

Northallerton School & Sixth Form College

Brompton Road, Northallerton, North Yorkshire DL6 1ED

Inspection dates

30–31 January 2018

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	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- There has been a marked decline in the quality of education provided by the school. This is because there are fundamental weaknesses in the school's leadership, management and governance.
- Senior leaders and governors have not made sure that the school's safeguarding arrangements are effective. Concerns about pupils' personal development, safety or welfare are not addressed in a timely or effective way.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is unacceptably variable. Assessment practice is weak and assessment information is inaccurate and unreliable.
- The progress pupils make in English, mathematics and a range of other subjects varies too much. Over time, the outcomes achieved by disadvantaged pupils have been poor and there is little sign of improvement.
- Levels of attendance are low and not improving. Too many pupils are persistently absent from school.
- Additional funding, including pupil premium funding, is not used well to improve the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. Senior leaders and governors have poor oversight of the use and impact of this additional funding.
- Too often, pupils' learning is interrupted by poor or disruptive behaviour. Behaviour incidents and incidents of bullying are not followed up consistently well by senior leaders. Pupils and parents and carers lack confidence in the school's response to the concerns they raise.
- Pupils do not have the consistently positive attitudes needed to be successful learners. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding, is not promoted well enough.
- Programmes for students aged 16 to 19 are inadequate because the school's safeguarding arrangements are ineffective. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in 16 to 19 study programmes is too variable.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils have positive attitudes when teaching is effective. Pupils respond keenly when they are set interesting and challenging work.
- Post-16 students who did not achieve GCSE grade C, or equivalent, in English and mathematics make strong progress in these subjects in the sixth form.

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?

- As a matter of urgency, ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective by:
 - implementing a robust monitoring system to guarantee that all required checks on the suitability of staff meet Department for Education (DfE) requirements
 - making sure that all concerns about pupils' personal development, safety or welfare are followed up robustly, in a timely way and records of the actions taken are detailed and of high quality
 - making sure that governors have strong oversight of all aspects of the school's safeguarding arrangements.
- Rapidly improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - governors support senior leaders and hold them to account for all aspects of the school's performance
 - leaders and governors act quickly and decisively to improve levels of attendance, pupils' conduct and behaviour, and their attitudes to learning
 - leaders and governors take urgent action to tackle the weaknesses and inconsistencies in the curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment at all key stages, including 16 to 19 study programmes
 - performance management is used to drive improvement in teaching, accelerate disadvantaged pupils' progress and hold teachers and leaders to account
 - additional funding, especially the pupil premium, is used effectively and the impact of this funding on outcomes for pupils is closely monitored by senior leaders
 - all aspects of pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are promoted consistently well.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment at all key stages and increase the progress pupils make, especially disadvantaged pupils, by ensuring that teachers:
 - plan learning activities which are interesting, engaging and closely matched to pupils' needs and starting points
 - assess pupils' learning and progress accurately and use assessment information to accelerate the progress pupils make.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

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

Inadequate

- There are fundamental weaknesses in the school's leadership, management and governance. As a result, the school's effectiveness has declined significantly since it was last inspected in November 2013. Until recently, the actions of senior leaders and governors have lacked the necessary focus, urgency and decisiveness.
- Pupils' personal development and safety are not promoted well enough and, crucially, the school's safeguarding arrangements are ineffective. Leaders and managers have not made sure that pupils develop positive attitudes to learning and behave well. The impact of these weaknesses on the outcomes pupils achieve is amplified by high levels of absence and increasing persistent absence. Disadvantaged pupils have underachieved substantially for a considerable period of time and there is little sign of improvement. This is unacceptable.
- Senior leaders and governors do not have sufficiently strong oversight of important aspects of the school's work. This includes checks on the suitability of staff to work in the school and the timeliness and effectiveness of the school's responses to concerns about pupils' safety or welfare. The school's systems are fragmented, and senior leaders do not systematically check whether concerns and incidents, including incidents of bullying, are acted upon and resolved. Too many pupils and parents told inspectors that the school does not respond well when they raise concerns.
- Systems for securing accountability are weak at all levels in the school. Performance management plans are insufficiently focused on improving the quality of teaching and the outcomes pupils achieve. There has been a lack of consistency in the way senior leaders, middle leaders and teachers have been supported and challenged.
- Until recently, senior and middle leaders have not kept a close enough eye on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Key weaknesses and inconsistencies in teachers' practice have not been identified and tackled and, as a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is unacceptably variable. The actions taken by senior leaders to improve the quality of teaching have had minimal impact. In part, this is because senior leaders do not systematically check whether the strategies and approaches they have developed are being used consistently. It is also because senior leaders spend too little time evaluating the impact of these strategies on pupils' learning and the progress they are making.
- The local authority has recently taken action to strengthen the school's leadership and management. The school's new leadership team has worked quickly to identify where improvement in teaching, learning and assessment is needed. They have done this well. However, it is too early to see signs of meaningful impact at this stage.
- Senior leaders do not have a sharp enough overview of the effectiveness of the school's curriculum, including how well the curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. While there are numerous individual examples of activities which are designed to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding, the school's approach to promoting these critically important aspects of their development lacks coherence. Senior leaders spend too little time considering

whether the curriculum is equipping pupils with the skills, qualities, knowledge and understanding they need to be successful, resilient and responsible learners and citizens.

- Pupil premium funding has not been used well to improve the outcomes achieved by disadvantaged pupils. The school's pupil premium strategy does not focus sharply enough on tackling the barriers experienced by disadvantaged pupils by providing the high-quality teaching and support they urgently need. Checks on the impact of the school's strategy are poor and, over time, disadvantaged pupils have underachieved substantially. A significant weakness is the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, which has been, and remains, unacceptably low.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is strengthening the school's approach to identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Importantly, however, the progress of this group of pupils is held back by high levels of absence and weaknesses in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This limits the impact of additional funding on the outcomes achieved by pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. The use and impact of additional funding for Year 7 pupils who need help to improve their literacy skills is similarly variable.
- Parents have diversely different views about the school's effectiveness. Many parents said that they have lost confidence in senior leaders and governors because their serious concerns about pupils' behaviour and incidents of bullying have not been addressed. Pupils share these concerns. Many told inspectors that their learning is frequently interrupted by poor behaviour and their concerns about bullying are not heard. Importantly, however, some parents spoke positively about the quality of education provided by the school and several said that the school's new leadership team is giving them greater confidence.
- The school cannot appoint newly qualified teachers (NQTs).

Governance of the school

- The governing body has not focused on the core tasks of making sure that the school's safeguarding arrangements are effective and making sure that the school provides a good quality of education for its pupils.
- The governing body has failed to challenge senior leaders and hold them to account. As a result, there are weaknesses in numerous areas of the school's leadership and management, including the effectiveness of safeguarding, strategic and financial planning, the management of performance and the use of pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils.
- The recently appointed chair of the governing body has a full grasp of these weaknesses in the school's governance. He is acting quickly to improve the way governors support and challenge senior leaders and to rebuild parents' confidence in the school's leadership and management. This work is at an early stage, and he knows, rightly, that there is much to be done.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Too many pupils and parents told inspectors that their concerns about pupils' behaviour and incidents of bullying are not heard or acted upon.
- Senior leaders and governors have had poor oversight of the school's safeguarding arrangements. The process of checking whether staff are suitable to work in the school and records of these checks are insufficiently robust. There is no system for senior leaders and governors to be absolutely assured that all required checks have been carried out prior to a member of staff being appointed. Similarly, records of the actions taken when concerns have been identified do not provide convincing evidence that pupils, and their families, get the timely and effective help and protection they need.
- Although senior leaders have provided safeguarding training and more regular updates, some staff do not have a clear enough understanding of their duties and responsibilities. Senior leaders and governors have not done enough to assure themselves that all staff are knowledgeable about their safeguarding duties and responsibilities and are vigilant about the things that make pupils vulnerable.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is unacceptably variable. Too often, the work pupils are set is poorly matched to their needs and different starting points. Learning activities do not build on what pupils already know, understand and can do. Inaccurate and inconsistent assessment practice contributes significantly to this weakness.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making inadequate progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding because of weaknesses and inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Too often, teachers do not expect or encourage pupils to behave well and work with a positive attitude. Pupils' learning is frequently interrupted by low-level disruptive behaviour, and some pupils refuse to comply with the school's expectations and guidance. This slows pupils' learning and the progress they make.
- The most able pupils told inspectors that they often find the work they are set repetitive or unchallenging. Pupils who have widely different starting points are often given the same work, which, for many, is either too easy or too hard.
- Pupils' learning and progress are not assessed frequently or accurately enough. This, again, limits the progress pupils make. Teachers do not have a clear enough understanding of whether pupils have secured their knowledge and understanding or need additional help and support.
- Senior leaders have developed a series of plans for improving the outcomes achieved by disadvantaged pupils. There is minimal evidence of the impact of senior leaders' actions to improve the quality of teaching or, crucially, the learning and progress of disadvantaged pupils over time. Similarly, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are

not supported consistently well. In fact, the weaker features of teaching, learning and assessment identified at the school's last inspection remain widespread.

- The teaching of literacy is too variable. Although pupils are encouraged and expected to read frequently and more widely in school, they are not being taught key reading skills consistently well. Year 7 pupils who receive additional help to improve their reading skills are not acquiring and developing the strategies they need to read unfamiliar words. As a result, their fluency and confidence in reading is not improving quickly enough.
- At times, teachers plan interesting learning activities which are well matched to pupils' starting points. As a result, pupils apply themselves well, work productively and cooperatively, and develop and deepen their knowledge and understanding. Pupils respond keenly when teachers question and challenge them to explain their ideas and understanding. Their work shows pride and determination to do well. Too frequently, however, these features of strong practice are missing or inconsistent and, as a result, pupils' engagement, learning and progress are unacceptably variable.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Pupils' safety and welfare are not promoted effectively because the arrangements for identifying and supporting pupils who need help and protection are ineffective. Records do not provide convincing evidence that leaders always take the timely action needed to help and protect pupils when concerns are identified.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning vary significantly. Pupils work hard and apply themselves well when teachers have high expectations and learning activities are interesting, engaging and challenging. At other times, when expectations are inconsistent and work is uninteresting or undemanding, pupils quickly lose interest, drift off task and some misbehave. This holds back their learning and the progress they make.
- The school's approach to promoting pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding, is not effective. Senior leaders acknowledge that many pupils are not knowledgeable enough about people who have different backgrounds, faiths and cultures. However, there is no clear and well-thought-out approach to tackling this gap in pupils' personal development.
- Pupils' understanding of how to live safe and healthy lives, including how to keep safe when using mobile phones, social media and the internet, is mixed, again because of the school's inconsistent approach to promoting these aspects of pupils' development.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Levels of attendance have been well below the national average in recent years and remain low in the current academic year. The number of pupils who are frequently absent from school has increased. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils, those who

have SEN and/or disabilities and pupils who attend alternative provision is consistently low and, in some year groups, declining. Inspectors have serious concerns about the impact of disadvantaged pupils' poor or irregular attendance on their learning and progress.

- Pupils do not conduct themselves consistently well during lessons or at social times. Incidents of poor, unruly or disrespectful behaviour are too frequent and, at times, pupils are simply unwilling to follow direction from adults. Pupils told inspectors that their learning is often interrupted by poor behaviour in lessons.
- Senior leaders recognise that the school's approach to promoting positive behaviour is ineffective. Systems for tackling incidents of poor behaviour and bullying are too fragmented. As a result, the follow-up actions needed are not always taken in a timely or effective way. Pupils often said that they are not confident that their concerns about poor behaviour or bullying will be acted upon. Many parents are similarly worried.
- Levels of fixed-term exclusion have been much higher than the national average in recent years and remain high. The school's monitoring records show that pupils are frequently removed from lessons as a result of poor or disruptive behaviour. Senior leaders do not analyse or use the information they collect about behaviour incidents and the use of isolation or exclusion in a systematic enough way.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- The outcomes achieved by Year 11 pupils in 2016/17 were broadly similar to those achieved by Year 11 pupils nationally. However, the progress made by disadvantaged Year 11 pupils was substantially lower than the progress made by other pupils nationally. Over time, the outcomes achieved by disadvantaged pupils have been inadequate and there is little sign of improvement in the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils currently.
- In 2016/17, the progress made by all pupils in English was below the national average and in mathematics was in line with the national average. In both English and mathematics, the progress made by disadvantaged pupils from their different starting points was significantly below the national average. Again, the work in pupils' English and mathematics books shows no substantial improvement in the progress disadvantaged pupils are making in English, mathematics or across a range of other subjects.
- The school's assessment information indicates a similarly variable picture in the current progress and attainment of pupils, including the most able pupils, lower-attaining pupils and those who are disadvantaged. Crucially, however, the school's new leadership team is not confident that teachers are assessing pupils' attainment either consistently or accurately. Senior leaders are acting quickly to address the fundamental weaknesses in assessment practice but, at this stage, the school's tracking system does not provide a sufficiently accurate or reliable picture of how well pupils are doing.
- Pupils who need help to improve their reading skills are not receiving the consistent, high-quality support they need to catch up. Similarly, some pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not make fast enough progress as a result of inconsistencies in the school's approach to identifying, assessing and meeting their needs. In contrast,

some pupils who have education, health and care (EHC) plans receive effective support and are making strong progress towards the targets and objectives in these plans.

- Information about Year 11 pupils' progression to the next stage of their education, training or employment shows that a high proportion move on to higher-level study in the school's sixth form. Importantly, however, some pupils' preparedness for the challenges of further study, training or employment is limited by weaknesses in their personal and social development.

16 to 19 study programmes

Inadequate

- The effectiveness of 16 to 19 study programmes is inadequate because the school's safeguarding arrangements are ineffective.
- In all other respects, the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes are met. Senior leaders have made sure that a range of subjects are offered in the sixth form and that students are well supported in their subject choices. As a result, retention and completion rates on sixth-form courses are strong.
- In contrast, senior leaders are not systematic enough in their approach to securing improvement in the 16 to 19 study programmes. For example, senior leaders do not use the information they collect about the quality of teaching to systematically improve teachers' practice. In addition, they do not use performance management to hold middle leaders and teachers to account for improving the outcomes students achieve. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too variable.
- Students make strong progress when the work they are set is pitched at the right level and their knowledge, skills and understanding are assessed accurately and effectively. This is not, however, consistently the case and, at times, students are set unchallenging work and there is limited assessment of the progress they are making. As a result, errors and misconceptions in their knowledge and understanding are not picked up quickly enough and students who are falling behind are not given the help they need to catch up.
- All students receive impartial careers guidance, and 16 to 19 study programmes include relevant work experience and a wide range of enrichment opportunities. These include volunteering and an aspirational programme of mentoring for the most able students. Levels of attendance are improving, students conduct themselves well and important aspects of their personal and social development are promoted effectively.
- Historically, and currently, academic outcomes achieved on 16 to 19 study programmes are broadly in line with the national averages. However, some groups of students, such as girls and students who achieved an average of grade B at GCSE, do not do as well. There is little evidence of effective action to improve the performance of these groups of students. Similarly, the progress students make in vocational subjects is not as strong as the progress they make on academic courses.
- Students who did not achieve GCSE grade C, or equivalent, in English and mathematics at the end of Year 11 make strong progress and achieve higher-grade qualifications in these important subjects.
- In 2016/17, almost two thirds of students moved successfully to higher education at the end of their 16 to 19 study programmes. Approximately one quarter achieved

places at Russell Group universities. However, some students who left the sixth form in 2016/17 are either seeking work or their destination is unknown.

School details

Unique reference number	121678
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10042135

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,133
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Bartlett
Executive Principal	Keith Prytherch
Telephone number	01609 772888
Website	www.northallertonschool.org.uk
Email address	enquiries@northallertonschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 November 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the use and impact of pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up premium on its website.
- Northallerton School & Sixth Form College is a larger than average-sized secondary school for pupils aged between 11 and 18. Previously called Allertonshire School, it was a smaller than average-sized secondary school for pupils aged between 11 and 14 when it was last inspected. At the time, Allertonshire School and Northallerton College were separate schools within the Northallerton and Catterick Federation. The schools have since merged.

- The school uses one alternative provider: Hambleton and Richmondshire Pupil Referral Service.
- The chair of the governing body, executive principal, associate principal and several senior leaders took up their posts in January 2018.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium is lower than that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who need support for their SEN and/or disabilities is lower than the national average. A lower-than-average proportion of pupils have a statement of SEN or an EHC plan.
- In 2015/16, the school met the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for the progress of Year 11 pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning on both days of the inspection. They also spoke to pupils and sixth-form students and examined the work in their books and folders. Several lessons were visited jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with pupils and sixth-form students, a group of parents, the executive and associate principals, senior and middle leaders, three newly qualified teachers, two governors and three representatives from the local authority. There were 184 responses recorded on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 160 free-text responses. Inspectors considered 137 responses to the online pupil survey and 46 responses to the online staff survey.
- Inspectors examined documents relating to governance, self-evaluation, school improvement planning, pupils' progress, attendance, behaviour, the curriculum and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Nick Whittaker, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Stephen Crossley	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Cook	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Johnson	Ofsted Inspector
Garry Stout	Ofsted Inspector

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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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