

Haydon Bridge Community High School and Sports College

Haydon Bridge, Hexham, Northumberland NE47 6LR

Inspection dates

20–21 March 2018

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| Overall effectiveness | Inadequate |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Inadequate |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Inadequate |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Requires improvement |
| Outcomes for pupils | Inadequate |
| 16 to 19 study programmes | Requires improvement |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Inadequate |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Pupils' achievement over time is poor in a wide range of subjects, including core subjects, humanities and modern foreign languages. Pupils from their different starting points do not make the progress they should.
- Systems to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding are under-developed. Leaders, at all levels, do not have an accurate picture of how well pupils achieve. Self-evaluation of the school's performance is over-generous.
- Most teachers do not use information about pupils' prior attainment to inform their planning. Consequently, learning activities are often too difficult, or too easy, for a significant majority of pupils, including those pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress remains weak across the curriculum and shows little sign of improvement.
- The interim executive board (IEB) does not provide leaders with the support or challenge they need. Their focus is too narrow. As a result, the IEB neglects some key aspects of their statutory responsibilities.
- Leaders' plans to address the weaknesses in school lack precision. They incorporate many relevant actions, but plans lack the strategic oversight needed to accelerate improvements.
- Attendance rates are improving but remain below average. In addition, disadvantaged pupils remain more likely to be absent, or persistently absent, than their peers.
- Although improving, the quality of pupils' behaviour remains variable. The proportion of pupils excluded for a fixed period is above average. Boys account for the very large majority of exclusions.

The school has the following strengths

- Subject leadership in some departments is beginning to improve provision, for example in English.
- Improved teaching in the sixth form is leading to stronger outcomes. Students are supported well for their next steps after school.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently address the serious weaknesses in the leadership and management of the school by:
 - ensuring that the IEB stringently holds leaders to account and provides the necessary strategic direction to improve teaching, learning and assessment and pupil outcomes, including in the sixth form
 - amending plans designed to improve the school so that unambiguous links exist between targets, actions, responsibilities and deadlines
 - making sure that leaders at all levels hold staff to account for their work
 - robustly monitoring all aspects of the school's work with a focus on the impact of activities on outcomes for pupils
 - analysing the impact of the spending of additional funds to support disadvantaged pupils so that leaders have a thorough understanding of the strategies that work and those that do not
 - supporting middle leaders to ensure that they are effective in their roles
 - reviewing staff training to ensure consistency in the application of all school policies.
- Improve teaching so that progress rapidly improves for pupils in English, mathematics, science, humanities and modern foreign languages, including for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, by:
 - refining school assessment systems so that data is accurate and provides teachers with useful information about pupils' attainment
 - improving the information teachers receive relating to all pupils, particularly those who have SEN and/or disabilities, so that they can plan to meet each pupil's additional, and individual, needs
 - ensuring that support is introduced swiftly when a pupil is identified as underachieving
 - making sure that all teachers follow the school's assessment policy
 - ensuring that teachers provide challenge and extend pupils' learning from their different starting points
 - developing teachers' use of questioning to enable them to assess pupils' understanding accurately.

- Continue to improve pupils' attendance and behaviour by:
 - decreasing persistent absenteeism further, particularly for pupils who are disadvantaged
 - improving rates of attendance so that they are at least in line with the national average
 - reducing the proportion of pupils who are excluded for a fixed term, especially boys.

External reviews of governance and of the use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders, including the IEB, have been unable to eradicate the significant inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment identified at the inspection in 2014 and at subsequent monitoring visits. At present, the senior leadership team does not have the capacity to deal with all the urgent matters that require their focus. Consequently, many of the key areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection remain.
- Leaders' plans to address key weaknesses in school are not fit for purpose. The IEB and staff do not know the role they play in achieving each target. In addition, plans lack precision. For example, targets do not link to specific actions, nor are the actions assigned to particular staff or given a deadline for completion. Consequently, leaders' plans are not contributing effectively to school improvement.
- Leaders, including the IEB, do not use additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils effectively. The IEB does not robustly hold leaders to account for their spending in this regard. Leaders do not know which strategies are having the most impact and so they continue to do 'more of the same' with different cohorts. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils' progress is poor in a wide range of subjects.
- Leaders monitor the work of staff regularly. They hold fortnightly meetings with subject leaders and set priorities for improvement based on pupils' assessment information. However, inspection evidence demonstrates that school assessment information is inaccurate. As a result, leaders sometimes have an over-generous view of the quality of education in the school and priorities for improvement are misdirected.
- A local teaching school provides appropriate support and training to a small group of staff. Teachers value the opportunity to observe effective practitioners. Staff told inspectors that it was helping to improve their knowledge and skills in the classroom. Other staff training has been less effective. It has not had a positive enough impact on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in school. This is because training has not met the needs of different members of staff or addressed the main weaknesses in teaching.
- Many subject leaders are new to the school. Some have had an immediate effect on improving the quality of education in their subject department, including in English. However, a minority of new and more established subject leaders do not provide effective leadership or hold others to account. This acts as a barrier to further improvement.
- Despite significant financial constraints, the design of the curriculum allows pupils the opportunity to study most subjects, including subjects that link closely to the rural context of the school. A wide range of extra-curricular activities complements the academic curriculum. Leaders ensure that pupils are able to access all after-school activities by providing additional transport home.
- Pupils, most staff and parents hold the principal in high esteem. They acknowledge that he is beginning to improve aspects of the school under very difficult

circumstances. He has started to introduce much-needed stability since his appointment in 2017.

- The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- Governance of the school is not effective.
- Since its formation, members of the IEB have worked hard to accomplish their core aim of facilitating the transfer of the school to become an academy. The process has been drawn out and ultimately unsuccessful. During this time, school leaders have not received the support or challenge they have needed to improve the school significantly.
- Members of the IEB do not fully contribute to the strategic direction of the school or hold leaders to account for the educational performance of all pupils. They are too accepting of leaders' views and, like leaders, have an over-optimistic view of the quality of education that the school provides.
- Members of the IEB have requested that they relinquish their statutory responsibilities and, as such, further uncertainty hangs over the school. The capacity to secure further improvement is poor.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The leadership of safeguarding in the school has improved recently. Since his appointment 18 months ago, the designated safeguarding leader has introduced a number of new systems to ensure that pupils receive the care that they need. Safeguarding records are detailed and staff receive regular safeguarding updates and training.
- Leaders make appropriate checks to ensure that staff are safe to work with pupils. Five members of staff support the leader of safeguarding to carry out his duties. Staff are aware of who to speak to if they have a concern about a pupil. Similarly, pupils say that they know who to report any issues to and that staff support them effectively.
- Well-designed personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons help pupils to understand how to stay safe. In addition, leaders regularly welcome professionals into school so that pupils can share concerns with experts. Pupils say that this helps them to overcome a number of personal issues.
- Pupils are safe during school hours. Staff supervise them well during lessons and at break and lunchtime. Leaders ensure that they mitigate the risks associated with movement between lessons and sites by conducting regular 'risk assessments'. Consequently, staff now supervise pupils when they need to cross the road to 'The Lodge' for lessons.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- For too long, poorly planned teaching has led to inadequate outcomes for pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is highly variable across the school. Overall, in mathematics and humanities it is weak. In both subjects, teachers often provide pupils with learning activities that are too easy and not matched to their needs. Because they 'get everything right', pupils in these subjects believe that they are doing well. This is not the case.
- Classes are often taught in mixed-ability groups, where pupils have many different starting points. Some classes include pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. However, teachers rarely consider information about pupils' additional and specific needs when planning lessons. Consequently, pupils in need of support do not always receive it. Similarly, the most able are seldom pushed to achieve more. They regularly find learning activities too easy and, as a result, do not make good progress.
- Teachers do not consistently follow the school's new assessment policy. Leaders' checks have not identified that teachers are unclear about the school's expectations related to assessment and feedback. Consequently, the quality of feedback pupils receive varies depending on which teacher they have.
- There is no shared approach to assessing pupils' achievement across different subject areas. Consequently, when teachers record pupils' results in the school's management information systems, the cumulative results are not comparable. Therefore, leaders' analysis of pupils' attainment and progress is not accurate. Notwithstanding this, senior and subject leaders meet every other week to discuss the progress of pupils and implement strategies designed to support those who are falling behind. However, senior leaders do not ensure that these strategies are shared and implemented fully by each member of staff. Consequently, levels of additional pupil support vary between subject areas.
- Pupils' enthusiasm and engagement varies between lessons and depends on the learning activity or teacher. Most are compliant and do as the teacher asks. When pupils are required to work in groups, they work in partnership and listen to each other's ideas. For example, in a Year 9 art lesson pupils were given a design brief to build a 'walking man' from clay, similar to that of the sculptor Alberto Giacometti. Pupils quickly organised roles and responsibilities and they successfully identified the need to build a large base so that the sculpture would remain upright.
- Teachers do not use questions effectively to assess pupils' understanding in lessons. Sometimes the questions already contain the answer or are too simple. Teachers rarely use questions to probe pupils' understanding further. They are too accepting when a pupil says that they 'do not know'. Likewise, when a pupil asks a question of a teacher, the response they receive is sometimes overly complicated and confusing for the pupil. For example, in a Year 7 geography lesson a pupil asked the teacher if any humans lived on the Galapagos Islands. The teacher's response included the words 'natives' and 'indigenous'. However, during discussions with the inspector, pupils said that they did not understand the words or know if a human population lived on the islands.
- Teaching is strengthening in the sixth form and in English, business studies, art, physical education and health and social care. In these subjects, teaching increasingly features better challenge due to teachers making more effective use of assessment

information.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Inspection evidence demonstrates that bullying does occur occasionally. However, the vast majority of pupils who responded to Ofsted's inspection questionnaire say that teachers deal with it effectively.
- In lessons, most teachers do not draw the pupils into the lesson, or engage them appropriately, so pupils are unable to develop their confidence and become self-assured learners.
- Pupils value the range of opportunities available to them during PSHE education lessons. A variety of professionals and external agencies visit the school to develop pupils' understanding of the world they live in and how to stay safe. Nearly all pupils in the school are of White British heritage. However, leaders actively investigate activities for pupils to learn about different cultures and religions. For example, links with a local refugee centre have developed pupils' understanding of global population issues and conflict.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Attendance rates remain below average. Absence rates for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities remain too high. However, leaders are now working more closely with pupils who attend less often. Improved rewards and sanctions linked to attendance are beginning to influence some less positive attitudes to good attendance. As a result, pupils' attendance is beginning to improve.
- The proportion of pupils who are excluded for a fixed term remains above average. Boys in key stage 4 are far more likely to be excluded. Inspection evidence demonstrates that disruptive behaviour remains the most common reason for exclusion. Over time, the proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities who are excluded is well above average. Although still high, this number is reducing because pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities now receive personalised support that is closely linked to their patterns of behaviour.
- Many pupils typically behave well. They are considerate, welcoming and willing to engage in conversation with visitors. Pupils' conduct when moving between lessons and at break is mature and cordial.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Published performance information for pupils at the end of key stage 4 shows that in 2016 and 2017 pupils' progress was significantly below the national average in a wide range of subjects, including in mathematics, languages and humanities.
- Disadvantaged pupils make far less progress than other pupils do nationally. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in 2016 and 2017 were well below average, including in mathematics, science and humanities. The school's own analysis demonstrates that wide differences in performance remain between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.
- Over time, the progress made by pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has been weak. Current pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities continue to make poor progress because the pupil information leaders share with teachers is too generic to inform planning to meet their individual needs effectively.
- Current pupils' progress in mathematics is extremely poor. Teachers' assessment does not identify when pupils do not understand a concept. For example, one pupil left a message for the teacher by writing: 'I am guessing. I can't do it.' This is not recognised or addressed successfully by staff. Consequently, pupils continue to make the same mistakes over a long period of time.
- The vast majority of Year 11 pupils and post-16 students successfully advance to the next stage of their learning or into employment as a result of effective careers education. Published figures do not fully reflect this positive picture, because a small number of learners do not progress and cohort sizes are small.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Leadership of the sixth form requires improvement. Wider school issues have diverted leaders' attentions so that they have not ensured that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good and students achieve well.
- Outcomes in the sixth form are variable over time. For example, overall in 2017, A-level students made better progress than those studying AS levels. However, within this, the progress of A-level students varies widely, depending on their starting points. Male students made far less progress than female students in 2017 in all types of qualification.
- The very small number of students who did not attain grades A* to C (or reformed grade 4) in English and/or mathematics at GCSE follow appropriate courses. In 2017, overall, the majority retaking English and/or mathematics secured a grade C.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving in the sixth form. Teachers' assessment of students' work is more focused and so students know their strengths and weaknesses. Relationships between students and teachers are positive. Students speak highly of their experiences in lessons. They say that the small class sizes allow teachers to provide them with effective individual support, which promotes their progress. One student spoke for many by saying: 'Teachers are really caring. They know us personally.'
- Sixth form students told inspectors that they welcome the chance to wear more formal

'business' dress. Students' mature and diligent approach to their work is reflected in the high standards of behaviour and attendance in the sixth form.

- Students play an active part in the life of the school. They are heavily involved in, and often lead, charity events, assemblies and creative and sporting activities. Students are able to access a wide range of information and opportunities to make choices related to their future, including talks from universities, visits and one-to-one guidance linked to their university applications.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 122328 |
| Local authority | Northumberland |
| Inspection number | 10048583 |

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

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| Type of school | Secondary Comprehensive |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 364 |
| Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes | 64 |
| Appropriate authority | Interim executive board |
| Chair | Ruth Dolan |
| Headteacher | Darren Glover |
| Telephone number | 01434 684 422 |
| Website | www.haydonbridgehigh.co.uk |
| Email address | hbhs@hbhs.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 10 December 2014 |

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- Responsibility for the school rests with an interim executive board (IEB). The structure

of the IEB can be found on the school's website.

- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a wide range of lessons across the school. Many of the observations in lessons were carried out with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior and subject leaders, teachers and members of the IEB.
- Inspectors held informal and formal discussions with pupils, visited tutor groups and observed pupil interactions during social times.
- Inspectors listened to a group of Year 7 and 8 pupils read.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and scrutinised a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation, analysis of performance information, action plans and evaluations, attendance and behaviour records, safeguarding files, recruitment checks and pupils' work.
- Inspectors took into account the 87 responses from parents who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Sixteen members of staff completed Ofsted's online staff survey and 39 pupils responded to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire. All of these responses were taken into consideration.

Inspection team

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Lee Elliott, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Richard Crane | Ofsted Inspector |
| Garry Stout | 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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