

Norham High School

Alnwick Avenue, North Shields, Tyne and Wear NE29 7BU

Inspection dates

9–10 October 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders do not have the capacity to improve the school. They do not have an accurate understanding of the weaknesses in the school or how to tackle them effectively.
- Too much weak teaching, within subject areas and across years, inhibits the progress pupils make.
- Outcomes in the GCSE examinations in 2018 were poor. This follows weak examination results in 2017. Progress, including in key subjects, is inadequate.
- Leaders' systems for improving the school and checking the quality of leaders' and teachers' work are not effective. Leaders have an over-generous picture of how well things are going.
- Leaders have not provided governors with appropriate information about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Until very recently, governors have accepted leaders' explanations for poor outcomes.
- Leaders do not have an effective strategy for the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. Outcomes for these pupils are not improving.
- Pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around school is often poor. Staff presence on corridors at key times is variable and a number of pupils do not self-regulate their behaviour well enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders' actions have led to a reduction in the use of fixed-term exclusion, and figures are now below the national average.
- More effective careers guidance has led to an improved rate of pupils who progress to education or training at the end of Year 11.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), educated in the resourced provision for language and communication, are cared for well and make good progress because this teaching is effective.
- The school is an inclusive community where discriminatory language and attitudes are challenged.

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?

- Improve, urgently, the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, so that pupils make better progress by:
 - making sure that there is a focus on the progress of all pupils from their different starting points, particularly disadvantaged pupils
 - having an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and learning
 - improving the effectiveness of training so that it directly affects the quality of teaching and learning
 - improving the systems for checking on the quality of teaching and learning so that there is a consistent approach across the school
 - making sure that middle leaders are supported in improving their skills, so that they can accurately evaluate the quality of teaching in their areas and identify, with accuracy, areas for improvement
 - ensuring that all staff follow school policies
 - providing appropriate information about pupils' progress and the standard of teaching and learning to governors, so that they can hold leaders rigorously to account.

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by making sure that:
 - all teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - teachers use information about pupils' starting points to set work which challenges and motivates pupils
 - pupils understand what it is that they are learning and what they need to do to improve.

- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - strengthening their understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism
 - ensuring that all staff are consistent in their use of the school's behaviour policy
 - ensuring that all staff consistently follow leaders' policies for corridor presence and the management of pupils' behaviour between lessons
 - improving pupils' attitudes to learning.

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 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

Inadequate

- Shortly after the previous inspection in 2016, pupils' progress was broadly average. However, outcomes went into sharp decline in 2017 and have fallen further in 2018. Leaders have not been effective in halting this deterioration.
- Leaders have not adequately addressed many of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Many of the same weaknesses prevail.
- Over time, the leadership of teaching has not been good enough. Leaders have been ineffective in bringing about the necessary improvements. Leaders have an overly positive view of the standard of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result of poor teaching over time, outcomes have declined. Leaders understand that weak teaching has prevented pupils from learning successfully.
- Crucially, over time, leaders have not had a clear understanding of what to prioritise to rapidly improve the quality of teaching. Leaders have introduced many strategies and interventions recently, with minimal effect on the quality of teaching and learning. Some staff think that there are too many strategies and that the effect of them is limited.
- Leaders' use of additional funding for the pupil premium has had limited impact. Plans for the spending are not monitored, evaluated and refined as required. Leaders understand that their use of this funding has not been successful. Outcomes for this group of pupils have declined.
- Leaders decided to enter all Year 10 pupils a year early for GCSE English Literature in 2017. Results in the examination for this cohort were poor. While there were plans in place for this approach to continue in 2019 this is now under review.
- Leaders have put in place a system for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. However, it does not provide leaders, at all levels, with sufficiently incisive information about standards of teaching and pupils' progress. Subject leaders' records of the monitoring of teaching reviewed by inspectors present an over-generous picture. Records of the quality of teaching presented to inspectors as evidence of 'good practice' were incomplete and give imprecise areas to improve. While monitoring by senior leaders is sharper at identifying areas for improvement than that of middle leaders, these areas are not followed up routinely in the next period of monitoring. Consequently, there is too little impact on improving the quality of teaching.
- Subject leaders are committed and energetic, but their effectiveness is hindered by inconsistent systems and leadership. There is a lack of clarity and consistency about how pupils' learning over time is measured. As a result, leaders, at all levels, have an inaccurate picture of the school's performance.
- Leaders have not made sure that all staff follow basic school policies. There are some inconsistencies in teachers' application of the school's marking and feedback policy and the extent to which teachers apply the processes for managing pupils' behaviour.
- Leaders of the resourced provision for pupils with SEND have ensured that these pupils are cared for well and that the teaching is effective in enabling them to make good

progress.

- Leaders have been effective in preparing pupils for life beyond school. Pupils speak positively about how they are educated about equal opportunities, and for life in modern Britain.
- Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

Governance of the school

- Governors are not effective in holding leaders to account. Until recently, they have been too accepting of leaders' explanations for poor outcomes.
- Over time, governors have not been well served by the information presented to them about the school's performance. Leaders' emphasis on pupils' attainment measures, rather than progress, has masked the decline.
- There is evidence in recent minutes of governors' meetings that they have been asking challenging questions of leaders. However, over time, they have not been effective in supporting leaders to secure improvements. For example, during the last academic year, they identified a number of weaknesses in teaching and inconsistencies in staff's adherence to leaders' policies. Several months later, these same weaknesses and inconsistencies remain prevalent.
- Following the GCSE outcomes in 2018, governors initiated what they have called a 'back to basics' review to consider the information they receive from leaders. It is too soon to evaluate whether this will have the necessary effect.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders make sure that the necessary arrangements for the safer recruitment of staff are carried out correctly.
- Appropriate training for staff has been delivered, principally by the designated safeguarding leader but also the local authority. This includes training on modern slavery and the signs of abuse to look out for. Staff have received updates on their responsibilities as set out in the government's 'Keeping children safe in education'.
- Leaders have provided additional training for staff on the appropriate use of social media. Staff understand what to do should they be concerned about a pupil, or the conduct of a colleague.
- The staff responsible for child protection arrangements ensure that timely referrals are made to the appropriate external agencies. Records of actions and follow-up are robust.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching over time is inadequate. Across a range of subjects and years, pupils make poor progress. The progress of disadvantaged pupils, and the least and the most able pupils, is especially poor.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are often not high enough. At times, pupils are not challenged enough in the tasks they are set. For example, in Year 9 mathematics some pupils are doing the same work as the least able pupils in Year 7. Some pupils at the start of their GCSE mathematics course repeatedly complete arithmetic normally expected of primary school pupils.
- Too often, questioning is not used well enough to challenge pupils, so they do not make the gains in their learning of which they are capable, such as in some English, science and humanities teaching.
- When teaching does not meet the needs of pupils from their different starting points, pupils are frequently compliant but not engaged. Pupils spoken to by inspectors said that they want more challenge in their learning. At other times, there is significant low-level disruption because of teachers' low expectations. Consequently, pupils' progress is limited.
- Across several subjects, too often, pupils do not understand what they are learning because the teaching has not made this clear. In other subjects, such as humanities, some key stage 3 pupils do not have the secure basic knowledge, skills and understanding needed to learn successfully. For example, some pupils do not know what is meant by fundamental terms such as 'describe' and 'explain'.
- At times, pupils are unclear about how well they are doing at the moment, or what they must do to improve. The various sheets containing progress and attainment information, which are stuck into pupils' books, are not consistently understood or used by some pupils.
- There are pockets of better teaching. In key stage 4 modern foreign languages, expectations of what pupils can achieve are higher. In key stage 3 art, pupils have a firm grasp of the techniques of the different artists being studied. In some key stage 3 and key stage 4 mathematics and key stage 4 English groups work is more closely matched to pupils' different starting points and so engages them. As a result, pupils make better gains in their learning.
- Teaching in the resourced provision for pupils with SEND is typically more effective than the teaching of pupils with SEND in the main school. This is because tasks are appropriate to meet pupils' needs, and teachers' use of questions is especially effective in helping pupils to secure new knowledge, skills and understanding.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Leaders have not done enough to educate pupils about the dangers of radicalisation. Pupils who talked to inspectors had a vague recollection that they did something on radicalisation after the Manchester attack, but could not bring to mind anything else

that they had learned. As a result, their awareness of the risks posed by different forms of extremism is limited.

- The curriculum helps pupils to develop their understanding of British values. Pupils have had opportunities to learn about equalities, such as matters relating to race and sexuality. Pupils speak confidently and enthusiastically about how the school prepares them for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils feel well supported by the range of extra-curricular activities available to them. This includes a variety of sport, music and art opportunities. In addition, pupils can participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. As part of their careers programme, Year 7 pupils participate in a scheme with a local bus company and Age UK to develop their wider skills.
- Pupils spoken to by inspectors reported that they felt safe in school. In the pupil survey a few pupils were not as certain. Most pupils who spoke to inspectors said that bullying is rare in school and that they are confident in the ability of staff to resolve it. A few pupils in the pupil survey said that some staff are not effective at resolving it.
- Leaders are not complacent in their attitude towards the prevention of bullying. Leaders' actions were demonstrated when pupils told inspectors that they have had education about different forms of bullying, including cyber, physical, verbal and emotional. They have been taught about the risks posed by social media.
- The processes for monitoring the attendance, behaviour and progress of pupils who attend alternative educational provision are well established. Leaders check on how well pupils are progressing through regular contact with the providers.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Too often, the conduct of pupils in lessons is poor. This is because, frequently, the work does not challenge them, and they become bored. This leads to some persistent low-level disruption. On occasions, pupils get out of their seats, talk over the teacher and shout out.
- Some teachers are inconsistent in their application of the school's behaviour policy; for example, not dealing with behaviour that is clearly unacceptable, such as swearing, or ignoring low-level disruption.
- Of the small number of pupils who completed the survey, most reported that behaviour in lessons is poor. In the staff survey, fewer than half of staff agreed that behaviour is at least good.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is often poor. Inspectors witnessed a range of inappropriate behaviours and language during the inspection. The use of mobile phones on corridors, between lessons, is commonplace and generally unchallenged. At times, there was little evidence of staff presence on corridors during lesson changeover. Pupils told inspectors that behaviour around school deteriorates when adults are not around.
- Pupils are expected to self-regulate and manage their own behaviour. Leaders have not established the necessary expectations or routines with all pupils and staff to enable this to happen.

- Behaviour in the resourced provision for pupils with SEND is excellent. Teachers and support assistants work effectively to engage pupils in their learning.
- Leaders have taken effective action to improve rates of attendance. There are encouraging signs that this improving picture is set to continue. However, the overall absence rate remains above the national average. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.
- Rates of persistent absence remain above the national average. However, leaders' actions led to a significant improvement in 2017/18 compared with the previous year.
- The use of fixed-term exclusion has reduced and is now below the national average, including that for disadvantaged pupils. This is the result of steps taken by leaders to develop a broader range of sanctions other than exclusion.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Provisional information for Year 11 outcomes in 2018 indicates that the significant decline seen in 2017 has worsened.
- Provisional information for Year 11 outcomes in 2018 suggests that pupils' progress across a wide range of GCSE subjects is poor. This is the case in English and mathematics. It is also the case in the other English Baccalaureate (EBacc) group of subjects of science, humanities and modern foreign languages. Progress in the 'open' group of other GCSE subjects is also significantly below the national average.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress has declined from 2017 and is even further below the national average for other pupils. The progress of the least and most able pupils is weaker than in 2016/17.
- Leaders' focus on subject attainment measures and how this compares with national averages has masked the scale and reality of pupils' underachievement.
- Too many pupils in key stages 3 and 4 make insufficient progress from their starting points across a range of subjects. This is evident in English, mathematics, science, technology, history, geography and music. Usually this is related to teachers' low expectations and work which fails to sufficiently engage or challenge pupils.
- Leaders' ineffective use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils means that these pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable. This is in both key stages, across subjects and within subjects. Pupils with SEND, who are educated in the main school, do not make sufficient progress.
- At times, some pupils make better progress as the result of stronger teaching. Pockets of stronger progress exist within English, mathematics, history, geography, art and French.
- Leaders have acted to improve the quality of careers education and guidance. A carefully planned programme of advice and guidance runs through all years of the school. As a result, the number of pupils who progress to further education or training has increased significantly recently and is now above the national average.
- Pupils in the resourced provision for pupils with SEND are making good gains in their learning, as the result of effective teaching.

School details

Unique reference number	108628
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	10047875

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	321
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr D Bavaird
Headteacher	Mr D Baldwin
Telephone number	01912 005 062
Website	www.norhamhigh.com/
Email address	david.baldwin@ntlp.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	25–26 May 2016

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there is a different head of school. After the previous inspection, two leaders shared the head of school role. In September 2017, one of these leaders took up full head-of-school responsibility. An executive headteacher is in position.
- Norham High School is a smaller-than-average-sized secondary school. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is well above the national average, as is the proportion who have an education, health and care plan. The school is in an area of deprivation which is above the national average.
- The school hosts an autism, language and communication resourced provision for 25 pupils with SEND.
- The school has links with four providers of alternative provision. These are Moorbridge PRU (pupil referral unit); PALS, a partnership between Churchill Community College and North Tyneside local authority; Splat; and The Motor Project.

- The local authority is providing financial support to the school and the support of an improvement adviser. The executive headteacher and head of school are seconded from another school. The leader for English and assistant leader for English are also seconded from this same school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out observations of teaching in lessons, across years and subjects. On occasions, they were accompanied by senior leaders. During these observations, inspectors spoke with pupils about their work and looked at their books.
- Pupils' work was also scrutinised as part of work samples. Inspectors did this both independently and with school leaders.
- Inspectors observed pupils' conduct between lessons and around school.
- Meetings were held with: the executive headteacher and head of school; other senior leaders; leaders of subject areas; teachers at different career points; and a group of non-teaching staff. The lead inspector met with the chair of governors and other governors. He also met with two local authority improvement advisers.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils formally and spoke with them around the school at social times.
- A range of school documentation was scrutinised. This included information relating to: safeguarding and child protection; attendance and behaviour; bullying; the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans; information about pupils' progress and attainment; and minutes of governors' meetings and activities. Leaders' records and analysis of the quality of teaching were reviewed. A report of a 'health check' of the school conducted by a local authority officer was considered.
- Inspectors considered four free-text responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 39 responses to the staff survey and 25 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Steve Shaw, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sara Roe	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Vernon	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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