

Walbottle Campus

Hexham Road, Walbottle, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE15 9TP

Inspection dates 20–21 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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. It is not good because

- The proportion of Year 11 students who gain five GCSE grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, remains below the national average.
- Students are not making the good progress needed to reach standards in line with their abilities.
- Over the past two years, teaching has not been consistently good enough to ensure that all students made good or better progress in their studies. The quality of marking is inconsistent. Students do not make use of the feedback they are given.
- The challenge for the most able students is sometimes not high enough to ensure that they reach the standards of which they are capable.
- There are too many instances of students of all abilities being expected to complete the same tasks in lessons.
- Strategies to improve students' literacy skills are not fully embedded.
- Homework is not consistently set by all staff, particularly in Key Stage 3 and, where it is, it does not always help students to develop their thinking and practise their skills.
- The sixth form requires improvement. There is too much variation in outcomes across subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- The proportion of students who gain five GCSE grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, has increased steadily since the last inspection.
- The dedicated headteacher, supported well by a talented senior team, has put in place well thought out strategies to further raise achievement. Consequently, this is an improving school.
- Governors know the school well and hold the leadership to account with rigour.
- Teaching is improving and there are examples of outstanding teaching in the main school and in the sixth form.
- Students feel safe and behave well. The school's work to ensure its students are secure is good.
- The provision for students with autism is of a very high quality and, as a result, they make good progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 42 lessons and parts of lessons. Four observations were conducted jointly with the members of the leadership team. A detailed work scrutiny was conducted jointly with four members of the leadership team.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, members of the leadership team, three groups of teaching staff, including middle leaders, five governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and two local authority representatives.
- Inspectors spoke to many students in lessons and at breaks and during lunchtimes. They also listened to students read in Year 7 and spoke formally to three groups of students.
- The inspectors looked at a range of evidence including the school's improvement plan, the school's own evaluation of its work, data for tracking students' progress, students' work and documents relating to safeguarding, quality of teaching and teachers' professional development.
- Inspectors took into account the responses of the school's own surveys, the 238 responses from parents to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 59 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

David Griffiths, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jim Hall	Additional Inspector
Lynne Horton	Additional Inspector
Patrick Hargreaves	Additional Inspector
Steven Horne	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Walbottle Campus is larger than the average secondary school. The number on roll is similar to the previous inspection.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for children in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Most students are of White British heritage. A smaller than average number of students speaks English as an additional language and, of these, a small minority are at the early stages of learning the language.
- The proportion of students identified with special educational needs and supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school does not use off-site educational provision.
- The school has additional resourced provision for students with autism. This opened in September 2012.
- Additional provision is provided for a small number of Key Stage 4 students, who are at risk of exclusion, in the Foundation Futures Support Unit.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the momentum for improving teaching is accelerated by:
 - continuing to share the good and outstanding practice that already exists in the school
 - eradicating the small amount of teaching that requires improvement and ensuring more teaching is outstanding, particularly in English
 - teachers making sure that students consistently make good use of the feedback they are given in order to improve their work
 - consistently setting regular and relevant homework that encourages students to develop their thinking and practise their skills.
- Accelerate students' achievement in the main school and in the sixth form, especially for the most able students by:
 - ensuring the work for all students is closely matched to their abilities
 - consistently providing students with more challenging activities that engage and stimulate their interest and ambition
 - extending opportunities for students to improve their literacy skills across different subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Although the majority of students enter the school with skills that are at least typical of their age, the percentage of students in 2013 who achieved at least five GCSE passes at grade A* to C, including English and mathematics, was below the national average.
- The attainment of the most able students is uneven across subjects. In too many subjects, including English, mathematics and science, not enough students achieve the higher grades. As a result of this, the progress of the most able pupils requires improvement.
- Students do not have enough opportunities to improve their writing skills by practising them in different subjects. Work in students' books shows that too many are repeating mistakes in basic spelling, punctuation and grammar. School leaders are aware of this and are working hard to make improvements but it is too early to measure the impact this is having.
- Until this year, there was an early entry policy for GCSE in mathematics. Students did not make the progress they should in 2013. The most able students did not have the opportunity to attain the higher grades, and too few students made better than expected progress compared to national results. The headteacher and school leaders have taken action to address this. Students currently in Year 11 have not been entered early for mathematics and, as a result, the school is predicting an improvement in achievement in mathematics, including the percentage of students who attain the highest grades.
- Although the percentage of students who achieve at least five GCSE passes at grade A* to C, including English and mathematics, is below average, there has been a steady improvement year on year and the school is predicting that in 2014 this measure will be at least average.
- Although achievement requires improvement, inspection evidence found that across all key stages and in the majority of subjects students are currently making good progress. The school's accurate tracking of students' progress indicates that the proportion of students achieving five GCSE passes at grade A* to C, including English and mathematics at Key Stage 4, will rise in 2014 to reach the national average. As a result of higher expectations of subject leaders, standards in Year 11 are higher than they were a year ago across most subjects.
- The work in students' books shows that over time students are now making increasingly good progress across the school and in the majority of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- The school makes accurate checks on students' progress. As a result, students are receiving increasingly effective extra help and support when needed, including students eligible for the Year 7 catch-up programme (additional funding provided to support those students who have not reached the expected attainment for their age in English and mathematics by the time they enter Year 7). During the inspection, students in Year 7 who entered the school with weaker reading skills were enthusiastic about the support that has been put in place for them, including the support they receive from sixth form students who regularly listen to them read. As a result of this, they are becoming better readers. This reflects effective promotion of equality of opportunities for these students.
- The school provides a range of support for the academic and personal needs of students, such as one-to-one support. As a result of this, gaps in achievement are beginning to narrow. At the end of Key Stage 4, the difference in attainment in 2013 between those students eligible for free school meals who were supported by pupil premium funding and all other students was the equivalent of almost one grade in English and one and a third grades in mathematics. The very latest school data show a much smaller difference. Leaders track and evaluate the impact of this funding effectively.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are doing better than in the previous Year 11 group. They are now close to expected levels of attainment compared to the national picture. Students with autism are well cared for and are making good progress.
- Students who are at risk of exclusion and attend courses in the on-site Foundations Futures Support Unit are well looked after and, as a result of the support they receive, they are making good progress.

- Although the progress of students currently in the sixth form is improving at a fast rate, achievement in 2012 and 2013 was below national standards in vocational studies and at A-level. This is because many students enter the sixth form with below-average attainment and their study pathways have not always been well matched to their ability. The school has worked hard to address this and has introduced new courses. This is now having a good impact on the progress students are making.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although teaching is improving, it does not yet consistently secure good or better progress for all students.
- Work in students' books and observation of lessons, indicate that students are not always provided with work that takes account of their ability. Consequently, they sometimes find work is too easy or too hard. In some lessons, the most able students have to wait before they are given more challenging tasks.
- A minority of students struggle to complete tasks because teachers have not taken sufficient account of their literacy levels. As a result, expectations of what students can achieve in writing are not always appropriate and opportunities for extended writing are not consistently promoted in all subjects.
- Scrutiny of students' books indicates that marking and feedback, while improving, are not yet consistent both within and across all subjects. While the vast majority of students' books are marked regularly, the quality of feedback given to students about their work is inconsistent. Students do not always get the opportunity to respond to the advice or to improve their work. When students do have the opportunity to develop their learning in this way, they respond well.
- Homework is not set often enough to help students develop their thinking and practise their skills. For example, homework is not always set regularly in the lower school and some students told inspectors that in some subjects they are rarely given any. Homework planners showed that too many teachers are not consistently setting homework to provide extra challenge for students. A significant minority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, expressed a concern that their child does not always receive appropriate homework. There are, however, some good examples of challenging homework being set, particularly in Year 11 and in mathematics.
- Regular monitoring and clear feedback to teachers from leaders and managers have resulted in improved planning that is beginning to make sure that all students are given work that gets the best out of them.
- Students learn quickly due to the range of different teaching methods used. Students are asked searching questions to get them thinking and to see how much they have understood. The information about how well students have learned is then used to help plan for future learning. For example, in a Year 10 mathematics lesson, students were animatedly discussing complex concepts and making good progress. Very precise explanations and activities ensured that all students were stretched. Marking was thorough and helped students to see the next steps they need to make, and pointed out areas where their understanding needed to improve.
- The more effective use of assessment information has been pivotal in accelerating progress and improving teaching. Students are made aware of their levels and targets and are becoming more skilled at checking their own and each other's work.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is improving at a fast rate. Teachers ensure that the level of academic challenge is high, while planning interesting ways to learn. For example, in a Year 13 biology lesson, students were frequently asked to relate their learning on genetics to food production or DNA profiling. The activities helped students to deepen their learning and, as a result of the high quality support for each student, they made outstanding progress. Inspection activities and scrutiny of school records show that this is now typical of much of the teaching over time in the sixth form.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. Students have good attitudes to learning and are keen to succeed. In lessons, most students answer questions readily, work hard and present their work well. They arrive punctually to lessons and school records show there are only occasional incidents of low-level disruption to learning. Students understand and appreciate the new system of rewards and sanctions that the school operates.
- Students behave well around the school, treating each other with respect and showing courtesy to adults and visitors. Students are proud of their school, they take care of their communal areas and the school grounds are free from graffiti and litter.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Inspectors interviewed many groups of students during the inspection and they say they are happy and feel safe in school. Although almost one-in-five parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, disagreed that the school deals well with bullying, inspectors did not find evidence to support this. In formal discussions with students, inspectors found that they understand the different forms of bullying, including homophobic and cyber-bullying, and know how to keep themselves safe from these. Students say that bullying is rare and if it does occur it is now dealt with swiftly and effectively by caring staff. Evidence from the school's own parent questionnaires also showed few concerns about bullying.
- The school has a relentless drive to improve attendance and, as a result, most students, including those in the sixth form, attend school regularly. Attendance is now close to average because of a range of successful strategies, such as the introduction of the 'Attendance Passport' and the 'Passport to Prom' for Year 11 students. The school works very hard with the families of students who are persistently absent. As a result, attendance for this group of students is close to the national average.
- The numbers of students who are excluded has reduced and is now close to the national average. The school provides very good on-site support for those students who are at risk of being permanently excluded. As a result of the support they receive in the Foundation Futures Support Unit, these students are well cared for and are making good progress to ensure that they move on successfully to the next stage of their training or employment.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has very high expectations for the school. He knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school very well, and, with very good support from governors, leaders and managers and all staff, has been instrumental in bringing about improvements. Any weaknesses are now being quickly tackled. These improvements, particularly in teaching, in tracking students' progress and in providing timely extra help for students who need it, are now helping students to make better progress. This was evidenced in school records and in students' books during the inspection.
- Senior leaders and managers have a precise understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching. Although inconsistent and not yet good overall, standards of teaching are improving rapidly as a result of careful checks. Together with subject and pastoral leaders, members of the senior team work highly effectively to tackle any teaching that is inadequate or requires improvement.
- There are highly effective systems in place to manage the performance of staff, which link to their progression through pay scales. Support programmes and wider professional training are closely matched to the needs of the school and individual staff. Teaching staff spoke very highly during the course of the inspection of the excellent professional opportunities that are available to them and the impact this is having on the quality of their teaching.
- Middle leaders are becoming more effective because they have received bespoke training on the analysis of data and how to use it to bring about improvement in students' achievement. Heads of subject departments now identify any possible underachievement earlier than in the past. Good quality support activities, both individually and in small groups, are now in place. As a

result, the progress students are currently making in English, mathematics, science and the majority of other subjects is now at least good. This can be seen in the school's own data and is backed up by evidence in students' work, which was observed in detail by inspectors during the inspection. Monitoring of students' progress is more effective not only in identifying where help is most needed but also in holding staff to account for the progress of students they teach. Regular challenge meetings help staff to focus their efforts more precisely on what will improve students' progress and attainment most rapidly. This had led to students' fast improving achievement this year.

- The quality of the curriculum, including that of the sixth form, is improving. This is supporting achievement in terms of students' personal development and academic success. The wide range of additional activities on offer provides students with many memorable experiences and successes. As a result, there are very few students who are not in education, employment or training when they leave school. The sixth form students are also highly appreciative of the additional opportunities that are made available to them. In discussions with inspectors, students were highly complimentary of the way the school is supporting their life learning and employability skills.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is promoted regularly through assemblies, form periods and in lessons. Students across the school access a wide range of opportunities that enable them to develop their confidence, experience and understanding of the world. For example, in a Year 7 assembly on what makes a good global citizen, students were highly engaged and eager to share their thoughts.
- The spending of the pupil premium funding is well planned and is used effectively to tackle inequalities of opportunity, and a focus on improving attendance as well as achievement has had a positive impact on outcomes for students in this group.
- The local authority continues to provide effective support for the school.
- Staff who completed the voluntary questionnaire for the inspection were positive about how the school is led.
- The school meets statutory responsibilities for safeguarding.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is improving and records show that it successfully supports and challenges the school. Governors are aware of the strengths of the school, including the improvements now being made in the quality of teaching. Since the last inspection, they have worked closely with the headteacher to tackle underperformance. As a result of this, a number of staff have left the school and have been replaced by staff from good or outstanding schools.
 - Governors have a good understanding of the progress students are making. They ensure that the training and the performance of teachers are well managed so that salaries and promotion reflect performance.
 - Governors ensure that finances, including any additional funding, support the needs of the school, for example, in providing additional staffing for English and mathematics.

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	442227

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	1,670
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	10 October 2012
Telephone number	0191 2678221
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