

Joseph Swan Academy

Saltwell Road South, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE9 6LE

Inspection dates

17–18 April 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders at all levels have failed to improve the school sufficiently since the last inspection. They have been slow to tackle weaker aspects of pupils' outcomes, the curriculum and teaching.
- Middle leaders were not held to account effectively until very recently and, as a result, pupils' progress has stagnated.
- Over the last two years, pupils' progress in many subjects by the end of Year 11 has been too slow. Pupils currently in key stages 3 and 4 are not making good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders' plans for school improvement do not clearly identify key weaknesses. It is not clear enough how leaders intend to measure the impact of their actions and how governors will hold leaders to account.
- Leaders and governors have not rigorously evaluated the use or the impact of the substantial amount of pupil premium funding received. Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve well.
- Governors are failing to hold school leaders to account effectively. The skills, knowledge and understanding they require to do so are underdeveloped.
- In key stages 3 and 4, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable. Teachers' expectations of what pupils, especially the most able, should be able to achieve are not high enough.
- Teaching is improving but too slowly. Although some teaching results in good pupil progress, leaders do not use this stronger practice effectively to improve the overall quality of teaching.
- The attendance of those pupils who are disadvantaged has not improved rapidly enough.
- Leaders and governors have not demonstrated the ability to improve the school's overall effectiveness quickly enough. Their view of the school's performance is overgenerous.

The school has the following strengths

- School leaders have successfully improved pupils' attendance overall and most pupils attend regularly.
- The sixth-form provision caters well for the needs of students. In particular, students make good progress from their starting points in vocational subjects.
- The headteacher is passionate about the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils. Pupils behave well.
- Arrangements to keep pupils safe are effective.
- As a result of good teaching, pupils achieve well in modern foreign languages and art.

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?

- Rapidly improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment rigorously, ensuring that it is consistently good across all year groups and subjects
 - rigorously evaluating the use and impact of additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils in their learning so that they make at least good progress
 - developing the capacity, knowledge and skills of middle leaders so that they become more evaluative in their analysis of their actions and the impact they have on the progress of pupils
 - ensuring that self-evaluation and improvement plans accurately identify areas of weakness, with clear and precise actions which are sharply focused and have measurable success criteria
 - urgently ensure that those responsible for governance develop their skills, knowledge and understanding so they can robustly hold school leaders to account for all aspects of the school's performance.
- Further improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment more rapidly so that all groups of pupils make strong progress across a wide range of subjects, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - plan engaging and challenging learning that meets pupils' needs to accelerate all pupils' progress, especially those who are disadvantaged and the most able
 - provide more opportunities for pupils to apply their developing knowledge, skills and understanding in a range of different contexts
 - continue to raise expectations of what pupils should be able to achieve, especially for the most able pupils and boys in English
 - are supported in sharing the stronger practice in teaching, learning and assessment across the school in areas where it is less strong.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Improvements in pupils' progress over the past two years have not been quick enough. Outcomes at the end of Year 11, given the pupils' starting points, have not been good enough. Leaders have failed to take the action required to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- Leaders have taken too long to address the issues identified at the last inspection. Outcomes did not improve in 2016 or 2017, and only very recently have leaders begun to focus on the actions which are required.
- Senior leadership roles and responsibilities have been reorganised recently. External partnerships have added some extra capacity, and a recent key appointment to the senior leadership team has been made. There is now an increasing emphasis on improving teaching, learning and assessment. However, these actions have not been sufficiently urgent. Strengths in teaching are not used well enough to support wider improvement.
- Leaders' evaluation of all aspects of the school's performance is too generous. Action plans do not always identify accurately the areas of weakness. Plans lack clear actions and rarely have precise outcomes against which to measure progress. This makes it difficult for leaders, managers and the governors to see what actions are having a positive impact and which need to be reviewed.
- Leaders have used pupil premium funding to provide pastoral support for a range of pupils' needs but, until very recently, leaders have been less focused on their academic outcomes. As a result, the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils have not improved quickly enough and they make less progress than other pupils.
- Middle leaders in the school are beginning to be held more to account. Their evaluation of the impact of their actions on the progress of pupils is poor, resulting in an overgenerous view.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils. Leaders have shown an awareness of pupils' specific needs by providing additional support for pupils who join the school with weak literacy skills. The curriculum for key stage 4 pupils offers them different pathways which supports a wide range of next-step choices after Year 11.
- This is an inclusive school. Leaders and governors have worked hard to establish a culture of respect among pupils and their personal development and welfare are promoted well.

Governance of the school

- The governance of the school is ineffective. Over time, governors and trustees have been too ready to accept information presented to them by school leaders without sufficiently challenging them. Governors do not have an accurate view of the school's performance.
- School leaders have introduced the 'governors challenge' approach but have only recently started to check its impact. While this approach is an appropriate and effective

action to take, it is too little, too late and has been driven by the school leaders themselves rather than by the governing body.

- Trustees and governors do not have a sufficient oversight of the spending of pupil premium funding. They have failed to ensure that leaders provide them with the necessary information required to hold them to account effectively.
- Governors do not have the range of knowledge, skills and understanding they require to successfully fulfil their duties. This means that governors are unable to challenge leaders appropriately and they are not supporting the school's improvement well enough.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is an established culture of the school, promoted passionately by the headteacher. Staff training which focuses on keeping children safe in education is appropriate and regularly updated, allowing staff to act quickly and appropriately when safeguarding concerns are reported to them.
- Leaders ensure that all appropriate record-keeping systems are in place to check on all staff and other adults who come into contact with the pupils.
- Leaders take safeguarding concerns seriously, acting promptly and investigating them thoroughly. They refer concerns through the appropriate channels, including external agencies and the police if necessary.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in key stages 3 and 4 is too variable. As a result, pupils do not make good progress across a wide range of subjects.
- Not all teachers use information from assessing what pupils know and can do to plan learning that effectively takes their varying needs and abilities into account. Expectations of pupils are too low. As a result, many pupils, and in particular the most able pupils, are not challenged enough and do not make good progress.
- Teaching in mathematics sometimes focuses on simple corrections rather than extending the pupils' skills and understanding of the mistakes made. This hinders pupils' progress. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use and apply skills learned to solve mathematical problems.
- The quality of teaching in English remains inconsistent. Strategies to improve the achievement of boys in English are in the early stages. Some improvements are now beginning to become evident. However, boys still make less progress than girls.
- In key stage 3, pupils are engaged in the school's own 'Thrive' programme, which allows pupils to explore global topics in more detail. Through this programme, pupils take advantage of home-learning opportunities to write creatively and extensively. However, in other subjects, pupils have too few opportunities to apply their knowledge, skills and understanding to solve problems in differing context, which limits their learning.

- In Year 7, pupils who need to catch up with their reading and number skills benefit from additional support through reading programmes and a curriculum which provides focused lessons designed to improve their understanding.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The learning environment around school reflects respect and the successful promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities outside the classroom to develop as individuals, for example through participating in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme and cadet group activities.
- Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) programmes are strong and foster an awareness of local, national and global issues in context.
- Careers information, advice and guidance are very effective. The school has been creative with local community links to encourage those pupils at risk of being disengaged from education and training to think positively about their next steps.
- Pupils respond positively to their experiences in school and are keen to participate in the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities offered. Almost all pupils take advantage of the extra-curricular programme.
- The range of visits, trips, events and activities further enrich pupils' experiences. As a result, pupils broaden their horizons beyond their own local community, which supports their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils enthusiastically support the local community and take great pride in doing so. Pupils raised an exceptional amount of money for the Royal British Legion appeal during the last Remembrance event.
- The school's own records show that bullying is rare. Pupils who talked to inspectors confirm that this is the case.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Although behaviour was judged good at the last inspection, pupils report that behaviour has improved. Recent changes to the behaviour policy have had a positive impact. Pupils say that the school will not tolerate extremes of unacceptable behaviour.
- Conduct around the school is good. Pupils are courteous and respectful to visitors, staff and each other. Pupils offer responses to questions clearly and confidently and allow others to voice their opinions and offer answers to questions while listening attentively and respectfully.
- Most pupils maintain good behaviour in lessons. However, a small minority of pupils lose focus and tend to waver off-task when activities are not suitably matched to their needs.

- Pupils are proud to wear the school uniform and do so smartly. Teachers and leaders reinforce the uniform rules effectively.
- Pupils take pride in their work and respond positively to teachers' comments which focus on improvements that may be required to the presentation of their work.
- Attendance has improved because of the hard work of leaders. They have adopted a range of effective strategies to support the families of those pupils who had low attendance to encourage them into school. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils, while improving, remains a focus for further improvement.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In Year 11, in both 2016 and 2017, pupils made less progress than other pupils nationally. In 2017, GCSE outcomes in English, science and humanities subjects lagged behind those seen nationally.
- Over time, disadvantaged pupils have made less progress than other pupils nationally. Disadvantaged pupils are beginning to catch up with others in the school, especially in key stage 3. Even so, disadvantaged pupils, along with other pupils in the school, have further gains to make. Leaders have not spent the money provided to support these pupils effectively enough to allow them to make good progress.
- The most able pupils in key stages 3 and 4 do not achieve consistently well. Too often, work lacks the challenge needed for these pupils to reach their full potential.
- Over time, outcomes in mathematics have not been good enough. External support is now beginning to help improvements in pupils' progress in mathematics but action to raise standards has not been timely.
- There are signs that pupils' progress is beginning to improve in other curriculum subjects but this improvement is at a very early stage. Pupils are still not making good progress from their starting points. This is because the quality of teaching remains too variable because leaders have not tackled this variability effectively or swiftly enough.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are now making better progress because of the support they are receiving. However, this support has not been effective enough in the past, resulting in these pupils not achieving well.
- Because of more effective teaching, most pupils make good progress in modern foreign languages and in art.
- Pupils move on to appropriate destinations, given their results, for the next stage of their lives.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leadership of the sixth form is effective. The director of the sixth form is accurate in his evaluation of areas of strength and weakness, both in academic and pastoral areas.
- Students have the opportunity to study a variety of A-level and vocational courses that are matched to their abilities and interests. Typically, students complete these courses

and the small minority of those who do not complete their courses follow pathways to appropriate destinations, including apprenticeships and employment. The proportion of students who are not in education, employment or training at the end of their studies is lower than the national average.

- Students benefit from a range of activities which support their personal development and welfare.
- Students are positive about the experiences they have at the school, and say that PSHE programmes are age-appropriate and give them guidance on staying safe and on extremism and radicalisation.
- Behaviour in the sixth form is good. Students arrive punctually to lessons and attend regularly. They have good study skills and are well prepared for their lessons.
- Students typically make progress which is at least in line with the national average for academic subjects. Students make progress which is well above the national average in the vocational subjects.
- There is good support for those students who did not attain a standard pass in GCSE English or mathematics in Year 11. Students make progress towards improving their grade which is broadly in line with similar students nationally.
- Teaching in the sixth form is consistently good across a range of subjects. Teachers encourage students through matching activities to the individual abilities of the students.
- The quality of careers information, advice and guidance for students in the sixth form is high, ensuring that students make sensible choices for their next steps.

School details

Unique reference number	137898
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	10048280

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	1,023
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	138
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mike Jones
Headteacher in charge	Heather Scott
Telephone number	01914 422 000
Website	www.josephswan.org.uk
Email address	enquiries@josephswan.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 April 2016

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is much higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is above average.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' achievement and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 4 academic performance results in 2017, 2016 and 2015.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 45 lessons and three registration sessions, some jointly with senior leaders.
- Discussions were held with governors, senior and middle leaders, other staff, the school's external consultant and a local authority representative.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in lessons and a sample of pupils' books.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour before school, during lessons, around school, in registration sessions, at breaktime and at lunchtime.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils in discussion groups and informally around school.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, its improvement plans, minutes of meetings of the governing body, information about the attainment and progress of all pupils, records relating to behaviour and safeguarding and information on the school's website.
- Inspectors considered 38 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, alongside 85 responses to the staff survey and 138 pupil survey responses.

Inspection team

Barry Found, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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John Downs	Ofsted Inspector
Gabrielle Reddington	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Gammack	Ofsted Inspector

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