

Prudhoe Community High School

Moor Road, Prudhoe, Northumberland NE42 5LJ

Inspection dates

14–15 September 2016

Overall effectiveness

Good

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Outcomes for pupils

Good

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Prudhoe Community High School has improved substantially since the previous inspection because good leadership and management have lifted the quality of teaching and raised outcomes.
- The school now provides pupils in all year groups with good teaching, which enables them to progress well. However, there are still some lessons where limited challenge and pace mean that pupils finish tasks early and then waste time.
- Leaders have ensured that the move to new accommodation has not disrupted pupils' learning.
- GCSE results in 2016 were better than the above-average 2015 performance and reflected pupils' good achievement.
- Effective tracking systems enable leaders and teachers to check pupils' progress accurately and provide good-quality support for those who fall behind.
- The marking of pupils' work has improved substantially and is now good overall but with some variation. This is because a few teachers are still not adhering fully to the school's policy, so their feedback to pupils does not meet the quality expected by leaders.
- The attendance of pupils has improved, but a small number of pupils, supported by pupil premium funding, do not attend school regularly enough.
- Good arrangements for pupils' health, safety and welfare mean that they are kept safe and benefit from effective support.
- Pupils in Years 9 to 11 and learners on 16 to 19 study programmes have a very positive view of the quality of education that the school provides.
- Well-managed 16 to 19 study programmes enable learners to benefit from a wide range of vocational courses and academic subjects at A level.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good at post-16 and enable the vast majority of learners to complete their courses successfully.
- Most learners successfully move on to university or their chosen careers.
- Pupils take a pride in their appearance and conduct themselves in a sensible manner in class and around school.
- The large majority of parents and carers have very positive views about the school and fully recognise the improvements that have been made.
- However, there is still much more scope to relate pupils' work across the curriculum to everyday life and the world outside the classroom, especially in mathematics.
- The headteacher, governors and leaders at all levels work effectively to ensure that the school continues to improve.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the current good teaching and achievement to outstanding by:
 - ensuring that teachers plan to make maximum use of lesson time so that pace and challenge increase and pupils are always fully engaged in learning activities
 - clearly relating work across the curriculum to the world outside the classroom, especially in mathematics so that pupils can understand the relevance of the topics they are studying
 - ensuring that all teachers follow the school's marking policy fully so that consistently good practice prevails.
- Successfully tackle the persistent absence of a small number of disadvantaged pupils by ensuring that their parents are fully aware that their current attendance figures are too low and that absence will detrimentally affect their children's life chances.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher provides the school with vibrant and effective leadership. She has a clear vision for the school and constantly seeks to improve the quality of education to ever higher levels.
- She has very successfully communicated her vision to the senior team and middle managers, who are all keen to play their part in ensuring that the school provides well for all groups of pupils.
- The efforts of managers at all levels have ensured that teaching, assessment and pupils' attainment are much better than they were almost two years ago.
- A well-managed move to new accommodation on the same site has involved very considerable efforts by members of staff at all levels to move equipment and materials, and to ensure that the new term started efficiently.
- The school has effective methods of measuring how well it is doing and identifying areas where improvements still need to be made.
- Leaders have high expectations of staff who work in their areas. Monitoring of teaching by leaders at all levels provides an accurate assessment of the rates of pupils' learning in all subjects. Leaders provide teachers with pointers for improvement as a result of their visits to lessons and provide plenty of extra help when teachers need it. However, there are still a few lessons where the pace of learning is too slow.
- Staff morale is very good. Members of staff are keen to ensure that the school continues to improve. This means that pupils progress well in most but not yet all subjects.
- The broad and balanced curriculum enables pupils to study a wide range of subjects at GCSE and beyond. Highly academic courses in physics, chemistry, biology and other subjects at GCSE provide pupils with a secure base for further study in these areas at A level. For pupils who prefer a more practical approach, the very successful engineering, design and technology courses augment their studies in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is embedded firmly into the entire curriculum. Pupils have plenty of opportunity to study topics relating to life in modern Britain. The school strongly promotes British values such as tolerance and democracy. Pupils appreciate that their own locality is almost exclusively White British, but they can speak with confidence about the cultures that make up Britain and where they are to be found. A wide range of extra-curricular activities enables pupils of all ages to develop new skills well, make new friends and generally become more rounded individuals.

- Equal opportunities have a high profile. Leaders look carefully at the progress being made by all groups of pupils and provide effective support plans for those who slip behind. A particular focus on the well-being and progress being made by the highest ability pupils, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities means that these groups progress well. Differences between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and that of others in the school are reducing quickly due to the effective planning for spending the pupil premium funding.
- Leaders make every effort to ensure that all pupils can fully benefit from the rich curriculum that the school provides. For example, very effective support and help for pupils whose reading is below where it should be when they join in Year 9 mean that by Year 10, they can quite easily access GCSE examination papers. However, there is still further scope to enable pupils to develop a greater understanding of how their studies relate to the world outside the classroom, especially in mathematics, where some lessons purely develop numerical skills without relating them to real-life situations.
- The school's website is informative, meets all requirements and gives parents and carers an accurate view of the way that the school operates. The majority of parents and carers fully recognise the school's improvements and are happy with it now. One parent said, 'I just wanted to say congratulations on the start of term in the new school, and on this summer's fantastic results. My child is coming home buzzing, which is wonderful to see.'

Governance of the school:

- Governance has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Governors now play an active role in the school. They have benefited from training and can probe and challenge when they think that further improvements are necessary. They understand how pupil premium funding is used to raise the levels of attainment of disadvantaged pupils and they check on its effectiveness.
- They play their part in ensuring that the management of teachers' performance is robust and that any salary progressions are fully merited.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective because there are rigorous systems which members of staff implement consistently. Very good levels of supervision when pupils are moving around the school, coupled with a strong emphasis on site safety and the effective checking of the identities of everyone who has access to pupils, mean that pupils' safety is high on leaders' agendas at all times.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the time of the previous inspection in response to effective leadership at all levels and generally much greater expectations of what pupils can and should achieve.

- Teaching is now good overall throughout the school but with some remaining variation. For example, highly effective teaching enables pupils to achieve well above-average GCSE results in biology, chemistry, physics and engineering, but there are still some subjects where pupils make slower progress, for example art and modern languages.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and usually plan lessons that adequately challenge pupils of all abilities. Usually, much is achieved in the time available.
- Typically, teachers manage their classes well, make learning objectives clear and check carefully to ensure that pupils know what is expected of them. Effective questioning establishes whether pupils have understood new work or whether they need further help with it.
- A strong and effective feature of learning is the way that pupils conduct themselves. This means that they can learn quickly through listening, discussion and production of written work without distraction.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from well-organised and effective teaching that enables them to make good progress. Good teaching provided by classroom assistants is instrumental in supporting the progress that this group of pupils makes.
- The teaching of the school's most able pupils has improved and is now good overall. Teachers routinely expect much more from the highest ability pupils because they understand the challenging targets that the school sets for them and do their best to ensure that their pupils meet them.
- The school's very accurate and comprehensive tracking system clearly shows the progress that individuals and groups of pupils are making. It quickly identifies those who are not making enough progress and triggers extra support to enable them to catch up.
- The marking and assessment of pupils' work are much better than at the time of the previous inspection. There are now many examples of exemplary practice, where teachers are fully embracing the school's policy. Marking is now good overall, but there are still a few teachers whose practice does not come up to the school's high expectations.
- There are still instances of learning being sometimes rather limited, for example in a few lessons in English, mathematics and science, when some pupils finish their work early and then waste time because the teacher has not provided them with anything else to do.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils become much more mature and aware of the needs of others as they move from Year 9 to Year 11 and after that to Years 12 and 13. The strong programme of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins the entire curriculum and provides a wealth of planned activities that help pupils to increase in confidence and develop new skills and competences. Extra-curricular sport and drama are particularly successful in this respect.

- Pupils value the amount of help that members of staff provide. They know that there is someone on hand when they need extra assistance with personal matters or their studies. Whilst many pupils have developed a real thirst for knowledge and understanding, others still rely rather heavily on their teachers for direction.
- Good levels of supervision at break- and movement times ensure that pupils are kept safe. Pupils say that they feel perfectly safe in school and that there is always someone to turn to if they need reassurance or help. They say that bullying is rare but that if it does occur, then they are confident that members of staff would deal with it effectively.
- Pupils confirm that the school teaches them about e-safety and potential perils posed by drugs, alcohol and radicalisation.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. It is much better than at the time of the previous inspection.
- The school runs smoothly when large numbers of pupils are on the move because members of staff have high expectations of pupils' conduct whether they are in class or socialising at breaks, lunchtime and at the end of school. Pupils conduct themselves sensibly with due regard for the safety of others.
- Behaviour in lessons is usually good and frequently outstanding. Most pupils listen well and cooperate fully with their teachers and classroom assistants, whom they respect fully. Older pupils and learners on the 16 to 19 study programmes frequently demonstrate exceptional concentration on their work for long periods.
- Exclusions for unacceptable conduct are low and falling. Racist incidents or bullying of any description are rare.
- Attendance is average, but there is still a small number of pupils, mostly disadvantaged, who do not attend school regularly enough to make sustained good progress with their learning.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The school produced its best-ever GCSE examination results in 2016, which were a considerable improvement on those of 2015. They reflected good overall achievement for the school's pupils as a whole. An above-average proportion of pupils gained five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics. Hence many pupils were well placed to continue their studies on 16 to 19 study programmes, move to further training at other establishments or enter the world of employment.
- Current progress data indicates that pupils in Years 9 to 11 are expected to do at least as well as the 2016 cohort and possibly better. These are well-founded expectations because work in pupils' books showed that they generally made at least good progress over the past year.
- In 2016, GCSE examination results showed that for disadvantaged pupils, there was a considerable difference in performance compared with that of other pupils nationally in terms of the proportion gaining five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics. However, the difference had reduced considerably compared with 2015.

- In response to substantial and effective support through the pupil premium funding programme in 2016, disadvantaged pupils' GCSE examination results in English matched those of other pupils nationally. In mathematics, there was a difference of two thirds of a grade, which was much less than the year before.
- The school's highest ability pupils did particularly well at GCSE in 2016. There were exceptionally good results in physics, biology and chemistry. This group outperformed similarly able pupils nationally in English and mathematics in terms of the progress they made. There was very little difference between the GCSE examination performance of the school's highest ability disadvantaged pupils and other, similarly able pupils nationally across the whole range of subjects.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities continues to improve in response to well-focused teaching. They now achieve well. When pupils join Year 9 with low attainment in reading, the school provides very effective extra help with word recognition and comprehension to enable them to catch up with their peers.
- Pupils' work is extensive and presented well in response to the high expectations of members of staff. Pupils read well and can write at length for a variety of audiences.
- Typically, pupils join Year 9 with broadly average attainment. The school challenges each cohort to reach above-average GCSE examination results. Pupils in all year groups are currently on track to do so.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Learners benefit from a wide range of options, both academic and vocational, in the well-managed 16 to 19 study programmes. They have the opportunity to study to AS level in Year 12 and A level in Year 13 in a large number of subjects. Vocational and technical options complement the academic options.
- Achievement has improved substantially since the previous inspection. Learners now make progress at A- and AS level that compares very favourably with the national picture for attainment and progress. Vocational and technical results are much better than average.
- Learners have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities and many help with the education of younger pupils. Good-quality advice for careers and application to university ensure that learners are confident about moving to the next stage of education or the world of work. Good links with local universities enable them to have a clear idea about courses available and university life in general.
- Learners who have not passed GCSE English or mathematics with at least a grade C have the opportunity to sit the examination again following extensive coaching. In the last year, results have improved in both subjects. Provision in the last year has been highly successful in English but less so in mathematics.
- Good teaching and plenty of effective support mean that most learners are successful and complete their courses. Learners themselves express great confidence in the 16 to 19 provision because they like their teachers and fully respect them for having supported them so well in Years 9 to 11.

- Good-quality assessment, which follows learners' progress with precision, quickly identifies those who are progressing well and also those who are slipping behind with their studies. The school is far more successful than previously in supporting learners who encounter difficulties with their courses.
- Learners feel perfectly safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe from the influence of potential threats to their welfare outside it. Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development helps to underpin learners' very positive outlook on life.

School details

Unique reference number	122351
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10019743

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	13–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	753
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	242
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rob Moore
Headteacher	Deborah Reeman
Telephone number	01661 832486
Website	www.pchs.org.uk
Email address	admin@prudhoe.northumberland.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 October 2014

Information about this school

- Prudhoe Community High School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The school moved into new buildings in September 2016.
- It provides a 16 to 19 study programme in addition to secondary education for pupils in the age range 13 to 16.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- A below-average proportion of pupils is supported through pupil premium funding.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 29 lessons, including 14 jointly with senior leaders, and looked at a wide range of pupils' written work.
- They held meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the special needs coordinator, groups of pupils in the main school, groups of learners in the sixth form and representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's review of its performance, development planning, records of pupils' progress, safeguarding procedures and incident logs.
- They took account of 93 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, the school's recent reviews of the views of parents, 55 responses to the staff questionnaire and 61 free-text messages from parents.

Inspection team

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Joanne Owens	Ofsted Inspector

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