

George Stephenson High School

Southgate, Killingworth, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE12 6SA

Inspection dates

1–2 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' progress in the main school requires improvement. Overall, progress is below average across a range of subjects and particularly in mathematics.
- Work set for the most able pupils and middle-ability pupils is not challenging enough to ensure that they make good progress. Assessment of pupils' work is variable and does not address pupils' misconceptions well enough.
- Teachers' expectations are not consistently high. This leads to pupils producing work of variable quality.
- Questioning is not consistently effective in checking pupils' knowledge and deepening pupils' understanding of what is being learned.
- Leaders have not managed to reduce the regular absence of a small number of disadvantaged pupils. Overall, disadvantaged pupils make slower progress than others.
- Senior leaders and middle leaders have not checked pupils' work thoroughly enough to make sure teachers' expectations are consistently high.
- Plans for improvement are not sharply focused on the key areas for improvement and how actions taken will improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders, including governors, have not prevented a decline in the overall effectiveness of the school. Consequently, leadership requires improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- There is good provision for students in the sixth form. As a result, students' progress over time is improving across most subjects.
- Pupils make good progress in vocational courses in key stage 4. Reading is promoted well especially in Years 7 and 8.
- High-quality careers advice and education ensures that almost all those leaving school continue in education or employment.
- Child protection and safeguarding procedures are of a high standard. Parents are clear that their children are well cared for.
- Good relationships and mutual respect exist between pupils and with staff. Pupils are keen to learn and behave well.
- Leaders and governors work well with parents and carers. Nine out of 10 parents recommend the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better in the main school to enable all groups of pupils to make at least good progress by ensuring that:
 - teachers have high expectations of the work produced by pupils
 - work set for pupils is challenging, especially for middle-ability pupils and the most able pupils, particularly in key stage 3
 - assessment is used well to address misconceptions and plan challenging work, particularly in mathematics
 - skilful questioning is used consistently well to deepen pupils' understanding of what is being learned
 - teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to write at length and apply their mathematical skills in a wide range of subjects.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and governance by ensuring that:
 - senior and subject leaders have higher expectations and check pupils' work thoroughly to make sure pupils make good progress overall
 - the proportion of disadvantaged pupils regularly absent from school is reduced
 - plans for improvement are crystal clear about the main school priorities and how actions taken will improve pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching
 - the use of the additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils results in these pupils making at least good progress across a wide range of subjects.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Over time, leaders and managers have not made sure that all groups of pupils achieve well. They have not taken effective action to make sure the quality of teaching across the main school is good. As a result, the overall effectiveness of the school has declined and leadership and management require improvement.
- Leaders, including subject leaders, have not had consistently high expectations and taken swift enough action to make sure pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching are good. They have not used the wide range of information available to them about teaching and pupils' progress thoroughly enough. They have not been thorough in linking pupils' work to the quality of teaching and taken timely action to improve learning.
- Over time, the pupil premium funding has not been used effectively to help disadvantaged pupils make good progress. Much has to be done to make sure the progress of these pupils is improved. There is evidence that some individuals have benefited well from the funding but not enough to ensure good progress overall.
- Leaders accurately assess the strengths and weaknesses in the school. However, their plans for improvement have not focused sharply on the key issues for improvement. Actions taken are not clearly linked to how much improvement is expected in pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning. This inhibits swift intervention when action may not be having the desired effect.
- Leaders have the support of staff and morale is high. A thorough system for performance management identifies a wide range of training opportunities to meet the professional needs of staff along with their career aspirations. When leaders have identified shortcomings, staff have worked closely with them and teaching has improved. However, further work has to be done to ensure that performance management is effective in ensuring teaching is good overall.
- Newly qualified teachers have a good programme of coaching and support to help them develop well.
- The curriculum contributes well to pupils' good personal development, behaviour and welfare. There is a rich programme of extra-curricular activities that pupils engage in. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developing effectively and leads to pupils having a good understanding of what it means to be a good citizen in modern Britain. There is a wide range of subjects studied by pupils and high-quality support to help older pupils choose appropriate courses of study. However, the quality of teaching is not good enough across the school to make sure all groups of pupils benefit as well as they should from their studies.
- Leaders make sure that additional government funding for the very small number of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is used effectively to meet their needs. Extra support is provided in school for these pupils and specialist support is provided when necessary.
- Leaders have established good systems to link with off-site providers attended by pupils. They check progress, behaviour and safety effectively for this very small

number of pupils.

- Parents indicate that leaders communicate well with them. The school involves parents closely when pupils are making their course choices for key stage 4 and the sixth form. Parents are keen to support their children and the school by attending such events in high numbers. A high proportion of parents would recommend the school to others.
- The school works with a wide range of other schools to seek out good practice and share it to improve its work. The local authority has a very clear understanding of the school's main priorities and the good work completed in the sixth form. It is working with the school and there are signs of improvement, although some development is very recent and work has yet to come to fruition.

Governance of the school

- Governors are diligent in making sure they meet their statutory obligations. However, their work has not held all leaders and managers to account well enough to make sure the overall effectiveness of the school is at least good. They are kept well-informed about the work of the school and are involved in strategically reviewing the work of the school. Through their committees, governors have a good understanding of the work of the school. However, their work has not ensured consistently good leadership across the school to help pupils make good progress.
- Governors are kept informed about how the school uses its finances, including additional government funding to support groups of pupils. However, their actions have not led to the pupil premium funding having a positive effect on the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Governors have suitable systems in place to ensure a clear link between teachers' performance and pay.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders are very effective in ensuring that staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. There is a strong culture of safeguarding. They have made sure that all staff are clear about their duty to keep children safe and how to report matters of concern. The safeguarding team maintains meticulous records. There is evidence of good links with external agencies and parents to make sure children, especially the most vulnerable, are safe. The record of staff pre-employment checks and the suitability of volunteers to work with children is well kept. There is a designated governor for safeguarding. Governors are kept suitably informed of safeguarding matters.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good across the school. Across departments and within departments, teaching is variable and requires improvement.
- Work set is not consistently well-planned to challenge pupils effectively, particularly the most able and middle-ability pupils. As a result, pupils' progress is not good. Inspectors noted examples of high expectations in English, science and vocational subjects but

this was not the case across a range of other subjects.

- Assessment of pupils' work does not clearly identify mistakes and misconceptions and pupils continue to repeat errors and this slows their progress. Teachers do not use assessment well enough to identify when greater challenge is needed for pupils to make better progress.
- Too many teachers set work which is too easy and not adjusted to meet the needs of all pupils, especially in key stage 3. As a result, a significant proportion of pupils are not well prepared, across a range of subjects, for the start of key stage 4. There are good examples of assessment being used accurately to overcome misconceptions and provide extra challenge to ensure good progress but this is not consistently the case.
- When questioning is used skilfully, teachers probe pupils' understanding well and make them think deeply about their learning. Skilful questioning is used particularly well in the sixth form. However, across key stages 3 and 4 questioning is not used well enough to measure how much pupils have learned and to deepen their knowledge and understanding. Pupils' short responses lack depth of understanding and some pupils are not fully engaged in responding.
- An analysis of current pupils' work showed pupils' written responses across a range of subjects can be limited and not showing a depth of understanding of what is being learned. Pupils' work showed variability across subjects and within subjects. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to practise mathematical problem-solving skills and apply them across a range of subjects.
- The work analysis showed that teachers' expectations are variable. Although there are examples of challenging work that is well-presented there are too many occasions when there is limited challenge and work is not presented well.
- Good relationships exist between pupils and staff and lessons flow smoothly. Pupils appreciate the advice they are given and usually act on it to improve their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident when speaking with adults. They told inspectors that they feel safe in school. They are clear about how to adopt safe practices when working with technology and using the internet because the school teaches this well and encourages internet safety through its website.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of how to stay safe as there are many opportunities in assembly, form time and in lessons to debate and consider safety. Pupils have a good understanding of liberty, equality and democracy. Throughout the curriculum, there is a good focus on developing these values and promoting a good understanding of other cultures and religions.
- Pupils consider real-life scenarios when they are learning about how to stay healthy and keep safe. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn about emotional well-being. Pupils are clear that they are listened to and concerns are dealt with sensitively

and effectively. Pupils are smart and take pride in their appearance.

- Generally, pupils take pride in their work and are keen to do well. Occasionally, pupils' pride in their work varies and is dependent on the quality of teaching and the expectations of their teachers.
- Pupils are clear about what constitutes bullying. They say it is rare and they are confident that staff do not tolerate it. School leaders have good systems in place to support pupils' welfare and safety, particularly the safety of the most vulnerable pupils.
- Careers education and guidance is very well organised. Pupils, including those attending off-site provision, have suitable support from the school and employers to help them make appropriate career choices. All pupils have work experience in Year 10. Visits from universities and local employers support good provision for careers education and guidance.
- Parents and staff indicated that they are very confident that pupils are well-cared-for.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils manage their conduct well both inside and outside the classroom.
- Pupils know what is expected of them and behave well. Overall, there is good behaviour in lessons. However, a few pupils lose concentration when the pace of learning slows. Pupils listen well and follow the instructions of their teachers.
- Attendance is broadly average. It is below average for disadvantaged pupils as too many are regularly absent from school in Years 9 to 11. For other pupils, attendance is above average.
- The school has good systems in place to make sure children are safe, even when they are regularly absent. Checks, especially home visits, are used to establish where these pupils are and parents are encouraged to send their children to school. Further work is to be done to make sure disadvantaged pupils attend well, although the school does have evidence of success with individual pupils.
- There are good links with off-site providers to make sure pupils behave appropriately. Any absenteeism is followed up by the school to make sure pupils are safe.
- The proportion of pupils excluded from school is very low and is an indication of pupils' good behaviour.
- The school environment is well-cared-for and is litter free.
- Parents and staff indicate that they believe the school ensures pupils are well-behaved.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils are not making good progress across the school because they are not challenged consistently well enough by the work set for them by their teachers. Currently, outcomes for pupils require improvement.
- Over the past two years, published information for those pupils leaving school at the

end of Year 11, and the provisional information for 2017, shows that overall progress is below average in a range of subjects. In particular, progress has been below average in mathematics and modern foreign languages, with variable progress in history and geography. Progress in English has been broadly average over the past two years and has been improving in science.

- From above-average starting points, and sometimes well above average, the proportion of pupils attaining GCSE grades A* to C in both English and mathematics has been broadly average, with attainment in English much better than in mathematics. Pupils attain high standards in English literature, physics, chemistry and biology. Leaders are clear that pupils' attainment is not good enough in mathematics, art, modern foreign languages and media studies. Leaders are taking action to improve outcomes but it is too early to have had a significantly positive effect.
- Inspectors' analysis of current pupils' work showed that the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are not challenged well enough by the work set for them. This is also the case for middle-ability pupils. In particular, a lack of challenge for pupils in key stage 3 does not give pupils a flying start to their studies in key stage 4. Work analysis showed variable progress across key stage 4 and variable attainment.
- Disadvantaged pupils make less progress than others, even in the school's better-performing GCSE subjects. The school indicates that progress is hampered by below-average attendance. Also, interventions used by the school have not had the desired effect in helping these pupils to catch up. Differences in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others are not closing consistently across the school. Consequently, the attainment of these pupils remains behind others.
- There are too few pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to make reliable comparisons between their progress and that of pupils nationally. Effective support is planned for these pupils although, very occasionally, support is not in place quickly enough to help pupils with their work.
- Pupils make good progress in vocational courses in key stage 4. For example, attainment in health and social care is regularly well above average and above average in sports studies, because teaching is consistently good in these subjects.
- Pupils eligible for the Year 7 catch-up funding are supported effectively and are catching up from their low starting points. An inspector listened to some pupils reading and noted they were catching up particularly well and are enthusiastic readers.
- The school promotes reading well, especially in Years 7 and 8. There are regular library lessons and pupils read at home each night. Younger pupils enjoy using computer systems to check their understanding of what they are reading. Pupils read well.
- The very small numbers of pupils attending alternative off-site provision make much slower progress than others. Poor attendance and, for some, challenging behaviour, hinder their progress.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Over the past three years, leaders have developed very effective systems to support students' learning and progress. Leaders' good use of these systems, the positive attitudes of students and good teaching have resulted in continuous improvement in

students' progress. Year-on-year improvements have occurred in overall progress, with progress at least average in all subjects and with some above average.

- Most students follow academic courses in the sixth form and are progressing well. The small minority of students taking applied courses are also progressing well.
- Thorough systems for checking students' progress have resulted in improved support for those students who need it. The vast majority of students attend very well, including disadvantaged students, and this contributes positively to students' learning.
- The head of sixth form makes sure leaders check the quality of teaching and students' progress thoroughly using a wide range of information. Good or better practice is used successfully to improve the quality of teaching, where necessary. The head of sixth form makes sure the provision is checked in school and across the consortium and takes very effective action when necessary.
- When scrutinising current students' work, inspectors found teachers' assessments informing future planning and well-organised student files that support good progress. Homework is used to consolidate and deepen learning, as is skilful questioning. Time in class is used very effectively by teachers to support students' improving progress.
- Progress is good for those few students who resit GCSE English and/or mathematics. The provision is well organised and given a high priority by the school.
- As part of a fully compliant system of study programmes, students have full and personalised access to a wide range of enrichment and work experience activities. The sixth-form leadership team interviews all learners to make sure students are choosing the right extra-curricular opportunities to match their future aspirations. Enrichment and work experience is systematically built into each student's programme. This ensures students are well prepared for the next stage of their lives. Students' personal development, behaviour and welfare in the sixth form are good.
- All students interviewed by an inspector, and spoken to by inspectors, praised the range and quality of independent advice and guidance they receive. They said high-quality guidance supported them well in making their choice of subjects at the start of the sixth form. They said it helps them prepare for work, apprenticeships or higher education. Most leavers attend well-recognised university provision. Retention on courses in the sixth form is high because of good careers advice at the start of the sixth form.
- Students' use of independent study time is reviewed by the sixth form mentoring team and the head of sixth form. Students use the time well and additional support is arranged by leaders should students need it. Study time is used well by students and makes a good contribution to the improvements in student progress over time.
- In the past, low-prior-attaining pupils and disadvantaged pupils have not attained as well as other students. The sixth form leadership team has sharply focused its efforts on improving outcomes for these groups. It has been successful and these students now make good progress. These students have benefited well from the pastoral team's regular checking of how independent study time is used to consolidate and develop learning.

School details

Unique reference number	108639
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	10032024

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,244
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	136
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Morley
Headteacher	Ian Wilkinson
Telephone number	0191 2161115
Website	www.gshs.org.uk
Email address	georgestephenson.high@northtyneside.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 May 2012

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is average. Three out of 10 pupils are disadvantaged.
- Almost all pupils are White British. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- Fewer than two in 100 pupils have support for SEN and/or disabilities. This is well

below average.

- There are fewer than two in 100 pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. This is average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards for progress by the end of Year 11.
- The school works with two other local schools to provide sixth-form education.
- There are two alternative providers used for an exceptionally small number of pupils. They are: PALS and Moorbridge Pupil Referral Unit.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The school received a section 8 inspection on 1 November 2017. The findings of that inspection informed the decision to convert to a section 5 inspection.
- Inspectors observed a range of teaching and learning in parts of lessons, with many sessions jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Throughout the two days of the inspection, inspectors spoke with pupils, both individually and in groups, about learning and safety.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading. They reviewed pupils' work in lessons and analysed samples of work in pupils' books.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with three governors. An inspector held a meeting with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors also held meetings with senior leaders and other staff.
- Inspectors looked at the school's review of its own performance, its development and improvement plan, a number of key school policies and the minutes of governing body meetings. They considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors analysed 163 responses to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) and a parental questionnaire completed for the school.

Inspection team

Jim McGrath, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Shelley Heseltine	Ofsted Inspector
Bernard Clark	Ofsted Inspector
David Penny	Ofsted Inspector
Nick Horn	Ofsted Inspector
Joanne Owens	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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