning.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Over time, all pupils, regardless of their starting points, make inadequate progress in almost all subjects. Since the new executive principal took up post, work in books is showing signs of better progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make inadequate progress. They perform considerably less well than other pupils with similar starting points over time. This is because previously, the spending of additional funding has not been evaluated for impact on improving outcomes, and leaders continued with the same strategies, some of which were ineffective.
- The provision for pupils who enter the school needing to catch up has not been effective enough in mathematics. The spending of catch-up funding has not secured the progress that these pupils need to make. As a result, these pupils make inadequate progress in mathematics.
- Pupils who are the most able make inadequate progress over time because there is insufficient challenge in their learning and expectations are not high enough for them. In books, however, most-able pupils are beginning to respond well when teachers challenge them. This allows them to deepen their learning.
- In the last academic year, progress improved for pupils in English but remains well below the government's floor standards.

- Pupils have access to careers information during key stage 4 but not during key stage 3. Consequently, pupils are not fully aware of opportunities for their future, and make uninformed decisions when selecting their options at the end of key stage 3. A much higher proportion of pupils than nationally do not progress into education, employment or training. Leaders have ensured that careers education for all year groups is built into the new PSHE education programme to help to prepare them better for the next stage of their lives.
- Outcomes for pupils attending alternative provision are more positive. Pupils make good progress in functional skills subjects, including English and mathematics.

School details

Unique reference number	140035
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	10019694

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	477
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Mr L Walton
Executive principal	Ms J Nolan
Telephone number	0191 4204555
Website	www.thomashepburnacademy.org
Email address	enquiries@thomashepburn.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about pupil premium funding and catch-up funding.
- The school is a member of the Northern Education Trust, a multi-academy trust.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is increasing in the school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is over twice the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average.

- The school currently has a small number of pupils attending alternative provision. The providers they use are REALAC, Ferndene and Heworth Hall.
- The school did not meet the government's floor standards in 2014 or 2015.
- The executive principal has been in post since September 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 part-lessons across a range of subjects, in all year groups. Six observations of learning were carried out jointly with school leaders. Inspectors also carried out learning walks and behaviour walks and visited alternative provision used by the school. Inspectors scrutinised pupils’ work in detail alongside school leaders. Inspectors listened to a sample of pupils read, including some of the most able pupils.
- Meetings and discussions were held with pupils, middle leaders, senior leaders, teaching staff, the executive principal and governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of 13 responses to Parent View, 33 responses to the staff questionnaire and 11 responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- The inspection team scrutinised a range of documentation including: the school’s website; the school’s self-evaluation and development plans; records relating to pupils’ behaviour and attendance; the school’s own information and data relating to pupils’ achievement and the quality of teaching; and minutes from meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, and associated policies and procedures, including checks on the suitability of staff.

Inspection team

Debbie Redshaw, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Shelley Heseltine	Ofsted Inspector
Judith James	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017