

Monkseaton High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108642
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	377792
Inspection dates	18–19 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Wendy Ripley HMI

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	13–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	718
Of which number on roll in the sixth form	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Hughes
Headteacher	Paul Kelley
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 29 lessons taught by 27 teachers, and met groups of students, staff, members of the school's governing body and Innovation Trust and the school's improvement consultant. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's safeguarding arrangements, self-evaluation form, development plan, and analysis of student data. Inspectors also looked at the 96 completed questionnaires received from parents and carers and questionnaire responses from the students and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Current standards and the progress of students across the school.
- The quality of teaching and the curriculum and their impact on improving outcomes for students.
- The effectiveness of school leaders in driving improvement and demonstrating sufficient capacity for sustained improvement.

Information about the school

Monkseaton High is a Trust School for students aged 13 to 18 (Year 9 to Year 13). It is a smaller than average-sized secondary school serving Whitley Bay and the surrounding areas. The number of students on roll has reduced by around 13% since the previous inspection in December 2008. Most students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students who join the school other than at the start of Year 9 is well above average. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average as is the proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school is a designated resource base for students with physical disabilities. The school has Investors in People status and holds specialist status in mathematics, computing and science and hosts a football academy. The school has new purpose-built premises completed in the summer of 2010. The building has won regional and national awards for its design.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Monkseaton High School provides its students with a satisfactory education. It has good features, including the care and support students receive and an inclusive approach to student admissions. This is particularly evident in the support provided for the higher than usual number of students the school accepts part-way through Key Stage 4, and in the sixth form, which welcomes students from other schools in the area who might not have attained at the expected levels at the end of Year 11.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 dipped in 2010 and was low. This represented inadequate progress given the students' starting points, particularly for boys and students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Students made satisfactory progress in 2011, so that attainment at the end of Year 11 was broadly average. The proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE or equivalent qualifications, including English and mathematics, rose considerably when compared to previous years. The gap between boys' and girls' achievement has closed. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making similar progress to their peers. The attainment of students in the sixth form also improved in 2011, and was broadly average. Most students in the sixth form are now making at least satisfactory progress taking their starting points into account.

Students are generally positive about their experiences of school and enjoy their learning. This is demonstrated through their good behaviour. Students appreciate the good relationships they have with staff and each other. As one student speaking for many said, 'You couldn't ask for more dedicated teachers. They put in lots of extra time after school and are really quick at replying to emails. This helped to keep me on target when I was going through a difficult patch.' Students report that the spacious feel, orderly layout and sense of calm in the new building, helps them feel secure and get along well together. They are very clear that the location of the gym right at the heart of the school and the wide range of sports-related activities help them to adopt healthy lifestyles. Similarly, the high quality resources and their participation in designing the new school and their uniform, for example, make them feel their contribution is valued. The many open-plan areas and easy access to staff promotes independent learning well and encourages students to actively seek help and advice.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. While just over half is good and some is outstanding, the proportion of teaching that is consistently good or better is not yet

high enough to enable all students to make the best progress they can. Teachers and middle leaders make good use of the school's robust and user-friendly assessment and tracking systems, such as the 'progress dashboard', to monitor and assess students' progress, set targets and plan for any additional support needs. However, as yet, assessment information is not being used routinely to plan tasks that are matched closely enough to students' individual learning needs and provide appropriate levels of challenge. The frequency of marking and the quality of written feedback vary considerably. Not enough emphasis is being given to developing students' literacy and numeracy skills in lesson planning and in all subjects across the curriculum.

Senior leaders' assessment of the school's performance and the point it has reached on its improvement journey is overly optimistic. Much of the school's improvement planning and other documentation is imprecise and does not focus sufficiently on maximising outcomes for students. Key priorities and the actions needed to accelerate improvement and measure success are ill-defined. Consequently, a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses is not being communicated effectively to staff and members of the governing body. This means that governors do not always receive the information they need to hold school leaders rigorously to account. Nonetheless, senior leaders have now set the school on an improving trajectory. The governing body recognised the need to increase leadership capacity and supported the move to recruit two additional assistant headteachers. The impact of this has been seen in the speedy reduction in students' absenteeism and the implementation of some well thought through strategies that are driving forward improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Students' outcomes are improving as a result. For these reasons the school currently demonstrates it has satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement and provides satisfactory value for money.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise students' achievement and accelerate their learning so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - increasing the proportion of lessons in which students make at least good progress
 - using assessment information to plan classroom tasks that are closely matched to individual learning needs and effectively challenge students whatever their ability
 - improving the quality of marking; ensuring that teachers' written feedback always explains to students what they need to do next to achieve their targets and sets out clearly how they can improve their work further
 - ensuring that the curriculum and teachers' planning maintains a strong focus on building in ample opportunities for students to develop and extend their literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects.

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - concentrating on key priorities and those actions that will have the maximum impact on improving outcomes for students
 - ensuring that self-evaluation is rigorous and portrays a realistic picture of the school's performance that is shared more widely with staff
 - providing members of the governing body with the information they need so they can consistently hold school leaders rigorously to account.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Students' achievement is satisfactory. Students enter Year 9 with attainment that is broadly average. Inspection evidence indicates students' attainment in lessons is at least average and they make generally satisfactory and sometimes good progress in their learning. Students' work is assessed regularly and assessment information is being better-used to identify those who are in danger of falling behind so that individual interventions can be put in place quickly. This is helping more students at risk of underachieving to catch up with their peers in lessons, but it is not yet translating into consistently good outcomes for all students. School data indicate that students throughout the school are currently on track to achieve their targets and are making satisfactory progress.

Students are courteous and polite to adults and each other. The high quality and warmth of relationships throughout the school establish an effective climate for learning and create an optimistic environment in which almost all students are happy and look forward to coming to school. Students generally apply themselves to tasks diligently and purposefully. Their good behaviour makes a positive contribution to their learning in lessons.

Students are regularly consulted and influence decisions about school life. They designed features of the new building; some of their innovative ideas, for example, doors they can write on, help to create lively classrooms and interactive learning opportunities. Students make a good contribution to the local community as peer leaders for younger students and sports leaders in local primary schools for instance. They are active fund-raisers for those less fortunate than themselves. Specialist subjects, modern foreign languages and links with schools overseas are used well to develop links within the community and in the wider world. All these factors enrich the curriculum and contribute strongly to the students' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students are confident users of information and communication technology; they consult their individual web-page regularly to monitor their own progress. They find corresponding with their teachers via email a timely and efficient way to seek further information and guidance about their work. Students' development of workplace skills is satisfactory and they report feeling well informed about future career options. This is borne out by good progression rates into further learning and education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

While improvements in the quality of teaching over the last year are enabling students to make satisfactory or better progress in lessons, it is too early to see the full impact on their longer-term progress. The best lessons are well planned and carefully managed to include all learners. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are enthusiastic communicators who use a good range of activities to capture students' interest and make learning relevant. There is a brisk pace and good quality questioning ensures that teachers can assess the quality of students' learning and their progress. In these lessons, students respond quickly to staff and apply themselves wholeheartedly to learning. Weaker lessons are characterised by lengthy periods of 'teacher talk' that are symptomatic of a focus on teaching, rather than engaging students as active participants in their own learning. Assessment information is not used effectively to plan activities that closely match the students' varying learning needs and provide the right levels of challenge. Teachers' comments do not always explain to students what they need to do next to achieve their targets or set out clearly how they can improve their work. Opportunities to reinforce students' skills in reading, writing, speaking and numeracy are being missed.

The curriculum meets the needs of most students through a range of academic and practical courses. Links with a school in China have resulted in students being provided with an opportunity to study Mandarin. Students particularly appreciate the efforts staff make to broaden their experience through the range of extra-curricular activities on offer and these are well-attended. Partnerships with the Open University and Whitley Bay student support centre, for instance, help the school broaden the curriculum offer and provide personalised learning packages for students. While there is a whole school strategy in place, this does not effectively promote the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects and consequently the curriculum is satisfactory overall.

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

All students are supported and cared for well. A strength of the school layout is the way in which adults are highly visible and make themselves readily available to talk with students about their work or any other concerns. This underpins the strong sense of respect that exists between staff and students and ensures that students are able to access help and support easily. Care, guidance and support provided by school staff and external agencies for those students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, has a positive impact on their well-being and personal development. For example, by re-engaging them in their learning or improving behaviour. Similarly, good support for students with physical disabilities and complex medical needs enhances their mobility and self-confidence. Transition arrangements and the guidance given at key points of students' education are good.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The recently extended leadership team is injecting vigour and enthusiasm as well as enabling responsibilities to be distributed more widely. For example, the newly-formed special education needs team is providing clear guidance and support to staff around identifying and putting in place strategies for individual students with a range of additional needs. This is already improving provision and outcomes for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is a strong focus on securing improvements in teaching. Lesson observations are undertaken regularly and weaknesses are being purposefully tackled. Data analysis systems have been considerably enhanced and are used well to track the incremental improvement in the quality of teaching and students' progress for instance. Teaching and support staff are very positive about their work and keen to improve. Consequently, they are embracing the opportunities to improve their professional knowledge and understanding that the regular good quality training and development activities provide.

Staff have high aspirations and ambitions for the school and the students. Leaders' drive for improvement, while satisfactory, is hampered by weaknesses in self-evaluation and improvement planning. Similarly, while members of the governing body are extremely supportive of the school, shortcomings in the quality of the information they have been provided with, is hindering their ability to evaluate school actions rigorously and to consistently challenge school leaders and hold them to account.

Parents and carers report that they are generally kept well-informed. Emails and the school's virtual learning environment are used very effectively to promote links between home and school. Strong links have been forged with partners such as the Open University and agencies to enhance provision and meet the students' needs. The school takes effective steps to tackle discrimination and to promote equality and

strives to make appropriate provision for every student. All students, regardless of their ability or difficulty are fully included in school life. The school makes well-considered and conscientious contributions to community cohesion locally, nationally and internationally. It provides additional support for modern foreign languages to primary schools in the North Tyneside area and supports a large number of primary schools nationally through the provision of resources for French and Spanish teaching. The school's specialisms in mathematics, science and computing have a positive impact on the work of the school, in the local community and on students' achievements. Safeguarding and child protection procedures meet current requirements and are extremely thorough and meticulously maintained.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
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	3

Sixth form

The sixth form is very inclusive and welcomes students from other schools in the area. By the end of Year 13 students make satisfactory progress relative to their starting points. Teachers know their students well and provide a number of opportunities for them to catch up and develop their study skills. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Students' needs and capabilities are appropriately matched to the range of courses and subjects on offer. The support students receive both in terms of their academic and their personal needs is good. This enables them to make suitable choices and, consequently, almost all students progress into further learning or employment. Through a number of schemes, some students are supported by the school beyond the age of 18 while they are taking apprenticeships or studying for Open University degrees. The leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth Form	3
Taking into account: Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

Inspectors received responses from around 13% of parents and carers. This is a low response rate when compared to other similar schools. Most respondents were very positive about the quality of education and care their children receive. Several parents and carers took the opportunity to provide additional comments highlighting particular strengths and to explain how their children had been helped to enjoy their time at school. A very small minority of parents and carers indicated they had some concerns about the times of the school day. Inspectors' discussions with students suggest that they do not consider this to be an issue. Student responses to their questionnaire were very positive. Students report that they feel very safe and the very large majority strongly agree that they learn a lot in lessons, teachers are interested in their views and the school cares about them and helps them prepare for the future.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Monkseaton High 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 96 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 718 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	47	48	50	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	40	42	55	57	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	51	53	42	44	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	34	54	56	5	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	34	35	55	57	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	34	54	56	5	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	23	61	64	6	6	2	2
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	29	54	56	4	4	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	38	51	53	2	2	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	36	46	48	3	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	34	45	47	4	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	32	33	57	59	2	2	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	47	43	45	3	3	0	0

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



20 October 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Monkseaton High School, Whitley Bay, NE25 9EQ

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your school. We took full account of your views and those of your parents and carers who also completed questionnaires which contributed to our judgements. We found Monkseaton to be a satisfactory school with good aspects. Most of you enjoy your lessons. You make satisfactory progress in your learning and attain broadly average standards. You feel safe in school and you are polite and courteous to adults and each other. Your good behaviour contributes well to your learning. There is a broad range of subjects you can choose to study between the ages of 11 and 18. You really appreciate the strong relationships you have with staff and all the extra activities they provide for you. The care, guidance and support you receive are good. You make a good contribution to the life of the school. Almost everyone leaving Year 11 and Year 13 continues with their education/training or finds employment. You told us that the new building is 'brilliant' and you are very proud about your involvement in its design. To make Monkseaton even better we have asked the school's leaders to:

- Ensure that each of you makes as much progress in your learning as you possibly can by:
 - making sure that teachers plan activities that are closely matched to your individual learning needs and provide you with the right amount of challenge
 - ensuring that teachers' written feedback lets you know how you can improve your work further
 - providing you with lots of opportunities to develop your literacy and numeracy skills in all of the subjects you study.

- Tighten up the systems and procedures they use to monitor and review their actions so that they will know what works and how best to support you to make good or better progress.

You can help to improve Monkseaton by attending school regularly and continuing to contribute to school developments. We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Ripley
Her Majesty's Inspector

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