

# North Axholme School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118093
<b>Local Authority</b>	North Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	339139
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Marianne Young HMI

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>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	439
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Leesa Murray
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Joe Sellars
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 July 2007
<b>School address</b>	Wharf Road Crowle Scunthorpe DN17 4HU
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 25 lessons, an assembly and a sample of form periods. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation including the school's planning and monitoring files. A total of 70 questionnaires were received from parents, 100 from students and 35 from staff.

- attainment and achievement in core subjects, particularly in mathematics
- the quality of teaching and how well assessment is used by teachers when planning lessons to ensure that all groups make the progress of which they are capable
- how effectively middle leaders and managers are monitoring and evaluating the work of their departments in order to improve attainment.

## Information about the school

North Axholme School is a smaller than average secondary school, serving the town of Crowle and the northern part of the Isle of Axholme. It became a specialist media arts college in 2008 and is also a Creative Partnerships Change School. The school holds the Artsmark Gold award. The number of students on roll has declined since the previous inspection due to changes in local demographics. A below average, but increasing, proportion of students is eligible for free school meals. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or difficulties is twice the national average.

**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?**

**4**

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

**3**

## Main findings

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to attainment and progress in mathematics.

Results in mathematics in 2009 were a considerable disappointment to the school and indicated that the three-year trend of underachievement in mathematics had not been reversed. When the results were known, a forthright assessment of the situation, led by the headteacher, signalled the start of action to bring about improvement. As yet, it is too early to judge whether this will be successful. Targets are set and reflect the school's desire for them to be challenging. However, the targets for the proportion of students gaining 5 GCSE pass at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics have not been reached. Conversely, those associated with specialist status were exceeded. Monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school, involving all leaders, is undertaken regularly. On occasions, however, when judging teaching, too little attention is paid to the impact it has on students' learning. This therefore affects decisions about what needs to be done to improve. The pastoral care and support provided by the school are strong and based on a genuine commitment to students' welfare and personal development. Inspectors found students to be polite, articulate and friendly. They enjoy school, as demonstrated by the above average attendance figures, particularly from the older students. They join in enthusiastically with many activities out of lesson time and good numbers of students are regularly involved in sporting activities. The school does a good job in helping students to lead healthy lives, keep safe and to understand the dangers associated with drugs and substance abuse. Students demonstrate good social and moral understanding but opportunities for them to develop spiritual and multicultural awareness are less well developed. The school recognises that despite being a cohesive community, its leaders have only recently started to plan, audit and promote community cohesion so that requirements have not yet been met.

Teaching is satisfactory, though there are examples of good and outstanding teaching where students make rapid progress in lessons. Students' progress is, however, often slowed because of their lack of understanding of how to move their work forward. Students' positive attitudes and willingness to undertake the work provided means that they make progress in most lessons, but it could be better. Some lessons are characterised by work which does not match students' needs well enough and by tasks which lack excitement and sufficient challenge for different ability levels. The good support and appropriate challenge given to some students with special educational

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needs and/or disabilities means that, overall, they make satisfactory progress. The creative changes to the Key Stage 4 curriculum and effective links with different partners, including those established as a result of the school's specialist status, means the school is able to offer a good range of courses to support students' different interests and needs and prepare them for their future employment routes.

Senior leaders and governors recognise the weaknesses and challenges they face. They have been successful in addressing some issues identified at the last inspection and raising attainment in many subjects, which demonstrates a satisfactory capacity for improvement. However, value for money is inadequate because underachievement still exists.

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

- Raise attainment and students' achievement in mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching and the rate of progress students make in lessons by:
  - - consistently making full use of assessment information to plan lessons which challenge students of all abilities
  - - capitalising on students' good behaviour and readiness to learn ensuring that marking is thorough and helpful so that they are clear how to improve their work and understand how to reach their long-term targets.
- All leaders should ensure that challenging and measurable targets explicitly underpin all action planning for improvement, and pay closer attention to the impact on students' achievement when monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the actions taken.
- Accelerate the pace with which the school plans for, and evaluates, students' contribution to community cohesion.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Students enter the school with broadly average attainment. For the last three years, however, students have underachieved in mathematics as they have not made the progress expected of them. As a result the proportion of students attaining five A\* to C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, has been below the national average. Despite hopeful predictions, provisional results for this measure did not improve in 2009 and targets were again missed, because mathematics was the weaker subject. Those who study a course in functional mathematics achieve above the national average in this subject. This picture of underachievement is recognised by the school and they understand the challenges posed. Provisional results in science, which was an area for improvement at the last inspection, have significantly improved. The school is rightly proud of the five A\* to C and five A\* to G GCSE results, which demonstrate the impact of changes made to the curriculum and the well-targeted support given to students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In lessons, the progress that students make is linked closely to the quality of teaching and the extent to which the degree of

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challenge is matched to their abilities. It is better for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and, as a result, these students make satisfactory progress. Students show respect for themselves and others, resulting in a welcoming and positive ethos around the school. They appreciate the opportunity to be part of the school community and recognise the merits of the school, summed up by one student: 'It's a small school and everyone knows everyone, so there's little chance of problems escalating.' Bullying is not regarded as an issue by students, despite a very small number of parents having concerns. Students have confidence to leave their personal belongings unattended during social times and have a well developed sense of right and wrong. However, their awareness of multicultural issues is less well developed. They are keen to contribute to school life and outside activities. Many take on roles enthusiastically, such as being prefects and peer mentors. Members of the school council are proud of their contribution to school life and their efforts are appreciated by their peers. The school successfully prepares its students for later life.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

<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.

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Teachers promote good behaviour so that classrooms are orderly and relationships with, and between, students, are positive. A wealth of assessment data is available. However, teachers are still not using it consistently to ensure that the work they provide is sufficiently well matched to students' individual needs. Most lessons are planned with varied activities and teachers generally provide good explanations of tasks, their purpose and the features of successful work. In some subjects and classes, the marking and information provided for students means they are clear how well they are doing and how to improve. However, in too many cases marking quality is perfunctory and only includes comments which reward effort and presentation. Good use is made of the increasing number of interactive whiteboards to stimulate learning, although some opportunities are missed to involve students in using them.

Further innovative developments to the Key Stage 4 curriculum means that the school provides a good range of different qualifications for all students. A clear impact of this work is seen in the much improved grades attained by students in, for example, science and information and communication technology. The well-planned complementary studies programme is enjoyed by students and makes a good contribution to their personal development. Extra-curricular activities are well supported by students and contribute well to their enjoyment of school.

Arrangements for the care and welfare of all students are good, monitored carefully and contribute well to their personal development. Students who are vulnerable or at risk are identified well: they are given good support, especially through their personalised plans which sustains their improved attainment well. Transition arrangements, when students join or leave the school, are good with students receiving good information and guidance to support their career choices. The effective systems in place to encourage students to go to school regularly have resulted in above average levels of attendance.

*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>3</b>
	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leadership team are ambitious to raise the level of students' achievement. Monitoring and evaluation yield a satisfactory understanding of the progress being made although there are occasions, notably when monitoring teaching, when too little attention is paid to the quality of students' learning which results from it. The school development plan addresses appropriate priorities and provides a way forward. For example, as a result of its review of the curriculum the school, in

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partnership with other schools and local colleges, has plans to continue to develop further the subjects offered to students. Courses that have been unpopular or unsuccessful have been discontinued. However, in both the school development plan and those for specific areas of the school's work, some actions are not linked explicitly enough to measurable benefits for the students. Systems to enable middle leaders to take a leading role in monitoring and evaluating the work of their departments and contributing to whole school improvement are secure. Generally the school has a more optimistic view of its performance than that found by inspectors. The school has recognised the challenges it faces being a small school in a rural area. It has successfully forged partnerships with different organisations and agencies in order to provide a wider range of opportunities for students than they could themselves provide. The school is justifiably proud of the impact, after only a year, of its media and arts status. Students report that they notice the increase in equipment in the school and the improved choice of media courses now available to them.

Procedures for safeguarding students meet requirements. Staff have been suitably trained in child protection and the school fosters a sensible attitude among students to keeping themselves safe. Links with parents are improving and new methods of communicating are being trialled, for example, an on-line survey. Senior leaders and governors recognise the importance of equality of opportunity for all students. Governors meet regularly with senior leaders and recognise that they need to look more closely at the impact on students' learning when checking how well the school is doing and defining what could be better. Ambitious targets are set; some have been met and, in some cases, exceeded. However, in the key measure of five A\* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics, targets have not been met over time. Nevertheless, the school's record of improvement in some key areas, since the last inspection, indicates that there is satisfactory capacity to improve.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>4</b>



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**The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money****4**

## Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of the 16% of parents and carers who returned questionnaires to the school are happy with their children's experiences at the school and believe that the school keeps them safe. Parents and carers took a more positive view of the progress being made by students at the school than did the inspection team. In their comments, parents and carers singled out the level of individual care for their children and the support from the special needs department as key strengths; a view shared by the inspection team. A very few had concerns about students' behaviour and incidents of bullying. However, the inspection team found behaviour to be good and that any isolated incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at North Axholme 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 70 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 439 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	29	39	56	8	11	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	20	29	42	60	4	6	2	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	26	41	59	5	7	4	6
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	23	43	61	7	10	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	17	24	47	67	4	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	21	39	56	13	19	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	20	48	69	7	10	1	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)	22	31	36	51	3	4	3	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	21	43	61	8	11	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	17	41	59	7	10	4	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	11	40	57	13	19	4	6
The school is led and managed effectively	13	19	45	64	5	7	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	24	41	59	8	11	3	4

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.**



8 October 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of North Axholme School, Scunthorpe DN17 4HU

This letter is to thank you for your help in the recent inspection of your school and to tell you what we found. Behaviour is good and your above average attendance and involvement in out of school activities indicate that you enjoy school. The school cares for you well. Many of you told us that the staff know and support you as individuals and that you are confident to turn to them if you need help.

Since the last inspection, too many of you are not doing well enough in mathematics, and are not reaching the standards of which you are capable. Your teachers are keen to help you do your best in lessons. However, some lessons are not as effective as they should be in ensuring that you make the best possible progress, and you are not always sure how to move your work forward. For these reasons we have judged that North Axholme requires a notice to improve. This means the school will receive a visit from an inspector to ensure improvements are made more rapidly.

We have asked your headteacher and the staff to make improvements by:

- raising your attainment and achievement in mathematics
- making sure you make more progress by ensuring lessons include challenging and engaging work for you all and by giving you a clear understanding of how to improve your work through clear and helpful marking
- making sure that the school's leaders check that the actions they take to improve the school are actually making an impact on your learning
- accelerating the pace with which the school plans for and evaluates its contribution to community cohesion.

I am sure you will want to play your part in helping North Axholme improve. I wish you all every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Marianne Young

Her Majesty's Inspector

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