

Boldon School

New Road, Boldon Colliery, Tyne and Wear NE35 9DZ

Inspection dates

3–4 May 2017

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not taken sufficiently rapid action to secure consistently good teaching across the school. Not enough pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are making the good progress of which they are capable in a range of subjects, including science, humanities and modern foreign languages.
- Leaders, including some middle leaders, are too generous in the evaluation of the impact of their work. While they can identify strengths in teaching, they do not take enough account of the impact of teaching over time on the outcomes achieved by pupils.
- Some of the targets set by leaders are not ambitious enough to secure rapid improvement. Plans do not focus precisely on improving the progress of key groups of pupils. As a result, governors do not hold leaders to account rigorously for improving the achievement of groups of pupils.
- Teaching is too variable. Some teachers' expectations of what pupils, including the most able, can achieve are not high enough.
- Teachers do not always set work that challenges pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, to make the best-possible progress.
- Leaders have not improved poor attendance quickly enough. Absence overall, and persistent absence, remains high, especially for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders do not monitor the impact of their work to ensure pupils' welfare and personal development accurately. Some pupils do not demonstrate an age-appropriate understanding of some fundamental British values.
- A small minority of pupils do not display consistently strong attitudes to learning.

The school has the following strengths

- The vast majority of pupils conduct themselves well in classrooms and around the school. Pupils enjoy school and the range of opportunities on offer to them.
- The proportion of pupils who progress to education, employment or training when they leave the school has improved and is above the national average.
- Leaders have significantly improved pupils' punctuality. Few pupils are late to school.
- Pastoral support to help the most vulnerable pupils, including those with social, emotional and mental health needs, to overcome barriers to their learning is highly effective.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance by:
 - ensuring that plans to improve the school include precise and ambitious targets to secure rapid increases in the outcomes achieved by pupils, including those who are disadvantaged
 - making sure that leaders, including middle leaders, take full account of the outcomes achieved by all groups of pupils when they check and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning
 - establishing robust systems to analyse and evaluate the impact of leaders' work, including the impact of the curriculum on pupils' personal development and welfare
 - ensuring that governors provide robust challenge to leaders for the progress of different groups of pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it secures consistently good outcomes for pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those who are eligible for support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities, by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can and should achieve, particularly in science, humanities and modern foreign languages
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment information to plan and teach lessons which challenge pupils at the correct level
 - making sure that teachers use questioning effectively to deepen and extend pupils' learning, particularly the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve the personal development and behaviour of pupils by:
 - improving the attendance and reducing the persistent absence of pupils, in particular disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - ensuring that pupils have a well-developed understanding of fundamental British values and demonstrate tolerance towards others
 - supporting all pupils to develop the strong attitudes to learning which will enable them to achieve well.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The actions taken by leaders since the previous inspection have not been effective in ensuring that teaching secures consistently good outcomes for pupils. In 2016, Year 11 pupils made too little progress from their starting points. Current pupils are not making consistently strong progress, particularly in science, humanities and modern foreign languages.
- Leaders have not ensured that disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, are making strong progress. Leaders' use of the pupil premium funding has resulted in some improvement to pupils' academic outcomes, as well as their behaviour and the extra-curricular opportunities they access. However, disadvantaged pupils are still not achieving well enough. Leaders and governors do not evaluate the impact that strategies have on pupils' achievement with sufficient precision.
- Plans for improvement focus on the correct priorities needed to improve the school. However, some targets set are not ambitious enough to secure rapid improvement. Plans do not focus sufficiently on accelerating the progress of groups of pupils who are not doing well enough, such as disadvantaged pupils, the most able disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils.
- Leaders are clear that discrimination and prejudice is not acceptable in school and staff act promptly to address any concerns that pupils raise. However, leaders, including governors, have not evaluated the impact of the curriculum to promote tolerance and respect and to instil the values which are essential in modern Britain. They have not recognised that there is more to do to ensure that all pupils show a consistently positive and tolerant attitude to those who choose a lifestyle which is different to their own.
- Leaders, including middle leaders, regularly check on the quality of teaching and provide helpful feedback to teachers on their strengths and aspects for development. This has resulted in improvements to the quality of teaching and the attainment and progress of pupils in some subject areas. For example, the proportion of pupils reaching a good pass in GCSE English has risen over time. However, leaders do not take enough account of the progress made by different groups of learners from their own starting points when judging the impact of teaching over time. As a result, some leaders have an overly positive view of the impact of their work on improving teaching.
- Staffing instability has been a major concern for leaders. They acknowledge that having temporary teachers has contributed negatively to pupils' outcomes in some classes. Leaders are working hard to ensure that pupils receive a more consistent level of teaching. In mathematics, this academic year, the newly established, stable staffing team is improving progress for pupils across different year groups.
- The school's provision and support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities within 'The Hive' is a strength because it provides well-targeted care and support. However, funding for special educational needs and/or disabilities is not yet securing consistently strong progress from all pupils across the school who are eligible for support.

- The leaders for English and mathematics have increased the school's capacity to improve. These leaders are using their skills to tackle underperformance in geography and modern foreign languages and there are early indications that this work is beginning to bear fruit.
- Leaders have taken appropriate steps to improve the breadth of the curriculum. They recognise that previously it was not fit for purpose and contributed to pupils' low rates of achievement. The curriculum now offers a broad range of subjects, allowing pupils to choose what interests them and what will prepare them for the next stage of their education, employment or training.
- The curriculum is underpinned by a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, such as a trip to Auschwitz, a range of sporting activities, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and school theatrical performances. Pupils appreciate these extra opportunities and the efforts of staff to make them happen.
- The headteacher and the senior leadership team have increased their expectations of pupils' conduct in and around school and have ensured that all staff share those high expectations. The impact of this work can be seen in the significant improvements in the behaviour of pupils and the reduction in fixed-term exclusions since January 2017.
- Leaders have successfully used the Year 7 catch-up funding. Year 7 pupils benefit from specialist literacy and numeracy programmes that help them to make better progress. The school also continues this work with pupils in Years 8 and 9, consolidating their skills further.
- The school has been supported effectively by two local secondary schools to improve provision in some subject areas. The headteacher and governors value the support and challenge that the school receives from a local authority adviser, particularly in relation to providing departmental reviews and developing the capacity of leaders and governors.

Governance of the school

- Governors are committed to promoting an inclusive and nurturing environment for the most vulnerable pupils. They have deployed additional resources, in response to requests from leaders, to create 'The Hive', which is supporting some pupils to make better progress and overcome barriers to their learning.
- Governors are keen to access external support to ensure that they have the skills they need to improve the school. They secured the services of an adviser to support the work of senior leaders and the governing body. This has helped the school to improve aspects of its work, such as a review of mathematics which has helped leaders accelerate progress in this subject.
- The records of meetings of the governing body demonstrate that they regularly ask members of the senior leadership team and heads of faculty to provide them with updates on their work. Governors are aware that they need to improve their skills so that they can challenge leaders about the progress of groups of pupils across the school and in a wider range of subject areas.
- On occasion, governors have accepted leaders' responses to their questions too readily. For example, governors are not fully aware of how strategies implemented using the

pupil premium funding have had an impact on outcomes for eligible pupils. They have not probed leaders' explanations rigorously enough.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has meticulous and rigorous procedures in place for child protection. Staff have been well trained in safeguarding issues, for example radicalisation and child sexual exploitation, and know what to do if they feel a child is at risk.
- Leaders engage appropriately with parents, carers and other agencies to make sure that all pupils are safe. In particular, they are tenacious in following up concerns about pupils with the local authority and are not afraid to take a lead role in securing the appropriate package of external support for pupils and families who are experiencing challenging times.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum gives pupils a good understanding of key issues which may affect their safety, such as substance and alcohol misuse and the importance of staying safe online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is too variable across different year groups, subjects and classes. As a consequence, pupils do not make consistently strong gains in their learning and progress.
- Teachers do not use the wealth of assessment information available to plan learning that develops and consolidates pupils' knowledge and understanding consistently. As a consequence, in some classes, pupils, including the most able and those who are eligible for support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities, are not challenged well enough to make rapid progress. In a few circumstances, pupils, mainly boys, lose interest, distracting others from their learning.
- The use of questioning is variable. Where it is used effectively, teachers' expectations of the quality of pupils' responses are high and questioning enables pupils to deepen their understanding and extend their knowledge. However, some teachers do not use questioning to probe and challenge pupils well enough. This is particularly the case for the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Teaching, although inconsistent, is gradually improving in science, humanities and modern foreign languages and pupils are generally making better progress than they did last year. This is because of extensive support from school leaders and an external adviser. Senior leaders acknowledge there is still more work to do in these areas to secure good outcomes for pupils over time.
- In mathematics, teaching is improving. This is because staffing is now stable and because the head of department has introduced a new, more ambitious, scheme of work. Assessments have been moderated, internally and in partnership with other schools, so that leaders know they are accurate. This information has been used to identify underperforming pupils and to put in place appropriate support. A comprehensive analysis has been completed with current Year 11 pupils so that they

know what to revise and what to practise in preparation for their examinations.

- Teaching in English is improving and is securing some of the best outcomes within the school. Pupils are confidently and successfully developing and applying knowledge, understanding and skills over time. Teachers in English encourage pupils to explain their thinking carefully and to justify their ideas. This was evident in a Year 11 middle-ability English lesson where the teacher did not accept the pupils' first responses and invited other pupils to extend and build on the initial response of other pupils.
- Teaching assistants are very effective in supporting the pupils with whom they are working. For example, in a Year 8 mathematics lesson, a group of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities were helped by a teaching assistant who demonstrated good subject knowledge, and who facilitated pupils to solve problems for themselves.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- In the main, pupils get on with their learning in class and follow instructions from adults well. However, some pupils do not have the positive attitudes they need to learn well and make fast progress. For example, pupils are sometimes reluctant to give responses to questions and contribute to class discussions.
- Pupils indicate that bullying is rare and most speak positively about the inclusive nature of the school. However, during the inspection, a few pupils commented on other pupils' use of derogatory language in relation to pupils who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT). Leaders are clear that this is unacceptable and are undertaking work with a group of pupils to develop the curriculum to promote more tolerant attitudes.
- Pupils learn about British values. However, values such as respect for others and tolerance are not instilled in the words and actions of all pupils.
- Pupils state that they feel safe in school, and that they know how to stay safe. They are aware of the risks that are prevalent in society, such as drug and alcohol misuse. Leaders have an honest and open approach to these issues. Pupils feel able to report concerns to staff.
- Pupils who benefit from additional support from the pastoral team, to assist them to overcome barriers to learning, speak with warmth and appreciation about the help they receive. Provision through 'The Hive' supports all aspects of pupils' personal development and is enabling those who attend to make better progress.
- Pupils in key stage 4 are provided with impartial advice, information and guidance about their future careers. Pupils know who to speak to for support and are developing an appropriate understanding of the range of career options open to them. A higher-than-average proportion of pupils who left the school in 2016 went on to further education, employment or training.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The proportion of pupils who are absent from school is above the national average, including for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The persistent absence of pupils is stubbornly high. Leaders have taken action to improve the attendance of pupils. While this is beginning to make a difference to some pupils, leaders recognise there is much more to do to reduce absence so that no pupil is disadvantaged by low attendance.
- When teaching does not challenge or sustain the interest of pupils, the behaviour of a few pupils deteriorates. This year, leaders have introduced a new, more systematic approach to tackling inappropriate behaviour. Staff and pupils report the positive difference they have seen as a result of this. The number of incidents of misbehaviour has reduced significantly since the new policy was introduced in January 2017. Leaders recognise there is still work to do to secure consistently positive behaviour and attitudes to learning from all pupils.
- Over time, the proportion of pupils excluded from the school on a fixed-term basis has been too high. Leaders have taken action and introduced 'assessment placements' at 'The Hive' to work with pupils at risk of exclusion. This is enabling adults to get to grips with any issues contributing to pupils' inappropriate behaviour. While exclusions remain above the national average, leaders can demonstrate that this work is beginning to make a difference in reducing the numbers of pupils who are excluded from school.
- Pupils are polite and courteous to staff and visitors and conduct themselves well outside of lessons. Movement around the school is orderly. The school is a calm and welcoming place.
- Pupils are punctual to their lessons. Leaders have taken highly effective action to increase the consequences of arriving late to school or to lessons. As a result, the instances of lateness have reduced significantly this academic year.
- A small group of pupils attend an alternative provision, two days per week. Pupils enjoy and benefit from this because it is providing them with the skills they need to be successful in the future.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over time, leaders have secured an increase in the attainment of pupils, with increasing proportions of pupils achieving a good pass in GCSE English and mathematics. However, the progress achieved by pupils from their starting points remains inconsistent.
- In 2016, Year 11 pupils did not make good enough progress from their starting points across a range of subjects, particularly in mathematics, science and humanities. The progress made by disadvantaged pupils and the most able was particularly weak in a range of subjects. As a result, some pupils were not prepared well enough for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- In 2016, Year 11 pupils made better progress in English than in mathematics. Current

school assessment information indicates pupils of all ability groups, particularly the most able, are making stronger progress in mathematics than was previously the case.

- Work in pupils' books indicates that across a range of subjects, in both key stages, disadvantaged pupils' progress, while improving, remains too variable. This is because teaching is not consistently good. In subjects where teaching is stronger, for example in English, art and technology, disadvantaged pupils make better progress.
- The school's own assessment information, for pupils currently on roll, shows that both attainment and progress are steadily improving in a range of subjects. However, there is still more to do to ensure that teaching secures consistently good outcomes in all subjects and in all year groups, particularly in science, geography and modern foreign languages, for all pupils.
- Year 11 pupils who were eligible for support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities made significantly less progress, from their own starting points, than other pupils nationally in 2016. Leaders are aware of this and have a wide range of support in place to help pupils to achieve well. This is benefiting some pupils who are clearly making accelerated progress due to the high-quality intervention they are receiving. However, leaders acknowledge that there is more to do to ensure that progress for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is consistently strong across the school.
- Those pupils who are attending alternative provision are making the progress expected of them in the subjects they are studying. Leaders keep a careful check on pupils' progress to ensure that the provision meets their needs.
- Pupils who arrive in the school with low literacy skills, for example in reading, are effectively supported to catch up. The reading age of most of these pupils quickly improves following targeted intervention.

School details

Unique reference number	108730
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	10031996

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	570
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Berry
Headteacher	Elizabeth Hayes
Telephone number	0191 536 2176
Website	http://boldonschool.com/
Email address	admin@boldonschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 March 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than an average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is low.
- The school did not meet the government's floor standard in 2016.
- A small group of pupils attend a part-time alternative provision at the Wheels Project. These pupils remain on roll at Boldon School.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a wide range of subjects and across both key stages. Two sessions of learning were observed jointly with senior staff. Inspectors scrutinised current learning in pupils' workbooks.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, governors and other staff. Telephone meetings were conducted with the school's adviser and the former director of children's services for South Tyneside.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils from key stages 3 and 4. The lead inspector also met with the school's student council.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation report, the school development plan, the single central register of checks on the suitability of adults to work with children, and published performance information.
- An inspector also visited the alternative provision, Wheels Project, which the school uses for a small group of pupils.
- Inspectors considered the 31 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire. Survey responses from 21 pupils and 43 members of staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Darren Stewart, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Claire Brown	Her Majesty's Inspector
Deano Wright	Her Majesty's Inspector
Bernard Senior	Ofsted Inspector

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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.

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