

Nunthorpe School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111740
Local Authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	310676
Inspection dates	30 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Marianne Young HMI

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	1,371
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Ian Click
Headteacher	Ms Debbie Clinton
Date of previous school inspection	September 2004
School address	Guisborough Road Nunthorpe Middlesbrough TS7 0LA
Telephone number	01642 310561
Fax number	01642 325672

Age group	11–16
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Introduction

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors together with an Additional Inspector inspected the school. They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the progress made by the students especially during Years 7 to 9, the quality of teaching and learning, students' academic support and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, the scrutiny of students' work, assessment records and the questionnaires completed by parents. Discussions were held with students, teachers, the headteacher, members of the senior team and a representative of the governing body. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

Nunthorpe is a secondary school with an above average number of students on roll. It is situated to the east of the Teesside conurbation. Almost all students are of White British background. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of students with a statement of special educational need is below that expected nationally. The school has held science, business and enterprise specialist status since 2006. Nunthorpe is a Leading Edge School. Silver Artsmark, Healthy Schools, Sportsmark, Schools Curriculum and Investors in People awards are also held by the school. The school will admit sixth form students from September 2008.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Nunthorpe is a popular, over subscribed specialist science, business and enterprise school which provides its students with a satisfactory education. Students enjoy coming to school as shown by their above average attendance and their eagerness to be involved in the Wednesday afternoon 'Opt 4' programme and many of the wide range of after school clubs. Students socialise well with each other and take on positions of responsibility with enthusiasm, for example, as prefects or members of the school council. These characteristics are clear evidence of the students' good personal development, which is a result of the high levels of pastoral care afforded to them. Although a very small number of the parents who responded to the questionnaire had some concerns about students' behaviour in lessons and around the school, inspectors found that generally behaviour is good.

Students start at the school with standards above those expected nationally. In 2007, standards attained by students in Year 11 remained above national average. However, the proportion of students at the end of Year 11 attaining 5 or more A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, decreased slightly compared to results in 2006. Progress for students in Years 10 and 11 is good but, overall, progress is satisfactory. This is because, although standards at the end of Year 9 remain above average, students have made insufficient progress given their favourable starting points in Year 7. Performance in the core subjects of English, mathematics, and science, although now showing some signs of improvement, remains a concern for senior leaders. Measures have now been put in place aimed at improving performance, especially in English. Students' progress is now tracked more rigorously across all subjects and underachievement identified quickly. The headteacher is not complacent and knows that the pace of change needs to be more rapid. Senior managers, supported by the curriculum leaders, are monitoring the progress made by students on a regular basis.

The specialist science, business and enterprise status has brought several benefits to the school. Partnerships with local business organisations and industries are being developed and they make a good contribution to students' understanding and involvement in the world of work. The school met its specialist targets for students' attainment in science but has not yet met them for business education and mathematics.

Visits to lessons during the inspection and analysis of students' work indicated there are strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. Overall teaching and learning are satisfactory. Relationships between students and their teachers are generally positive and lessons are generally planned carefully and well organised. Many provide good challenge for all groups of students. However, some lessons give little chance for students to work unaided, think for themselves and not rely on their teachers to provide the answers. Marking at its best is informative and explains clearly how students can improve but too often it is cursory and gives them little help to understand what is expected so that they can reach higher levels. The setting of homework is inconsistent and not sufficiently well used as a way of developing students' independent learning.

The school is very responsive to the needs of its students and is constantly looking at ways to improve and develop the curriculum. Recent reviews have resulted in modifications that are designed to better meet the needs of all students, for example, the range of vocational courses and the increased number of science options which are popular with many students. Students value the pastoral care afforded to them and the house system is popular. This provides a range of opportunities for students of different ages to mix socially and to enjoy competitions and challenges through a variety of events. Good support is given to any student who needs extra personal help or who is finding learning difficult.

Since the previous inspection, the drive and determination shown by senior leaders and governors have resulted in the school achieving dual specialist status, improving standards and achievement at Key Stage 4 and gaining agreement to open a sixth form centre in September 2008. Challenging targets are being set at all levels, especially at Key Stage 3, as the school rightly recognises the need to improve students' performance in Years 7 to 9. Firm foundations have been laid through the better tracking arrangements and senior leaders are clear how they can measure improvement. For these reasons capacity to improve is good. Strengths demonstrated by the senior leadership group do not yet extend to all other managers. Some middle managers are yet to play their part effectively through rigorous monitoring and evaluation of their subjects and ensuring that accountability for the students' achievements is shared by all teachers. Governors afford staunch support to the school, are regularly involved in school life and they play an essential part in forward planning, especially preparations for the new sixth form. They effectively hold the school to account for its performance. The school's self-evaluation documents show that leaders gather a considerable amount of information about the school and know where there are examples of good and sometimes innovative work. However, they are less successful in ensuring that the resultant improvement plans are sufficiently precise to be used effectively as a basis for scheduling actions, monitoring progress and identifying the impact on students' achievement. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- To raise standards at Year 9, particularly in English.
- Improve the quality and consistency of marking and homework.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of all aspects of the planning process in relation to improving outcomes for students.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	NA
The effectiveness of boarding provision	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

31 January 2008

Dear Students



Inspection of Nunthorpe School, Redcar and Cleveland, TS7 0LA

Thank you for making me and my colleague so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to some of you and hearing what you like best about Nunthorpe School. A few of your parents took time to complete the questionnaire sent to them. Please thank them. A special note of thanks goes to two of the Year 11 students who gave me a very comprehensive tour and introduction to your school.

We found that your personal development, the choice of subjects offered and the way you are cared for and supported at Nunthorpe are good, but overall the school provides you with a satisfactory education. You behave well in school despite the obvious congestion on some corridors and stairways. It is clear that many of you work hard and attain above average standards at the end of Year 11. However, your test results in Year 9 are not as good as they should be. We know that Ms Clinton and her staff want all students to do equally well in all subjects. So we have asked that some improvements are made.

- Make sure that your results in the national tests at the end of Year 9, especially in English, improve.
- Ensure that the marking in your books makes it clear how you can improve your work and also to set homework regularly.

In order for these to be successful you must all play your part. We have also asked the school to make certain that all parts of their planning are effective and help to improve your progress and results.

Good wishes for the future

Yours sincerely

Marianne Young
Her Majesty's Inspector