

James Calvert Spence College - Acklington Road

Acklington Road, Amble, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE65 0NG

Inspection dates 30 September–1 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Sixth form provision		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 students who have gained good grades in both mathematics and English has been consistently below national average since the previous inspection.
- More students are now making the progress expected of them in subjects other than English. However, not enough students at the college are doing better than this.
- The college has only recently been able to demonstrate the positive impact of the additional funding provided through the pupil premium. Although the attainment of students supported by this money is increasing, it requires further improvement as these students are still not achieving as highly as they should.

The school has the following strengths

- Students are making better progress in the majority of their subjects than at the time of the last inspection. This is seen most clearly in mathematics and in science.
- Senior leaders have brought about important improvements in key areas of the work of the college.
- Senior leaders and the majority of middle leaders are focused on driving further improvements and raising expectations. Results from the staff survey indicate that all staff embrace this positive culture of improvement.
- Governors now offer strong and well-informed support and challenge to senior leaders.
- The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. However, it is taking time for this better teaching to overcome previous levels of underachievement and weaknesses remain in English.
- Students' behaviour is good and they feel very safe in college. They show respect to each other and to teachers and other adults. Students are keen to learn and want to do well and are proud of the improvements being made in their college.
- The sixth form is good. The progress of sixth-form students is good and academic standards are steadily rising, particularly at AS level.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons and part-lessons, one of which was observed jointly with a senior leader from the college. Lessons were observed in a range of subjects and were taught by teachers across the age range of the college. In addition, inspectors watched senior leaders reporting back to teachers on the quality of teaching and learning.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the head of school and other members of the leadership team, middle leaders, a representative the local authority, and the Chair and one other member of the governing body.
- Inspectors observed the college’s work, scrutinised a range of documentation including the college’s view of its own performance, external reviews of performance and standards, monitoring records, information about students’ progress, improvement planning, students’ books, minutes of meetings of the governing body, records of behaviour and attendance, and records relating to safeguarding and child protection.
- Discussions were held with three groups of students about the quality of their educational experience and the standard of behaviour in the college. Inspectors spoke with other students at social times.
- Inspectors took account of parents’ views through the 34 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). A very high proportion of staff were also able to contribute their views in a questionnaire; 55 responses were received.

Inspection team

David Brown, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

John Leigh

Additional Inspector

Barbara Waugh

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This college caters for students aged from 13 to 18 years old and is smaller than the average sized secondary school.
- The percentage of disadvantaged students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is above the national average (the pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children that are looked after by the local authority).
- A small number of students attend the Education Other than at School Service (EOTAS) alternative provision run by the local authority.
- The majority of students are of White British heritage and few students speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is well above average.
- The proportion of students supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- Few students leave or join the college other than at the beginning and end of the college year.
- The college is federated with its partner college, James Calvert Spence College – South Avenue. Leaders have responsibility for both federated colleges.
- The college meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise students' achievement, especially in English, by ensuring that all groups of students, including those supported by pupil premium funding, make progress which is at least good.
- Continue to build on recent improvements to teaching by sharing best practice within the college to ensure that all teachers plan and deliver challenging lessons that are closely matched to students' needs and abilities.

An external review of the college's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The college has been led very well by the executive headteacher and she is supported effectively by the deputy head teacher. Together they have been unrelenting in the pursuit of improvements to raise standards across the college and have guided the college through a period during which students' behaviour and attitudes to learning have significantly improved. The college senior leadership team has recently been strengthened with new appointments and its capacity to improve the college further is good.
- Senior leaders are well supported by a team of middle leaders who share the same goal of high aspirations for students. Leaders clearly communicate high expectations and ambition for the college and its students. The majority of middle leaders, including heads of faculties, the head of sixth form and the special educational needs coordinator, are now fully contributing to college improvement and are rigorously held to account for both the quality of their work and outcomes for students in their areas of responsibility.
- Decisions about pay and promotion are rigorous and made in line with records of teachers' performance and national standards. Challenge and support are provided where improvements in teaching have not met leaders' expectations. Teachers are regularly observed and receive good quality feedback on how to improve. Staff training is carefully targeted and has led to improvements in the quality of teaching, and coaching has supported improvements for individual staff. Support for newly qualified teachers is of very high quality.
- The college curriculum offers a broad range of subjects, is well matched to students' needs and provides well for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The college is active in giving students a balanced view of other cultures, both through the curriculum and through regular personal, social and health education (PSHE) days. These sessions and a series of well-planned assemblies ensure that students are aware of British values and the dangers of extremism. A number of students and staff have taken part in a long-standing exchange partnership with a school in South Africa.
- There is an increasing focus on developing students' literacy skills across the curriculum and this is helping to raise attainment in a number of subjects, and in particular in science. Carefully targeted support is available to weaker readers through the accelerated reading programme.
- The college website is easily accessible and regularly updated and provides all the information that parents require.
- The college has rigorous systems in place to ensure that safeguarding and child protection arrangements meet statutory requirements. At the time of the inspection, the college met all government requirements in relation to safer recruitment. Record keeping is exemplary.
- Until very recently the impact of the local authority's support and challenge in helping the college to improve has been ineffectual.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body works well to both support and challenge the executive headteacher and other senior leaders. Governors have regular meetings with college leaders and members of the teaching staff and governors are well informed about the quality of teaching and its impact on learning. They are up to date with appropriate training and use data well to assess performance. They have a good grasp of the need to improve standards and narrow the gaps between groups of students. Governors have been effective in challenging college leaders to review their work constantly to ensure a continuous drive for improvement.
 - The governing body plays an active part in performance management of senior leaders and monitors performance management of other teachers to ensure that their salary progression is related to students' achievement and the quality of teaching. Governors have worked hard to engage parents from the community so that their views help to inform their decisions. The governing body fully meets its responsibilities with regard to safeguarding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. Students play a key role in making the college a harmonious and pleasant community to work in and be part of. They have positive attitudes to each other and to adults. They are supportive of the work of teachers to develop the orderly environment of the college and, along with the staff, believe that good behaviour is now embedded throughout the college.
- The majority of students have positive attitudes to learning and arrive promptly for lessons with the

correct equipment. Students usually listen attentively in lessons and respond well when they are challenged by better teaching. Around the college students are polite and courteous to each other, to members of staff and to visitors. Students wear the college uniform with pride.

- Attendance has improved and is now close to the national average, following diligent work in following up and minimising absences, particularly with students who have a history of persistent absence. The development of the college 'Progress Zone' to provide one-to-one support for students with significant behaviour issues has helped to reduce exclusion rates and minimise the need for alternative provision. The small number of students who attend the facility continue to follow the college curriculum and in most cases return to normal lessons, with little disruption to their academic progress. The less formal 'Reflection' internal withdrawal area is used effectively to support improvements to behaviour.
- Punctuality to the college is good and this reflects well on students' enjoyment of college and their positive attitudes towards their learning.
- The college's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Procedures and policies for safeguarding are fully in place and are reviewed regularly by senior leaders and the governing body. Staff receive appropriate training in managing students' behaviour and in safeguarding.
- Students have a clear understanding of what makes an unsafe situation. They are able to talk knowledgeably about e-safety and the potential dangers of social media. Students are taught about different forms of bullying, including homophobic and racist bullying, and know what to do if they witness or experience it. Students say that there is some bullying and use of derogatory language from a small minority of their peers, but when this occurs, staff deal with it effectively.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The college has focused on improving the quality of teaching and has been largely successful in this work. However, improvements to teaching have not yet had sufficient time to make students' overall achievement good, particularly in English. The quality of students' learning is improving because teaching is better and behaviour has improved significantly. This has helped to create very positive relationships between teachers and students and develop good attitudes to learning.
- In most lessons planning is detailed, with a variety of activities that interest and engage. Teachers have high expectations of what students can achieve and work hard to make sure lessons are interesting, challenging and enjoyable. Students speak with enthusiasm and pride about their high quality project work in art and design technology, which could be seen on display throughout the college.
- Where students make limited progress, teachers do not demand enough from them. Teachers do not use their knowledge of students' previous learning to make sure work is set at the right level and as a result, these lessons are based on all students completing the same task rather than in making sure that all students are sufficiently challenged with the work they are given. Because their behaviour in lessons is good, students still make positive gains, but not as much as they should. The most-able students however are held back, because teaching does not move them on quickly enough to more challenging work.
- Students' work is marked regularly, although there remain some inconsistencies in the quality of marking.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students' achievement requires improvement because until recently their progress has been too slow, especially in English.
- Current Year 11 students entered the college with standards in English and mathematics which were well below the national average, although attainment on entry to the college is rising and students in the current Year 9 have ability levels closer to the national average.
- In GCSE examinations in 2013, attainment was significantly lower than in the previous year. Too many students made very limited progress in English or mathematics from the levels of attainment they had reached at age 13. A small but significant number of students with behaviour or health issues made almost no progress, having been educated in alternative provision. To counter this problem the college developed the internal 'Progress Zone' to provide one-to-one support for students with significant behaviour issues. The high quality work of staff in this centre has ensured that the majority of these students are now back in mainstream classes, with much improved attendance and behaviour and making better academic progress.
- Provisional information indicates that the proportion of students gaining 5 good GCSEs including English and mathematics in 2014 has risen, but remains below the national average. Examination results in

mathematics rose markedly, but there was only limited improvement in results in English.

- In 2013, the average point score reached by students known to be eligible for free school meals in English and in mathematics was equivalent to more than one GCSE grade lower in each subject. Provisional GCSE scores for 2014 show the gap between disadvantaged and other students is closing, but remains wide. Twenty per cent fewer free school meal students gained five or more good GCSEs including English and mathematics than other students. College leaders have improved the way they use pupil premium money in order to target support more carefully and as a result, these differences are now being reduced. However, the overall level of achievement for this group of students still requires further improvement.
- Students with disabilities or special educational needs receive valuable and well-targeted support from teachers and teaching assistants and make good progress. There are excellent systems in place to check on how well students are doing and provide extra help quickly and effectively, if needed. The team of staff who provide support for students with additional needs is led very well.
- Increasing attention is given to encouraging students to develop their literacy skills throughout the curriculum and many students develop into confident readers.
- College assessment data show that standards are rising in most subjects as the quality of teaching improves. These improvements are supported by inspection evidence in a number of subjects including mathematics, science, design technology and art. However, the most-able students are not always challenged or extended sufficiently and consequently the proportion of students achieving the top grades is lower than it should be.
- The college has rarely used early entry for GCSE students.

The sixth form provision

is good

- The effectiveness of sixth-form provision is good.
- The college sixth form is smaller than average and offers an environment in which students feel both secure and challenged. Successful arrangements for academic and personal tutoring have been established and tracking systems are effective in checking on students' progress and informing where additional learning support is needed. Students are engaged in a harmonious and hardworking learning environment. Students feel safe and are well prepared in tutorial groups on safeguarding and welfare matters.
- Effective teaching and well-paced activities engage and challenge students, and students' interact well with both teachers and their peers in class to support their learning. The curriculum includes a range of vocational courses, aligned closely with employment opportunities in the area, as well as a well-considered selection of GCE A and AS level subjects.
- There are very effective advice and guidance systems on entry to the sixth form and in promoting students' understanding of progression and destination opportunities. Students are encouraged to 'aim high' and the college has had significant success with a number of first generation university entrants.
- From broadly average starting points, students attain in line with national averages in the majority of subjects. Progress is higher in vocational courses, but improved results at AS level indicate that achievement is rising. Almost all students leave the college to take up employment, apprenticeships or to enter university. Retention rates are close to the national average for the majority of courses.
- Governors and college leaders are highly committed to the continuing development of sixth-form provision.

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	122363
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	428921

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	13–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	375
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	110
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Scott Dickinson
Executive Headteacher	Christine Graham
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2013
Telephone number	01665 710636
Fax number	01665 713470
Email address	enquiries@jcsc.co.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

