

North Shore Academy

Talbot Street, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland TS20 2AY

Inspection dates

2–3 March 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have not managed to eliminate fully the weaknesses in achievement and teaching identified at the time of the previous inspection.
- The Principal's resignation in September 2015 necessitated rapid temporary arrangements at senior level.
- Some middle managers are still learning the skills required to improve teaching in their subjects.
- GCSE examination results in 2015 were far too low and represented considerable underachievement for all groups of pupils.
- Current pupils in Year 11 have underachieved in the five years they have been in the school, particularly in mathematics.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can and should achieve are sometimes too low.
- Teaching is of variable quality so pupils' progress is not consistently good.
- Attendance is below the national average and persistent absence above average. This affects the progress that pupils make.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils in Years 7 to 10 are making better progress in most subjects.
- There is some good teaching that is helping to accelerate pupils' progress.
- The performance information that the school produces on pupils' progress is helping to identify any underachievement.
- Pupils' personal development and behaviour are generally good. Welfare arrangements are good.
- Pupils receive plenty of effective advice about the next steps in education and future careers.
- Senior managers are successful in ensuring that the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis and that staff morale remains high.
- The governing body is increasingly effective and provides robust challenge when appropriate.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that senior leaders improve achievement and the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - raising the attainment and progress at Key Stage 4, particularly in mathematics, to at least the national average
 - improving the skills and knowledge of middle leaders to enable them to improve teaching and drive up attainment in their subjects
 - making certain that teachers always provide suitable challenge for pupils.

- Reduce pupils' absence and particularly persistent absence by consistently implementing current plans to reach families whose children do not attend frequently enough.

- Secure the provision of a settled senior leadership team which can concentrate fully on raising the overall effectiveness of the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the school has not managed to provide its pupils with consistently good or better teaching. As a consequence, GCSE examination results have been too low and pupils have underachieved.
- The resignation of the Principal necessitated several changes of role at senior level. Support from the Northern Education Trust secured the services of the current executive director to help to stabilise the senior team.
- Variable leadership of subjects has meant that in several areas, for example mathematics and history, the school's older pupils are still attempting to overcome a legacy of previous underachievement.
- Since the previous inspection, systems put into place to improve the attendance of pupils have had limited impact.
- The recently reconstituted senior team has been effective in ensuring that pupils' behaviour is generally good and that the school provides a calm environment in which they can learn.
- The executive director and his senior team have ensured that staff morale remains high and that parents are generally confident in the school.
- The upheaval surrounding the resignation of the Principal has been well managed. Staff, parents and pupils have all been kept well informed.
- Leadership of teaching, in terms of classroom management, has been effective so lessons proceed smoothly. Good systems for collecting data on pupils' progress in all subjects mean that leaders at all levels can challenge classroom practice if slippage occurs. Leaders have ensured that policies relating to the classroom are being followed, for example those concerning behaviour and marking. Weak teaching is challenged.
- The enthusiastic team of middle leaders is now well placed to learn the skills necessary to ensure that teachers and their assistants promote good progress in their subjects.
- The good promotion of equal opportunities means that all pupils are regarded as individuals. The school makes every effort to ensure that those with the greatest level of need, for example the disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs or disability, achieve as well as their peers. In this respect, the school successfully uses its pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding well to narrow gaps and accelerate learning.
- A well-designed curriculum is starting to enable pupils in Years 7 to 10 to make better progress than previous cohorts. Strong provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development pervades the work of the school. The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils understand the concept of democracy and study a range of religious faiths. The older pupils are clear about the courses they intend to pursue in the next stage of their education and recognise the good-quality advice they have received on careers.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Since the previous inspection, the governing body has become increasingly effective. It has a good range of expertise, often drawing on officers from the Northern Education Trust. A realisation after the GCSE results of last summer that the governing body had not been provided with accurate predictions led them to probe and challenge so that the systems the school now uses are far more rigorous and accurate.
 - Governors ensure that performance management arrangements are effective and that any salary progressions are fully merited. They give valuable support to senior staff when difficult decisions need to be made to eradicate weak teaching.
 - Governors understand the data that the school provides on the progress of all groups of pupils and know how they relate to national figures. They are keen to ensure that teaching now improves substantially and that pupils' progress rises rapidly.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and meet statutory requirements in all respects. Record-keeping is good and the arrangements for checking the identities of adults who have access to pupils are exemplary.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teaching and learning require improvement because pupils have yet to benefit from consistently effective teaching over time. Quite frequently, expectations of pupils are too low, tasks provided lack challenge and progress in class is too slow.
- Teachers do not always ensure that pupils make good progress in their subjects. For example, in Year 11 mathematics, pupils are sometimes expected to attempt GCSE-type questions without having the basic numerical or algebraic skills to tackle them. This means that they complete the questions they are confident with and tend to leave the ones where they do not have the skills to proceed.
- Although the school has good systems for the collection and distribution of assessment information, teachers are not all using it to plan lessons or to ensure that challenging targets are set. Teachers do not use the information to set work at the right level or ensure pupils master the topics they are studying.
- Nevertheless, there is a fair proportion of teaching which enables pupils to learn quickly. For example, a middle-ability group of Year 7 pupils were observed making good progress with the construction of complete sentences in French. In Year 11 construction, pupils made good progress because they observed a high-quality demonstration of the techniques for making lap joints and went away to replicate what they had seen the teacher do. In Year 11 art, pupils of all abilities made good progress with their GCSE work, often with skilled assistance from a teaching assistant. The quality of some of the work produced was exceptionally high.
- As a general rule, teachers manage their pupils well, so behaviour in lessons is good and pupils can concentrate and progress without distraction. Instructions are clear so pupils know what is expected of them.
- Teachers use the school marking policy well to enable pupils to understand what they have done well and how they can improve their work. Often, teachers provide pupils with extra exercises designed to develop and consolidate their learning.
- It is to the school's credit that teachers ensure that pupils present their work neatly and in a logical fashion. This means that pupils can use their books to revise for examinations because their work is easy to follow.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are keen to learn, and become more mature and self-assured as they move from Year 7 to Year 11. They feel that teachers and their assistants know them well and that they are always on hand to offer support and guidance when appropriate.
- Older pupils say that the school has improved considerably since they joined in Year 7. They really appreciate the commitment of members of staff who, they say, really care about their progress and personal development.
- A good range of extra-curricular activities enables pupils to develop additional skills and interests, particularly in sport, music and drama. The opportunity to try new activities broadens pupils' understanding and enables them to develop confidence.
- Good levels of supervision from the time the school opens for breakfast club in the morning to the time pupils leave in the afternoon means they feel safe and secure. Most but not all pupils say that they feel safe in the school and that bullying is rare. Pupils are confident that if bullying should occur then staff would deal with it effectively.
- Pupils confirm that the school takes care to ensure that they understand all potential threats to their welfare, such as radicalisation, cyber bullying and perils posed by drugs and alcohol.
- Older pupils have a good idea about what they intend to do in the next stage of their education and beyond that. They confirm that they have had plenty of good advice on courses available from all providers and the qualifications they need to access them.
- The school checks effectively to ensure that the pupils educated at the Ace Unit at Dyke House Sports and Technology College are kept safe, attend regularly and progress on their courses. Current checks show that they are cooperating well and making progress. When pupils are excluded, the school ensures that they have the opportunity to continue to study at home.

- Pupils with special educational needs benefit from a well-designed programme which supports them in their journey from Year 7 to Year 11. All pupils can read relatively fluently by the time they reach Year 9.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' attendance is below average and persistent absence above average, especially for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability.
- Exclusions for poor conduct are above average as they were at the time of the previous inspection.
- Occasionally, pupils become restless in class when the pace of learning is too slow.
- Nevertheless, the school generally provides pupils with a calm and effective setting for their education. The behaviour of the majority of pupils both around the school and in lessons and extra-curricular activities is generally good because they respond well to the high expectations of them.
- Movement of pupils at change of lessons is orderly and safe. Lunchtimes and breakfast club are very well organised and enable pupils to socialise effectively.
- Pupils are proud of their school and their appearance. They are smartly turned out in their uniforms, and the standard of physical education kit is high.
- Pupils show respect to visitors. They are helpful, considerate and polite.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- GCSE examination results in 2015 were far too low and did not reflect adequate progress over pupils' five years in the school. Pupils underachieved particularly in mathematics and in several other subjects, for example science, religious studies, history and English literature.
- GCSE examination results in English were better than in mathematics and represented generally adequate progress for pupils over five years.
- Attainment in the current Year 11, although better than for the previous cohort, is still not as high as it should be, particularly in mathematics where pupils' numerical and algebraic skills are relatively weak. In this year group, pupils are still overcoming a previous legacy of underachievement which is limiting their potential for higher grades in GCSE examinations in several subjects.
- Nevertheless, these pupils' work in English, health and social care, art, design and technology, and physical education reflects at least expected progress over time. Extra lessons in several subjects are helping pupils to improve pupils' work in the run-up to GCSE.
- The picture is much brighter in other year groups. For example, Year 10 are on track to achieve much better GCSE examination results than Year 11. Realistic predictions suggest that the current Year 10 will reach national average figures for five GCSE grades in the range A* to C including English and mathematics from below-average starting points in Year 7. This represents good progress in a wide range of subjects over time.
- In Years 7 to 9, current pupils are progressing across most curriculum subjects at least at expected rates. Pupils of all abilities are progressing equally well and the gap between the performance of disadvantaged and other pupils is closing. Pupils with special educational needs are also doing better than previously. The school ensures that their reading skills develop well so they can access the same work as other pupils in their year groups.
- Pupils educated at the Ace Unit at Dyke House Sports and Technology College are making broadly expected progress towards their targets in academic and personal qualifications.
- There is plenty of evidence that the school's most-able pupils are doing much better than previously. They are frequently challenged strongly by their teachers and produce work which demonstrates their high levels of literacy. They write well and accurately at length with good attention to spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Pupils are proud of the quality of their work and take care to present it well.
- Typically, pupils join Year 7 with below-average attainment. The school is challenging pupils to reach at least average results in GCSE examinations. Apart from Year 11, pupils are on track to meet these targets.

School details

Unique reference number	136146
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	10002037

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	650
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Caroline Reed
Executive director	William Jordon CBE
Telephone number	01642 612381
Website	www.northshoreacademy.org.uk
Email address	info@northshoreacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 December 2013

Information about this school

- North Shore Academy is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- The school is part of the Northern Education Trust.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been many staffing changes.
- Most pupils are White British.
- There are few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported through pupil premium, is above the national average. The pupil premium funding is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' performance at GCSE.
- A small number of pupils in Year 11 are educated at the Ace Unit at Dyke House Sports and Technology College where they pursue a range of academic, personal and social qualifications.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 35 lessons, including six jointly with senior leaders, and looked at a wide range of pupils' written work especially in Years 9 and 11.
- They held meetings with the executive director, senior and middle leaders, the special needs coordinator, groups of pupils in Years 7, 9 and 11 and representatives of the governing body and the Northern Education Trust.
- 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 16 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View), 34 responses to the staff questionnaire, 13 responses to the pupil questionnaire and nine free-text messages from parents.

Inspection team

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Bernard Clark	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Durand	Ofsted Inspector

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