

Walbottle Campus

Hexham Road, Walbottle, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE15 9TP

Inspection dates

12–13 February 2019

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- The relatively new senior leadership team has not addressed the pupils' poor outcomes at the end of Year 11, despite their ambition and determination.
- The poor behaviour of a significant minority frequently disrupts and impedes the learning of others. Some pupils have a negative or apathetic attitude to learning. Some are wilfully disobedient. Over time, exclusions have been high and have increased markedly this year.
- Attendance is a concern and has declined further this year. Around a quarter of pupils miss school regularly. Over a third of disadvantaged pupils are persistently absent.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate. Some teachers have low expectations and provide work that is too easy and lacking in depth. It is too early to see the impact of recent changes to the curriculum.
- The quality of learning support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including those pupils attending the additionally resourced provision, is weak. As a result, these pupils make poor progress.
- Pupils' personal development is also inadequate. Too many pupils show a lack of pride in their work and a general apathy. Some are disrespectful and intolerant. The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is ineffective.

The school has the following strengths

- Pastoral systems provide effective support for more vulnerable pupils. Leaders work effectively with external partners to protect pupils at risk of harm.
- The quality of 16 to 19 study programmes requires improvement. The quality of teaching in the sixth form is variable and leads to inconsistent progress across different subjects.
- Newly appointed and experienced governors are more active and influential than in the past. They have managed to recruit some higher-calibre leaders and have diverted resources to where they are most needed.
- The quality of teaching in some subjects, such as art and history, is more effective.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently improve the standard of behaviour and conduct of a significant minority of pupils in key stages 3 and 4 by:
 - training teachers to apply the school's behaviour policy consistently and with authority, including ensuring that derogatory language is firmly challenged
 - making sure that staff and pupils understand the types of behaviour that are and are not acceptable
 - developing the skills of teachers and leaders to de-escalate poor behaviour and to nurture more positive attitudes to education
 - further developing the role and effectiveness of The Zone, the school's internal alternative education provision
 - ensuring that part-time timetables used to reintegrate previously excluded pupils have a stated end point
 - rapidly reducing the use of exclusion to be more closely in line with levels seen nationally.
- Improve the overall level of attendance and rapidly reduce the level of persistent absence by:
 - working more effectively with parents and carers so that they better understand the importance of excellent attendance and the negative effect of poor attendance on their children's education
 - focusing more explicitly on the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.
- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils make consistently good progress across different subjects by:
 - raising expectations and ensuring that teachers provide challenging topics that reinforce and build on what pupils, and students in the sixth form, already know and can do
 - ensuring that teachers plan and use more probing questions to check on and deepen pupils' understanding
 - ensuring that all teachers address errors in pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar so that they improve their writing skills
 - ensuring that guidance in the support plans of pupils with SEND are used by teachers to improve their access to the curriculum and to accelerate their progress
 - providing training for teachers on the day-to-day strategies they can use to

accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - monitoring more closely the effect of actions taken to improve the school by checking more on the difference that actions are making in the classroom
 - strengthening the skills of middle leaders so that they become more influential in raising the expectations of their colleagues
 - improving the quality of support received by pupils with SEND
 - ensuring that governors and leaders monitor closely and refine current strategies to improve attendance, accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils and improve pupils' reading skills
 - ensuring that all members of staff help to foster pupils' character and promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development so that all pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

An external review of the school's use of the 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

Inadequate

- The headteacher and her new senior team show great passion and determination to improve the school. However, their vision and their efforts to raise expectations are not being translated into better practices on the ground. The quality of education provided since the last inspection, and that which is currently being provided for pupils in key stages 3 and 4, is inadequate.
- Leaders are not demonstrating the capacity to improve the school. They have been unable to address the negative culture and level of disaffection that permeate the school. Since the last inspection, standards of behaviour have deteriorated and levels of pupil absence have risen. Rates of progress across a broad range of subjects have been significantly weaker than seen nationally in recent years. Pupils currently in the school continue to make poor progress because the quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Leaders' evaluation of the school's performance is overly generous. Their efforts to improve the quality of teaching are being undermined by some turnover of staff and frequent staff absences.
- Leaders are taking some sensible steps to put right poor decisions made in the past but these changes have not had a demonstrable impact. Leaders have correctly begun to remodel the curriculum so that it becomes more ambitious and reflective of pupils' starting points. In last year's Year 11, 45% of pupils entered the school having attained highly in primary school. And yet, only 12% of pupils followed the suite of academic subjects in the English Baccalaureate. Only 13% of pupils in the current Year 11 are doing so. This represents a lack of ambition for pupils over time.
- Efforts to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils were, until recently, poorly considered. The gap in attainment between the school's disadvantaged pupils and others nationally has been wide in recent years. In 2018, the gap increased further as many disadvantaged pupils underachieved considerably. The disengagement and lack of interest in learning shown by a significant minority of disadvantaged pupils are a continuing challenge. In particular, disadvantaged boys currently in the school are much more likely to underachieve, to be persistently absent and to be excluded for poor behaviour. Leaders now have a more coherent strategy in place, including the more considered use of Year 7 catch-up funding, to improve pupils' reading. To date, these strategies are having limited success.
- The school's professional development programme is appreciated by teachers but it has not done enough to address some endemic weaknesses in the way teachers plan and pitch lessons. Messages from staff training are not carried through consistently into practice. The quality of middle leadership, over time, has been too variable to support improvements in the standard of teaching. Some new subject leaders have begun to make a positive impact but they recognise they have much more to do. Elsewhere, the quality of middle leadership is variable.
- Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed, except in mathematics and English, where leadership has now been strengthened.
- The quality of provision for pupils with SEND is weak. These pupils make poor progress because their specific needs are not being met. Efforts to improve SEND provision have

been hampered by frequent changes in the leadership over time and a lack of rigorous monitoring.

- The school's programme to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is having little effect on a significant minority of pupils. Consequently, pupils are not being prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- The school's current leadership team has made extensive use of expertise from other schools to help them validate their own judgements about the school's effectiveness. External reviews of the English, mathematics and science departments have helped leaders to begin to address some weaknesses.

Governance of the school

- Membership of the governing body has changed considerably over the last two years. New appointments have brought valuable experience of school improvement. Governors are now more active than in the past. They make regular visits to check on the quality of the school's work. They recognise the challenges leaders face and are now holding the headteacher and senior leaders to account effectively. Governors have made some stronger appointments and brought more capable leaders in to the school.
- The governing body is using available funding more strategically. For example, governors have channelled more resources into improving attendance and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Well-informed and knowledgeable governors now visit the school frequently to support leaders with the key priorities in the school improvement plan.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All necessary checks are made on members of staff and people who visit the school. Members of staff and the governors have received training on their safeguarding responsibilities. The safeguarding policy is particularly detailed and provides members of staff with clear guidance on procedures to follow.
- Leaders ensure that there is a good programme of teaching about personal safety. Leaders work closely with external partners, such as the police, and parents to ensure that clear messages are given about risks within the community.
- The pastoral team is quick to support vulnerable pupils. Appropriate actions are taken when concerns are identified, and the safety of vulnerable pupils is reviewed frequently.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Standards of teaching in key stages 3 and 4 are inadequate. Much of the teaching is typified by low expectations. Teaching lacks sufficient pace and challenge to interest and engage pupils. Consequently, pupils make inadequate progress in many subjects.
- Teachers do not typically use assessment information well. Some teachers set work which is often too easy for pupils. In key stage 3, too much work recaps topics pupils

have already covered in primary school. Some teachers also fail to assess pupils' grasp of new knowledge in lessons and do not move the lessons on when they should. The new subject leaders of English and mathematics have begun to analyse pupils' work more systematically to identify misconceptions and are now directing their colleagues to reteach these areas.

- The quality of questioning in lessons is highly variable. In some lessons, it is effective. For example, the teacher targeted questions of increasing difficulty around the class in a Year 9 childcare lesson, which challenged pupils with different starting points to contribute. However, some teachers get drawn into asking easier and easier questions because pupils are not prepared to offer answers. Rarely did inspectors see questioning that pushed pupils to think deeply.
- The low expectations of many teachers are reflected in the quality of work in pupils' books. Work is often poorly presented and unfinished. Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar often go unchecked. Many topics are covered superficially and pupils do not get enough opportunities to apply their knowledge and build their depth of understanding. Inspectors found pupils typically could not remember much about topics they had recently covered.
- Only a minority of teachers employ specific strategies in lessons to support and challenge disadvantaged pupils. Inspectors saw teachers in history and art challenging disadvantaged pupils more effectively.
- Some teachers do not manage poor behaviour in line with the school's policy. Some lack authority and 'turn a blind eye' to behaviours they should deal with.
- The quality of teaching in some departments has been adversely affected by staff absence. Around 20% of lessons in the mathematics department have been taught by cover teachers this year. Last year, the science department suffered from a high level of staff absence, although the picture is now stable. Pupils told inspectors they have lots of lessons covered by supply teachers.
- The quality of support for pupils with SEND in lessons is poor. Their specific needs are often not recognised or understood by teachers. Information in pupils' support plans is not routinely used to good effect.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Some pupils are apathetic in lessons and do not take enough pride in their work. They lack confidence as learners and many, including some of the most able pupils, prefer not to participate in lessons. Many pupils are reticent to answer questions, and few are prepared to share their thinking with others. In some lessons, pupils are not prepared to work with one another in groups. Leaders have recognised this and have begun a project to improve pupils' oracy.
- The school's tutorial programme includes topics covering a wide range of personal, social, health and economic issues. However, teachers are not always confident with the content as this is prepared by other members of staff. Inspectors observed some

teachers simply reading from presentations. The approach did not engage and interest many pupils.

- Inspectors overheard repeated examples of pupils swearing and using derogatory language, some of which was racist and homophobic. This undercurrent strongly undermines the vision and culture leaders are striving to engender across the school.
- The Zone, an internal area for more vulnerable pupils and for those at risk of exclusion, is a positive development. The Zone and Zone Plus, a similar facility for pupils in key stage 4, are helping to create a more settled environment for some of the school's most challenging pupils. Some of these pupils attend on a part-time timetable designed to support their reintegration back into school following exclusion. However, some pupils have been on these part-time timetables for many months with no sign they are ready to fully integrate back in to school.
- The school's careers guidance programme is developing. There are some effective opportunities for pupils to meet employers and to learn about future options through annual careers fairs. More vulnerable pupils, such as those looked after by the local authority, all receive impartial support to help them take their next steps into education, employment or training.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors said they are confident that pastoral staff will support them if they are worried about things. Many pupils do confide in their head of year and report concerns about their own safety. Pastoral staff and senior leaders respond appropriately. Pupils told inspectors that incidents of bullying do get sorted out. The school has recorded relatively few incidents of bullying this year.
- Pastoral leaders make thorough checks on the safety, behaviour and attendance of pupils who attend external alternative provision.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Although the conduct of many pupils meets the school's expectations, a significant minority of pupils in key stages 3 and 4 show negative attitudes to learning. Some wilfully disrupt lessons and show a lack of respect for other pupils and members of staff. A few pupils flagrantly ignore requests from teachers to behave properly. During the inspection, inspectors visited many lessons where learning activities were interrupted, and this was not dealt with effectively. In some instances, pupils' behaviour was extremely poor and disrespectful. Some teachers do not deal with challenging behaviour successfully when it arises.
- The school's on-call system has recorded numerous incidents when teachers have required assistance from more senior colleagues to deal with behavioural incidents. Pupils told inspectors that lessons are frequently disrupted by poor behaviour.
- In recent years, the level of exclusions has been twice the national average. This year, the use of exclusions has increased markedly, in part because leaders have tried to reduce the number of lessons disrupted by poor behaviour. There have already been three permanent exclusions and 326 fixed-term exclusions since September, a doubling of the rate seen last year. The increasing use of fixed-term exclusion reflects a tougher stance on behaviour from leaders. However, this zero-tolerance approach has made

little difference to the culture and climate for learning experienced by pupils on a day-to-day basis.

- Overall, pupils' attendance is low, particularly among the school's disadvantaged pupils. The situation is getting worse. The number of pupils who are persistently absent is increasing, with over a third of disadvantaged pupils missing school regularly.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Over the last three years, rates of progress through key stages 3 and 4 across a broad range of subjects have been weak. At the end of key stage 4, pupils' progress in many subjects has been consistently in the bottom 10% of the country's secondary schools. Pupils' progress in academic subjects has been particularly poor.
- On average, pupils have entered the school having attained broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics at primary school. However, by the time they have completed key stage 4, their attainment in GCSE examinations has been well below the national average.
- Leaders' efforts did bring about some improvements last year. In 2018, the proportion of pupils who attained a good pass in English, mathematics and science, for example, increased from the previous year. However, despite these improvements, still only a quarter of pupils attained a good pass in both English and mathematics.
- The school's own assessment information for pupils currently in Year 11 shows a variable picture. The proportion of pupils achieving well in English and mathematics is rising, but improvement is slow or not apparent in some other subjects.
- Nearly half of the school's pupils are disadvantaged. In recent years, their progress and attainment have been particularly weak. In 2018, fewer than 10% of disadvantaged pupils in Year 11 attained a good GCSE pass in both English and mathematics. The gap between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally widened further last year. Leaders recognise that they are finding it particularly difficult to engage many disadvantaged boys in the school. Although leaders and governors are now giving much more thought to the use of the pupil premium, recently introduced strategies have not had time to make any marked difference on the progress of disadvantaged pupils currently in the school.
- Pupils in key stage 3 make variable progress. The progress made by boys, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have lower attainment on entry is weak in many subjects. Evidence from pupils' workbooks shows many pupils do not take sufficient pride in their work and often do not complete tasks thoroughly. This impedes their progress over time.
- The progress and attainment of pupils with SEND are weak. In recent years, they have made considerably less progress than other pupils nationally and there is no sign of this improving for pupils currently in the school. Scrutiny of their workbooks confirms the disappointing picture seen in the school's own assessment information. Leaders do not monitor closely enough how well teachers support pupils, including those pupils who attend the additionally resourced provision. Inspectors found that the support for learning set out in pupils' plans was not being provided in many lessons. Leaders' evaluation of the quality of SEND provision is inaccurate.

- Over time, pupils have made better progress and attained higher standards in vocational subjects at the end of key stage 4. Standards have compared favourably with national averages in subjects such as hairdressing, health and social care and performing arts. This has helped some pupils to move on to suitable destinations in education, employment or training. Last year, overall, the proportion of pupils who progressed into further education, employment or training was close to that seen nationally. However, the picture was considerably weaker for disadvantaged pupils.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- The quality of education for students on 16 to 19 study programmes is better than that seen in other key stages and, consequently, students make better progress. Almost all secure places in higher education, employment or training.
- In 2018, students' outcomes on academic courses were broadly average. However, there was some variation across different academic subjects. For example, the progress made by students in subjects such as English language, sociology, psychology and biology was below average and showed a three-year declining trend. Outcomes in vocational and technical qualifications were also broadly in line with the national picture. The school's current assessment information shows that variability in rates of progress remains an issue. Subjects such as art, history and photography show strong progress, but subjects such as mathematics, further mathematics and media studies are performing less well.
- Students make better progress on 16 to 19 study programmes because the quality of teaching, although variable, is generally better in the sixth form. Students' attitudes to learning are more positive. However, too much teaching still lacks real challenge and fails to make students think deeply. Furthermore, many students lack a secure grounding from key stage 4, which undermines the quality of their written work. Scrutiny of books showed, for example, the quality of essay writing is relatively weak. Some students also lack the independent study skills to apply themselves well outside of lessons.
- Leaders of 16 to 19 study programmes show ambition and determination to improve standards further. They know they need to address the variability in teaching and that teaching needs to challenge students more. They recognise that the most able students are not making the progress they should.
- Students who began post-16 study programmes without a grade 4 pass in English and/or mathematics receive further teaching. Outcomes in resit examinations are variable. They were strong in English but weaker in mathematics last year. The school's assessment information indicates that this is still the case this year.
- The school meets the requirements of 16 to 19 study programmes. While plans are in place for all students to complete work experience activities this year, only around a quarter of Year 12 students and around a half of Year 13 students have done so to date. Students receive effective careers information and guidance, including opportunities to meet with employers and to visit universities.
- In marked contrast to other key stages, students' attendance in the sixth form is high.
- Students speak favourably of the personal development programme. They have good

opportunities to discuss and debate current affairs and topics such as personal safety.

School details

Unique reference number	108524
Local authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	10093381

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
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,585
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Bell
Headteacher	Kerry Lord
Telephone number	0191 267 8221
Website	www.walbottlecampus.newcastle.sch.uk
Email address	admin@walbottlecampus.net
Date of previous inspection	14–15 July 2016

Information about this school

- Walbottle Campus is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most pupils are White British. A small proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is below average.

- The school has additionally resourced provision for up to 18 pupils with autism spectrum disorder. There are currently 17 pupils in this provision. Most of these pupils are integrated into mainstream lessons.
- Some key stage 3 and 4 pupils are educated off-site at Newcastle Bridges School, Stepney Bank Stables, Engage and Rathbone Training. The school has also developed The Zone, its own in-house alternative education base for some key stage 3 pupils. In September 2018, it introduced The Zone Plus for some key stage 4 pupils at risk of exclusion.
- Shortly after the last Ofsted inspection, the headteacher left the school. The deputy headteacher acted as headteacher until she was appointed to the substantive post in February 2017. The leadership team has been remodelled since then, with two new deputy headteachers appointed. In September 2018, new subject leaders for mathematics and English joined the school.
- There has been considerable turbulence in staffing since the last inspection. Last year, 39 members of staff left the school.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was undertaken without any notice.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, both deputy headteachers and other senior leaders, including those who lead the sixth form. Inspectors also met with groups of middle leaders and a group of teachers.
- Inspectors met with three members of the governing body.
- Inspectors met formally with two groups of pupils from key stages 3 and 4 and with a group of sixth-form students. Inspectors also spoke to pupils more informally at social times to gather their views about the quality of education they receive.
- Inspectors listened to some Year 7 and Year 8 pupils read and discussed their interest in books with them.
- Inspectors visited lessons across key stage 3, key stage 4 and the sixth form. Many observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. During lesson visits, inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and sampled a range of pupils' workbooks.
- An inspector visited the additionally resourced provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder and met with the special educational needs coordinator. Together, they visited lessons and talked to pupils to evaluate the quality of provision for pupils with SEND.
- An inspector visited The Zone and The Zone Plus to evaluate the quality of the school's in-house provision for pupils who are more vulnerable and those who exhibit challenging behaviour. An inspector also spoke to a representative from one of the alternative education providers used by the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised a sample of pupils' books from across the full 11 to 18 age range in subjects including English, mathematics, science, history, geography, modern foreign languages and religious education, as well as vocational subjects. The sample included books of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, policies, assessment information and records of meetings of the governing body. Inspectors also looked at records of attendance and behaviour and safeguarding information.
- There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, for any results to be considered.

Inspection team

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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