

Walbottle Campus

Hexham Road, Walbottle, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE15 9TP

Inspection dates 10–11 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Students' attainment is improving quickly and they achieve well in some subjects including English. Across the school progress is improving in mathematics. Students who have previously not done as well as they should in the subject are now catching up with others in the school and with their peers nationally.
- Teaching is improving but it is not yet of a consistently good quality across all subjects.
- Teaching and the curriculum in science do not ensure that students experience a wide range of interesting and relevant scientific experiences. As a result, students' progress is not good enough in this subject.
- Most subject leaders make a full contribution to the improvement of teaching in their subjects and to the achievement of students. However, not all do this well enough, particularly in science.
- While provision in the sixth form has improved rapidly in the last year under new leadership, further improvement is needed to raise students' attainment.

The school has the following strengths

- Inspirational and determined leadership by the headteacher is moving the school forward quickly. He is supported effectively by an able senior leadership team which shares his high ambition for students to do well.
- Governors are clear about how well teachers perform and they have ensured that weak teaching has been systematically reduced.
- There is a calm, purposeful atmosphere in this vibrant, happy school. Students' behaviour is good, and they feel safe and secure in school.
- Teachers reflect on their own teaching and are keen to improve their professional skills through training and learning from each other's good practice.
- The school strives to promote equal opportunities in ways that allow all groups of students to succeed whatever their individual needs. This has contributed to an overall improvement in achievement since the last inspection and a steep rise in many subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 55 lessons and held discussions with groups of students. They undertook an examination of students' work in the current year.
- Meetings were held with staff, including senior and middle leaders, and with members of the governing body. A meeting was held with a local authority representative and the School Improvement Partner.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents. These included information on the school's most recent examination results, information on students' progress in the last school year, the school's analysis of how well it is doing and its development plans. Records on safeguarding, behaviour and attendance were also examined.
- Inspectors took account of the 72 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), and of the 100 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Moira Fitzpatrick, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

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Patrick Feerick

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Lesley Powell

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Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average sized secondary school.
- Most students are from White British heritage, with fewer than average from other ethnic groups. A small number of students speak English as an additional language.
- The percentage of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of students assessed as requiring support at school action is average.
- The proportion of students with special educational needs, including those assessed at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, is above average.
- The school makes provision for students with special educational needs, and those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable to exclusion, in six support units which provide tailored learning for each group. Every year a number of students transfer into the school to access these support units.
- The school has additional resourced provision for students with autism. This opened in September 2012.
- Since the previous inspection there has been a very high level of staff turn-over at all levels. A new senior leadership team was formed in 2011, when all leadership in the school was restructured.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise students' achievement so that both are consistently good or better by:
 - improving the consistency and quality of lesson planning by ensuring that it is based on a good understanding of students' prior knowledge and understanding
 - ensuring the progress of the most able, and those students who enter the school with attainment that is just below average, at least meets national expectations
 - continue the improvement of teaching in mathematics so that students' progress at least matches national expectations.
 - implementing the school's detailed plans for improving provision and achievement in the sixth form.
- Improve students' achievement in science by:
 - improving leadership skills throughout the department
 - improving what is taught in science so that it better matches students' needs and aspirations
 - establishing more effective ways for students to record their learning in science so that their written work provides a good base from which to build on their learning and to monitor progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- There has been a strong trend of rising attainment at GCSE since the previous inspection. In 2011, the proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grade passes was significantly above the national average, and in 2012 almost every student achieved this pass rate. However, the proportion reaching A* and A grades was below average and some students who joined the school with slightly below average attainment did not make as much progress as other groups. Accelerating the progress of these groups of students is a current priority for the school.
- While the proportion of students gaining five or more good passes, including English and mathematics, was below average, the 'best eight' subject score was significantly above the national average. These above average achievements demonstrate the school's determination to raise students' attainment by providing many pathways to success.
- Students' progress is good in many subjects, partly because of the excellent way the school makes sure every individual is fully involved in school life and work. However, progress is not as good in mathematics and science.
- In Key Stage 3, better links with primary schools help most students get off to a good start and regular progress checks ensure any underachievement is spotted early. School data show that a high proportion of students in Key Stage 3 made expected progress in English and mathematics in the last school year, and that a good proportion exceeded it. In Key Stage 4, ambitious targets are set for students and well-planned personalised catch-up sessions are in place to help them overcome any underachievement from the past.
- Students at school action plus, and those with a statement of special educational needs, achieve well, as do those students eligible for the pupil premium. This is because their learning is well tracked and lessons are tailored to their needs. Activities are well matched to students' needs and interests and are the key to the progress they make, because they can join in learning and they enjoy their work.
- In the majority of lessons students make good progress, because teachers expect them to work hard and support each other. Reading, speaking and listening are well promoted in most lessons because students work together to gather information or talk to each other to solve problems. In other lessons, progress slows because some teachers do not have an accurate picture of students' needs, so expectations are not high enough.
- Progress is improving in the sixth form because there is a better balance of academic and vocational courses available. This has opened up more pathways to success by offering courses which are better suited to the needs and aptitudes of all students.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire agree their children make good progress.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The school's relentless drive to develop teachers' skills through continuous professional development has improved the quality of teaching throughout the school and there is much that is good. While inconsistencies remain, teaching has shown good improvement since the appointment of the headteacher, with a significant reduction in the amount that requires improvement. In the main, teachers have a thorough understanding of what constitutes good teaching and learning and make increasingly effective use of new strategies. The vast majority of parents agree that their children are well taught.
- In the best lessons staff plan opportunities for students to discuss new topics, then share and develop their ideas through talk. This leads to good progress in most cases because all students are learning from each other and consolidating their own understanding by explaining to others. In the very best examples, teachers make clear what students are expected to achieve in the lesson then draw together students' ideas through well-focused, probing questions. This allows

teachers to assess what students have learnt and plan appropriately for the next lesson. For example, excellent planning was seen in a French lesson in Year 9, where all made good or better progress in their use of the correct tense.

- Where teaching requires improvement, it is usually because teachers have not used information about students' prior learning to plan work at the right level. In a few other cases, teachers talk for too long, leaving little time for students to get on and complete tasks.
- Teaching in science is not organised well enough to systematically build students' knowledge and understanding. Teacher assessments do not help students understand how much they know, and what they need to learn next.
- Other effective teaching strategies include giving students responsibility to work independently of the teacher and setting clear targets to help them to do this. This allows students to work at their own best pace and make decisions about how they will tackle tasks. Good examples of this were seen in art, food studies and textiles lessons. However, this good practice is not found in all lessons.
- Teachers who work with students that are disabled or who have a special educational need, have a good understanding of their students. They plan activities meticulously to ensure that small and achievable steps are provided to ensure each student can experience success. This gives these students enormous confidence, so their resilience develops well. Students at risk of exclusion are supported well in the 'Pavilion' to achieve as well as their peers do in examinations, because they are well managed by staff who are skilled at helping them overcome problems.
- The recently established unit for students with autism makes excellent provision for their learning through varied and stimulating activities. Their social skills are developing exceptionally well through fun activities, such as their role play in a coffee shop. This is connected to a forthcoming real-life experience for the students when they hold a coffee morning later in the term, which is creating much excitement for them.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Excellent pastoral care and a strong ethos of respect underpin students' good behaviour. Students follow the excellent example set by staff to create the warm, harmonious and safe environment in which they thrive. Students feel safe in school and their parents overwhelmingly agree that they are both safe and happy there.
- Students show a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. They understand about e-safety and the different forms that bullying can take. They say that bullying is rare, but when it occurs is dealt with quickly and effectively.
- In lessons, behaviour is nearly always good and sometimes outstanding, especially where students participate fully in the lesson and the teacher insists on good standards. Occasional instances of disruption are usually because the lesson is not well adapted to the needs of all students.
- Behaviour out of lessons is often outstanding because older students set a very good example to younger ones when moving around this large campus. Scrutiny of behavioural records show that this is the case over time.
- Attendance has improved since the previous inspection to average. Despite the school's strenuous efforts, there are some groups whose attendance still gives cause for concern. Inspectors noted that some students' work showed little progress because of their poor attendance.
- The rate of exclusion is below the national average for all groups. This is because of the school's determination to provide a pathway to success for every student. For example, those at risk of exclusion are supported to remain in school and achieve well in the Pavilion.
- Students in the sixth form are very positive about the supportive ethos in the school and the contribution they make to improving it. They undertake many responsibilities in the care and

supervision of younger students and are zealous fund raisers for charity.

The leadership and management are good

- The determination and ambition of all leaders and governors, is ensuring consistent improvement. The quality of teaching, students' achievement, the curriculum and behaviour have all improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- The headteacher's outstanding leadership has transformed staffing in the school, driven improvements and established a completely new senior leadership team. This team is accelerating improvements by effective implementation of their roles and responsibilities. Together they are creating a culture of striving for excellence in teaching and learning, and an environment in which every individual feels safe and valued.
- Planning future improvements is thorough and based on an accurate analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Meticulous tracking of students' progress against targets underpins sustained improvements. The leadership and management of teaching have been effective in increasing the proportion of good and better teaching by providing regular high quality training. Teachers are clear about their accountability for the progress their students make and how senior managers measure this against performance management targets.
- The leadership of subjects is improving well through the clear expectations and guidance of senior leaders. However, some inconsistencies remain and not all subject leaders are effective in holding their staff to account for their students' performance. For example, leadership of science is not strong enough and consequently students make slower progress than in their other subjects.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced leading to some good outcomes for students. The school responds quickly to the needs of its students and there is now an improving range of academic and vocational courses available in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is central to the school's belief in developing the whole person. This is developed across the whole curriculum, through after- and out-of-school activities and by frequent opportunities to raise funds for charity and learn about the lives of others.
- The school effectively deploys resources to support students who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. This enables them to achieve as well as others and is seen in the rapid narrowing of the gap between their performance and that of other students.
- Walbottle Campus is a caring, tolerant community where discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- The school meets requirements for safeguarding students. Record keeping is exemplary.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body have successfully managed the re-structuring of staffing to accelerate improvement and it rigorously challenges school leaders over the school's performance.
 - They set challenging targets in its drive for excellence and they actively monitor the work of the school to discover at first hand its strengths and weaknesses.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	108524
Local authority	Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Inspection number	400988

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	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1678
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	270
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jeremy Paterson
Headteacher	Paul Sampson
Date of previous school inspection	14 October 2009
Telephone number	0191 2678221
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