

Netherhall Learning Campus High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107756
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	377642
Inspection dates	16–17 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Clive Moss 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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	428
Of which number on roll post-16	5
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Rock
Headteacher	Joan Young
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 33 lessons taught by 26 teachers, observed teaching in tutor-group sessions, held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, leaders and managers and other staff at the school. They met with groups of students and spoke with others in lessons and around the school.

Inspectors observed the school's work, examined policies, plans and records in relation to, for example, safeguarding, work with the community, and the quality of teaching, as well as the school's data on, for example, students' progress and behaviour. They looked also at questionnaires completed by the staff, pupils and 169 returned by parents and carers, and held a telephone discussion with a parent.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well does the school focus on reducing variations in performance between subjects?
- What strategies has the school used to improve attendance?
- How well does the school identify and support students at risk of underachieving?

Information about the school

Netherhall Learning Campus High School is much smaller than the average secondary school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well-above average, but it has fallen since the previous inspection. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is above average. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is high. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average overall; it is above average for those with a statement of special educational needs, owing mainly to a specialist resource provision for learners with moderate learning difficulties being located at the school. A high proportion of students join the school at times other than the usual. The school has specialist status for art and drama. It has recently opened a 'studio school' for students aged 14 to 19. Currently, there are five students aged 16+ who are part of the studio school. The school is part of a formal federation with primary schools located on the campus and has changed its name since the previous 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

A flexible and innovative approach to providing the students with courses and programmes that meet their individual needs and interests characterises the school's approach to learning. The approach results in students who are happy at school and like to learn. Students from all backgrounds mix together well, in lessons and around the school, including those who are part of the specialist resource provision. The students are cheerful, friendly and welcoming to visitors. They engage in conversation readily, though often struggle to express their views at length, particularly the boys. Similarly, they struggle to express their views in writing also, though generally, they make good progress in improving their literacy levels.

The students are provided with information frequently, particularly during lessons, about how well they are doing and what standards are required for achieving higher levels in their work. The teachers are alert to the rates of progress being made by individual students and the school uses a range of approaches to support students who are falling behind or need to catch up. The students are not always sufficiently clear, however, about what specifically and individually they need to do to get to the higher levels required by the challenging targets the school sets. In particular those students identified with less-severe special educational needs; the students are, however, usually aware of their targets. In the best examples of practice seen during the inspection, the teachers' questions encouraged the students to think more deeply and this helped to secure good learning and develop their skills in expressing ideas. On other occasions, only short responses were required and the students were not asked to expand or comment on them.

The leaders and managers have created a remarkable degree of unity and commitment among the staff. Improvement plans are focused unequivocally on a range of clearly expressed and challenging targets for students' attainment, progress, attendance, and the quality of teaching. Self-evaluation is thorough, grounded in good-quality, detailed data about the students' attainment and progress. As a result, the school identifies accurately subjects that need to improve and takes effective action to improve provision in those subjects. The work has led in turn to improvements in students' attainment and consequently the school has a good capacity for further improvement. The school's work to improve attendance has been effective. The level of persistent absence has reduced significantly and attendance overall has risen, being broadly average in the period since the previous inspection; it

was actually above average at the time of the inspection and the challenge for the school is now to sustain that level.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure a consistent approach throughout the curriculum to improving students' writing and speaking skills.
- Ensure that students understand the precise steps that they need to take to reach higher levels in their work and are able to see individually what they must do next, particularly those students identified with less-severe special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Use questions in lessons more effectively to provide opportunities for the students to answer at greater length, to challenge their thinking more, in the manner of the best examples seen at the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

A very large majority of parents and carers said in the responses to the inspection questionnaire that their children enjoy school and the proportion of responses indicating this was much higher than is usual. The students are willing learners and enjoy lessons. They respond well to the teachers and make good gains in learning when lessons are lively and the teaching is focused closely on individual needs. For example, in a Year 11 drama lesson, a small group of students with significant language development needs responded very well to intensive and personalised coaching of their speaking skills. The teaching has enabled those pupils to make rapid gains in their skills and confidence since joining the school. Lessons support the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of the students also. For example, in a Year 10 English lesson, boys told the inspector about their growing appreciation of Shakespeare's writing and spoke maturely about how they were learning to express their views about the emotional aspects of *Romeo and Juliet*.

There are no major differences in the progress of different groups of students at the school. The students join the school with very low levels of attainment. Generally, they make better progress than might be expected given those starting points, including those from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language, and reach broadly average levels by the time they leave the school. Very few do not go on to education, employment or training after leaving. Overall, the students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the progress that might be expected given their starting points; those with statements of special educational needs make good progress.

A very large majority of students stated in the questionnaires that they completed for the inspection that they thought behaviour at the school was good and this was the view expressed also to inspectors in discussions. The students told the inspectors that, on the whole, behaviour was good and getting better. There have been no permanent exclusions at the school for several years and the number of short-term exclusions has reduced significantly. The students show respect for each other when moving around the buildings, including in crowded areas, and there is noticeably little

evidence of litter or vandalism. The students say that instances of bullying, racist behaviour or homophobia are rare and dealt with effectively if they happen. Inappropriate language is not tolerated.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Lesson planning is consistently good. Learning objectives are clear and linked carefully to assessment levels. The best examples ensure clearly differentiated tasks for the pupils and opportunities for the students to make choices, for example, in a Year 10 textiles lesson, that included deciding what they would make. The teachers use their secure subject knowledge well, transmitting their enthusiasm to the students and providing lively lessons. In a highly effective Year 10 mathematics lesson, the teacher referred frequently to examination techniques and how they linked to grades. They then used the mistakes made by the students expertly to enable the students to learn from each other. Less successful, though still satisfactory, teaching tended to emphasise the teacher talking, rather than the students working actively, so that the pace of learning was steady, rather than brisk. Much marking of the students work is of good quality, diagnosing things that the students do well and need to improve and providing comments accordingly. That is not always the case, however.

The school has put right the problems noted with the curriculum at the previous inspection. The curriculum provides imaginative opportunities that encourage the students to learn. Netherhall is the first school nationally to open a 'studio school', specialising in creative and media courses for 14 to 19-year-olds, and has forged close and innovative partnerships with employers to work on a range of projects, including fashion shows and advertising campaigns. The students in the studio school produced work on those projects that would grace any commercial enterprise. The specialism in art and drama is evident throughout the school, most noticeably in the many examples of students' work on display and in the rich, varied and well-attended programme of extra-curricular activities.

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

The school has effective arrangements to support the students when joining the school, at points of change during their time at school and to guide them when leaving. The arrangements have helped to increase the proportion of students going into post-16 education since the previous inspection. Students who speak English as an additional language are provided with translator support when they join the school. Like the rest of the students, they settle into Netherhall quickly. The students with the highest levels of special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well through teaching in small groups and the work of the teaching assistants. As a result, those students feel confident to ask questions and share their work with the class. The school uses a broad range of strategies rigorously to promote regular attendance and it has raised the profile of attendance among the staff, students and with parents and carers.

The school has very effective links with external agencies for supporting students, if necessary. A very small minority of parents and carers indicated in the inspection questionnaire that they did not think that the school manages unacceptable behaviour effectively. The students told the inspectors, however, that behaviour has improved as a result of the school’s efforts. The data held by the school show that instances of unacceptable behaviour have reduced noticeably and that the school is usually successful at reintegrating into lessons students who have had to be removed.

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?

Careful monitoring of the work of the school, linked to effective use of data and well-considered approaches to professional development has resulted in high levels of commitment among the staff. Action to bring about improvements is well judged, targeted carefully and has helped to secure the good quality of teaching. The school benefits from a committed and supportive governing body, which prioritises the safety of the students and is focused on ensuring that the federation arrangements, increasingly, have beneficial impact for the pupils.

The school’s good arrangements for safeguarding result in different groups of students feeling safe at school and confident about how to report any concerns they have. The arrangements are known well to the staff and the students and monitored closely. The school’s success in promoting equalities is most evident in the harmonious school community. The school’s work in the local community is extensive and much appreciated by community organisations and other activities enable the students to learn about the wider world. The school uses various methods to communicate with and involve parents and carers in its work and parents and carers informed the inspectors about examples where the methods worked well, including

supporting a student in transferring from another school. The parent described the student as a ‘changed child, happy to come to school and no longer frightened’. The inspectors acknowledge that some parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire would like more information about their children’s progress and help to support their children’s learning; the school was made aware of these views.

These are the grades for the 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
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	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 proportion of parents and carers returning completed questionnaires was well-above average. The responses show that parents and carers are generally supportive of the school. An above-average proportion of parents and carers believe that their children are making enough progress at the school and that the teaching is good. A third of the questionnaires included additional comments, about a half of which raised concerns held by parents and carers, including instances of bullying. The inspection team looked at all of the comments and followed them up without reference to individuals during the course of the inspection through observations, scrutiny of behaviour records and discussions with the students and senior leaders. The outcomes of that work and the questionnaire results, as a whole, were used to help the inspectors form their judgements.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Netherhall Learning Campus 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 169 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 428 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	32	105	62	6	4	3	2
The school keeps my child safe	74	44	85	50	5	3	2	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	63	37	85	50	15	9	5	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	62	37	93	55	9	5	4	2
The teaching is good at this school	61	36	97	57	6	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	48	28	87	51	22	13	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	26	106	63	10	6	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)	59	35	93	55	3	2	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	53	31	97	57	15	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	56	33	80	47	18	11	4	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	49	29	91	54	13	8	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	58	34	92	54	7	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	67	40	91	54	7	4	0	0

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



18 November 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Netherhall Learning Campus High School, Huddersfield, HD5 9PG

Thank you for talking to my colleagues and me and making us welcome when we visited your school recently. We judged that Netherhall is a good school overall. Here is a summary of the main findings, which we hope will be of interest to you.

- You make good progress in lessons, particularly when they are lively and provide you with carefully chosen activities, and the school has worked successfully to improve your learning in different subjects.
- You are given good support to help you catch up with learning when you are falling behind or have difficulties.
- Your attendance is average and has improved well. At the time of the inspection, it was above average and I hope you will maintain that.
- You told us that you are happy and feel safe at school. You get on well with each other.
- You have many, varied and interesting opportunities to learn and like the additional activities that the school organises.

The school has improved well since the previous inspection. We have asked the headteacher and the staff to make further improvements, however, so that teachers make sure that activities provided in lessons focus even more on improving your writing and speaking skills, including through the way that they use questions to make you think harder and explain your answers. We have asked the school also to ensure that each of you understands fully exactly what you need to do to get to higher levels in your work. We know many of you make an important contribution to the school already and are sure all of you will want to do everything you can to support the staff in making Netherhall better still.

Yours sincerely

Clive Moss
Her Majesty's Inspector

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