

Sir John Nelthorpe School – A Specialist Technology College for Science, Mathematics and Computing

Grammar School Road, Brigg, Lincolnshire, DN20 8AA

Inspection dates

2–3 December 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students' achievement throughout Key Stages 3 and 4 is good.
- Standards are well above average by the end of Year 11 in English and mathematics and in some other subjects, reflecting students' good progress. Progress in English has been outstanding for the last two years.
- Students achieve well and sometimes better because teaching is consistently good throughout Key Stages 3 and 4 and provides good challenge for many students.
- Students' behaviour is sensible and considerate around the site. They feel safe.
- They show a real desire to learn in lessons and respect the staff's efforts to help them to achieve well.
- The good relationships between students and between students and staff create a positive environment for learning throughout the school.
- The school promotes students' personal development, including their responsibilities as young citizens, very well. Through the good curriculum, the school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding effectively.
- The headteacher has made a strong start in his role and has put good systems in place to check all aspects of students' work.
- Subject leaders are contributing well to the school's capacity to improve further because of their good knowledge of achievement in their areas through much more focused checking of teaching and progress.
- The governing body has a comprehensive understanding of the quality of teaching and achievement and is therefore able to hold leaders to account for how effectively they carry out their roles.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement in the sixth form requires improvement because teaching is variable in the challenge it offers students and in their degree of involvement in their learning. The monitoring of their progress is not sufficiently detailed to raise achievement as quickly as possible.
- Challenge for the most able students in Years 7 to 11 is variable, so they do not all attain the standards of which they are capable.
- Attendance, including in the sixth form, is average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 29 lessons. Six were observed jointly with either the headteacher or with individual members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspectors talked with students during lessons and at break and lunchtimes. Inspectors met formally with three groups of students to find out their views about the quality of education they receive at the school.
- The inspectors also held meetings with senior and subject leaders, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a variety of documentation including information about the achievement of all groups of students in the school. Inspectors checked the school's development plan and subject department plans, and their impact on driving improvement, including in the sixth form. The inspection team scrutinised students' work, checked records of their attendance and behaviour and reviewed policies to help keep them safe.
- In carrying out the inspection, the inspectors took into account the 36 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) and the 31 responses given in the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Lynne Blakelock, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Patrick Hargreaves	Additional Inspector
James McGrath	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than others of its type and the number on roll has fallen since the previous inspection.
- It has a split site, with a five-minute walking distance between one and the other.
- Most students are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of students known to be disadvantaged and therefore supported through the pupil premium is below average at 16%. The pupil premium funding is additional government funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is below average at 8%.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- The school works in collaboration with The Vale Academy as part of the Brigg sixth form to provide a broad range of courses for the sixth-form students.
- The school is part of a consortium of seven secondary schools and two colleges, working together to raise achievement and strengthen leadership and management.
- There is alternative provision for 19 students in Years 10 and 11 at the Skills Centre at Baysgarth School in Barton-upon-Humber. The provision is delivered by North Lindsey College.
- The school does not enter any students early for GCSE examinations.
- The headteacher took up his post in September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate students' progress throughout the sixth form by ensuring that:
 - teaching provides greater challenge and more involvement of students in their learning
 - tutorials provide wider and more detailed monitoring and recording of students' progress in order to support their needs promptly and accurately
 - the school has the highest expectations of sixth-form students' attendance
- Ensuring that the most able students are challenged effectively, through probing questioning and activities, in order for them to make rapid progress and thus reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Raise attendance levels throughout Years 7 to 11 by making sure that:
 - students understand the link between progress and attendance and the importance of good attendance in securing and keeping a job
 - all students have an individual attendance target.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has made a very quick start to strengthening the school's performance, supported by an effective governing body. Following a detailed audit of the school's strengths and needs, he is building securely on the improvements made in the quality of teaching and in the checking of the school's work since the previous inspection. Nothing is being left to chance in driving improvement.
- Consequently, the roles of senior leaders have been modified to meet the school's needs more accurately and to ensure their accountability for whole-school issues. Attendance is an example, with the need for a greater focus on the attendance of all students, and students' greater ownership of their attendance.
- The headteacher's determination to strengthen the school's performance is aided by the staff's strong support for his plans.
- Subject leaders are contributing far more effectively to the school's capacity for further improvement. They have been empowered by their greater roles and accountability for the progress and quality of teaching in their areas. Their detailed and comprehensive subject development plans ensure they focus on the progress of all groups of students and on the performance of their staff.
- Subject leaders monitoring incorporates all groups of students including those eligible for the pupil premium funding, who are now getting the attention they deserve and their improving progress is proof of this. The checking of the work and learning of the few disabled students and those with special educational needs has been too superficial in the past and is now being addressed.
- The assistant headteacher oversees the quality of teaching in the school. Teaching is being monitored well, helped by subject leaders' increasing checking of teaching in their own areas. Leaders' judgements of the quality of teaching are accurate.
- Teachers' performance targets were set before the headteacher's arrival. Of the two targets they presently have, the one based on accelerating progress is challenging, achievable and measurable. The other target is appropriate although less focused on how exactly it will improve teaching or leadership. The staff feel well supported by the training provided to improve their practice, including that through the consortium.
- Students like the wide-ranging opportunities they have to learn and thrive in and outside the classroom, both academically and in their personal development. From Year 8 onwards, they get chances to consider their careers options and develop the skills to apply for jobs. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is supported through a range of learning activities and daily routines, including promoting British values and preparing them for life in modern Britain. Students like the many and varied after-school clubs, such as cooking, reading, badminton and drama. This is an inclusive school which does not allow discrimination and provides equal chances of success for students in the courses offered. Students know they are valued for their contribution to their school.
- The school's partnerships are effective in driving improvements. In particular, the local authority has done an excellent job since the previous inspection in working with leaders and the governing body to provide them with the skills to ensure the school can make sustainable improvements. The school values the help that the parents give in supporting their children's education.
- Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. This includes checks made on the progress and well-being of all of the students educated off-site, including their behaviour and attendance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is effective in helping the school to strengthen its performance.
 - Although the headteacher provides them with a great deal of information about the school, the governors are able to find out a lot for themselves through their ability to analyse school and national data and through carrying out activities such as learning walks round the school.
 - The governors' capacity to challenge the school is strengthening significantly as they start to run progress meetings and discuss with subject and senior leaders their development plans and the impact they are having on accelerating students' progress and strengthening teaching. Governors have sought guidance on the type of questions they need to ask so that they can find out exactly what they need to know in determining how well the school is doing.
 - The governors' skills are a good match to the school's needs, including in finance. The school's budget is in a deficit situation due to the falling number of students. The governors are monitoring the budget robustly, along with the local authority, to ensure that it gets back on track.
 - The governing body knows how the pupil premium funding is used and checks its impact as part of its monitoring of the school development plan. Governors know the quality of teaching across the school.

- Governors' understanding of performance management is sharp. They consider very carefully whether to award pay rises to reward performance and only do so if they are satisfied that both targets are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good.
- Students say that it has improved further since the new headteacher took up his post. They like the fact that they see him around the school a lot.
- Students get to lessons punctually and are ready to learn; this includes having the right equipment with them.
- They are attentive because they want to learn. In many lessons, students take personal responsibility for their learning and take pride in being productive. A few students get distracted if teaching is not challenging them well enough.
- Round the school, students are orderly, polite and friendly. They move sensibly between the split site, showing respect for staff and other students. Most students wear their uniform very smartly.
- Their appreciation of British values is highlighted by their desire to take on roles of responsibility, such as representing other students on the school council and acting democratically. Students see the council as their way of having their voice heard by the headteacher and governing body and getting improvements, such as everything working properly and better facilities.
- Some Year 10 and 11 students help younger students in their role as student subject leaders. Year 11 students like assisting as linesmen when the sixth-form students referee inter-school football matches.
- Students feel equally valued by the school and know it is right to treat others the same, whatever their differences.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Staff and parents agree that the school keeps students safe. Students feel safe because the staff are always there and students are confident in asking staff for help.
- The students know how to keep safe, including when using the internet.
- There is little bullying but students know whom to go to for help if it happens.
- Students say that the programme of personal, careers, health and social education informs them well about a range of potential dangers and prejudices, such as racial prejudice, homophobia and extremism.
- Attendance rates are average. The school has introduced more prompt and comprehensive methods to check the attendance of all students, which is the first stage in improving attendance. Persistent absenteeism is below average but students do not have individual attendance targets.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is almost always good and a small amount is outstanding. Over time, it results in students' good progress throughout the school. In the sixth form, the quality of teaching is more variable.
- Teachers know their subjects well. They ensure students know the purpose of learning and constantly remind them, in order to ensure that they achieve the aim of the lesson.
- Most teachers expect a lot from their students, who respond by working hard. This is so in history, where students learn very well. Tasks are very interesting, and demanding of the students who practise and refine their literacy skills through writing at length. They develop good evaluative skills through tasks that require them to give an opinion and justify it.
- Students are expected to have a reading book and read at the start of English lessons. They take this seriously because they like reading and they are expected to record what they have learned from books.
- Students say that a lot of teaching is interesting and helps them learn. In geography, for example, information and communication technology (ICT) was used well and helped the teaching to capture their imagination about the impact of volcanoes in the Andes.
- Students usually set out their work carefully, in mathematics for example.
- Students' work is marked regularly and generally gives students helpful information about what they know well and what to do next so that they can make further progress. They assess their own and their

classmates' work regularly, encouraging them to improve their own work.

- Not enough is consistently expected of the most able students to ensure that they achieve their potential. Questioning and activities are not always sufficiently probing to accelerate these students' progress.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students achieve well throughout Years 7 to 11 due to their industrious attitudes to learning, their desire to achieve as well as they can, and by teaching that is usually at least good.
- By the end of Year 11, standards are consistently above average. This is reflected in the proportion attaining five A* to C grades, including in English and mathematics. Standards in English continue to rise year-on-year because teaching is consistently strong and continuously reinforces students' learning.
- Students attain highly in areas such as history, religious education, art and electronic subjects. They do less well in modern foreign languages, geography and in information and communication technology (ICT) where teaching over time is less consistent.
- From above average starting points, students make good progress across Years 7 to 11. In English, progress has been outstanding for two years.
- The proportions of students making expected and better-than-expected progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11 are well above average.
- Different groups of students achieve equally well, including boys and girls.
- The support for students who are eligible for the pupil premium funding, including those eligible for free school meals, is planned carefully. It includes a daily reading and homework club to help raise standards in literacy and numeracy, mentoring, and music tuition. As a result, the students make good progress in English and overall good progress in mathematics.
- The test results of disadvantaged students show that they are one and a third grades behind other students in the school in English and a grade behind in mathematics. Nationally, they are five-sixths of a grade behind in English and two-thirds of a grade behind in mathematics. Although the gap in standards in GCSE English and mathematics between disadvantaged students in school and non-disadvantaged students nationally was one grade behind in mathematics and one and a third grades behind in English in 2013, it has narrowed to one grade in English and two thirds of a grade in mathematics. This demonstrates their good progress. The gap lower down the school is also narrowing.
- The progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs cannot be compared to other students because there are very few students in this group.
- The most able students learn well in some subjects, including in English and mathematics, but their rates of progress vary in other subjects, due to them not being challenged effectively enough.
- Those students who learn vocational skills off-site make good progress, because courses match their abilities and aspirations well.
- Students who do not reach the expected standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 are given extra support through small-group work. They also have access to a daily reading club. The support is effective because last year, by the end of Year 7, all students reached the levels expected for their age.
- After Year 11, all students join the sixth form or go into further education or training.
- A scrutiny of students' work shows good progress overall this term in most subjects and year groups.

The sixth-form provision requires improvement

- Students make expected, rather than good, progress through Years 12 and 13, because teaching is not consistently challenging enough. The attendance of some students is not regular enough to support good achievement over time.
- Standards are above average by the end of Year 13, reflecting students' expected progress from their starting points into Year 12. Achievement is improving but not quickly enough because teaching and checks on progress, in tutorials for example, are variable in their effectiveness.
- Students who join Year 12 have attended the school since Year 7 and have GCSE results that are above average. Just over half continue into Year 13 and this is an aspect that the school is working to increase.
- Very few students join Year 12 without at least a C grade in both English and mathematics, but these students re-take the examinations in Year 12 and last year all attained at least a C grade.
- Teaching requires improvement because it does not consistently provide enough challenge, including to

the most able students, and not all students participate fully in their learning.

- However, there is some good and outstanding teaching, which promotes the students' rapid progress. In a Year 12 mathematics lesson, for example, students developed very well their skills in working out combinations and permutations. Teaching was lively, involved students who put forward hypotheses, and had the highest expectations of their responses.
- Leadership and management, while improving, are not resulting in sufficiently detailed monitoring and recording of students' progress to ensure that the staff support the students as well as they could.
- There are some stronger features to the sixth-form provision. The school's partnerships with other sixth-form providers ensure students have a varied and broad range of courses that also brings the necessary experiences to satisfy the requirements of the Department of Education study programme. This includes careers education and guidance.
- The school ensures that the achievement, safety and well-being of those students who spend some time on other sites are checked carefully.
- Students behave maturely and feel safe. They contribute well to school life, which in turn promotes their good personal development. The students are looked up to by younger students for their mature contribution to the school and their support for them, such as when helping younger students master mathematical skills.
- A wider programme of learning ensures that students consider their lifestyle options and have the information to make informed choices to keep themselves safe.
- At the end of Year 13, all students go on to higher or further education, or into training and employment.

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	118112
Local authority	North Lincolnshire
Inspection number	455013

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary controlled
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	580
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Smith
Headteacher	Robert Biglands
Date of previous school inspection	2 October 2013
Telephone number	01652 656551
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