

Jarrow School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133725
Local Authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	341405
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Jane Jones HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	604
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Watson
Headteacher	Mr Malcolm Jones
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Field Terrace Jarrow Tyne and Wear NE32 5PR
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 25 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, and groups of students. They observed the school's work and scrutinised a range of documents including the minutes of governing body meetings, the school's raising attainment plan, information from senior and middle managers' monitoring activities, the school's assessment information and analysis, and 130 parental questionnaires.

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

- the school's analysis of the 2009 examination results and other assessment information
- learning and teaching, and what the school is doing to improve them
- students' views about learning and life at school
- the ways in which the curriculum meets students' needs and prepares them for their futures
- how effectively leaders and managers set clear direction and use information from analysis, monitoring and evaluation to prioritise actions, tackle weaknesses, and plan for improvement.

Information about the school

Jarrow School is smaller than average: the number on roll has fallen by 200 since the last inspection. Around a quarter of the students are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. Very few students are of minority ethnic heritage or have home languages other than English. The proportion of students identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities has risen substantially to over a third. Of these students, 38 have statements of special educational needs, which is much higher than average. Some attend the local authority's units for autistic or hearing impaired students, both of which are housed within the school.

The school has held specialist status for engineering for two years. It achieved the Healthy Schools Standard in January 2009. The school is the first in the area to be completely rebuilt as part of the 'Building Schools for the Future' programme. The school was due to move into the new buildings two weeks after the inspection.

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 students' progress and learning, particularly in Key Stage 3, and the development of their basic and independent learning skills.

The school's successful focus on raising students' attainment at Key Stage 4 provides evidence of its satisfactory capacity for further improvement. Strategic development of the curriculum in introducing vocational courses, some in partnership with other providers, coupled with systems to track students' progress and intervene accordingly, has borne fruit. In addition, there has been a strong drive to improve students' performance in English and mathematics. The 2009 examination results build on the green shoots seen in 2008 and indicate that the school is overcoming a pattern of significant underachievement. Almost all students gained at least one qualification, including those who have more complex special needs.

The school is aware that there is more to do at Key Stage 3. Standards in national tests have been persistently low and represent inadequate progress for too many students. Teachers' assessments indicate some improvement in 2009. At both key stages, the progress of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is variable but is satisfactory overall. Those who receive specialised provision tend to make the strongest progress.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. There is some good and outstanding teaching but not enough to ensure that students make the consistently good progress required to raise standards significantly and equip them for the next stage of their education. A key shortcoming is that most teachers do not take sufficient account of students' individual needs and capabilities when planning lessons. While sometimes students are not able to make the most of the opportunities provided in lessons because of weaknesses in their basic skills, especially literacy, it is more often the case that teachers do not help students sufficiently to develop these skills.

Most of the outcomes in relation to students' personal development are satisfactory although attendance remains too low. Older students talk positively about the breadth and relevance of the options they have at Key Stage 4. Exclusion rates are high: the sample of students' questionnaires shows that many think behaviour is not good. During the inspection, no incidences of poor behaviour were observed although students were sometimes noisy and boisterous, especially in narrow or crowded spaces. In lessons,

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behaviour was never less than satisfactory, even when the lesson was dull. Students say they dislike lessons where activities lack challenge or are repetitive.

Senior leaders demonstrate a vision for the school's future that is securely focused on raising standards while personalising learning for all students whatever their needs, abilities or aspirations. Governors understand the school's strengths, weaknesses and priorities, and provide appropriate challenge and support through the revised committee structure. There is a core group of strong senior and middle leaders whose roles are key to tackling the school's weaknesses and driving improvements forward. Though some lack experience, most leaders have an accurate grasp of strengths and developments required within their areas of responsibility. Monitoring is appropriately focused on the quality of provision and students' progress, but approaches to tackling weaknesses lack the rigour required to ensure strategies are embedded consistently across the school.

The school has a range of well developed partnerships, including with a further education college, neighbouring schools, local industry and a range of external agencies. It has been entrepreneurial in establishing productive links with other course providers and settings for the development of workplace skills. While the school has a clear understanding of its community and does much to engage with the local community through, for example, musical activities and the Jarrow 1001 project, little is done to prepare students for life in modern multi-cultural Britain. The school's effectiveness in promoting community cohesion is inadequate. It has only recently started to address this area.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure students' better progress in lessons and over time during Key Stage 3.
- Develop students' basic skills, particularly in literacy and oracy, and strengthen their ability to learn independently.
- Raise the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring lesson planning takes account of students' starting points, needs and potential in structuring learning and choosing activities
 - adopting a systematic approach to tackling weaknesses and inconsistencies and to developing and sharing good practice.
- Increase the influence of leaders in driving improvement more rapidly by:
 - developing the skills of inexperienced leaders
 - ensuring relevant data from across the school's work and outcomes of monitoring are analysed thoroughly and used to prioritise actions, tackle weaknesses, and adjust planning for improvement.
- Implement national guidance on the promotion of community cohesion.
- Reduce the high levels of persistent absence.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Students' achievement is inadequate. It is stronger at Key Stage 4 where standards are

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rising, aided by the successful introduction of vocational courses. In 2009, 71% of students attained at least five A* to C grades, which is above the 2008 national average. When English and mathematics are included, the proportion gaining five A* to C grades is much lower at 34% but this nevertheless represents a rise of 11% and takes the school above the National Challenge target of 30%. However, only 81% of students attained five A* to G grades, which is too few and is a lower proportion than the last two years. Half of these students had poor attendance.

At Key Stage 3, teachers' assessments in 2009 indicate some improvement in the proportions attaining the standard expected by age 14 in English, mathematics and science. Too few students, though, attain the higher levels. The school's analysis shows that many students made too little progress given their below average starting points on joining the school in Year 7. A scrutiny of a sample of students' assessed work provided by the school and observation of students' work during lessons aligns with this picture.

The majority of students say they feel safe in school. There are few incidents of racist behaviour or bullying and most students feel that, when they occur, they are dealt with effectively. Most students understand what to do to adopt a healthy lifestyle: the lunchtime menu has popular healthy choices. Students enjoy the varied range of sporting, enterprise and other additional activities. They have some opportunities to play a part in the school's community. Students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory, though the spiritual and multi-cultural dimensions are less well developed than the social aspects.

Vocational courses, industry links and projects such as those in science and engineering help students to prepare for the world of work. However, their weak basic skills are a barrier to successful participation in further education, training or employment. Despite the school's efforts, rates of persistent absenteeism remain too high.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3

¹ 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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The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

There is some good and outstanding teaching but much is satisfactory and occasionally it is inadequate. The best is enthusiastic and captures students' interest. It focuses on what each student will learn, underpinned by high expectations of students' contributions and progress. Teachers listen carefully to what students say, asking further questions to make students expand on their answers and develop their thinking further. Time is used well.

A principal weakness in the teaching is the lack of attention to meeting students' individual needs: often the whole class tackles the same work and little attention is given to promoting students' literacy and speaking skills. Learning support assistants are not deployed consistently well. There is good practice in the two units but elsewhere additional adults are sometimes underused. Lesson plans do not routinely indicate how learning support assistants will contribute to students' learning. A further weakness is that many teachers talk for too long, resulting in students who are passive, become bored, and have limited time for working independently.

The school has made progress in developing the use of assessment in lessons. Many teachers refer to the level or grade of the work taught and some encourage students to assess whether they have reached a particular level in the lesson. Work remains to be done on making assessment meaningful and embedding practice across the school.

The Key Stage 4 curriculum provides a broad range of options. About 20 vocational courses are available within the school, at a further education college, or with other trainers. All students follow a certificated course in information and communication technology. At Key Stage 3, the curriculum is enhanced by programmes relating to emotional maturity and thinking skills. The promotion of numeracy skills across the curriculum is improving but much higher priority is needed to secure students' skills in literacy and oracy.

The school's specialist status for engineering has provided some good quality resources. It is fostering the development of successful courses that include food, electronics, and construction. There are effective links with other schools and industry because of the school's lead role in engineering.

The school provides a satisfactorily caring and supportive environment for students. Procedures for the transfer of students from primary school are effective. Younger students are particularly appreciative of the help readily provided by learning mentors.

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An in-school occupational therapist helps students who have problems adjusting to school. Older students are provided with sound advice in relation to course options and future career development. The school works well with a wide variety of outside agencies to support vulnerable students. The newly appointed special educational needs coordinator is also developing more targeted support for students.

The unit for students with autism offers a secure and positive environment. The 27 students receive work tailored effectively to their individual needs. Hearing impaired students also receive well focused support that helps them access the curriculum.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, supported by a relatively new team of senior staff, has responded to the range of challenges faced by the school. These include issues such as the need for robust action in managing staffing reduction in the light of the falling numbers on roll and the building of the new school. In addition, leaders have embraced the National Challenge of raising attainment at Key Stage 4, and have as a result seen standards rise. However, while many students are making satisfactory progress in Key Stage 4, some are not, and there is too much underachievement in Key Stage 3. Senior staff gather information on students' performance and progress across the curriculum and their participation in school life. The outcomes of analysis of this information are not used systematically to inform school improvement as the analytical expertise of senior staff is generally underdeveloped.

Rigour of monitoring and evaluation is improving through, for example, scrutiny of students' work and structured observations of teaching and learning, though the outcomes are not always followed through robustly or used to inform strategic planning which results in uneven impact. Leaders of English, mathematics and science understand their roles well and are committed to raising performance. The planned structure for subjects in the new school offers potential benefits from collaborative work. Several staff who have subject responsibilities currently work in relative isolation.

The school's approach to improving teaching centres on in-house support provided by colleagues such as the school's advanced skills teachers, subject leaders and senior staff. Some teachers, keen to improve their practice, have joined the new teaching and learning group. All staff have received training on aspects such as 'assessment for learning' and are offered practical advice within assessment and teaching policies. These

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strategies are not, however, complemented by a structured approach to raising the quality of teaching of all staff.

The school engages satisfactorily with parents and carers and makes appropriate efforts to consult and engage with them on matters of school policy.

The school has been scrupulous in meeting requirements for verifying that all adults who engage with students have been properly cleared for the work they do. Staff have been trained in matters relating to child protection and are aware of how to communicate any concerns. The needs and development of vulnerable students, including some from complex domestic backgrounds, are monitored carefully. There are appropriate links with other agencies.

There are adequate measures for recording incidents where students sustain injury or where behaviour impacts on a student's welfare. Systems for recording students' attendance when being educated off-site have improved this term.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	4
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Views of parents and carers

Inspectors received 130 parental questionnaires, around 90% of which were from parents of Key Stage 3 students. The questionnaires show that almost all parents are confident that the school keeps their child safe. While most parents are supportive of the school's leadership and the education provided, a small minority have some concerns, principally around three areas. The first is students' behaviour, which accords with the views of many students and with the high rate of exclusion, but no unacceptable behaviour was observed during the inspection. The other two areas are

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the way the school helps parents and carers to support their child's learning, and the extent to which the school supports students to adopt healthy lifestyles.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Jarrow 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 130 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 605 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	23	84	65	13	10	3	2
The school keeps my child safe	31	24	94	72	3	2	2	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	25	86	66	7	5	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	28	81	62	7	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	27	21	90	69	11	8	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	20	70	54	28	22	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	16	81	62	20	15	2	2
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)	26	20	83	64	10	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	21	93	72	6	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	24	72	55	20	15	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	15	84	65	14	11	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	33	25	84	65	5	4	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	28	80	62	8	6	3	2

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



9 October 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Jarrow School, NE32 5PR

I am writing on behalf of all the inspectors to tell you about the findings of our inspection but, first of all, I would like to thank you for the welcome you gave us. We enjoyed visiting your lessons and talking to you about your experiences of school.

Here are some of the things we found out about your school.

- You like the course options you have at Key Stage 4. The staff told us that many of you have done well in the assessments you have taken already, especially in vocational courses. The school's links with local businesses and industries are helping to give you a good understanding of the world of work.
- You enjoy activities such as sports, music and enterprise.
- During the inspection you behaved well in lessons but in the corridors there was some pushing and jostling. Many of you told us that behaviour is 'not good', especially in some lessons. You told us you prefer activities that are practical and which challenge you rather than doing lots of repetitive work.
- Your attendance has improved this term – keep it up! A minority of you miss more than a day every week on average and this is likely to damage your chances of success in Year 11.
- When you are worried or have difficulties, you know who to approach for help. You are happy with the advice you get about choosing options at Key Stage 4 or when making choices about what to do when you leave school at age 16.

Although examination results have improved in the last two years, some important things are not yet good enough. Therefore we have given the school a 'notice to improve'. We have asked the staff and governors to do several things in particular:

- help you make better progress, especially in Key Stage 3
- help you acquire good basic skills. Many of you are better at thinking things out than you are at reading and writing and to get the best out of your studies you need to be able to read and write well
- improve teaching so that more is good or outstanding. Every student in a class is different; lessons need to be better at helping each individual learn
- school leaders must be more systematic when tackling what needs to be improved

so that further improvements are made quickly.

- to do more to give you an understanding of life and people in other parts of England and the wider world, and your part as a citizen in them.

You will soon be moving into your new school – an exciting time for everybody and many new opportunities. I wish you all success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jane Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector

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