

# South Shields Community School

Nevinson Avenue, South Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE34 8BT

**Inspection dates** 25–26 June 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Standards are rising rapidly across the school. The proportion of current Year 11 students on track to attain five or more good GCSE and equivalent qualifications, including English and mathematics, is just below average. This represents good progress over time.
- Achievement is typically good in all years, especially in English and mathematics. Students with disabilities and special educational needs make particularly good progress, due to well targeted, expert support.
- Teaching is good, with some outstanding practice. Teachers provide interesting and motivating experiences in which students can give of their best.
- Arrangements to keep students safe are good. Students say how much they value the support from all adults. Behaviour is good, and students' attitudes to learning are flourishing.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through a range of exciting experiences. 'College' (house) events, and tutor arrangements encourage competition and team work.
- The executive headteacher, head of school, governors and key leaders and managers exude high expectations. They drive improvement relentlessly. As a result, teaching is improving strongly, achievement is rising, and increasing numbers of students are eager for success.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A minority of students do not make enough progress over time in mathematics.
- Not all teachers have high enough expectations and check carefully enough that students work is adjusted if they are not making fast enough progress.
- Attendance, although improving, is only just at the national average, and not as high as it should be.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 33 different lessons, of which three were joint observations with the school’s senior leaders.
- Students’ work was sampled informally in lessons, and inspectors looked at a number of Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 students’ mathematics books in detail, to gain evidence about the quality of teaching and students’ progress over time.
- Inspectors also reviewed a range of documents, including the school’s own data on current students’ progress, planning and monitoring documentation, minutes of governors’ meetings, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents pertaining to safeguarding.
- Meetings were held with students, governors, and school staff, including those with management responsibilities. A discussion also took place with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors evaluated the 94 responses of parents to Parent View (the Ofsted on-line questionnaire). Inspectors also took account of the views of 62 members of the school’s staff through the inspection questionnaires they returned.

## Inspection team

Andrew Swallow, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jim Hall	Additional Inspector
Graeme Clarke	Additional Inspector
Patrick Earnshaw	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students receiving support through the pupil premium is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportions of students supported through school action are higher than those found nationally, as are the proportions supported through school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Almost all students are of White British heritage. Very few students speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students who start and leave the school after Year 7 is above average.
- All students are educated on the school's site. None are entered early for GCSE examinations.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standard in 2013, which is the minimum expectation for students' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection there have been a large number of staffing changes, including the appointment of a new executive headteacher, new leaders and managers, and a new Chair of Governors. The school entered into a learning partnership with Churchill Community College, a local 11-18 secondary school, in April 2013.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress of a minority of students in mathematics across Years 7-9, especially for the least able, by:
  - providing more frequent opportunities for students to solve problems, set in everyday contexts, by using key mathematical skills.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
  - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations of what all students can achieve and students have sufficient opportunities to exchange ideas and views to deepen their understanding
  - ensuring that students' understanding in lessons is always checked and work adapted so that they all learn exceptionally well.
- Embed recent and successful initiatives to improve students' attendance, so that overall attendance in the school is above average by summer 2015.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Historical underachievement by many students has been successfully addressed, over the past 18 months, by leaders and managers across the school. Rigorous arrangements to monitor and evaluate students' progress have been introduced, teaching has been improved, and students' expectations and commitment to their own learning have been enhanced.
- School leaders have put in place robust arrangements to check and validate teachers' assessments of students' performance. These assessments indicate that the proportion of present Year 11 students on track to attain five or more A\*-C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, is broadly average. This means that, over time, students make good progress, given their below average starting points on entry to the school. As a result, their achievement is good.
- The school's records and students' work show that similar proportions of students now make expected and more than expected progress in English, as seen nationally. In mathematics, increasing numbers achieve well throughout the school, although a minority do not achieve as well as they might, including a small number of the least-able students. This is because not enough opportunities are regularly provided for them to apply mathematical skills to solve problems in relevant, everyday scenarios. Teaching does not always take stock of students' changing needs, to introduce even more challenging activities and promote even higher outcomes.
- The vast majority of students achieve well across most subjects in Years 7 to 11, especially in vocational and applied courses. Inspection evidence shows that many students develop confident speaking and listening skills, read fluently, and write enthusiastically in different scenarios, and for different audiences. Students' mathematical skills are used increasingly well to measure, record and chart information in science and technology.
- In general, the most able students achieve well. Rising numbers attain the highest GCSE grades in an increasing number of subjects.
- Students with special educational needs make overall good progress. This is because their specific needs are carefully identified from the outset, and additional support, in and out of lessons, is of a good quality.
- The achievement of students for whom the school receives the pupil premium funding is rising. As a consequence, the margins between the progress that they make in English and mathematics, in relation to their peers, are closing. Over time, they have attained approximately half of a GCSE grade lower than their peers in English, and two thirds of a GCSE grade lower in mathematics, by the end of Year 11. The school's data indicate that these margins are set to close further this summer. Students' work across Years 7-10 shows good impact of additional support on reading, writing and numeracy skills, with students eligible for pupil premium funding achieving as well as their peers do, in English and mathematics, in some years.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well. All groups of students now have access to good teaching, and good support is made available for those at risk of falling behind. For example, Year 7 'catch-up' funding has been used to provide more one-to-one specialist teaching in English and mathematics, and to enhance students' confidence through bespoke mentoring. It has also supported the purchase of new resources to boost students' reading and spelling skills. As a result, the attainment of students involved in these initiatives has increased at a fast pace.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is improving strongly and as a result, most students make good progress and achieve well.
- Across the school, teachers are conscientious and committed. Good subject knowledge is readily

shared with one other so that all improve their skills. Expectations of students are rising.

- Relationships are positive and stimulating activities and experiences enthuse students across the curriculum. For example, Year 9 physical education students were empowered to develop accurate passing and catching skills when throwing a frisbee, and encouraged to reflect on similar skills practised previously in other sports. Similarly, in science, Year 7 students were keen to simulate an experiment to determine the impact of different mass, from different distances, on the moon's craters.
- Students' understanding is usually checked while they work with astute oral feedback that has a notable impact on the quality of learning. However, this is not always the case especially when expectations are not high enough and students are provided with the same work, regardless of how well they are doing. This leads to students' progress not being checked closely enough and adjustments not made to the level of work to meet changing needs.
- Students' work is increasingly marked with helpful comments that point out what they have done well and what they need to do next. Teachers' comments are leading to improvements in students' work, as more take heed of their teachers' suggestions, to edit and amend their initial versions.
- Teaching assistants are thoughtfully deployed and, on the whole, make strong contributions to supporting students' learning. Occasionally, learning is interrupted too frequently by adults, and there is not enough opportunity for all students to share and fully develop their ideas.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The school's work to keep students' safe and secure is good.
- Students say how much all adults go out of their way to support them. They are particularly positive about the roles they are afforded in 'college' competitions, as students' buddies, and as digital champions in partnership with Age UK, emphasising the extent to which they are encouraged to look out for one another, and become good citizens.
- Parents say how well the school looks after their children, and that they are happy to attend regularly.
- The school's mission statement 'excellence in all we do' is embodied in the strong relationships between adults and students, and between students and their peers. For these reasons, there is little bullying of any kind. Students are confident that adults will always be at hand to help, should they experience difficulties.
- College activities, daily tutor group experiences, and visitors from local authority services and external agencies, all contribute towards students' good understanding of the different types of bullying, including homophobic and cyber-bullying, and how to keep safe.
- The behaviour of students is good.
- They take pride in wearing the school uniform, and keeping the school clean, tidy and free from litter. During breaks and lunchtimes they socialise in an orderly manner, showing positive regard for one another.
- Students' attitudes to learning are increasingly positive. In most lessons, they show a desire to participate, and complete an enormous amount of work. The endeavours of staff are paying off in promoting students' expectations of themselves. Even where a minority of teaching still requires improvement, and does not create sufficient interest or challenge, the vast majority of students show resilience and commitment.
- Attendance is rising stubbornly and is now broadly average. This is due to the persistent engagement of individual families, by key adults, to encourage parents to send their children regularly to school, bespoke attendance plans for individual students, and one-to-one mentoring arrangements. Not all of these procedures are yet fully established. School leaders recognise the scope to heighten their impact and reduce absence levels further.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The executive headteacher and head of school have galvanised the work of all staff over the past eighteen months, raised expectations and inspired rapid improvements in teaching, learning and achievement.
- Key leaders and middle managers across the school are effective and aspirational on behalf of all students. They are determined to improve students' life chances. They are promoting a 'can do' culture in school in which all students feel valued.
- The strong learning partnership with Churchill Community College underpins the school's relentless drive to improve teaching and students' outcomes further. The executive headteacher has ensured careful and successful pairings of all key leaders and managers with expert practitioners beyond the school. These arrangements support the exchange of innovative practice, and have helped to transform the range of students' learning experiences in a short time.
- There is a wave of optimism and confidence spreading throughout the school. As a result, the quality of teaching is now good and improving strongly. Students' achievements are rising across all years.
- The school has an accurate view of how well it is doing. Leaders know that they have yet to ensure that all teaching is good. As such, the school improvement plan is focused on addressing the minority of teaching that still requires improvement, as well as securing more students making better-than-expected progress, and attaining the highest GCSE grades.
- Over time, the local authority has provided some significant and beneficial support and has a well-informed view of the school's current performance. In addition, the expertise of external consultants and local authority advisers is commissioned to check the school's judgements about its work and ensure they are accurate at every level.
- Staff demonstrate high levels of respect for students and colleagues and ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.
- The performance management of staff is appropriately challenging. Individual teachers' targets indicate the high expectations they set for students' achievements, as well as for their own practice. Professional development opportunities are varied and matched closely to identify needs. Training increasingly draws on the expertise of staff within school, as well as those from other schools and national organisations. It has particularly enhanced the work of curriculum leaders, who show confidence in holding others to account. The executive headteacher makes the right decisions about teachers' movements up the salary scale, on the basis of robust information about their quality of teaching and its impact on students' learning.
- The school knows its students very well, and successfully removes barriers to learning. As a result, all have an equal opportunity to succeed. Overall margins between the performance of students in receipt of pupil premium funding and their peers are closing. Students with special educational needs are thoroughly integrated into school life.
- The school's curriculum is good. It meets students' needs increasingly well. Arrangements to support the move from primary to secondary school, especially for those whose literacy and numeracy skills are not as well developed, are effective and highly innovative. They include a week-long summer school in Normandy, France. The number of academic courses is increasing, and the small number of vocational opportunities is well matched to students' aptitudes.
- The wide range of sporting, musical and performing events and extra-curricular activities make strong contributions to students' personal development. 'My Money Week,' 'Technology Week,' visits abroad, and motivating experiences, such as the trip to the Thurston Outdoor Education Centre, all enrich students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. These aspects of the school's work underpin a constant promotion of equality of opportunity, and intolerance of any discrimination, should it arise.
- Parents are supportive of the school. A high proportion indicates they would readily recommend the school to other families.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Over the past eighteen months there have been significant changes in governance, including

the appointment of a new Chair of Governors. Governors are now regular visitors to the school, and linked with key areas of the school's work. They show a clear insight into the quality of teaching, learning and achievements of all students. Minutes of governing body meetings indicate that governors are increasingly confident in challenging the senior leaders.

- Governors have perceptive discussions about the value of spending decisions, in particular the allocation of pupil premium and Year 7 'catch-up,' funding. For example, they have authorised small-group teaching and additional time for adults to enhance students' reading, spelling and mathematical skills – all with success.
- Governors receive detailed information about the salaries of all staff and decisions about teachers' applications for promotion. As a result, governors have a good understanding of the effectiveness of the management of teachers' performance throughout the school.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131756
<b>Local authority</b>	South Tyneside
<b>Inspection number</b>	439891

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	630
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gillian Moore
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Baldwin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 March 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 456 8929
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