

# South Shields School

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

## Inspection dates

4–5 October 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Inadequate</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Over time, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has varied too widely, both across and within subjects. As a result, overall, pupils have made insufficient progress from their starting points in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, and science. Pupils' current progress remains weak, particularly for those with high starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils underachieve. The use of additional government funding for these pupils has not improved their learning well enough.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below that of other pupils nationally.
- Not all teachers use assessment information effectively enough to plan work that has the right level of challenge. As a result, pupils do not make sustained progress.
- Some teachers' techniques for checking pupils' understanding and their use of questioning to help pupils deepen their thinking are underdeveloped.
- In the past, leadership and governance have failed to bring about the necessary improvement. Consequently, the school's performance has declined.
- Attendance is below the national average, especially that of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. It has not improved quickly enough.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher, supported by senior leaders and governors, has a clear and ambitious vision for the school. Leaders know the school well and are clear about what needs to improve. They have the capacity to further improve the school.
- Middle leaders are enthusiastic and optimistic about their role in school improvement. They are beginning to drive improvements in teaching, learning and assessment.
- The leadership and management of behaviour are having a positive impact on pupils' conduct in school. Pupils are well behaved and treat each other with respect. Teachers and pupils all report that improved behaviour has had a positive impact on learning in lessons.
- Senior leaders have raised expectations and their monitoring of pupils' achievement is now thorough and well-focused.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

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

- Further develop the quality of teaching, so that all groups of pupils make strong progress across a wide range of subjects, by:
  - removing the inconsistencies in teaching quality
  - ensuring that teachers use information about pupils' prior attainment more effectively and plan specifically for pupils' different abilities, especially for the most able
  - checking carefully that pupils have learned and understood things before moving them on to the next topic
  - developing teachers' questioning skills so that they ask probing questions that help pupils to deepen their understanding and enable boys to provide extended oral responses
  - sharing more effectively the good practice in teaching that exists in the school
  - accelerating the progress of disadvantaged pupils and diminishing the differences between the progress of these pupils and other pupils nationally
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, can and should be able to achieve.
- Improve outcomes for pupils by ensuring that:
  - pupils' attainment and progress at key stage 3 and key stage 4 improve dramatically
  - disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as other pupils with the same starting points
  - pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make the progress that their starting points indicate they should
  - the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make appropriate progress.
- Improve pupils' attendance rates, especially for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that they at least match national averages.

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

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Many of the actions that new leaders have rightly taken to improve aspects of the school's work are recent. Consequently, the impact of some of these actions is not apparent, especially on improving outcomes.
- The way that leaders use pupil premium funding is not fully effective. School leaders do not assess or review the impact of actions well enough. Information provided by school leaders shows that the progress of pupils in key stage 3 is improving but remains especially weak in Year 11. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils remains low and requires sustained improvement.
- Since the school's previous inspection there has been considerable turbulence and difficulty in establishing a permanent headteacher and senior leadership team. This has contributed to a decline in standards.
- The curriculum has been adapted to better suit the needs of pupils, who now benefit from a balance of academic and vocational studies. The curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced. Leaders have reviewed aspects of the school's provision and adjusted them, such as making more time for English and mathematics. The full impact of these changes on pupils' outcomes is not evident.
- The headteacher, supported by her leadership team, has started to take appropriate action to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching allow them to identify key aspects of teaching that need improvement. This information is used to provide suitable training and support which is helping staff to develop their practice. Despite this, although improved, teaching remains inconsistent, especially in challenging the most able pupils.
- The special educational needs coordinator provides strong leadership. Since her appointment, she has taken effective action to make sure that assessment information is accurate and involves parents, pupils and professionals. Support strategies are suitably shared with teachers and support staff. However, some teachers still do not have high enough expectations and this hinders the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The new headteacher has a clear and ambitious vision for the school's rapid and successful improvement. She is well supported by senior leaders and a developing team of middle leaders. There is an improved ethos and culture for learning and there are some early signs of improvement.
- School leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Improvement plans focus on the aspects that require the most immediate improvement. Leaders have had to overcome a number of complex and difficult challenges centred on pupils' poor behaviour and attitudes to school. Leaders have urgently reviewed behaviour support policies and introduced better working systems. This has strengthened the school's ethos and working atmosphere considerably.
- Historically, teachers' assessment of pupils' progress has been too generous. Recent approaches to improving the accuracy and use of assessment information are beginning to make a positive difference, so teaching is having a greater impact on

pupils' learning.

- Senior staff and school governors were quick to see that the objectives set under the previous performance management system were not improving standards quickly enough. A more rigorous system has been introduced with teachers' objectives linked to school priorities. Middle leaders can demonstrate how clear expectations are having an impact on the performance of teachers across the school. Staff training has supported improved lesson planning that considers a pupil's learning in a subject from Year 7 to Year 11 and how topics are revisited.
- Pupils arriving in Year 7 below the expected level who need to catch up in mathematics and English have increasingly started to do so. They now receive well-planned additional support. Leaders now review how effectively the Year 7 catch-up funding is being used. This has not always been the case.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, through the taught curriculum, extra-curricular activities and the school's assembly programme, is well considered and appropriate. Pupils understand the skills needed to be an effective member of the school and the wider community.
- Pupils value the extra-curricular opportunities that are provided. These activities enrich the school's work to promote pupils' personal development. Pupils like the wide range of activities that are available each day. Extra-curricular activities include arts, performance and sporting opportunities. The school recently established a combined cadet force in partnership with the Royal Navy. This has begun to raise the self-esteem and career aspirations of those pupils who have enrolled.
- Staff, including those that are newly or recently qualified, value the training that the school provides. It is effective and has supported improved teaching, learning and assessment. They have confidence in their subject leaders and clearly enjoy working at the school. One commented, 'I am so lucky to have a leader I can aspire to and who leads by example.'
- The recent decisions to change the school working day and to introduce a new uniform have been well received. Pupils in Year 11 value the 'after-school' sessions and attendance at them is very good. Pupils also commented that they were consulted and listened to by leaders regarding the uniform changes.

### **Governance of the school**

- Since the last inspection, while governors have focused on recruiting new and permanent senior leaders, the school's performance has declined.
- Members of the governing body are supportive of the new headteacher's vision and ambition for the school. They have full confidence in her strategic leadership.
- Governors offer a wide range of skills and expertise and are keen to see the school provide the very best learning opportunities for all pupils. They understand the context within which the school operates and increasingly hold senior leaders to account for their actions.
- Governors are determined to regain the school's previous strengths. They have recently undertaken a self-review and audit and have streamlined working structures to create six sub-committees. These committees now meet more regularly with senior

leaders to hold them to account and to monitor school improvement and performance.

- Governors know how the pupil premium funding is being used but they have failed to scrutinise whether it is making enough difference to the progress and attendance of disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors carry out their safeguarding duties appropriately. Governors have received relevant training in safeguarding and the governor with this responsibility has developed good systems to monitor the school's safeguarding processes.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Those staff spoken with had a good understanding of the school's safeguarding procedures and policy. Safeguarding training is in place and effective. Teachers are very clear about how to make referrals and have a good understanding of the ways in which pupils may be at risk.
- Staff referrals for child protection concerns are kept securely and are well organised. They contain the full range of required information detailing the chronology of events, and communication with parents and external agencies. This information, along with effective communication between different members of the safeguarding team, enables staff to take appropriate action to keep pupils safe.
- Pupils said that bullying is rare. They said that, if it happens, staff deal with it quickly and effectively.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent and varies across and within subjects. However, as a result of leaders challenging underperformance and the appointment of several new subject leaders and teaching staff, the school has strengthened the current quality of teaching. These positive changes have not had enough time to impact fully on pupils' past underperformance, so progress, overall, remains weak.
- Teachers' skills in identifying the next steps pupils should take to deepen their learning are not consistently well developed. Teachers typically try to provide work of suitable challenge for pupils of different abilities. However, they do not always implement this skilfully enough, especially for the most able pupils.
- Some teachers do not pick up on pupils' misconceptions quickly enough. As a result, some pupils do not make the progress that they are capable of. Teachers' use of questioning and targeting of specific pupils in order to check their understanding are not consistently effective.
- Pupils do not receive regular homework and it is not consistently of a high enough quality. Some parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey said that they wanted to see more homework being set. The school recognises this and leaders have recently introduced systems to improve the regularity and quality of homework. Parents value the information they receive from the school about their child's progress.
- Recent improvements to assessment approaches and systems are now helping

teachers improve their understanding of the expectations of progress and attainment in the subjects that they teach. Middle leaders have carefully reviewed and mapped the curriculum and introduced new assessments into their subject teaching schemes of work. This is now enabling teachers to make more accurate and timely assessments about pupils' work and progress. A scrutiny of pupils' workbooks in mathematics showed that the new assessment policy is starting to have a positive impact.

- Leaders are now monitoring the progress of pupils more effectively and this is leading to more successful teaching in English, mathematics and science. However, the improvements are not consistent and, as a result, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils are not making the progress expected of them.
- Relationships in lessons are positive. Pupils engage well and are keen to learn. Teachers make effective use of the school's policies to create a positive learning climate. Teachers and pupils say that this has significantly improved over the last year and, as a result, their lessons are now fully focused on teaching and learning.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers have high expectations and explain clearly what they want pupils to learn. In a physical education lesson, for example, pupils responded well to the challenges set by their teacher. In a design technology lesson, the teacher's high aspirations for the class generated high levels of motivation and concentration by all pupils. Their work folders showed that they had developed a good knowledge of techniques from a variety of taught methods.
- Pupils understand how the school is developing their reading. They are encouraged to read for pleasure and have access to a wide range of reading material.
- All pupils read each day in school and their progress is monitored and tracked well. The teaching of reading is effective. The most able pupils read with fluency and meaning.
- Teaching assistants and behaviour support workers play important roles. For example, teaching assistants support pupils to catch up with their work following an absence.
- Teachers typically display good subject knowledge. In the subjects where teaching is resulting in pupils' stronger progress, for example in modern foreign languages and humanities, pupils engaged positively and were able to clearly explain what they were learning. In such cases, teaching captured pupils' interest and pupils made better progress. This was also seen in mathematics lessons where pupils were challenged to identify incorrect answers from their peers and then discuss the correct answer and method.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Requires improvement

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils in different year groups have had a mixed experience of school. This is partly because they are adjusting to a number of changes that have been introduced by senior leaders. Changes include a new working day, higher expectations of pupils

generally and a much firmer behaviour policy. These adjustments have had a direct effect on improving pupils' attitudes to learning. Pupils told inspectors that behaviour in lessons is now better and that lessons are rarely disrupted by pupils who do not behave.

- Pupils have useful opportunities to find out about careers and the world of work. However, opportunities for younger pupils to discover and find out about careers in apprenticeships and college courses are more limited. The number of pupils who progress into sustained education, employment or training remains below the national average.
- School leaders place considerable emphasis on pupils' personal development. They put significant time and expertise into personal, social and health education aspects of the curriculum. As a result, pupils' social skills, including their respect for others and tolerance of those who have different views, develop well.
- Pupils learn how to keep safe when using the internet and social media. Pupils who spoke with inspectors reported that they feel safe in school and that bullying is not an issue. They are confident that any incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Pupils respect the school site. Inspectors did not find any graffiti or litter anywhere inside the building or outside.
- Leaders make sure that pupils who attend alternative provision are safe, well cared for and attend regularly.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Information shared by school leaders shows that pupils' attendance is low compared with other pupils nationally. The overall absence and persistent absence rates of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities require particular improvement as they are well above the national averages. School leaders have recognised this and are beginning to have some success in addressing it. However, the figures show that absences remain too high.
- Leaders and governors have taken a firm line against poor behaviour and given pupils strong messages about unacceptable conduct. As a result, behaviour has improved and fixed-term exclusions have reduced notably this year. Some pupils spoke positively about the school's work to improve their behaviour. They said that it had transformed them.
- Pupils wear their uniform with pride and look smart throughout the day. This is also mirrored by the presentation of most pupils' work. Pupils write neatly.
- Pupils act in a mature and sensible manner around the school site at break and during lunchtime. They treat each other well and their relationships with adults are positive. The atmosphere is calm and orderly.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Inadequate

- From their starting points in 2016, pupils overall, including disadvantaged pupils, underachieved significantly and were in the bottom 10% of all schools nationally for pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. Provisional outcomes information for 2017 indicates that this is still the case for the school's most recent Year 11 pupils.
- In 2016, disadvantaged pupils made especially poor progress across almost all subjects compared with other pupils nationally. This has been the case for three years. Leaders' use of the pupil premium funding has failed to have enough impact on improving their outcomes. This has been a priority for school leaders and there are signs that this group of pupils is starting to do better, especially the younger pupils in Years 7 and 8. Currently, these pupils are now making stronger progress across a range of subjects.
- Pupils are not well prepared for their next stage of education. In 2016, very few Year 11 pupils, including those who were disadvantaged and too many of the least able pupils, achieved the grades of which they were capable, especially in GCSE English and mathematics. This limited their post-16 choices.
- Historically, the most able pupils do not achieve the levels of attainment that might be expected of them when compared to the progress of other pupils nationally.
- The school's tracking system is showing that outcomes are improving for the current Year 11 pupils in English, mathematics and science. Inspectors, alongside school leaders, saw improved progress and learning in pupils' current books and compared them with the work in books from last year's Year 11 pupils. However, they are not catching up fast enough to overcome the legacy of underachievement earlier in their secondary education. Leaders agree that this is unacceptable and now monitor pupils' progress more closely. They have introduced earlier bespoke interventions and support for Year 11 pupils to prepare them better for their GCSE examinations. Pupils told inspectors that they value this support and are clear about what they need to do to prepare for their examinations.
- Disadvantaged pupils made especially poor progress across almost all subjects in 2016. This has been a priority for school leaders and there are signs that this group of pupils is starting to do better, especially across Years 7 and 8.
- Historically, the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been well below that of other pupils nationally. The new special educational needs coordinator is aware of these pupils' needs and has developed a much stronger support programme for them. Improved teacher planning is beginning to impact on the provision for these pupils.
- Leaders rightly have more confidence in the accuracy of teacher assessment. Teachers have received training, external support and have been involved in moderation activities that have improved the accuracy of their assessment of pupils' examination work.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read. Pupils could explain how they received help if required to understand words or phrases. The school's approach to literacy is strong and features frequently throughout the pupils' learning day in school.
- Pupils who arrive in school with below the expected standards in literacy and numeracy

are now supported well. Many are improving their basic skills. All pupils across the school are encouraged to read widely and for pleasure. In key stage 3, pupils' reading is regularly assessed and monitored. This information is then shared with subject teachers to assist them with planning lessons that match the reading ages of the pupils they teach.

- The small number of pupils who attend alternative provision at South Tyneside College are making better progress than when they were attending the school. This is because the curriculum provided is tailored to their interests and ability.

## School details

Unique reference number	131756
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	10040078

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	553
Appropriate authority	Governing body
Chair	Gillian Moore
Headteacher	Allie Denholm
Telephone number	0191 456 8929
Website	<a href="http://www.southshieldsschool.co.uk/">http://www.southshieldsschool.co.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@southshieldsschool.co.uk">info@southshieldsschool.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	25–26 June 2014

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Pupils enter the school with starting points significantly below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is higher than the national average.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British. Almost all pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities supported by the school is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care

plan is below the national average.

- A very small number of pupils attend alternative provision at South Tyneside College.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 56 lessons across a broad range of subjects. These included lessons observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work.
- Inspectors held discussions with four groups of pupils and with many other pupils informally around the school. Inspectors listened to a number of pupils read.
- Meetings were held with staff, including senior and middle leaders, teachers and newly qualified teachers. Meetings and telephone conversations were held with five members of the governing body and the school's improvement partner.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 30 staff and 102 pupil questionnaires.
- Inspectors looked at the school's website and a range of documentation provided by the school. This included information on pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour, school policies, the school's self-evaluation of its work, school improvement plans and information about attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors looked at behaviour records and reviewed safeguarding documentation and how this related to daily practice, as well as speaking with staff and children.

## Inspection team

Tudor Griffiths, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Angela White	Ofsted Inspector
Jill Bowe	Ofsted Inspector
Nick Merifield	Ofsted Inspector
Shelley Heseltine	Ofsted Inspector

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