

# Boldon School

New Road, Boldon Colliery, Tyne and Wear, NE35 9DZ

**Inspection dates** 18–19 March 2015

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Students' achievement requires improvement, because some groups, especially disadvantaged students, the most able and those with special educational needs, have not made as much progress as others in English, mathematics and science in the recent past.
- The proportion of students gaining five good GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, was below the national average in 2014; so too were students' rates of progress.
- Teaching requires improvement. Recent increases in the quality of teaching are not fully consistent across the school.
- Some supply teachers have lacked the specialist subject knowledge to assess accurately when students are ready to move on.
- In other classes, some permanent staff do not always check on learning often enough during lessons to ensure that students are making good progress.
- Students are not always given work that offers the right level of challenge.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and governors moved swiftly to reorganise leadership and management in the school after the previous inspection. A more effective team of senior and middle leaders has been established. Consequently, the school is improving strongly.
- Behaviour in the school is good because students follow the rules for good conduct. Their good behaviour creates a positive climate for learning in classrooms.
- Students have positive attitudes to learning; they work hard in lessons. Older students say that changes to the curriculum have increased their enjoyment of learning this year.
- Students say they feel safe, and are kept safe, in school. Their parents agree. Staff are vigilant when supervising students moving from one lesson to another, so that there is a calm atmosphere around the school.
- Robust monitoring of teaching by senior and faculty leaders is improving the quality of teaching. Weak teaching has been challenged leading to rapid improvements.
- Governors provide good challenge and support for the school. They are aware of the difficulties created by the staffing instability and have a good understanding of how well teaching and students' progress are improving.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in lessons and parts of lessons, two of which were observed jointly with senior staff.
- Discussions were held with members of the governing body, senior and middle leaders, staff and students.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and looked at a range of documentation, including that relating to the school’s safeguarding policies and procedures. They also looked at information about students’ progress and attainment, the school’s view of its own performance and the school development plan.
- Inspectors examined students’ work and discussed their work with them during classroom visits.
- Inspectors took account of the 47 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also considered the 48 responses to Ofsted’s staff questionnaire.
- Two of Her Majesty’s Inspectors visited the school on 22 April 2015 to gather additional evidence and quality assure the inspection evidence.

## Inspection team

Moira Fitzpatrick, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Alexandra Hook	Additional Inspector
Julie McGrane	Additional Inspector
Bernard Clark	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students eligible for support through the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium provides additional funds to support students known to be eligible for free school meals and students looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is above average.
- The vast majority of students are of White British heritage. The proportion that speaks English as an additional language is low.
- The school met the government's floor standards in 2014. These are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- No students attend alternative provision off site.
- There has been a very high level of staff reduction and turn-over since the previous inspection. Since then, 22 teachers, including several middle leaders, have left the school. Due to some unavoidable staff absence, the school has employed a number of supply staff over the past year.
- The school provides sixth form teaching for learners registered to Lord Lawson of Beamish Academy in Gateshead.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to be consistently good or better, by:
  - continuing to share the best practice in the school across all faculties
  - ensuring that faculty leaders monitor and identify teaching which promotes good learning for specific groups, then sharing this information across the school
  - ensuring that all teachers use effective assessment and marking practices consistently which help students to improve their work
  - making sure that staff always use the necessary specialist subject knowledge needed to move students' learning on at a purposeful rate.
- Raise the achievement of students, particularly those who are disadvantaged, the most able and those with special educational needs, by:
  - ensuring that all teachers check robustly how well students are learning, so that they are able to pitch the level of challenge correctly
  - continuing to develop strategies to accelerate the learning of disadvantaged students, checking carefully on how well these strategies are working, and sharing the successful ones across all faculties
  - ensuring that all groups of students in Key Stage 3 are supported to make consistently good progress in mathematics and science.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors share an ambitious vision for the school's development. Decisive action by senior leaders and governors following the previous inspection led to a complete restructure of the school's leadership and management. Following this, there was a significant reduction in the number of school leaders. There is now greater clarity of expectation in the roles of senior and middle leaders and of their accountability for the school's improvement.
- Accurate monitoring of the work of faculties has given senior leaders a clear overview of where improvement is needed to ensure that all middle leaders are as effective as the best. Middle leaders now gauge the performance of their faculties through regular checks on the quality of teaching and students' progress. This is driving improvement in teaching and learning, and allows senior leaders to identify and share the most effective practice for the benefit of students in all subjects.
- Recently appointed leaders in core subjects have quickly established higher expectations of what students can do. They have taken prompt action to tackle the previous underachievement of students in Year 11. They have provided new courses which allow students to demonstrate their skills and knowledge better, as in English. In addition, they have made sure that additional support and interventions give students the opportunity to overcome gaps in their learning in mathematics and science. This demonstrates the school's commitment to providing equality of opportunity for all.
- Robust systems to monitor and assess students' progress are used increasingly well by middle leaders and teachers to ensure that students are on track to meet their targets. Termly meetings with heads of faculty allow senior leaders to discover where students' progress is slowing, so that remedial action can be taken. While in the early stages of implementation, this system is providing a range of effective interventions which help students to catch up.
- Teachers are held to account for the progress that their students make through clear targets, which are linked to students' progress. Performance management systems ensure a good balance of support and challenge for staff by providing regular training opportunities and support to improve their performance when needed. Staff morale is good; several staff commented in the questionnaires about the 'good support from senior leaders', 'positive changes since the previous inspection', and 'improvements to progress for Year 11 students'. All are highly supportive of the way the school is developing.
- The curriculum has been reviewed and improved in both key stages since the previous inspection, so that it now matches the abilities and supports the aspirations of most students. Students are prepared well for the next stage of education or employment through regular careers advice and guidance as they move through the school.
- Students have regular opportunities to find out about and empathise with the circumstances of others and learn about the diversity of life in modern British society. They are taught tolerance and develop respect and acceptance of different viewpoints and beliefs. Discrimination in all its forms is tackled effectively and the school fosters good relations with all. Students are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Students of all ages value the many and varied extra-curricular opportunities that the school provides, and readily acknowledge that this is because their teachers give so much of their time to after-school clubs, and events at weekends. One Year 7 student was particularly impressed that teachers had, in his words, organised a 'big Christmas party so that all Year 7 students could get to know each other better'. These memorable, enriching experiences, together with regular opportunities for reflection and to support others, are among the school's strengths and contribute very well to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Funding allocated for disadvantaged students is used in a variety of ways to help them overcome any barriers to their learning and achieve as well as others in the school. A range of support is in place to ensure that these students attend regularly, and to support their learning. School data indicate that the gap between the attainment of these students and their peers is narrowing in the current year, partly because there has been some improvement in their attendance. However, the gap is still too wide, especially in English and mathematics, and the school is exploring more effective strategies to improve the achievement of this group.
- The local authority has provided effective and sustained support, which has allowed the school to make improvements to teaching through links with a local teaching school. This support has also helped with the reorganisation of the school's management structure, so that leadership is much more effective in monitoring and evaluating performance and setting appropriate targets for further improvement.
- Safeguarding procedures meet current requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**

- Governors show high levels of commitment to the school’s drive for improvement. They have played a significant role in the restructuring of leadership and management, and in reducing staffing since the previous inspection. They have held the school to account robustly over the decline in performance in 2014. Governors have a good understanding of achievement data and are well informed about the work of the school, including its performance, the quality of teaching, and the impact of staffing turbulence since the previous inspection. This equips them to challenge the school over variations in performance.
- Governors ensure that funding is allocated well to achieve good value from spending decisions. For example, they know how pupil premium funds are spent, and continue to challenge the school to improve the achievement of the group of students for whom it is intended. Governors manage the headteacher’s performance effectively and are involved in agreeing the salary progression of only those staff who meet their performance targets fully. Governors’ commitment and dedication to the service of the school could not be stronger.

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

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is good. School records show that this is the case over time. Students get on well with each other during break time and move around the school in a calm, civilised way between lessons. Calm, considerate behaviour in lessons makes a good contribution to learning in most classrooms.
- Behaviour is managed well by staff, especially at lunchtime when the pressure of time means that students have to follow rules promptly to ensure that all have time to collect and eat their lunch calmly.
- Good attitudes to learning make a strong contribution to students’ increasingly better progress in lessons. Students ensure that time is used well for learning by listening closely and responding to teachers’ questions and instructions. They persevere well to complete tasks and, where learning and progress are strongest, they work at a rapid rate. Students’ respect for one another’s right to learn is apparent in the vast majority of lessons.
- In lessons and tutor time, students learn much about the need for tolerance of different beliefs and ways of life. They are taught to uphold British values of tolerance and fairness and the rules by which everyone has to abide. This forms the basis of the harmonious, civilised atmosphere around the school.
- Attendance is improving, although still below the national average, and persistent absence is reducing in the current year.

### **Safety**

- The school’s work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students of all ages have a good grounding in how to keep themselves safe. They are taught well to assess risks to their well-being; for example, from social media and the internet. Students understand the different forms that bullying can take, including prejudiced-based and cyber-bullying. They say that bullying does sometimes occur, but that they trust staff to deal with it quickly. Informative poster displays around the school remind students to be alert to threats to their well-being and of what to do should they need help.
- Students whose circumstances put them at risk of becoming vulnerable are supported well by special needs staff. These staff make good links with faculty heads and form tutors to share important information promptly, so that support is put in place. Some students spoke of how much they appreciated the opportunity to work in the inclusion base when they were unable to cope in class. This well-thought-out system of allowing students to opt into a different place to work is proving very helpful to those students who, on occasions, work better away from the main class. It is also helping students to take responsibility for their behaviour and manage it for themselves.

## **The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement partly because of the impact of unavoidable staff absence, which has persisted since the start of the school year. This has led to the appointment of a number of supply teachers, which has caused a high level of teacher turn-over for some classes. This, in turn, has slowed learning for a significant number of students. The school has appointed new subject specialist teachers from the beginning of next term as a way of resolving this long-standing problem.
- Senior staff have worked well with a neighbouring school to improve teaching and there is now more good or better teaching than at the time of the previous inspection. There has been a marked reduction in the

proportion of teachers on support plans and a marked improvement in the quality of teaching.

- Teachers do not always gauge precisely how well students are progressing. Sometimes this is due to a lack of secure subject knowledge, and at other times it is because teachers do not check carefully enough on students' learning in lessons. This leads to work that does not consistently provide a good level of challenge, particularly for the most and least able students and those with special educational needs. In other instances, sometimes evident in science and mathematics books, students are moved on to a new topic before they have fully mastered the previous one.
- Learning in English has improved rapidly this year because of changes to the curriculum for Key Stage 3 students and the introduction of a new examination syllabus for Key Stage 4 students.
- Younger students are building well on their previous learning in English because teachers provide interesting topics, varied activities and expect students to work hard in lessons. The quality and quantity of work seen in books indicate how much younger students enjoy their work, and how eager they are to please their teachers with good presentation and the determination to improve. Work is increasingly well matched to students' needs and the variation in the progress made by different groups of students is being ironed out. Older students are well prepared for their writing in English, and have rapidly improved their skills this year. They say that they are able to focus more easily on learning because teachers structure the learning of new skills in a very focused way. Students are given time to practise these skills and then review their work. Boys in particular comment on how this is helping them to stay on task and complete more work.
- Reading skills are well developed for all groups of students. They are given regular opportunities to read for information and research in most subjects. Those who join with lower-than-expected levels of reading are now supported well by a range of programmes to catch up with their peers.
- In mathematics, there is a sharper focus on teachers demonstrating effective working methods to students and then giving them work that is matched to their abilities. Students in Year 11 made good progress in calculating the area of a circle: they were encouraged and supported to move on quickly to more difficult tasks by the teacher, who carefully monitored their progress and knew when they were ready for the next level of challenge.
- Sometimes, learning slows in mathematics when students are set work that is pitched too high for their level of knowledge and skill. An example was seen in Year 7, where lower-ability students could not grasp fully the concept of the probability. Nevertheless, work seen in many mathematics books in Key Stage 3 shows that the majority of students are making expected progress, because teaching is matched to their needs. However, some still have gaps in their learning from previous weak teaching, while others are not always fully stretched to do their best.
- Teachers are using a new system for marking students' work; this includes helpful comments on how students can improve their work and challenges to help them work out how to solve problems. However, this is not consistent. Many students comment that they welcome the help in dealing with errors and misconceptions in this way, and appreciate the time allowed at the start of lessons to make corrections, because it helps them get things right next time.
- There are examples of students making good progress when teachers' skilful questioning prompts them to think hard and comment on their own and one another's learning. For example, Year 11 students demonstrated high level thinking skills and the ability to listen closely to, and learn from, their classmates in a basketball lesson. This sharpened their ability to analyse and understand the tactics of the other team and raised the level of challenge for both sides as a consequence. However, this skilful approach is not always evident.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Students enter the school with attainment that is broadly average. In 2014, their performance at the end of Year 11 was below the national average in relation to students gaining five GCSE A\* to C grades, including English and mathematics. Severe staffing turbulence in the preceding year in the English, mathematics and science faculties had contributed to this performance, because of the high proportion of supply staff and non-specialist teachers working in these areas.
- While results in some subjects were not good enough, results in other subjects showed a stronger picture of performance. For example, while the average grade for GCSE subjects overall was grade C, the overall average grade in religious education, information technology, health and social care and travel and tourism was grade B.
- The proportion of students who made expected progress, and the proportion that made more-than-expected progress were below the national averages in both English and mathematics. In both subjects,

the proportion of disadvantaged students making expected or more-than-expected progress was below that of other the students in school.

- School data and the scrutiny of students' work show that progress is accelerating in English and mathematics in the current Year 11. Predictions based on this evidence indicate that the school's performance is on track to be close to the national average in this year's examinations. Leaders have used the support of the local authority and the partner school to check on the accuracy of their predictions.
- Leaders recognise that the most able students have not been challenged sufficiently in recent years. They are working effectively with teachers to improve expectations and help teachers to plan work that provides a good level of challenge. As a result teachers are more aware of the need of the most able students, although there is still some way to go in meeting those needs consistently.
- Year 7 catch-up funding is being used to support those students who join the school below the level expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics, to improve these basic skills quickly. Specialist reading programmes and small group teaching, together with additional reading lessons, are helping students to make good gains in their literacy skills. In mathematics, the use of tutor time for additional sessions is helping these students fill gaps in their learning and consolidate their basic number knowledge.
- The progress made by students with special educational needs lags behind that of other students. The school's work to support these students is improving. For example, students with similar needs in English and mathematics are taught together and have extra support from learning support assistants.
- Students supported through pupil premium funding do not achieve as well as their peers in school and are, on average, about one GCSE grade behind them in English and mathematics. Current predictions indicate that the gap is narrowing in the current year, but the school recognises that there is some way to go before the gap is narrowed significantly. The attainment and progress of disadvantaged students are both some way below non-disadvantaged students nationally. In 2014, in English and mathematics, disadvantaged students in this school were about a grade behind other students nationally.
- Reading is promoted actively across the school, in English lessons and tutor time. Students are becoming increasingly aware of their preferences in reading, and are able to access, in their words, 'the right kind of books' for them. The vast majority of students have reading skills which allow them to read with understanding the text books in the subjects they study.
- The school has used early entry for English and mathematics GCSEs in the past. This has not improved the attainment of students significantly. The practice has, therefore, been discontinued from this year.

## 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>	108730
<b>Local authority</b>	South Tyneside
<b>Inspection number</b>	453508

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>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	674
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Colin Berry
<b>Headteacher</b>	Elizabeth Hayes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 March 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 536 2176
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 537 4073
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:boldon.school@btinternet.com">boldon.school@btinternet.com</a>

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)  
[Store St](#)  
[Manchester](#)  
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2014

