

# Bedlingtonshire Community High School

Palace Road, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 7DS

**Inspection dates** 28 February–1 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Students do not consistently make good progress. Consequently, not all groups of students achieve highly enough in all their subjects.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school and between subjects. Not enough is consistently good or better.
- Teachers do not always use information about what students can and cannot do to give work that is appropriate for all of them to learn as effectively as they could.
- Marking does not always make it clear to students how they can improve their work.
- Many students entering the school have poor reading and writing skills and this is not being addressed effectively enough at present.
- Attendance is below average. Not enough parents have been persuaded of the importance of regular attendance.
- The effectiveness of the sixth form requires improvement. Students' performance in Year 12 is not good enough and the number entering into Year 13 is not high enough.

### The school has the following strengths

- School leaders and managers, including the governing body, have brought about some significant improvements and achievement is rising, although it is not yet good overall.
- Although teaching is not yet good, the quality of teaching is improving, helped by training and collaboration with an outstanding school.
- The vast majority of students' behaviour is good and students are keen to get involved in their own learning.
- The number of students persistently absent has fallen and attendance has risen, although it is not yet high enough.
- Aspects of the sixth form have improved and this is seen in the improved success of the number of students achieving pass grades at GCE in Year 13.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 37 lessons taught by 37 teachers. Four observations were conducted jointly with four different members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding and child protection, development planning, the monitoring of the quality of teaching and also information about teachers’ professional development.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers and other leaders in the school, members of the governing body and also with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors spoke to many students in lessons, at breaks and at lunchtimes. They also spoke formally to four groups of students on the first day of the inspection.
- The inspectors observed a number of students read in lessons and they also listened to six students read at lunchtime on the second day of the inspection.
- The 51 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the 14 responses to the staff questionnaire were analysed.

## Inspection team

Alison Thomson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Frank Cain	Additional Inspector
Clive Hurren	Additional Inspector
Derek Neil	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Bedlingtonshire Community High School is smaller than the average sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is higher than average. (This is funding available for students known to be eligible for free school meals, students in local authority care and those whose parents are in the armed forces).
- Almost all students are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of students who are supported at school action is above average. The proportion of students supported by school action plus or with a statement of special needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- A very small minority of students are currently educated part-time off-site. These include Northumberland College, GUSTO (getting you started training), Choysez, Buzz Learning and Skills 4 U.
- The school enters some students early for GCSE examinations.
- The school officially started admitting Year 7 and 8 students in September 2012. Prior to that Year 7 and 8 students attended a middle school situated on the same site but were taught by teachers from the high school.
- The current headteacher took up his post in January 2013. Prior to that there had been an acting headteacher for one term.

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

- Ensure all teaching is consistently good or better for all groups of students in all subjects by:
  - using information about students' progress to always plan and deliver lessons that effectively maximise the learning of all students in the class
  - improving the quality of written feedback to students about their work so that they understand clearly how to improve it.
- Further increase the rate of students' progress and so improve their achievement by:
  - ensuring that more parents understand the importance of regular attendance and so students reach at least the level of attendance found nationally
  - improving the reading and writing skills of the many students who enter the school with low skills by embedding the new initiatives, such as additional reading sessions
  - ensuring better performance of students in Year 12 and increasing the number who continue their education into Year 13 through a better match of students to courses.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Students enter the school with below average attainment and many have low literacy skills. By the end of Year 11, some reach standards that are in line with those found nationally, but the standards reached by many others are lower than this. Achievement overall, therefore, requires improvement.
- Students' progress is beginning to accelerate, but inspection evidence shows that the proportion of students making expected or better than expected progress is not as good as it should be. The school's records of the progress that different groups of students make confirms this.
- Progress in many subjects is improving, including that in mathematics, an area for development at the time of the previous inspection. Progress of the most able students in English is now good.
- Standards in many vocational subjects are above average and achievement is good.
- The progress of students who are educated off-site is variable. Some make good progress, whilst the progress of others requires improvement.
- Achievement in the sixth form requires improvement, particularly that in Year 12. Students do not always embark on courses that are suitable for them at present. However, the percentage of students achieving a pass grade in A Level examinations in Year 13 has improved.
- Good progress was seen in many lessons during the inspection. In some lessons, however, students do not make sufficient progress, as the work is often the same for all with some finding it too hard and others too easy.
- In the past, disabled students, those who have special educational needs, and those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and supported through the use of pupil premium funding have not performed as well as other students in the school in English and mathematics. However, the gaps in performance are closing and the school's data shows that they are in line to close even further this year. This is because strategies such as support in lessons and small group tutoring are having a good impact.
- Students are entered early for some examinations. Students say that this motivates them to work hard early in their courses and leads to improved outcomes, for example, in mathematics and in science.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) skills are good and are being integrated increasingly well into other lessons. Many instances were seen of students accessing the internet to research topics, such as the impact of genetic engineering on selective breeding.
- Mathematics, one of the school's specialist subjects, along with numeracy, is being increasingly integrated into other areas. This was observed during the inspection, such as an emphasis on calculations in science.
- Many students have low literacy skills. The school is addressing those increasingly well in class and through additional reading sessions, but it is too early to see a great deal of impact.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching is improving but its quality is still inconsistent within subjects and across the school. Nonetheless, there are examples of good and outstanding teaching, although a little is inadequate.
- Teachers have good relationships with their students and many lessons were seen where students eagerly marked their own work or that of others against clear criteria for success. This was exemplified especially well in a Year 11 mathematics lesson where students made outstanding progress.
- In less successful lessons, teachers do not use information about students' progress to plan work that maximises their learning. Instances were seen where the work was too easy for some students and too hard for others. As a result, students do not learn quickly enough.

- Where teaching assistants are deployed, they work effectively with disabled students and those who have special educational needs helping them to access their work and guide their learning.
- Sessions to improve students' reading and writing skills were observed and some good progress was seen, but in some progress requires improvement. All English lessons start with a reading session, but it is too early to see the full impact of this in students' achievement.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are integrated well into many lessons. For example, Year 11 English students debated the idea that women such as 'The Coy Mistress' in Andrew Marvell's poem were victims. Likewise in a Year 13 Chemistry lesson, should Haber have his name attributed to a chemical process even although he was a member of the Nazi party.
- The standard of marking in books requires improvement. Currently, there are not enough helpful comments to enable students to improve their work. The new headteacher has introduced a new marking policy to address this issue, but it is too soon to see its impact.
- The response to Parent View was very low. However, the majority of those parents agreed that their children were well taught. Inspectors found that teaching overall requires improvement.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Most students behave well and are polite and courteous. This was seen during the inspection, such as engaging inspectors in conversation and holding open doors.
- Students are keen to be involved in their own learning and enjoy discussions and assessing how well they are doing.
- Most parents who responded to Parent View agreed that the school helps their children to behave well. Likewise, almost all the staff who returned the questionnaire agreed that students' behaviour is good.
- The students themselves were a bit more critical about behaviour and said that there were a few individuals who find it difficult to always conduct themselves appropriately. However, they described their school as a friendly one and one where behaviour has been good for some time. This was confirmed by scrutiny of behaviour records.
- Students have a very good understanding of different types of bullying and say that the very little that does occur is dealt with swiftly. They say that there are many adults to turn to for help and advice.
- Students describe their school as very safe. This view was echoed by parents and also by staff. Students were observed working very safely in practical lessons and they demonstrated a particularly good understanding of safety issues when using computers.
- The school has increased attendance by working closely with families and their children who have been persistently absent in the past. However, attendance is still below that found nationally. Not all parents have been persuaded of the importance of regular attendance.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The very recently appointed headteacher has a very clear view of the school's strengths and what it needs to do to secure further improvement. He has already put in place initiatives to address the quality of marking.
- The school has continued to overcome many changes, such as widening the intake of its students to Years 7 and 8 and also a change in leadership. This has been overseen well by the current deputy headteacher in his role as acting headteacher.
- Leaders work well together and have clear roles and responsibilities. Subject leadership has improved since the previous inspection. They now have greater accountability for the progress students make.
- Teaching had improved through good leadership and management of teaching and learning, although there is not enough teaching that is consistently good. Teaching is improving through more staff training on how to improve teaching, though some judgements on the quality of

teaching have been a little overgenerous.

- The school has made improvements in many areas since the previous inspection two years ago and some of the areas for development have been addressed well. Achievement has risen, particularly so in English and mathematics, although it is not yet good overall.
- The school's systems for checking students' progress are thorough. Students who are at risk of falling behind in their learning are identified earlier and strategies to help them catch up are increasingly effectively. Progress is improving for all groups of students. Gaps in performance between groups of students are closing and this reflects the improving equality of opportunity. Discrimination is not tolerated.
- The curriculum meets the needs of the students well. There are different pathways for students of different aptitudes and abilities. Students have a good range of subjects available in the sixth form and the school is looking to broaden this provision further to help raise achievement in Year 12 through collaboration with other schools. There is suitable provision for those being educated off site, although its effectiveness on students' achievement is not always evaluated rigorously enough. There is a wide variety of clubs, visits and visitors to the school.
- The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Aspects of this are integrated well into lessons and students told us how much they had benefited from activities, such as visiting London and Paris to learn of other cultures. Sixth formers shared their experiences of their visit to South Africa with other students in assemblies.
- All statutory requirements relating to safeguarding are met well.
- The local authority has played a role in the improving success of the school. It has helped to forge successful links with a nearby outstanding secondary school in order to improve the quality of teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body works closely with the school. It has played a key role in the allocation of the budget, including pupil premium funding and this is improving the progress of those students eligible for that funding. Governors have a realistic view of the quality of teaching and ensure that the pay of teachers is linked closely to their performance. They undergo training, including training to understand data. However, they acknowledge that this is an area for further development. The governing body holds the school to account increasingly well for the performance of its students.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	12360
<b>Local authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	406088

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	872
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	166
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Trevor Weldon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephen Griffiths
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 June 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01670 822625
<b>Fax number</b>	01670 829378
<b>Email address</b>	admin@bedlingtonshire.northumberland.sch.uk

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