

Allertonshire School

Brompton Road, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL6 1ED

Inspection dates 20–21 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- From broadly average starting points when they join the school, students achieve well and reach above average standards by the end of Year 9.
- Gaps in performance between groups of students have significantly reduced. Students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium make the same good progress as that of their peers and the gaps between their performance and that of other students are already below national levels.
- Teaching is mainly good and sometimes outstanding. Teaching is carefully monitored to ensure that teachers have high expectations of their students and use their subject expertise to plan lessons which deepen students' knowledge and understanding.
- Students' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Students show respect to each other and adults and are polite and helpful to visitors. Students enjoy learning, say they feel safe in school and that they have good support from staff.
- Leadership and management across the whole school are good. Senior staff lead the school with strong commitment to drive forward improvements. The involvement of all staff and subject leaders is encouraged through a collaborative team spirit where everyone plays a part in attempting to make the school the best it can be. The new governing body has an accurate picture of the school and asks exactly the right questions to make sure that senior leaders and middle leaders are held rigorously to account.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teaching is consistently good and not enough teaching is outstanding.
- Students do not always respond well enough to comments on how to improve their work so that they can progress more quickly.
- Students are not given enough opportunities to work by themselves and in groups to solve problems and to show they can manage their own learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 34 lessons, taught by 33 teachers. Three lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors observed an assembly, met with five groups of students, five members of the Northallerton and Catterick Federation governing body, a representative of the local authority and a representative of a local pupil referral service. Several meetings were held with pastoral staff, heads of subjects, the special educational needs co-ordinator, the literacy co-ordinator and members of the senior leadership team, including the two associate headteachers.
- Inspectors took account of the 64 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and of the 31 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and looked at students' exercise books, student attainment and progress data, school development planning, tracking systems and the school's self-evaluation of its performance. They also scrutinised a range of school policies and documentation in relation to safeguarding, child protection, behaviour and attendance. In addition, they considered minutes of governing body meetings.

Inspection team

Geraldine Hutchinson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jim Kidd	Additional Inspector
Steven Beverley	Additional Inspector
John Townsley	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Allertonshire School is part of the Northallerton and Catterick Federation consisting of Risedale Sports and Community College and Northallerton College. All schools share the same executive headteacher and governing body. Each school has its own associate headteacher. In the case of this school there are two co-associate headteachers. The school joined the Federation on 1st September 2013.
- The school is a smaller than average secondary school that caters for students in Years 7 to 9.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding to support students known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after and the children from service families) is below average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below that usually found.
- The proportion of students for whom English is not a first Language is below average, as is the proportion of students from minority ethnic heritages.
- The school is located on two sites which are joined by a bridge and walkway across a main road.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning so that all is at least good and more is outstanding by:
 - reducing the amount of teacher-talk in lessons
 - ensuring that work and activities in lessons meet the needs, abilities and interests of all groups even more closely
 - giving students more opportunities to find things out for themselves and to be responsible for their own learning
 - using homework in a more focused way to extend learning in the classroom
 - improving systems to ensure that pupils respond more consistently to the marking and feedback that they receive.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join Year 7 with skills that are generally typical for their age and leave in Year 9 with standards that are above average. All groups of students, including those known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium, make good progress in English and mathematics.
- Students' work in books and files and displays around the school confirm that they make good progress between Year 7 when they join the school and Year 9, when they leave. The rates of progress have increased steadily over the last three years and especially for the most-able students, boys and those known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium.
- Current data show that attainment in English is still a little behind that in mathematics. However, the rate of progress in English has shown the greatest acceleration and standards are rising rapidly.
- The school has introduced a number of effective systems to monitor teaching quality and to track students' progress on an individual basis at four assessment points during each year. This has had a positive impact on raising attainment and accelerating progress in every subject and for each student. This means that, if the rate of progress slows for any reason, the school finds out quickly and takes immediate action to put in extra support so that students catch up quickly.
- Additionally, this process allows the school to set more ambitious targets so that students make faster progress as they further develop their skills and understanding. This is especially the case for the most-able students who, over the last three years have made a 32 per cent increase in progress levels achieved.
- The school Year 7 catch-up programme where students are taught in smaller groups and the accelerated reading scheme make sure that students quickly adapt to work in a secondary school. This helps them to settle quickly so that they learn, extend their skills and make more rapid progress in lessons. As a result, students' literacy and numeracy skills have become more assured and the progress that students make has gathered pace. In addition, their progress is further enhanced by teachers in every subject who focus effectively on developing literacy skills. Teachers of science and design and technology have noticed that levels of progress have increased as literacy levels have improved.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs benefit from effective support from teaching assistants and individual teaching so that they make the same good progress as that of their peers.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding effectively to ensure that support for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well-targeted. There is also individual support for students and additional training for teachers. In lessons observed during the inspection, students supported by the pupil premium made progress that was equal to that of all other students.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire is very satisfied with the progress their children are making.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching over time is good and there are examples of outstanding teaching across a range of subjects. In three-quarters of lessons observed, for example, teaching was judged to be good or better. Where teaching was judged to be less than good, it was often because there was too much teacher-talk, lessons were too teacher-led and did not allow scope for students to develop their independent learning skills.
- As a result of accurate monitoring and evaluation by subject leaders, teaching quality has improved as teachers work better together to improve their skills and to share classroom practice; this helps students to learn more effectively. One example is the 'Habits of Mind' scheme integrated into all teaching and every aspect of school life. It encourages students to learn, for example, how to be persistent, how to ask questions when they do not understand,

how to manage impulsive behaviour and how to listen to others. These opportunities for students to think about their own learning are emphasised every day in lessons and raise awareness of what skills are needed to be a good learner.

- Teachers usually set high expectations for students and, where teaching is good, it sets challenging tasks that require students to make individual decisions and to work independently. For example, in a design and technology lesson Year 7 students worked individually and used technical equipment safely to make a circuit board and to test that it worked.
- There are strong and positive relationships between students and the adults who work with them. Students respond well to opportunities where they are trusted to work alone in a group to come up with original and creative ideas. This was evident in a music lesson on drumming where Year 8 students worked collaboratively to create lyrics and a drum beat based on an anti-bullying theme. Students said that this kind of lesson develops their confidence as they do not rely on the teacher and try out their ideas to see if they work.
- Where teaching is good and better teachers plan carefully to make sure that lessons are well-resourced and keep students involved in active learning. In these lessons the pace is brisk and students have the chance to complete several tasks. For example, in a science lesson Year 9 students considered the impact of smoking on respiration and health through group research, made a leaflet of key facts and a poster to explain the effects of smoking on the body.
- The majority of teachers gives students good feedback on their learning during lessons so that they can improve the standard of their work. This was the case in a physical education lesson where Year 7 students practised gymnastic moves and through teacher feedback and use of a video, refined their skills and improved their technique.
- Feedback and marking in books is generally helpful and tells students what to do next to improve. There are, however, fewer examples where students are required to respond to feedback and to make the improvements needed.
- Homework is set and completed regularly. However the focus of homework tasks and how these deepen understanding and reinforce learning in the classroom is not always clear enough.
- Students are keen to learn and there is a good work atmosphere in classrooms. Mutual respect abounds. Students persevere in their work to make improvements and ask questions when they need help. The use of word boards in English and other subjects helps students to learn subject-specific terminology and improve their spelling and literacy skills.
- The best teaching encourages students to help each other. For example, in an English lesson students used a 'shoulder partner' sitting next to them to talk through an idea and they also had opportunities to work out how well their peers were doing. Students said this develops social skills and encourages them to support others.
- A strength of the school is the harmonious and positive learning environment created in the majority of lessons.
- Most of the parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire agreed that their children are taught well.

■ The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students enjoy school and show a positive attitude to learning across all subjects and at after-school activities and clubs. A large majority of students participates in musical, dramatic and sporting activities and these events are celebrated throughout the school and with the local community. Students are proud of their school and this is reflected in their attendance which is above average.
- Students' behaviour is good in and around school. They show self-discipline when moving round the school, walking sensibly from one site to the other across the bridge and moving through narrow corridors at lesson change-over with good regard for others' comfort and safety. They are polite and respectful to each other, to the adults who work with them and to visitors.
- Students say that they feel safe in the school and know who to talk to when they have a problem. They appreciate their heads of house and form tutors for the support they provide.

Often, the first person students speak to when they need help is one of the student listeners who have been trained to help others with a problem. The vast majority of parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire agreed that their children feel safe at school.

- Students say that bullying does happen but that it is usually verbal and is dealt with quickly by the school. A positive response by the school and students to bring this topic out into the open was evident in the anti-bullying week. The theme was effectively reinforced through lessons and assemblies. The anti-bullying theme, including through social media sites, was discussed and explored by students during the two days of the inspection. Students show a keen awareness of how prejudice-based bullying is hurtful and wrong.
- The school encourages students to take responsibility and develop their leadership roles. The student voice representatives for each subject regularly meet to discuss ideas for improvement to present to their teachers. For example, students have suggested a music questionnaire and expanded the inclusion of more students in sporting activities.
- The promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. There is a wide range of well-attended extra-curricular activities and visits. Students show a good awareness of other cultures and are articulate in relevant debates and discussions, for example when they talk about the use of samba and drumming in Africa and South America. Displays around the school also celebrate other cultures and cultural activities. Students show respect and appreciation of others' talents and readily perform in music and drama activities. The school prepares students well for life in a multi-cultural society.
- Provision and support for students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and for those disabled students or those who have special educational needs are good. The high-quality work of teaching assistants promotes these students' personal and academic progress. As a result, they are integrated effectively in lessons and learn well alongside their peers.

The leadership and management are good

- The two associate headteachers work effectively together to lead the school and the staff. Their methodical and diligent team approach to establishing strategies for improvement continues to work well, sets an example throughout the school and ensures that staff at all levels are actively involved in driving the school forward. A major strength of the leadership is its willingness to allow others to take responsibility and thus fulfil the school's mission, 'Learning and Achieving together'.
- Subject leaders are held effectively to account for their areas for improving the quality of teaching, raising attainment and progress and monitoring and supporting their staff. These middle leaders meet together on a fortnightly basis to evaluate progress and to deliver or receive training. They also inform governors of performance in their subject areas. Middle leaders value their active involvement in school improvement and speak highly of the professional training they receive. They particularly value the coaching they receive to improve their classroom practice.
- Senior leaders know their school well, assess its performance accurately and have identified appropriate strengths and areas for improvement.
- Teaching, for example, is monitored more robustly than at the time of the previous inspection and leaders have an accurate view of the quality of classroom practice across the school. Targets for improvement are challenging, training activities focus on improving achievement and students' progress has accelerated as a result.
- Performance management arrangements are linked directly to the monitoring of teaching quality and student achievement. They are in line with the Federation's policy and practice linking performance with pay progression.
- The curriculum provides opportunities for students to develop a wide range of personal and academic skills and talents which are promoted and celebrated across the whole school community.
- The local authority provides strong support to the school, including at subject level through the

moderation of internal assessments by subject advisors which has ensured the accuracy of school data.

■ Safeguarding and child protection policies and practice fully meet current requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body demonstrates a strong commitment and passion for improving the provision of education in the school. Some governors were also governors of the school before it joined the Federation so there is a continuity of experience which benefits the school. Governors have completed appropriate training. Governors show an accurate knowledge of the strengths of the school and also of the areas for improvement.
- The governing body has extremely rigorous systems for holding leaders, including middle leaders, to account for the standards of progress of students and for quality of teaching. Governors oversee performance management arrangements and allow salary progression only when teachers meet the rigorous targets for students' progress.
- The governing body has evolved a committee structure that oversees financial and human resources functions and decides on how pupil premium funding is used to promote the progress of students who are eligible for support through this funding. The governing body scrutinises all school performance data closely and holds leadership to account with rigour.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	121678
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	429607

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	630
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rob Barker
Headteacher	Chris Byrne/Mike Holmes
Date of previous school inspection	30 May 2012
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