

Haltwhistle Community Campus Upper School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122327
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	359225
Inspection dates	15–16 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Brian Blake HMI

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	241
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Lawrence Thompson
Headteacher	Mr Mike Routledge
Date of previous school inspection	15 January 2008
School address	Haltwhistle Community Campus Park Avenue Haltwhistle NE49 9BA
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 11 part-lessons, which involved a total of nine teachers. A range of documents was scrutinised and meetings held with members of the senior leadership team, members of the governing body, nominated staff, and a group of pupils. Other informal discussions were held with staff and a significant number of pupils during lessons and around the school. Inspectors also read 184 inspection questionnaires returned by parents and carers, in addition to considering the views of those staff and pupils who completed separate questionnaires.

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

-The pupils' attainment at the end of Years 6 and 8.

- The progress of pupils when reaching the end of Year 8.
- The outstanding characteristics in those areas where the school has self- assessed a grade improvement since the previous inspection.
- The evidence of impact of the federation structure on pupils' outcomes.

Information about the school

Haltwhistle Community Campus Upper School is a middle deemed secondary school for pupils from nine to 13 years of age. It is part of a hard federation with the co-located former first school, now named the lower campus. There is one headteacher, one governing body, and a combined staff, some of whom work exclusively in either the lower or upper school, while others teach in both. The school, which has specialist status in sport, is much smaller than the average sized secondary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average, as is those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has a higher than average number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. All pupils are of White British heritage. The school holds a number of national awards; these include the Healthy Schools Award, Artsmark, Activemark, Investors in People status, and the Financial Management in Schools Award.

This was a parallel inspection event, in which the inspection of the lower school campus took place at the same time as this inspection. A separate report is published on the Ofsted website.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Haltwhistle Community Campus Upper School provides a good and improving quality of education for its pupils.

The school has continued to make improvements since the previous inspection in 2008, building on previous achievements and tackling issues raised. Senior managers and leaders are aware that there are still some areas where they would like to see further improvements. This applies, in particular, to pupils' progress in reading and writing in both English and across the school more generally. Overall, however, pupils' attainment is above average and progress is good, which ensures that when they leave the school at the end of Year 8, they are well prepared for the high school.

The curriculum provides the pupils with a varied range of good quality learning activities. The school's specialist status in sport has made a big impact on provision, especially in the varied and extensive range of extra-curricular activities on offer. In turn, the pupils have responded in large numbers to take advantage of these additional learning opportunities, which makes a very positive contribution to them achieving healthy and sustainable lifestyles.

The teaching in lessons is generally good, with staff preparing work that suits the needs of all pupils well. The working relationships between pupils and with teachers in and out of lessons are good, which means that behaviour, overall, is also good. There is, however, a very small minority of pupils who present very challenging behaviour in lessons, and which is not always managed as consistently and effectively as it could be.

Leaders and managers share a common purpose in helping the school to continue improving. They work well together, and with the full staff provide a caring and supportive work environment for the pupils. Self-evaluation is accurate. Resources are used well, and the sharing of teachers' expertise between the upper and lower campuses is very effective. Overall, the school has good capacity to make further improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop a whole-school approach to reading, writing and presentation of work as an aid to all pupils achieving in line with their capabilities.
- Develop and implement a range of behavioural management strategies to ensure that those pupils who present the most challenging behaviour in school are helped to maintain at least a satisfactory rate of progress in their learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

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Pupils start at the school in Year 5 with broadly average levels of attainment across the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science. While there are some small variations in the levels of attainment between girls and boys throughout the school, especially in some aspects of reading and writing in English, observations from lessons show that the overwhelming majority of pupils make good progress in their learning. This good rate of progress results in pupils' attainment being above average overall when they leave the school at the end of Year 8. However, performance in mathematics and science is better than that seen in English. There are no significant differences in the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or other smaller groups of pupils in the school. Overall, these pupils also make good progress relative to their capabilities.

Pupils are acquiring new knowledge and developing and consolidating their understanding of key literacy and numeracy skills. The vast majority of pupils are keen to listen and learn and, with few exceptions, apply themselves willingly and enthusiastically to activities and tasks in lessons. Pupils' achievement is good. In lessons, pupils' interest levels are generally good and they are willing participants in class and group discussions. Pupils say they enjoy their work and that they feel safe; these judgements were confirmed by inspectors when they spoke to pupils during the inspection, and when reading their questionnaire responses. Although pupils' behaviour is good overall, a very small minority do present some challenging behaviour that disrupts their learning and progress. In the overwhelming majority of lessons, pupils act sensibly, showing a sensitivity to the learning and personal needs of others.

The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles is outstanding because of the much higher than average take-up of sporting activities in school, and in the good level of pupils' awareness about eating healthily in order to maintain their personal well-being. Pupils' contribution to the school and wider community is good overall. Involvement in and commitment to the different enrichment activities provided by the school, especially in extra-curricular sport, is good. This also extends to the community's use of the school's sporting facilities. Attendance is average, with few persistent absentees.

The focus on acquiring key skills in literacy and numeracy is helping to ensure that the pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. These are also helping the pupils to develop their self-esteem and personal confidence as they tackle new learning activities as an aid to their future economic well-being.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, but strongest in moral and social aspects. The school places a high level of importance on all these aspects, and is very successful in helping the pupils to work well with each other in all learning environments, and to know the difference between right and wrong.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. Staff planning of lessons shows an appreciation of the varying learning needs of different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and higher-attaining pupils. This positive approach to working with the pupils helps to maintain good quality classroom control and creates a positive work environment for the pupils. The vast majority of teachers skilfully use different learning techniques and resources to aid the pupils' learning. The school makes good use of the teachers' expertise available within the upper and lower schools. The support of classroom teaching assistants makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning and personal development.

Teachers skilfully use praise to help motivate the pupils, and this encourages them to respond positively in lessons. There is regular and ongoing assessment of pupils' progress, which is helping pupils to know how well they are doing at school. The quality of teachers' marking is satisfactory overall, but it has yet to include more detailed comments about the presentation of work, in particular to pupils' writing.

The curriculum is good overall. It is well planned and effectively meets the needs of all pupils. Aspects of personal and social education are taught well, and enhanced through tutor time. A varied programme of enrichment and extra-curricular activities contributes valuably to pupils' achievement, enjoyment and personal development. Particularly noteworthy are the significant numbers of pupils participating in a substantial range of sporting activities, reflecting the school's specialist status and also making a significant contribution to pupils' healthy lifestyles.

The school's arrangements for the care, guidance and support of its pupils are good. A

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very large majority of parents and carers say that they value both the information that is provided about their children's progress and how well the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns. The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. The transition arrangements for pupils joining and leaving for the high school are good. The majority of pupils come from the lower school campus, which boosts their personal confidence when they start at the school because they already know many of the pupils and teachers through joint events and lessons.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are good. Senior leaders and managers are helping to drive improvement through a clear and well-shared set of priorities; this, in turn, is helping all who work or are linked to the school to share a common sense of purpose, direction and ambition for further improvement. The governing body is well informed, dedicated to its work, with a good grasp of the issues facing the school. It has proved flexible and adapted to new ideas quickly when implementing the recent changes to a campus federation. The partnership within the federation benefits the school, for example, through the ability to share the expertise of staff, and ensure the seamless transition of pupils. The policies adopted by the school for promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination are good and it has pertinent information about the different groups of pupils it serves. The effectiveness of the school's arrangements for ensuring the safety of its pupils is good. All safeguarding regulations are met and policies are in line with government requirements. There are good opportunities for the pupils to appreciate and develop a greater understanding of different international cultures, including different world faiths. The links with different, regional and national cultures are improving. For example, the relationships that the school has with the local community, especially local sports associations, contribute strongly to partnership links within and beyond the school. The school's use of its resources is good, and therefore, contributes to it achieving good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2

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The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The percentage number of questionnaires returned by parents, at 76%, is very high when compared to other school inspections. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are very positive about the quality of education provided for their children. A very small number took the opportunity to write some additional comments on the inspection questionnaire, the vast majority of which praised the school. However, a few parents and carers that felt some aspects of the school's provision, for example, in dealing with bullying, could be improved by better communication and action with both the pupils and their parents and carers about how the issue can be resolved to the satisfaction of all concerned. The inspection team considers that the school respond to these concerns when they arise.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Haltwhistle Community Campus Upper 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 184 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 241 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	63	34	111	60	6	3	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	74	40	105	57	3	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	50	27	119	65	8	4	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	61	33	108	59	5	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	66	36	111	60	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	48	26	118	64	10	5	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	23	129	70	5	3	2	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)	50	27	118	64	5	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	56	30	115	63	4	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	51	28	108	59	17	9	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	22	110	60	11	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	50	27	119	65	2	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	69	38	104	57	4	2	1	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



17 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Haltwhistle Community Campus Upper School, Haltwhistle, NE49 9BA

I should like to thank you, on behalf of the inspectors who recently visited your school, for the welcome that you gave to us and for your willingness to talk and share your views about attending Haltwhistle Upper School. The inspectors recognised very quickly that you both feel safe and that you enjoy attending school.

We hope that both you and your parents and carers enjoy reading the following text, in which we summarise our main findings from the inspection.

- The school provides a good and improving standard of education.
- You make good progress and achieve above average standards by the time you leave the school. However, not all of you are doing as well as you should in reading, writing and in the way you present your work. We are, therefore, asking the school to help you improve these areas.
- Your behaviour is good, and you are generally attentive in lessons. The behaviour of a small minority is not yet good enough so we are asking the school to help those pupils improve so that they do not lose ground in their personal learning.
- You know the difference between right and wrong, and you work well together.
- Teaching is good overall, and the staff care and support you well.
- Senior leaders and managers, including the governors, know the school well and they jointly have a clear ambition to help it improve further.
- Your parents and carers are very supportive of the school, but a few would like to see it work a little better in dealing with any bullying that may occur.

We hope that you continue to enjoy attending school and that you achieve all that you and your parents wish for yourselves for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Brian Blake

Her Majesty's Inspector

On behalf of the inspection team

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