

North Axholme School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118093
Local authority	North Lincolnshire
Inspection number	358261
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Tanya Harber Stuart HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	423
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Leesa Murray
Headteacher	Joe Sellars
Date of previous school inspection	6 October 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 22 lessons and saw 19 teachers. Fourteen of the lesson observations were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team. Meetings were held with groups of students, members of staff, members of the senior leadership team, and representatives of the governing body. Two assemblies were observed as were three tutor periods. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school improvement plan, documentation regarding the promotion of community cohesion, monitoring documents and assessment data. The team took into account the 133 questionnaires from parents and carers as well as questionnaires completed by students and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- The levels of attainment and rates of progress especially in the core subject of mathematics.
- How effectively teachers use assessment data to ensure that lessons meet the needs and interests of all students regardless of their academic ability.
- How effectively leaders and managers, at all levels, including governors, have dealt with the areas for development since the last inspection. In particular, how community cohesion, judged as inadequate in the last inspection, has improved.

Information about the school

North Axholme School is a smaller-than-average secondary school, which serves the town of Crowle and the north part of the Isle of Axholme. The vast majority of students are from a White British heritage background and very few students speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students who have a statement of special educational needs is much higher than the national average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average.

North Axholme School holds specialist status in media arts and is a Creative Partnership Change School. The school also holds the Artsmark Gold Award, the International Schools Award and the Healthy School status. At the time of its previous inspection in October 2009, the school was issued with a notice to improve.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

North Axholme school provides its students with a good education. Students are polite, friendly and exhibit good behaviour. They are willing to engage with staff and are motivated to work well in lessons especially where teaching is good. Since the last inspection, staff and the governing body have worked effectively and efficiently to make sure that students leave having made good progress. Of particular note, is the considerable rise between 2009 and 2010 in the proportion of students achieving an A* to C grade in mathematics.

In 2010, students left the school having reached levels of attainment which were above the national average. Given the starting points of the students, they made good progress during their time at the school. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities made the same good progress as their peers. Students were supported to make this progress by the provision of a good curriculum and effective links with parents, particularly with parents and carers whose children were in Year 11. However, although students who were capable of achieving A* and A did make at least satisfactory progress, the school has rightly recognised that it needs to challenge higher attaining students more.

Overall, teaching is satisfactory. A key factor in the better lessons is the highly effective use of questioning to gauge students' knowledge and understanding and extend it further. The use of assessment to support learning in lessons varies. In some lessons, marking is not used effectively to ensure that the needs and interests of all students are met. This means that some students are not challenged by the work and others find the work too hard.

Self-evaluation is regular, honest and comprehensive. It leads to good quality planning which links specifically to improving outcomes for students. This planning is regularly reviewed and the impact of actions is monitored effectively. The actions taken have ensured that students' achievement has increased, attainment has risen, community cohesion is now good and attendance is high, all demonstrating that there is good capacity to improve and make further improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good by:
 - making sure that all teachers use assessment data consistently well to provide students with activities which challenge and support them regardless of their academic ability
 - developing teachers' use of questioning to both ascertain what students know and to extend their knowledge and understanding.
- Ensure that students who are capable of achieving higher grades at GCSE are challenged more to ensure that they make consistently good progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Students' progress is carefully tracked and monitored and well-thought through strategies are put in place if students are not making at least expected progress. The combination of these strategies, the good curriculum, satisfactory teaching and good care guidance and support means that students make good progress during their time at the school. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported to make good progress through their specially adapted curriculum. In addition, well-trained teaching assistants support these students effectively in lessons. They challenge students to participate in the lessons and enable them to make good progress.

The contribution made by students is good. They are given many opportunities to contribute and they do so enthusiastically. The school council is actively involved in making improvements and recently attended a governing body meeting to discuss school uniform. The students have good knowledge and understanding of what they need to do to keep themselves healthy. They participate willingly in a range of extra-curricular activities. The community cohesion module in 'complementary studies,' engages students well and enables them to develop good moral, social and cultural understanding.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Overall teaching is satisfactory. In the better lessons, when students make good progress, planning is good, there is a quick pace and teachers have high expectations of what the students can achieve. Assessment data in these lessons is used effectively and students are aware of what they need to do to improve their work. However, the use of assessment data to support learning is inconsistent. In some lessons, teachers do not use it effectively and this means that their expectations are lower and this often leads to students making only satisfactory progress.

A personalised approach is adopted to ensure that students take courses which are appropriate. The courses are adapted to the students' needs and have engaged more students in their learning. As a result, attendance has improved and is now high. The specialist status is enhancing the curriculum in both key stages. There are strong innovative links with outside agencies. For example, in mathematics an architect is working with staff to make the theme-based curriculum more relevant to the 'real world'. These links develop the students' wider work-place skills and extend the range of courses on offer.

The care, guidance and support offered to the students are good. Clearly targeted support has enabled students to make better progress. More vulnerable students are supported well with individualised and specific help.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, are fully aware of strengths and weaknesses. Well-thought through plans are in place to eradicate weaknesses and much progress has been made on improving outcomes for students in the past year. Achievement has increased and attainment has risen especially in the core subject of mathematics. Governors are very supportive. They challenge the leaders and managers and are fully involved in self-evaluation and the quality assurance cycle.

The school promotes community cohesion well. There is a good understanding of the school's context, the action plan is comprehensive and is monitored regularly and rigorously. There has been a concerted effort to engage with other schools to enhance the students' understanding of different religions and cultures.

Safeguarding policies and procedures are good. As a result of these, students are safe and say they feel very safe. They are confident that the very rare incidents of discrimination are dealt with very quickly. Good policies and procedures are in place to ensure equality of opportunity. The vast majority of parents and carers agree or strongly agree that their children are safe in school.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

One hundred and thirty three parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Overall, parents and carers were supportive of the school. In particular, parents and carers appreciate the way the school keeps their children safe, and the manner in which it prepares them for the future. Parents and carers did express some concerns about behaviour, which the inspectors investigated but the inspection team found behaviour to be good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at North Axholme School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 133 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 423 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	32	24	92	69	9	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	27	88	66	8	6	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	37	28	78	59	14	11	3	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	23	78	59	18	14	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	18	14	86	65	18	14	4	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	13	82	62	24	18	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	14	91	68	16	12	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	28	21	77	58	12	9	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	16	90	68	14	11	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	22	64	48	20	15	6	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	14	76	57	24	18	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	24	18	79	59	11	8	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	18	88	66	12	9	3	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 November 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of North Axholme School, Crowle, DN17 4HU

Thank you for welcoming me, and my team, when we came to inspect your school. Thank you for talking to us, and for filling in a questionnaire, this meant we were able to take your views into account. It was also very helpful that many of your parents and carers filled in a questionnaire as we could also take account of their views.

As you know North Axholme School was given a notice to improve in October 2009. I am delighted to say that your school no longer requires significant improvement. You are now making much better progress, especially in the core subject of mathematics.

You are cared for well at North Axholme. You behave well, especially during breaks and in the social areas. You take on responsibility well and many of you have a responsibility be it as a prefect, peer mentor or bus buddy. Your school council is active and you are able to express your views and opinions to both the governors and the senior leadership team through them. You are kept safe in school and you feel very safe. Your parents and carers are pleased with how safe you are in school.

To make North Axholme School even better we have asked the school to:

- make sure that in all your lessons you are provided with activities which challenge and support you
- ensure that more of you achieve higher grades at GCSE.

You can contribute by continuing to attend school, behaving well and pass your ideas to the school council.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Tanya Harber Stuart
Her Majesty's Inspector

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