

# North Shore Academy

Talbot Street, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland TS20 2AY

## Inspection dates

9–10 October 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- This is a rapidly improving school. The passion, skill and resilience of new leaders are ensuring that the quality of pupils' educational experience is far more positive than it used to be, despite the school's overall effectiveness remaining unchanged.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved since the previous inspection. In turn, this is leading to improving pupil outcomes. However, the better-quality teaching pupils are now receiving has not been in place long enough to ensure that all groups of pupils make consistently good progress, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Pupils' rates of attendance are beginning to improve. Leaders recognise, however, that disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are still absent too often.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receive some effective pastoral support and advice. However, some teachers do not always use guidance from the special educational needs coordinator to ensure that they meet the additional needs of this group of pupils. This inhibits the learning and progress of these pupils.
- The effectiveness of the school's strategies to address gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, due to pupils' absence and/or a legacy of weaker teaching, is more apparent at key stage 4 than at key stage 3. As a result, the progress of key stage 3 pupils who attend less often is inconsistent.
- A minority of pupils account for the majority of fixed-term exclusions. Prior to this academic year, the proportion of pupils who were excluded was significantly higher than average. Leaders' actions and high expectations of pupils' behaviour are now leading to substantial reductions in the number of exclusions.

### The school has the following strengths

- The executive principal and, more recently, the new principal, have a thorough knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Together with a team of able senior leaders, they ensure that no stone is left unturned in their quest to provide the best education for all pupils.
- Pupils' personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) development is strong. Pupils benefit from a plethora of opportunities to explore and develop their own understanding in this regard.
- The quality of teaching in mathematics is highly effective. Pupils' problem-solving skills are well developed.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
  - sustaining recent improvements in pupils' attendance and decreasing persistent absence, particularly for pupils who are disadvantaged and those who have SEN and/or disabilities
  - working closely with pupils and families to eradicate the inappropriate behaviour that leads to pupils being excluded or removed from lessons.
- Sustain the improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils' outcomes continue to improve across the curriculum, but particularly for pupils who are disadvantaged and those who have SEN and/or disabilities in English by:
  - ensuring that all teachers consider and use specific guidance from the special educational needs coordinator when planning to meet the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
  - identifying ways in which absent pupils can swiftly catch up on missed work, particularly in key stage 3.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- This school is improving swiftly. The executive principal's and principal's appointments in September 2017 and 2018 respectively, in addition to a capable senior leadership team soon after, acted as a catalyst for significant school improvement. Leaders, including governors, are unwavering in their determination to make the improvements needed to ensure that every pupil leaves school with the best outcomes possible. As the executive principal describes, 'It is the currency to improve pupils' chances in life.'
- Although many senior and subject leaders are new to their roles or to the school, they have a clear understanding of what they and their staff can do to improve pupils' educational experience further. Senior leaders lead by example in their conversations with staff and pupils. They model high expectations. This, and the intensive support key stage 4 pupils receive, are contributing to improving pupil outcomes.
- Leaders insist that teachers focus on their core purpose of teaching. The comment of one member of staff, when replying to a leadership question in Ofsted's online staff questionnaire was typical of other staff opinions:

'Teachers and their welfare have been taken into consideration. They are a high priority. Teachers are expected to plan, teach and provide feedback for our students. No additional pressures or expectations are placed on teaching staff and this is something that is much appreciated.'

Consequently, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving quickly and is now good.

- School leaders and leaders from Northern Education Trust (the trust) lead effective training for teachers that is well matched to the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. Teachers, including those new to the profession, say that they value the weekly opportunities to develop their skills in the classroom or share good practice. As a result, lessons follow a consistent format and include a range of challenging activities; an area for improvement previously.
- Two thirds of pupils in the school are disadvantaged. A dedicated team of leaders use additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils well. They monitor disadvantaged pupils' progress carefully, ensuring that most underperformance is addressed swiftly. Leaders coordinate 23 different activities, paid for with pupil premium funding, that contribute to disadvantaged pupils' literacy, numeracy and pastoral development. Consequently, there is very little difference between disadvantaged pupils' outcomes and others, in many subjects.
- Additional funding for Year 7 pupils who need to catch up with their literacy and numeracy skills is used effectively. Effective transition arrangements ensure that leaders know which pupils need to catch up, prior to them joining the school. Consequently, because leaders know the size of this growing task in advance, they plan accordingly. Pupils with weaker literacy and numeracy skills in Year 7 receive timely and effective support, making accelerated progress as a result.
- Leaders review the curriculum regularly. There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to study courses that interest them and help them progress to their next stage

of employment, education or training. Currently, pupils in school have no opportunities to develop their musical talents or interests. However, leaders have plans to introduce music provision soon. A minority of subject leaders are unclear when describing the rationale or design of the curriculum in the school or their subject. They are less sure about the specific skills they want pupils to develop or the uniqueness of their subject. Consequently, the design and sequence of some subject curricula do not allow pupils to fully understand, practise or apply knowledge in other subjects. Pupils sometimes miss the links between what they have learned in one lesson and how it can be applied to another. For example, in a Year 9 history lesson, some pupils' attempts to explain 'The Treaty of London of 1839' were less successful because they could not make the connection between their previous learning in geography relating to the structure of Europe.

- A very small number of new subject leaders, although already making a positive contribution to raising standards in their subject, lack the confidence or know-how to be able to challenge staff who do not always live up to their high expectations. However, senior leaders provide less-experienced subject leaders with comprehensive induction training and regular professional development. This ensures that staff do not shy away from holding difficult conversations. In turn, new subject leaders are swiftly gaining the skills and conviction to reduce any inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in their subjects.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is a strength. This is because leaders have been successful in creating a culture in school where differences are celebrated. Furthermore, the well-established 'life' curriculum, assembly themes, leadership opportunities and vast array of extra-curricular opportunities ensure that pupils can ask questions, explore issues and learn about matters beyond Teesside.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors are confident in their accurate assessment of the school's strengths and areas to develop further. They acknowledge the challenges they and leaders face. They are tenacious in their determination to overcome them. Governors' enquiring questioning of leaders allows them to identify underachievement and to hold leaders to account.
- Members of the governing body are paired with different leaders. This allows governors to see for themselves the effect of leaders' actions or the impact additional funding is having on improving pupils' outcomes. For example, governors evaluate the work of safeguarding leaders well because they make regular school visits and hold effective link meetings with leaders and staff.
- Governors have statutory responsibility for this school and another local secondary school that is part of the trust. Both schools share some common challenges. Consequently, governors use their experience in one or both schools to ensure that the improvement strategies they agree to are appropriate and have a track record of success.
- Governors were unaware that some policies on the school's website were due to be reviewed at the time of the inspection. Lines of accountability are blurred currently with some governors suggesting that this important function is the responsibility of the

trust. Governors are unclear of their statutory responsibility in this regard.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders with responsibility for pupils' welfare have a detailed understanding of the circumstances of each pupil. They know that, for many pupils, simply attending school can be a struggle. However, leaders conducted over 4,000 home visits last year to ensure that pupils receive the support they need. Consequently, relationships between families and school continue to improve. Pupils are beginning to attend more often.
- School leaders invite a range of external speakers into school to talk to pupils about emerging risks locally and further afield. For example, a local police officer visits the school weekly so that pupils can 'chill with a Bill' and discuss concerns or share information. As a result, pupils have an understanding of different risks and what to do if they are concerned about a friend.
- Leaders' strategies to record and follow up any safeguarding concerns are robust. Records of concerns are well kept and demonstrate that leaders respond swiftly and incisively when they have a concern about a pupil. Consequently, pupils say that they feel safe and are confident to share a problem with most adults in the school.
- Leaders, including governors, regularly check the quality of the school's work to keep pupils safe. They make appropriate checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with pupils. However, an analysis of the school's single central record, the database holding staff details, demonstrates that leaders do not make routine checks on governors to ensure that they are not barred from holding a management position in a school. However, leaders rectified this issue during the inspection.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving rapidly. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They teach lessons in a way that is consistent across the trust and include frequent tasks designed to help pupils recall previous learning. Teachers encourage pupils to work together. They promote peer-to-peer praise by endorsing spontaneous rounds of applause. As a result, the atmosphere in most classrooms is positive and allows teachers to make the most of the learning time available.
- The teaching of mathematics is a strength. Teachers challenge pupils to apply their learning to real-life situations. Teachers' effective questioning probes pupils' understanding of new concepts. Teachers ensure that the needs of the most able pupils are met by challenging them in a variety of different ways. An example of these qualities was seen in a Year 11 mathematics lesson on trigonometry; the teacher set high expectations of all pupils, from their different starting points, and presented incisive questioning which ensured that all pupils were challenged well in their learning. Pupils frequently apply their mathematical knowledge in other subjects, including in science. As a result, pupils' conclusions to their practical investigations are increasingly accurate.

- Teachers' development of pupils' literacy is improving. In most lessons, teachers emphasise the correct spelling of subject-specific vocabulary. Written work highlights that most pupils act on advice, including many new words in their extended writing. However, inspection evidence demonstrates that pupils who do not receive individual literacy support continue to make basic literacy errors in their work. This is because many pupils' literacy development is below average when they enter school, and/or some teachers do not always identify repeated mistakes in pupils' written work.
- Teaching assistants support teachers and pupils well. They receive instructions in advance of the lesson and have a clear understanding of their role. Teaching assistants effectively support individual pupils and/or smaller groups of pupils. When they are linked to a pupil they take a keen interest in their academic and pastoral development. As a result, pupils value their support. Relationships between teaching assistants and pupils are strong.
- Teaching is stronger in key stage 4 than in key stage 3. Teachers have a comprehensive understanding of pupils' strengths and weaknesses in relation to their subject. This is because teachers analyse pupils' responses to assessment questions in detail and use this information in their planning. As a result, most pupils in key stage 4 are making good progress from their low starting points. In key stage 3, teachers' strategies to identify and correct pupils' misconceptions are less developed.
- Most teachers use the insightful and specialist advice guidance from the special educational needs coordinator to plan appropriate learning activities. When they do, teachers successfully meet the diverse needs of this group of pupils. When teachers do not use the 'pupil profiles', some pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities find it difficult to access the work and so they make slower progress as a result.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- Leaders' many strategies to improve pupils' personal development demonstrate their thorough understanding of the context of the school. Recent initiatives such as the 'pledge' awards, 'random act of kindness tree' and the 'teachers' apple box' ensure that pupils consider the feelings of others and learn what it means to be a responsible citizen and member of the school community. Consequently, the school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Enrichment and extra-curricular activities are an integral part of school life. During the last academic year, pupils attended many hours of personal development activities including many sporting activities, enterprise clubs or awards that include charity work and supporting the community.
- Pupils say that teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour are now much higher. This has led to incidents of bullying reducing. Most pupils feel confident to share a problem or a concern with staff. They also say that staff take incidents of bullying very seriously and are successful in resolving disagreements.
- The active student council contributes significantly to pupils' personal development. Leaders ensure that council elections mirror 'the real thing'. When elected, pupils are

given responsibility to debate, disagree and challenge the work of the school. As a result, pupils develop a range of speaking and listening skills. They also learn how to respect the opinions of others and find a compromise.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Over time, pupils' rates of attendance have been below average. For the last two years, overall attendance rates have declined and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent increased. Rates of attendance for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have been well-below average. However, pupils' attendance has improved more recently. Pupils have made a much stronger start in this regard to the new academic year than previously.
- Above-average rates of temporary exclusion have contributed to the school's weaker attendance figures over time. Similarly, varying rates of internal exclusion (pupils who are removed from lessons) have contributed to historically weaker pupil outcomes. This is because a significant minority of pupils continue to undermine leaders' attempts to create a positive and harmonious learning environment. Pupils and staff say that the standard of pupils' behaviour is now much improved. Teachers consistently use the school 'consequence' system to promote positive attitudes to learning. As a result, the number of pupils who are excluded is reducing so far this year.
- During the inspection, pupils were polite and welcoming, and behaved in a mature manner. They move from social areas to lessons quickly and sensibly. Many staff supervise pupils before, during and after school. Pupils say they appreciate this and that there are no areas of the school that remain unsupervised.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- As a result of leaders' concerted efforts and the improving quality of teaching, pupils' outcomes are improving significantly from their low starting points. Pupils' progress in their 2018 examinations was broadly average across a wide range of subjects. This is a considerable accomplishment as this cohort of pupils suffered from a legacy of weaker teaching over time. Nevertheless, outcomes require improvement because pupils' progress is not consistently strong, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities in English.
- Over time, the progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities in English has been below average. Inspection evidence demonstrates that this continues to be true for current groups of pupils. The school's own assessment information for current pupils highlights gaps between boys' and girls' progress.
- Pupils' previously low rates of attendance and more recent pupil absences result in gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, particularly in key stage 3. This is because strategies to ensure that pupils catch up on any missed work are not fully embedded. Teachers in key stage 4 proactively direct pupils returning from absence to complete missed work or attend after-school lessons to catch up. Consequently, key stage 3 pupils' progress is not as strong as that of pupils in key stage 4.

- Pupils currently in the school are making more rapid progress than they have previously. Challenging schemes of work, higher expectations and improving pupil attitudes to learning are contributing to pupils' improving outcomes. Pupils say that they can see the more recent improvements in the school and that this motivates them to do better.
- Leaders' strategies to improve pupils' reading are effective. Pupils have a reading lesson each week. Teachers ensure that books match their reading ability. Teachers check pupils' comprehension regularly and provide appropriate support if needed. As a result, pupils make good progress in reading over time. However, many pupils' reading level remains below their chronological age.
- Pupils attending alternative education provision study a curriculum appropriate to meet their needs and future aspirations. These pupils' attainment overall is low but their progress in work-related courses ensures that they are ready to step up to further education, training or employment.
- Pupils receive generic and individual careers education in key stage 4. Pupils told inspectors that this helps them to identify opportunities or formulate career plans. This, and improving examination results, ensures that nearly all pupils are well prepared to progress to further education, training or employment.



## School details

Unique reference number	136146
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	10048262

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

Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	676
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	John Copping
Executive Principal	Michael Robson
Principal	Andrew Murphy
Telephone number	01642 612 381
Website	<a href="http://www.northshoreacademy.org.uk">www.northshoreacademy.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@northshoreacademy.org.uk">info@northshoreacademy.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	2–3 March 2016

## Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The vast majority of pupils attending the school are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium is significantly above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- Since the previous inspection in March 2016, nearly all staff are new, including the executive principal and principal.
- The school is a member of the Northern Education Trust (NET) multi-academy trust. Responsibility for the school rests with the local governing board. It is their responsibility to ensure that the school is run effectively, hold the school to account,

manage the performance of the principal and develop their own partnerships and collaborations', Northern Education Trust website:

[www.northerneducationtrust.org/governance/the-trust-governance-structure](http://www.northerneducationtrust.org/governance/the-trust-governance-structure)

- Currently, the school uses part-time and full-time alternative education provision at East Durham College, Ace at Dyke House, Bishopton Centre the local authority pupil referral unit and the home and hospital service.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a wide range of lessons across the school. Many of the observations in lessons were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior and subject leaders, teachers, members of the local governing board, the chair of governors and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- An inspector spoke on the telephone with a representative from one alternative education provider used by the school.
- Inspectors held informal and formal discussions with many pupils and observed interactions during social times.
- Inspectors listened to a group of Year 7 and Year 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 some pupils' work.
- Inspectors took into account the 28 responses from parents and carers who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Fifty-five members of staff and 17 pupils completed Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys. All of these responses were taken into consideration.

## Inspection team

Lee Elliott, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sarah MacDermott	Ofsted Inspector
Garry Stout	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Gammack	Ofsted Inspector

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