

Longbenton Community College

Hailsham Avenue, Longbenton, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE12 8ER

Inspection dates 6–7 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders and governors are committed to ensuring that every student makes good progress. They know what to do to improve achievement even further.
- From Year 7 starting points that are typically average, the vast majority of students make good progress to attain typically above average standards, by the end of Year 11.
- Achievement in English and mathematics is rising. The proportions of students making more than expected progress over time are higher than those seen nationally.
- Pupil premium funding is used successfully to close achievement gaps between disadvantaged students and their peers by the time they leave school.
- Disabled students, those with special educational needs, and the few from minority ethnic backgrounds, achieve equally well. The Melrose Centre supports successfully students with autism and associated learning difficulties.
- Teaching is mainly good, with some outstanding practice. Teachers benefit from regular training provided by staff within the school, from the local authority and the North Tyneside Learning Trust.
- Students study a full and imaginative curriculum. It has particular strengths in music and the performing arts.
- The behaviour of students around the school and in the large majority of lessons is good. Few students are excluded. Attendance has improved and is now average.
- The school makes a strong contribution to the personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students. The wide array of extra-curricular activities and visits, including links with schools abroad, enhance students' confidence and self-esteem.
- The school's work to keep students safe, on and off site, is strong. Students facing intense personal challenges are very well supported.
- The sixth form is good. Most students make good progress and attain challenging targets in the vast majority of academic and vocational subjects.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small minority of teaching does not challenge all students to give of their best and respond to comments about how to improve their work.
- Not all teaching checks carefully that all students understand their work before moving on to other activities.
- Not enough students attain the highest GCSE grades in some subjects.
- A small minority of disadvantaged students do not make sufficient progress in Years 8 and 9.
- Not enough students in the sixth form improve their previous attainment in English and mathematics to attain at least a GCSE grade C.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a wide range of different lessons, of which three were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Students' work was sampled informally in lessons in a wide range of subjects. In addition, work from Years 10 and 11 was sampled separately.
- Inspectors also reviewed a range of documents, including the school's own data on current students' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, minutes of governing body meetings, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents pertaining to safeguarding.
- Meetings were held with students across Years 7 to 13, governors and school staff, including those with management responsibilities. A discussion also took place with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors evaluated the 75 responses of parents to the Ofsted on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also took account of the views of 75 members of the school's staff through the inspection questionnaires they returned.

Inspection team

Andrew Swallow, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jonathan Parkinson	Additional Inspector
Patrick Hargreaves	Additional Inspector
Kevin Broadfoot	Additional Inspector
Anne Smedley	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are of White British heritage. A very small minority speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported through the pupil premium funding is broadly average. The pupil premium is additional funding to support those students known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- In 2014, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The school has additionally resourced provision, known as the Melrose Centre, for 26 students with autism and associated learning difficulties.
- Approximately 45 students in Years 10, 11 and 12 study a range of vocational courses, including engineering, construction, hair and beauty, retail and childcare, off the school's site. These courses take place in Seaton Burn College, Tyne Metropolitan College, Northumbria Youth Action, Barnardos and in number of local nursery schools.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes in staffing, including the appointment of a new acting headteacher and an executive headteacher. There have also been changes in the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body.
- The school receives support from schools within the North Tyneside Learning Trust and from the local authority.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching further so that more students make outstanding progress and reach the highest GCSE grades, and a small minority of disadvantaged students make better progress across Years 8 and 9, by ensuring that:
 - all lessons challenge and inspire all students to give of their best
 - all teachers check on students' understanding thoroughly before moving on to other planned activities in lessons
 - all students respond to teachers' comments about how to improve their work further.
- Increase the proportion of students leaving the sixth form with a good GCSE grade in English and mathematics, by ensuring that:
 - more frequent lessons and better-matched work are provided to equip more students with the skills needed to improve their previous attainment and reach at least a C grade.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Changes in the leadership and governance of the school have strengthened the overall expectations of leaders and managers at all levels. As a consequence, a good response has been made in each of the areas of improvement from the previous inspection. The quality of teaching and students' achievement continue to improve.
- The new executive and acting headteachers demonstrate high aspirations for all students. They have refined procedures for gathering information about students' progress, and ensure that these are used effectively by most teachers to plan successful lessons, check on students' rates of progress, and tackle any underachievement early.
- Senior leaders' enhanced responsibilities set positive examples for all staff. They check on the quality of teaching carefully using a range of information to assess its effectiveness on students' learning and progress over time.
- Leaders are equally rigorous in checking on the achievement, attendance and behaviour of students who attend off-site learning provision.
- The roles of middle leaders have been developed well since the previous inspection. They are now at the centre of checking on the quality of lessons, assessing the rates of progress of different groups of students, sharing best practice and identifying and improving aspects of teaching that still require attention.
- Well-tailored professional development provided by colleagues within school, from the North Tyneside Trust of schools and from the local education authority, has enhanced the quality of teaching. Rigorous appraisal procedures ensure that the precise training needs of all teachers are continuously met.
- The executive and acting headteachers make robust decisions about teachers' movement up the salary scale on the basis of reliable information about the impact of their teaching on students' day-to-day learning.
- The school has an accurate picture of its strengths and areas for development. Leaders and managers produce detailed plans to improve the school's work further. For example, they have identified the work still to be done to increase the proportion of highest GCSE grades by the end of Year 11, reduce further gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students' achievements in certain years, and increase the proportion of good and better teaching.
- Teachers know their students well. The school is committed to ensuring that all have an equal opportunity to succeed. Overall performance gaps between disadvantaged and other students have closed notably since the previous inspection. This is evidence of effective use of pupil premium funding.
- The curriculum is very well planned to meet students' needs. Small-group work, one-to-one support, judicious off-site learning opportunities, a broad range of subjects and very strong personal, social, health and citizenship education lessons prepare students well for life in modern Britain. They promote the importance of freedom for all individuals and the significance of mutual respect, particularly for those from different faiths and cultures.
- Strong careers education and advice, work experience for all Year 10 students and bespoke work placements for sixth-form students are influential in the high proportion of students that continue in education, employment or training when they leave school at the end of Year 11 or the sixth form.
- Students access a wide array of sporting, musical and performance events and extra-curricular activities. Creative enterprise challenges; visits to Auschwitz, Rome, London and New York; links with schools in China and South Korea; extensive charity work and the annual sponsorship of three secondary-aged children in Kenya all enrich students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness well. They help to promote their understanding of the importance of equality of opportunity.
- In providing these experiences, the school emphasises the importance of good relations and ensures that any discrimination that may arise is tackled decisively.
- Leadership of the sixth form and of the Melrose Centre are effective. Sixth form students achieve well. Provision in the Melrose Centre for students with autism and other associated difficulties is well led and managed. As a result, students make good progress and are integrated very well into the life of the school.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. School leaders are effective in identifying any students at risk of harm at an early stage. They engage with the local authority's safeguarding board and other agencies to provide appropriate support and care.

- Work to help families support their children’s learning and development at home is good. Parents are supportive of the school. The vast majority believe that their children are happy and well looked after, and would recommend the school to other families.
- The school receives appropriate support from the local authority to improve further the quality of teaching and governance, as well as to provide an external check on its overall effectiveness.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The newly appointed Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body are ensuring an efficient re-constitution of the governing body. Governors carry out their responsibilities with increasing precision and confidence and are effective.
 - The training that governors receive helps them to understand the school’s detailed information about students’ progress, the quality of teaching, and the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements. As a consequence, they ask probing questions that hold leaders and managers for the school’s performance to account.
 - Governors discuss carefully major spending decisions, in particular the allocation of pupil premium and Year 7 ‘catch-up’ funding. For example, they authorise additional staffing and resources to support students’ literacy and numeracy skills development in small groups, and the purchasing of computers to enhance students’ research and on-line skills. Governors are increasingly aware of the impact that these measures have on students’ achievement.
 - Governors have put in place rigorous processes to review annually the performance of the acting headteacher. They ensure that they receive general information about the performance targets set for teachers and review potential links with salary progression. They ensure that teachers receive financial reward only if their students reach their challenging achievement targets.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Their conduct around the school is good. At breaks and lunchtimes, in the dining room and when moving between lessons, the vast majority of students are calm and sensible. They are particularly mindful of the potential risks posed by the extensive on-site building work and manage these risks well.
- Students are polite and friendly to each other, and courteous towards visitors. Most students enjoy positive relationships with one another and with the many adults who encourage their work and personal development.
- There is little low-level disruption in lessons. A large majority of students take pride in their work, keeping it neatly in books or folders. A few students became distracted in the minority of lessons where teaching failed to keep their interest.
- Attendance has improved since the previous inspection and is at the national average.
- No student has been permanently excluded in the last three years, and the number of students receiving fixed-term exclusions is well below national expectations.
- The behaviour and attendance of students attending off-site alternative placements is monitored closely and is good. The school’s leaders check on this by regular contact with their partners.
- Students and parents report rare instances of bullying. All indicate that the school deals with bullying effectively when it occurs. They also note that help is provided for the student responsible as well as their victim. This is fully in keeping with the strong pastoral care of the school.

Safety

- The school’s work to keep students safe and secure is good. This includes for those who attend alternative off-site courses.
- Students are aware of how to keep themselves and others safe. They receive frequent reminders through assemblies and personal and social development lessons about staying safe. They understand the risks associated with social media and know how to keep themselves safe on line.
- Sensitive teaching in religious studies addresses issues related to homophobic, racist and extremist views, as well as drugs, alcohol and substance abuse. This is an example of the school’s intention to provide safe spaces for students to discuss matters that may affect them or their friends.
- Students say that they are well looked after. They emphasise that the school’s climate is one of openness

in which their views are encouraged and listened to carefully by all staff and their peers.

- Adults are well trained in child protection and safeguarding matters. On-site trained medical staff, teaching assistants and counsellors ensure that no child is overlooked.
- The needs of students with autism and associated difficulties are well met and they feel safe.
- The school works effectively with a range of agencies to ensure that potentially vulnerable young people are as safe as possible.
- Students relate well to one other, taking steps to ensure that peers are included in friendship groups and in planned activities.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is mainly good, with some outstanding practice. Teachers mostly communicate their good subject knowledge effectively, and readily share ideas about their teaching with other staff in the school and within the North Tyneside Trust. As a result, students learn and achieve increasingly well.
- Most teachers plan interesting experiences to motivate students and encourage enjoyment in learning. For example, in a Year 8 design and technology lesson, students were eager to exchange views about potential designs for a 'best-selling' xylophone. Similarly, Year 7 students were keen to find out in their English lesson what impact a real highwayman had on travellers of the day. They concentrated well to draw inferences and justify their ideas in their study of Alfred Noyes' poem, *The Highwayman*.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Students rise to the regular oral mathematical challenges that teachers pose, working out mental calculations with increasing confidence. In books, work over time shows opportunities for students to apply their mathematical knowledge and deepen their understanding to solve everyday problems.
- The teaching of reading is also good. Well-planned activities before the start of morning lessons enable those who did not benefit fully from learning phonics (the sounds letters make) earlier in their school career to acquire skills they missed. Such initiatives are supported purposefully by the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding.
- The teaching of general literacy skills is good. Teachers model different aspects of punctuation and grammar for effect well, build students' confidence in writing increasingly complex sentences and in sequencing ideas in increasingly well-constructed paragraphs. Students are encouraged to speak in many lessons in full sentences, so that they rehearse what they want to say before writing.
- Relationships with students in lessons are good. Most teachers and teaching assistants know their students well. They plan generally well to meet students' different needs. As a result, the most-able learners, disadvantaged students, those with disabilities and special educational needs and the small minority from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve well overall.
- Some students, particularly the most able, are insufficiently challenged and motivated at times to give of their best. Not all teachers check on students' understanding carefully enough before moving on to other planned work.
- Teaching in the Melrose Centre successfully ensures that the needs of students with autism and associated difficulties are well catered for.
- There is good teaching in school in all subjects, especially in English, mathematics, science and the performing arts. The school's records indicate that teaching is equally good in all of the off-site provision.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good overall. Teachers in all subjects encourage students to find things out for themselves, and apply their new-found knowledge in relevant scenarios. Teaching of basic English and mathematics skills is not sufficiently well planned. It does not enable enough students to attain a GCSE grade C or above when they have not previously done so by the time they leave the sixth form.
- The vast majority of teachers engage in meaningful dialogue about their work with students. Many provide good quality written comments on students' work. Overall, not enough teachers ensure that students respond to these comments about how to improve their work and thus fully stretch themselves.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most students start Year 7 with typically average standards. The vast majority make good rates of progress to attain usually above average standards by the end of Year 11. In 2014, end of Year 11 standards dipped. This was largely due to national changes in entry patterns for GCSE examinations and

to the uncommonly large number of Year 11 students with autistic and other associated difficulties.

- The school's information and work in students' books indicate that students' general rates of progress across Years 7 to 11 are good and that present Year 11 standards are securely above average. The proportions of students making expected and more than expected progress in English and mathematics are above national expectations.
- Students' reading and communication skills are honed well in many subjects. For example, in history and geography students of all aptitudes confidently scan written materials from a range of sources to find specific information and deepen their understanding. They read poems and plays in English fluently. A high proportion of students readily volunteer ideas in many lessons and are confident in justifying their opinions. They listen attentively to peers' explanations and are often willing to challenge emerging viewpoints in a sensible manner.
- Students' mathematical skills are equally well developed. Increasingly, they apply their mathematical knowledge to tackle a range of problems in different subjects. They interpret data, capture information in appropriate graphs and charts, calculate orally with accuracy and measure with precision.
- Many students write fluently and convey ideas and opinions in a clear and engaging style.
- Students make good progress and achieve well in many subjects, notably English. Achievement is improving rapidly in modern foreign languages in particular, where it has historically lagged behind other subjects.
- Students with disabilities and special educational needs achieve well. They are well supported by the planned activities in lessons and in small groups out of lessons by teaching assistants who understand their specific needs precisely.
- Students with autism and other associated difficulties make particularly good progress in the Melrose Centre. The good balance of challenge and support from specialist practitioners promotes their self-confidence and personal qualities well.
- The most-able students also achieve well overall. Increasingly, a large number are stretched appropriately in many lessons, including English and mathematics, and reach their challenging GCSE targets. This is not the case for all and the proportion of students attaining A* to A grades, while rising, is still not high enough.
- The small minority of students from minority ethnic backgrounds, including the very few who speak English as an additional language, make good progress. Teachers and other adults support their knowledge and understanding of the English language effectively and tailor work well to meet their specific needs.
- Disadvantaged students make increasingly good progress. Gaps from their starting points in Year 7 in English and mathematics, compared with their non-disadvantaged peers both in school and nationally, are closing by the end of Year 11.
- In 2014, the gap in English between the proportion of disadvantaged students making expected progress and their non-disadvantaged peers in school closed by over 20%; the gap with non-disadvantaged peers nationally also closed by 25%. In mathematics, respective gaps closed by 16% and 4%. The school's information and current work in Year 11 students' books indicate that gaps in both subjects will close further this summer.
- For Year 11 in 2014, disadvantaged students' attainment in English closed to just under one full GCSE grade behind others nationally and to just over half a GCSE grade behind their peers in school. In mathematics, gaps also closed but were still just over one full GCSE grade behind others, both in school and nationally. Inspection evidence indicates that these attainment gaps are set to close again this summer.
- Achievement gaps in other years, including the sixth form, between disadvantaged and other students are generally closing. The school's own data indicate that a small minority of disadvantaged students do not currently make enough progress in Years 8 and 9. Consequently, achievement gaps are wider in these years than elsewhere.
- Good support is made available for students at risk of falling behind. For example, Year 7 catch-up funding has been used to provide specialist resources and teaching. The school's information on the impact of these measures shows good gains to date, especially in reading, writing and basic numeracy skills, for a large majority of students.
- The school makes judicious and successful decisions about the small number of students entered early for GCSE English examinations. This policy does not limit the attainment of the most-able students.
- The students in Years 10, 11 and 12 who follow off-site vocational courses at Seaton Burn College, Tyne Metropolitan College, Northumbria Youth Action, Barnardos and in number of local nursery schools achieve well. They gain worthwhile qualifications in subjects such as engineering, construction, hair and beauty,

retail and child care.

The sixth form provision

is good

- Achievement in the sixth form is good. Given their broadly average starting points in Year 12, the vast majority of students make good progress in most of their academic subjects and increasingly attain challenging A-level targets at the end of Year 13.
- Sixth form students pursuing vocational and applied subjects, especially those attending off-site provision in a variety of bespoke work placements, also achieve well.
- As a consequence, overall sixth form outcomes meet the national 16 to 19 interim minimum standards.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Students are provided with well-planned opportunities to research and develop their own viewpoints and reasoning. For example, Year 13 religious studies students relished a discussion on modern virtue ethics, particularly on the concept of 'throwing a sickie,' in the world of work. Independently of the teacher, Year 12 drama students were equally absorbed in their investigation of the responses of similar characters in different circumstances.
- Students are positive about the quality of the careers information and guidance they receive. Those who choose not to continue with their courses from Year 12 into Year 13 are supported well to obtain local apprenticeships or continue with their studies and training at Newcastle College. Almost all students who complete their studies in Year 13 are successful in continuing into higher education establishments, or obtaining further training and/or employment.
- The sixth form curriculum is organised well in conjunction with courses offered in two other secondary schools, George Stephenson High School, Seaton Burn College and bespoke work placements. As a result, students benefit from a wide range of academic and vocational experiences.
- Provision for students entering Year 12 without good GCSE qualifications in English and/or mathematics is not fully effective. While some students benefit from opportunities to enhance their basic communication and mathematical competencies further, not enough succeed in improving their initial low GCSE results.
- Sixth form students show positive attitudes to learning, take private study time seriously, behave well and are good role models for younger students. They fulfil their roles as sixth form leaders well and bolster the school's activities in a number of ways. For example, students plan fundraising events, support subject teachers in lessons and mentor younger students.
- Through fortnightly tutor meetings and gatherings, bespoke visitors and visits, students' personal and employability skills are developed adequately by the time they leave school. These arrangements also ensure that students' individual needs are well catered for and that they feel safe and well supported, both in school and during work placements.
- The head of sixth form has a clear understanding of the sixth-form's strengths and areas for improvement. Appropriate tracking systems are in place to check on students' progress, provide additional support for any who fall behind, and to ensure continuously good and better teaching in all subjects.

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	108645
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	461698

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	845
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	150
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Houghton
Headteacher	I Wilkinson (executive headteacher), P Quinn (acting headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	14 May 2012
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