

Sir John Nelthorpe – A Specialist Technology College for Science, Mathematics and Computing

Grammar School Road, Brigg, North Lincolnshire, DN20 8AA

Inspection dates

2–3 October 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to promote outstanding progress. The expectations of some teachers are not always high enough to motivate and challenge all students. Occasionally, too much copying and mundane tasks contribute to a few students making slower progress than that of their peers.
- The sixth form requires improvement because students' achievement declined since the previous inspection and insufficient attention was given to understanding the cause.
- Leaders at all levels are not able to identify where improvements are needed because monitoring activities are not coordinated methodically and evaluated systematically so that senior leaders and subject leaders can identify where improvements are needed.
- Governors are not rigorous in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities and ensuring they have an accurate and realistic understanding of how well students are doing.

The school has the following strengths

- Students are well-behaved, welcome responsibilities, socialise sensibly and are tolerant of and show respect for each other and adults.
- In many lessons students are provided with imaginative, stimulating and challenging activities that meet their needs appropriately.
- Students in Key Stage 4 achieve well and attain standards higher than that seen nationally. The performance of students supported by pupil premium funding is improving.
- The progress made by lower-ability students is tracked carefully and effective additional support is given to help them improve their progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 31 lessons, including four jointly observed with senior leaders. Lessons were observed in all key stages with a range of subjects observed. Inspectors also looked at examples of students' work.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and subject leaders, and two members of the governing body. They spoke formally to groups of students and informally at social times about the quality of their education. A telephone conversation was held with the School Improvement Partner.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and development plan, the school's own data on students' progress and attainment, monitoring records related to the quality of teaching and to students' behaviour and attendance.
- The inspection team also took account of the 51 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and 36 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Marianne Young, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Helen Lane

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lisa Fraser

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sir John Nelthorpe is a smaller than average secondary school with a sixth form. The sixth form is run in collaboration with an academy in Brigg and a local school in Barton on Humber. The number of students on roll is lower than at the time of the previous inspection.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium is about half that seen nationally. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and looked after children.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is very low.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is half the national average.
- The school works with other schools in the local authority in order to share practice.
- Alternative provision for a very small number of students is provided by The Darley Centre and Keys 7KS. Twenty-one students follow BTEC Level 1 courses in Salon Services, Construction or Motor Vehicle maintenance at Barton Skills Centre.
- In 2012, the school met the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching especially in Key Stage 3 and the sixth form by:
 - making sure that group work is a regular feature of lessons so that students can discuss and discover things for themselves
 - consistently providing stimulating tasks that inspire students and accurately meet their needs
 - ensuring that the best practice used when teachers mark students' books is a common feature in all lessons.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - equipping leaders at all levels with the skills needed in order to undertake monitoring and evaluation work effectively
 - creating a development plan that provides clear targets for success and regular milestones so that progress can be checked
 - ensuring that there is always an explicit link between the progress made by students and the performance management of staff.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved and so that governors fulfil their statutory duties fully and develop a mechanism so that they can gain a realistic and accurate understanding of the performance by all students.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of students

is good

- Students enter the school with levels of attainment that are at those expected for their age. Attainment for all students at the end of Year 11 has risen, since the previous inspection, in English and mathematics. Attainment in other subjects is mixed; in 2013, attainment in music and religious education was low.
- Students supported by the pupil premium reach standards above that seen nationally and the gap between them and students not supported by the pupil premium funding is closing. This is due to better awareness by teachers of who these students are and more careful tracking of their progress and contributes to improving equality of opportunity.
- School data show that all students are making good progress as they move through the school with an increased proportion than previously making more than expected progress in English and mathematics. Inspectors looked at the progress being made in year groups other than Year 11 and this showed that generally students are doing better in mathematics than English prior to taking GCSE examinations. This was confirmed by the quality of teaching observed during the inspection.
- Early entry in mathematics has been undertaken to help students in the Foundation Group reach the highest grades. School data show that this was particularly successful in previous years. This year only a few students are being entered early.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress and attain well. This is because of the additional support and coaching they receive. Inspectors saw lessons where students who struggle were receiving extra help with aspects of their literacy.
- Pupil premium funds provide a number of interventions to improve eligible students' attainment, progress and involvement in educational visits. In addition, the 'catch up' funding for students in Year 7 is used to improve students' reading skills. Although staff involved can see a difference, checking by senior leaders and governors to ensure that funding is used successfully and makes a difference is not done thoroughly.
- The students who receive all or part of their education off-site make good progress and achieve appropriate qualifications.
- Students are keen to learn, are cooperative and supportive of each other. When given precise direction and enabled to investigate and share ideas they work well and make good progress. Some are eager but are not given the same opportunities.
- Students develop their literacy skills in a range of subjects because of a focus on using key words and writing at length. Developing students' numeracy skills in all curriculum areas is not yet firmly established in each subject area.
- Individually, students made the progress expected of them in 2013 at A2 level. The decline in attainment since the previous inspection at AS level was halted in 2013 with more students reaching the higher grades in some subjects.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The good teaching that many students receive enables them to make good progress, particularly in Key Stage 4. Students are set work that matches their capabilities and they respond positively to challenge from the teachers.
- The very best teaching is characterised by a brisk but appropriate pace, good use of questions and high expectations by teachers. These features help all students make rapid progress. Students' capabilities are well known by the teacher. For example, in a Year 11 mathematics lesson, the teacher used skilful questioning to help students understand how to reach the highest grades. Students were completely absorbed in their learning and questioned the teacher enthusiastically to ensure they understood complex mathematical ideas.

- Inspectors saw examples of good marking so that students know exactly how to improve their work and reach high levels. Students are encouraged to reflect on their learning during lessons and provide well-considered and effective comments for themselves and their peers.
- The use of teaching assistants varies with the best practice enabling them to contribute to students' learning and make a positive contribution. However, insufficient thought is given to their potential when a few teachers plan lessons.
- A large number of parents who used Parent View were exceptionally positive about the quality of teaching and the homework that is set. Inspectors saw examples of appropriate homework being set regularly.
- There is some teaching that requires improvement, in all year groups, but more especially in Key Stage 3 and the sixth form. In these lessons, the information about students' capabilities is not used well enough to meet their needs. Consequently, students become passive and are over-directed by the teacher to complete tasks or copy information. Marking does not match that of the best. Students follow instructions carefully but are not able to find things out for themselves or discuss their ideas and make suggestions.

The behaviour and safety of students are good

- Students self-manage their behaviour well and are well aware of the consequences if they step out of line. Student subject leaders have a key role working with departments to support the learning of younger students. These positive attitudes, students' ability to value others' opinions and their constructive discussions, when they are able to work together in lessons, contribute well to their progress.
- All kinds of bullying, including homophobic, extremism, racial intolerance and lack of understanding of others' differences and faiths are exceptionally rare. Students, especially those in the sixth form, recognise the importance of keeping themselves safe both in the 'real' and the 'virtual' worlds.
- Attendance is above average and persistent absence has been well below the national figure since the previous inspection. Attendance is accounted for well for students in the sixth form and for those who are educated off-site. The school site is large but students move quickly and sensibly between buildings with virtually none arriving late to their next lesson.
- The behaviour and attendance of the students who are educated off-site either part or full-time are monitored carefully and match the behaviour and attendance of those at Sir John Nelthorpe. The overwhelming proportion of parents who expressed their opinion about behaviour on Parent View concurs with the positive view judged by inspectors.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership, including that of governors, requires improvement because there is very little systematic and coordinated approach to moving the school forward. Activities, such as checking the quality of teaching and looking at information about student's progress take place, however, there is no plan with clear success criteria to help senior leaders and governors monitor improvement over time. Consequently, self-evaluation is not accurate and the capacity to move the school forward is adversely affected because activities are not evaluated methodically to see if interventions, coaching and support are making a difference and to inform a clear strategic direction for the school.
- Heads of subject departments provide an annual report, following public examination results, for senior leaders. However, these do not include an analysis of the quality of teaching in the subject department or information from the scrutiny of students' workbooks as indicators so that student progress and attainment can be judged thoroughly using all available evidence.
- The school plays an active role in a consortium of local schools which provides useful joint training and opportunities for sharing good practice. In some cases, leaders are able to identify

where improvements have taken place.

- Teachers are in the process of setting their own performance management targets, following a self-assessment process, using the Teachers' Standards as a guide. At the time of the inspection, targets for this year have not been agreed. The headteacher uses performance management of teachers to inform salary progression and to support teacher development. Nevertheless, some issues identified at the previous inspection linked to the quality of teaching have not been fully eradicated.
- The curriculum matches the needs of the students. Partnership with two other schools increases the range of courses offered in the sixth form. There are opportunities for students to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills during school time and within sporting and reading clubs. Opportunities for students to extend their horizons and enhance their academic work are provided, through the exchange visits, for example. Some students spoke positively following their career interviews; others told inspectors that they were unsure if career support was available for all.
- The personal needs of sixth-form students are known well. The headteachers from the consortium schools quality assure sixth-form provision. Senior leaders do not use this information rigorously enough to identify where improvements are needed so that students' progress is rapid and sustained.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very proud of the school and want students to do well. They are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and within subject departments and how performance management links to pay rises. However, their understanding of how well students are doing in the sixth form is weaker. Overall, their view of provision within the school is more positive than that judged by inspectors. Governors know where pupil premium money has been spent; however, they are less clear about the impact it has on students' achievement. Their knowledge about Year 7 'catch-up' funding is weak. The lack of a clear strategic plan so that they can check if the school is moving forward, meeting targets and thus challenge senior leaders, is a barrier.
 - The school's website is out of date and some key policies need updating and amending. During the inspection, attention was drawn to these deficiencies and to gaps in the single central record. The latter issue was rectified during the inspection; consequently, safeguarding meets statutory requirements.

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	118112
Local authority	North Lincolnshire
Inspection number	425880

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	575
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Gray
Headteacher	Linda Hewlett-Parker
Date of previous school inspection	12 September 2011
Telephone number	01652 656551
Fax number	01652 658229
Email address	admin.sjn@northlincs.gov.uk

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