

# Whitley Bay High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108638
<b>Local Authority</b>	North Tyneside
<b>Inspection number</b>	337113
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alison Thomson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	13–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1613
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	566
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Paul Mitchell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Adam Chedburn
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Deneholm Whitley Bay Tyne and Wear NE25 9AS
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by six additional inspectors. The inspectors spent the majority of time looking at learning, observed 40 teachers and 42 lessons, and held meetings with the Chair of Governing Body, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work and analysed 290 questionnaires from parents, 312 from students and 121 from staff. The team also looked at documents and policies including those relating to the safeguarding of students, the data the school had collected about students' progress and the school's records of its monitoring of the quality of teaching.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- current attainment and progress, particularly in mathematics and of higher and lower attaining students
  - the extent to which students are successfully directed to learn independently and assess for themselves how well they are doing
- the effectiveness of middle leaders in driving whole-school improvements.

## Information about the school

Whitley Bay High School is a large secondary school. The proportion of students eligible for a free school meal is much lower than average. Most students are White British and have English as their first language. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those who have a statement of special educational needs, is much lower than average. The school is a specialist English, mathematics and science college and has many awards, including Investors in People status and the Healthy Schools award for the promotion of a healthy lifestyle.

It also has Leading Edge status that involves working collaboratively with a number of schools to inspire, design, test and adapt professional practice to raise standards in teaching and learning.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

Whitley Bay High is an outstanding school that works closely in partnership with its students to provide them with a first-class education. It is very popular and students are overwhelmingly positive about their experiences there. Parents and carers, too, value all the work that the school does and the following comment exemplifies those of many, 'My daughter is proud to aim high and truly feels that her friends and all the staff are on her educational journey with her'.

Teaching, the curriculum and care, guidance and support are all outstanding. This leads to all groups of students, including the highest attainers and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, having outstanding achievement. Attainment is high in all subjects and exceptionally so in English. Since the previous inspection, learning and progress have improved to be outstanding and relative underachievement in mathematics has been tackled well, so that it is now in line with other subjects. These improvements have arisen mainly through improvements in teaching, much of which is exciting and innovative, capturing the interests and imagination of the students well.

A highly cohesive leadership and management team is driving the school forward and is expertly steered by the headteacher and his deputy. Self-evaluation is extremely rigorous and incisive. Management of teaching and learning is exemplary and there is a keen sense of everyone working together to raise standards even further. The sharing of best practice is commonplace. Middle managers, led by the subject leaders of the school's specialisms, are fully involved in helping to drive up standards and progress.

A strong ethos of respect permeates the school. This results in students having an extremely positive attitude to learning. Their behaviour is exemplary and the inspection team felt that it was a delight to see them really enjoying the challenge of working independently, under the careful direction of their teachers. Students' personal development is excellent in every respect. Going for mock interviews at a nearby international conference centre and meeting an astronaut are some of the memorable experiences described by the students.

This school is not complacent. The school fully understands that 'outstanding does not mean perfect' and there are comprehensive development plans in place to improve even further. Capacity to improve is excellent.

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

- The school has accurately identified its priorities for improvement and there are no further ones to add.

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## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**1**

Inspection evidence from lesson observations confirmed the school's view that learning and progress is outstanding. Students are fully involved in learning collaboratively with their teachers and with each other. This was seen to very good effect in a Year 11 mathematics lesson, in which students acted as 'expert consultants' for each other having mastered a particular task. A focus on looking at the learning of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities during the inspection confirmed that their learning is outstanding. They were seen fully engaged in their work, guided extremely well by support staff. Students enter the school in Year 9 with broadly average standards. All groups of students make outstanding progress throughout the school and by the time they reach the end of Year 11, standards are high in all subjects and particularly high in English. In previous years, standards in mathematics have lagged behind those of English and science. A new head of department in mathematics has been instrumental in their rapid rise over the past 18 months.

Excellent relationships are a key feature of the school. Students are most keen to take on responsibility and many do so readily through the regular 'school voice' to get involved in issues that they identify as important, such as school uniform. There is a high involvement in the local community, including a Family Learning Day with local allotment holders. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Although most of the students are White British, they have an excellent understanding of other cultures through links, such as those with a school in Kenya, and through the curriculum and visits and visitors to the school. They have an excellent understanding of what it means to be healthy. Many develop leadership capacity through initiatives such as Junior Sports Leaders. The fact that students enjoy school so much is illustrated by their high attendance. This, coupled with their high attainment, their excellent skills in information communication technology and the mature way in which they cooperate with each other, means that they are outstandingly well prepared for their future economic well-being.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b>	
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	<b>1</b>
	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Teaching is innovative, exciting and varied. It is planned very well to meet the needs of all the students. Activities are well thought out and capture the interests of the students well, helping them to grasp difficult concepts securely. For example, in a Year 11 science lesson on atomic structure, students were captivated when asked to think of themselves in a dark cave and to try to devise methods of gauging its dimensions. Teachers' specialist subject knowledge extends students' learning very well. Students are fully involved in assessing their own work and that of their peers. In a Year 10 music lesson, students were seen evaluating the compositions of their peers in a most sensitive, helpful and thoughtful way. Marking is exemplary, with many specific comments to help students improve their work.

The curriculum has breadth and balance and the specialist school provision enhances learning well. The use of information communication technology, including interactive whiteboards, heightens enjoyment and aids progress, as does the embedding of literacy across the curriculum. A wide range of activities, such as specialist days, residential visits and out-of-school clubs, contribute significantly to the students' excellent personal development. The innovative contribution made by students to a North Tyneside publication, exemplified their excellent understanding of how to be safe and healthy. All students, including the most vulnerable, benefit from a highly personalised and pro-active approach to care, guidance and support and this has an outstanding impact. The responses to the students' questionnaire revealed that students feel that staff care about them and are interested in their views. When asked what was special about their school, one student replied, 'teachers listen to us'.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>1</b>
	1
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

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<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>
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## How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are exemplary, particularly that of teaching and learning, and all staff are ambitious on behalf of their students. The needs and interests of the students are paramount and education is something that is done with the students rather than to the students. It is clear that all staff and students feel extremely valued. The headteacher, ably assisted by his senior leadership team, delegates well and middle leaders play a vital role in monitoring and evaluation, not only of their own areas, but of the whole school. The leaders of English, mathematics and science, along with many other external partnerships, have helped to raise the expectations and practice of all teachers through some innovative strategies. Teaching in the rooms with the viewing gallery is seen by many staff as a privilege in order to share good practice. Relationships with parents and carers are excellent and they appreciate the many forums to help them help with their children's learning. Safeguarding is exemplary, with checks in all areas actioned and up-to-date, and equality of opportunity is outstanding. Racism and poor behaviour are not tolerated and are very rare indeed. Community cohesion action plans, following an incisive evaluation, are embedded well and impact is substantial. Students have an excellent understanding of many other faiths and cultures. Governance is outstanding. Governors are knowledgeable, hold the school to account well, and evaluate not only the work of the school, but their own contributions. The school provides excellent value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

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## Sixth form

The sixth form is popular, oversubscribed and is outstandingly successful. Attainment on entry is above average and achievement is outstanding, resulting in attainment at the end of Year 13 being very high. Over half of all grades achieved in their GCE Advanced levels are A or B grades. The average point score per examination entry has risen substantially since the previous report in 2006. Students are exceptionally well inducted into the sixth form. Those who enter from the school, and the large number who come from other secondary schools, are equally appreciative of the advice, guidance and support they are given. One student new to the school said, 'I don't feel like I've come from another school. I just fit in and everybody is great'. Retention rates are exceptionally high and many students move on to higher education, a very large majority achieving their first choice of university. Students' personal development is also outstanding. They appreciate the many opportunities to take on responsibilities and they play a significant and important role in the school community in supporting younger students. The quality of teaching is outstanding and students appreciate the healthy debate of many of the open discussions in their lessons. A high quality feature of students' learning is their exceptional understanding of how to assess their work and that of their peers. The curriculum is very well matched to their needs and aspirations and is extended well with a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sports, drama and music. Leadership and management are outstanding. Close and rigorous systems for assessing and monitoring data mean that any underachievement is addressed quickly. The students greatly appreciate all the help they receive. One student told us, 'I have never not been helped when I have needed it. They are always there for you'.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

## Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers who returned the questionnaire were very positive about all aspects of the school. In particular, they felt that their child was kept safe and enjoyed school. This high level of enjoyment was clearly seen by the inspectors. A few parents and carers did not agree that the school helped to keep their children healthy. Inspectors did not agree with this view and felt that this was something that the school did well.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whitley Bay High School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 290 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,613 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	148	51	137	47	2	1	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	106	37	174	60	3	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	145	50	130	45	8	3	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	138	48	134	46	17	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	128	44	147	51	11	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	100	34	162	56	20	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	62	21	170	59	46	16	4	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	147	51	126	43	9	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	134	46	138	48	14	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	80	28	162	56	22	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	94	32	149	51	17	6	1	0
The school is led and managed effectively	130	45	142	49	7	2	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	165	57	115	40	6	2	2	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



10 March 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Whitley Bay High School, Whitley Bay, NE25 9AS

The inspectors would all like to thank you most sincerely for engaging with us so well when we visited your school recently. You were very keen to talk to us and tell us about the many things that you like about your school. You say that your school is an excellent one and we agree with you. We were hugely impressed by your behaviour and your mature attitude to learning. Your teachers make your lessons very interesting and fun and we can see that, in turn, you thoroughly enjoy learning and play a major part in assessing how well you are doing.

Here are some of the responses you gave when asked to describe your school.

- 'Excellent school with a positive friendly, encouraging environment'
- 'It's a well rounded school and teaches you how to be a good person'
- 'Motivational school with many opportunities'
- 'It's a school that helps you to work harder'
- 'Every teacher cares about what you do'
- 'Teachers go out of their way to help you'
- 'We are treated as individuals'.

We agree with all your comments. We believe that all aspects of your school are outstanding – the teaching you receive, your curriculum and the care, guidance and support you receive. Your school is particularly well led and managed and even though the school is outstanding, it is not complacent. We do not believe that we need to give the school any areas for development as your headteacher and other leaders know exactly what to do to keep on improving. We are sure that you will play your part too, as you are so much involved and at the heart of all that the school does.

We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Alison Thomson

Lead inspector

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