



Whitley Bay High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108638
Local Authority North Tyneside
Inspection number 288144
Inspection dates 23–24 November 2006
Reporting inspector Ann Wallis

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Deneholm
School category	Community		Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear
Age range of pupils	11–18		NE25 9AS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 2008800
Number on roll (school)	1545	Fax number	0191 2008803
Number on roll (6th form)	500		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Doctor John Fenwick
		Headteacher	Mr Adam Chedburn
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–18	23–24 November 2006	288144

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Whitley Bay High School is larger than average. Students come from the town of Whitley Bay and from neighbouring rural and urban areas. In 2006, over 50 learners joined the sixth form from other local schools. Students enter the school with above average standards. The proportion of students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average. There are small numbers of students from minority ethnic groups and a few who have English as an additional language. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well below average. The school has held specialist status in science and humanities since September 2006. It also has Leading Edge status and Investors in People and Healthy Schools Awards.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Whitley Bay High is a good school with many outstanding features, as stated in its own accurate self-evaluation. Outstanding leadership and management ensure that both student and staff morale are high. Staff are relentless in seeking ways to improve their already good teaching and students respond by showing very positive attitudes to learning. The school has forged outstanding links with partners as both a specialist college and as a school at the leading edge of education. It shares its own good practice widely. For example, a large group of middle school students were enjoying being taught by a teacher in a wizard's costume whilst investigating 'the magic of science' in an after school lesson. The school also benefits from the expertise of its many business and education partners, which enriches the outstanding curriculum.

Students' personal development and the care, guidance and support they receive are outstanding. The well-being, enjoyment, safety and achievement of every student are at the heart of the school's work. The personal and academic progress of all students is tracked very carefully and the results of regular progress checks are reported to parents so they are kept well informed. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Their comments included, 'My daughter is really enjoying school and takes part in three diverse after-school activities'. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive excellent support from teachers and classroom assistants.

Teaching and learning are good and there are examples of exemplary teaching in each key stage. Learning activities are often exciting and in some lessons you can feel students' enjoyment as they rise to a challenge. A small amount of teaching is inadequate and in these lessons students do not progress as well as they should.

Students reach standards which are well above average and their achievement is good. They enter the school in Year 9 with above average standards. Because of their enthusiasm for learning and the good teaching they receive, students make good progress and reach well above average standards by the end of Year 11. Senior leaders know their school well and have been successful in tackling areas of identified weakness. This has resulted in recent improvements in standards at Key Stage 3 and in subjects such as mathematics, which the school now needs to maintain.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that the sixth form is good with many outstanding features. This is a very large, successful and inclusive sixth form where learners reach well above average standards. In 2006, examination results were well above average, maintaining a consistently positive trend since the last inspection. Most learners successfully complete their courses, and are able to access their higher education and career ambitions. Given their above average attainment on entry to the sixth form, learners' achievement and progress are good overall. Year 12 learners achieved particularly well in their AS-level examinations last year; although the progress of those in Year 13 was a little slower. The quality of teaching is good with some

examples of outstanding practice. Learners have very positive attitudes to their learning and are very keen to succeed. Learners enjoy being in the sixth form and say, rightly, that they get excellent academic and personal support.

The personal development of learners is outstanding and is nurtured by a vigorous tutorial programme. The curriculum is outstanding. Learners are advised sensitively and are well matched to their courses. Learners enthusiastically participate in the many opportunities to enrich their studies, notably by helping younger learners, or by their participation in work experience for Year 12.

The sixth form is very well led and managed and has outstanding capacity to improve further. The new sixth form management team has a sharp focus on improving all aspects of the sixth form. Recent improvements in the guidance and support given to learners have yet to have their full impact on raising learners' achievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the recent improvements in attainment at Key Stage 3 and in mathematics at Key Stage 4 are sustained.
- Eliminate the small amount of weaker teaching to ensure that students achieve well in all subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students enter the school in Year 9 when they are two thirds of the way through their Key Stage 3 education. Therefore, standards and achievement data across Key Stage 3 have to be interpreted with care. In 2005, results in national tests at the end of Year 9 were above average overall. Students reached standards which were above average in mathematics and science and average in English. Value added data show that the achievement of these students in Key Stage 3 was below that of similar students nationally. However, in 2006, standards, particularly in English, have risen markedly. Students' achievement is now good and challenging targets have been met. These improvements were due to the successful teaching and learning strategies the school put in place to raise standards and achievement at the end of Key Stage 3. Inspection evidence confirms that students are continuing to make good progress in Year 9.

Students' progress accelerates as they move through Key Stage 4. GCSE results in 2005 were well above average and students' achievement was good. Students achieved well in English but their achievement in mathematics was below that of similar students nationally. GCSE results in 2006 were again well above average and students' achievement was good. The number of students gaining 5 or more A* to C grades rose markedly to over 80%, continuing the upward trend of recent years. Results in mathematics improved and the school exceeded the challenging targets set. Students

achieved best in art, child development, food and textiles and least well in religious education, classics and systems and control.

A-level and AS-level results are well above average and are improving. In 2006, virtually all students successfully completed their A-level courses, with 40% achieving A or B grades. Students make positive progress in their studies and achieve particularly well in design and technology (product design and textiles) at both A level and AS level, and in biology, mathematics, chemistry, computing, and art at AS level. There is room for improvement at A level in English literature, geography, and general studies.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The personal development and well-being of students, including those in the sixth form, are outstanding. Attitudes towards learning are very positive and students are keen to achieve well both academically and personally. Attendance is well above average. Relationships within the school are excellent. The school's strong commitment towards personal development and well-being and students' good understanding of how this can be achieved, contributes to their mature approach to learning and good behaviour.

Students feel safe and say that they can turn to an adult for help if they need it. They are made aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle through initiatives such as 'Fruity Friday,' which encourages students to eat healthily and develop good reading habits because they are rewarded with some fruit when they borrow a book from the library. A very high proportion of students participate in the wide range of extra-curricular sports and fitness activities. Preparation for students' future economic well-being is exemplary, through a comprehensive programme of work experience, careers guidance, partnerships with local organisations and the development of basic skills.

Students' moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Students represent the views of their peers through the active school councils, which make a real impact on school life. Students are keen to take the initiative in organising very successful fund raising events for charities. Cultural development is strong and students take part in visits to galleries, theatres and visits abroad. Spiritual development is good; although planned opportunities for students to engage in quiet reflection are not consistently implemented.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students in this school enjoy learning and are very keen to achieve and improve. This is, in part, because learning activities in lessons in both the main school and the sixth form are often exciting and stimulating. Relationships between teachers and students are very positive and supportive. Consequently, students feel that they are treated like adults, grow in confidence and increasingly take responsibility for their own progress.

Extensive well-focused professional development and many opportunities to share best practice have established an atmosphere where teachers are not afraid to try out innovative approaches. Teachers' very good subject knowledge and understanding of how children learn have led to teachers using a wide range of approaches that succeed in capturing students' interest and fully engaging them in demanding tasks. Students enjoy working collaboratively and taking part in practical challenging tasks that help them to assimilate knowledge and understanding and apply this in many novel situations. A Year 9 English lesson succeeded in captivating students' interest from the very start by setting up a mock crime scene on which students drew up a formal report. Homework supports learning well and teachers' marking gives useful guidance to students on how to improve their work.

Students understand the purpose of lessons but it is not always clear what the most able students must do to achieve a higher level of performance in each lesson. Consequently, in some lessons students are not always fully challenged. In a small number of lessons, where teaching is weak and relationships are less good, unacceptable behaviour is not managed successfully and learning is held back.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school offers an outstanding curriculum both in the main school and the sixth form. In Year 9, students experience a very broad, well balanced curriculum that fully meets statutory requirements. An unusual and innovative feature at this stage is the opportunity for students to choose from a wide list of optional subjects including dance, drama, a further modern foreign language or classics.

Provision in Years 10 and 11 is responding very well to individual students' needs and aspirations through its flexible planning approach. It includes a wide range of GCSE courses and a growing emphasis is given to vocational and work-related opportunities, and to the alternative arrangements that cater for those students who are not well suited to a full GCSE programme. There is excellent provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In keeping with the school's specialist status, there is

strong priority given to basic skills. This is both helping to raise standards and is ensuring that students are very well prepared for the world of work.

Many students really enjoy taking part in an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, notably in sport and performing arts. The combined personal, social and health education, careers and citizenship programme contributes very strongly to students' personal development and raises their awareness of their responsibilities to the community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Care, guidance and support in the school are outstanding. Child protection procedures are very firmly in place with two designated persons taking responsibility within school, and effective support from the local authority. The school has taken all the necessary steps to ensure students' safety in class and around the school. The support and guidance given to gifted and talented students and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities meet their needs very well. Students in Year 9 and their parents speak very highly of the arrangements for transfer from middle school. Students, including those in the sixth form, are given excellent advice about future courses and careers. The new custom-designed, web-based tracking and reporting system is excellent. It brings together all aspects of academic and pastoral tutoring, aids tracking of progress and the process of setting targets, and has been applied successfully to producing this year's first progress report. Vulnerable students and those at risk are closely monitored under this system to ensure that when extra support is needed, they receive it.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

The school evaluates leadership and management of the whole school as good. However, inspectors grade it as outstanding because it is at least good in all respects and in significant elements it is exemplary. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and he is well supported by a very effective senior team who share his clear vision for further improvement. The impact of this outstanding leadership is seen in the excellent personal development of students and their outstanding achievement in some subjects such as art, textiles, food and child development. The leadership of the sixth form is good. All staff are committed to improving their professional skills and hence the school has outstanding capacity to improve further.

Leaders recognise the need to eliminate the small amount of weaker teaching to ensure that students achieve well in all subject areas. They are well placed to do this as good use is made of mutual lesson observations and the school's teaching 'observatory' to

model good practice to all staff, including the large numbers of newly qualified and trainee teachers whose skills the school develops very well.

Governors have an in-depth knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and provide outstanding support and challenge for the school. Accommodation and learning resources have been improved by the addition of a new library and a new sixth form area. School finances are very well managed and the school provides good value for money.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Whitley Bay High School

Deneholm

Whitley Bay

Tyne and Wear

NE25 9AS

23 November 2006

Dear Students

We recently visited your school in order to find out how well you are doing and how well your school is supporting you. We really appreciated the very friendly welcome you gave us and would particularly like to thank those of you who spoke with us. We were very impressed with your positive attitudes and enjoyed our discussions with you.

What we have said about your school in the inspection report:

- yours is a good school with many outstanding features
- you reach standards in your work which are well above average and you achieve well
- teaching and learning are good
- your school gives you outstanding care, guidance and support and provides excellent personal development
- the leadership and management of your school are outstanding.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- ensure that the recent improvements in your Year 9 test results (SATs) and in mathematics in Years 10 and 11 are sustained
- eliminate the small amount of weaker teaching to ensure that you achieve well in all subjects.

Best wishes

Ann Wallis

(Lead inspector)