

Inspection of Norham High School

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

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 March 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Norham High is a rapidly improving school at the heart of the community. The school has undergone significant changes since the previous inspection. Many people described the school to inspectors as 'unrecognisable' from its former self. Pupils are passionate about their school. Most pupils behave well consistently. Warm, genuine, friendly interactions between pupils and their friends or teachers are commonplace; pupils hold open doors for others, smile and nod when walking by and engage in joyful banter at every opportunity.

The curriculum pupils study continues to improve. Leaders and staff have worked diligently to ensure pupils' learning is well thought through. While the curriculum is ambitious, there is still work to do to ensure that the gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are identified and addressed. It is clear that pupils have some catching up to do due to the impact of the pandemic.

Pupils have a strong understanding of issues that could influence their well-being and safety. They talk in detail, and with confidence, when questioned about healthy relationships, consent and anxiety. Opportunities for pupils to develop personally are in abundance. Every pupil participates in 'active lunches' each day. Pupils thrive when attending clubs to develop an interest in origami, drama and gardening, for example.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has been transformed in a very short space of time. Leading from the front, the headteacher leads with passion and determination. He has successfully created a sense of team spirit within the staff and pupil cohort. As a result, the school has the capacity to continue its journey of improvement.

The school has been a focal point for pupils and the community during the pandemic. Leaders and staff ensured that pupils had the equipment, technology and guidance they required to be able to attend remote learning during lockdown. Pupils' attendance to 'live' lessons was very high. Additionally, leaders and staff provided pupils and families with essential items regularly. This included food parcels and free school meal vouchers. As a result, pupils kept in touch with their learning, and relationships between home and school have been strengthened further.

Despite leaders' best efforts, there was some lost learning due to COVID-19. Leaders have created a new curriculum from scratch, across all subjects. Teachers have a stronger understanding of what to teach and when to teach it. Pupils are making up for lost time. They achieve well from their different starting points. Pupils in all classes are encouraged to read aloud, using a range of different teaching resources. There is a respectful and supportive culture that gives pupils confidence to read and to overcome personal barriers to reading fluently.

There is still work to do to ensure that the curriculum in all subjects is planned and sequenced effectively to meet the needs of pupils as they emerge from an unsettled period in education. Leaders know that, for several pupils, some lessons are too ambitious in comparison to pupils' current understanding. There are plans in place to improve this over the coming months.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well known by staff. Many pupils with SEND are supported effectively in the school's additional resourced provision. Here, staff are experts when it comes to asking pupils carefully crafted questions. Staff are patient, supportive and demonstrate a strong understanding of the learning needs of each pupil they teach. In this way, pupils with SEND often mix with their peers in classes in the main part of the school. Pupils with SEND have ambitious goals and aspirations for the future. Leaders ensure that they liaise closely with college providers or employers to ensure that pupils with SEND make their next steps into education, employment or training seamlessly.

Teachers in the early stages of their career receive excellent support. Leaders act as mentors and meet regularly with new teachers to ensure that they receive the guidance they need. Early career teachers and more established staff report high levels of job satisfaction. They appreciate that leaders are considerate of their well-being and workload. Finer details including 'Doughnut Fridays', 'secret buddy' present exchanges and the distribution of daffodils at the start of spring are all appreciated by staff who say these acts of kindness help to strengthen the collaborative culture in the school.

Careers education is a strength. Leaders have thought carefully about how pupils should improve their understanding of their own personal qualities and future career pathways. Over time, pupils have been able to draw on the experiences and advice of professionals and careers advisers who attend school during guidance interviews or 'focus' days. For example, visitors to school have included doctors, tyre-fitters, florists and hairdressers. Furthermore, pupils often engage with a range of staff from local colleges and further education. The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause.

Governance continues to improve. Since the last inspection, there have been new additions to the governing body. New governors are appointed following regular audits of governors' skills. This ensures that governors possess the right skills to challenge leaders about the effect of their actions on pupils' learning. Governors are starting to triangulate the evidence leaders provide to them. This aspect of governors' work could be strengthened further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The procedures for checking the suitability of staff are robust. Safeguarding leaders have a detailed understanding of their responsibilities. Training for staff is frequent. As a result, staff can explain in detail the steps they would take if they were

concerned about a pupil. Records of referrals highlight that staff and safeguarding leaders leave nothing to chance. When pupils need help, they receive support swiftly.

Pupils demonstrate a mature and responsible attitude to safeguarding. They know growing up can be a struggle sometimes. They actively seek help for themselves and their friends if needed.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum introduced in the last 18 months is serving pupils well. They are making much stronger progress than they have in the past. However, the curriculum is not yet sufficiently well planned and sequenced in some subjects. The intended curriculum and end points pupils are expected to reach are a step too far for some pupils currently. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is well matched to pupils' needs and allows pupils to swiftly develop their knowledge, skills and understanding from their different starting points. Leaders need to complete the process of reviewing the curriculum in all subjects within their identified timescale. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.
- Governance is strong and improving. Members of the governing body continue to seek advice and guidance from the local authority and other experts in governance. Governors have made significant strides towards implementing the recommendations from the last review of governance. There are some recommendations that require more work to ensure that governors are as effective as they want to be. This includes ensuring that governors do not accept the information leaders present to them too readily. Governors should ensure that they triangulate fully any information provided by leaders to ensure that it is accurate and demonstrates how it is supporting pupils to do better.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	108628
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	10184593
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	351
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Margie Burdis
Headteacher	Terence Conway
Website	www.norhamhigh.com
Date of previous inspection	24 March 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last section 5 inspection, in October 2018, a new headteacher took up post. There have been considerable changes to the staffing structure of the school, including that of the senior leadership team.
- The school has an additional resourced provision for pupils with SEND. Currently, 32 pupils attend this provision. Most pupils with SEND attending this provision require support with their speech, language and communication.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is much higher than the national average.
- The school has a high proportion of pupils starting the school at times other than normal admission dates.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Inspectors conducted two remote monitoring visits during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is the first onsite inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors undertook deep dives into the following subjects: English, geography, science and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with senior and curriculum leaders, teachers, governors and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with the school improvement adviser.
- Inspectors held informal and formal discussions with pupils and observed interactions during social times.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and scrutinised a wide range of evidence, including behaviour and admissions records, safeguarding files, recruitment checks and curriculum documentation.
- Inspectors took into account the 52 responses from parents who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Forty-five members of staff completed Ofsted's online survey for staff. All responses were taken into consideration.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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