

Monkseaton High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108642
Local Authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	309753
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Andrew Johnson 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	13–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	761
Sixth form	242
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Steven Fawkes
Headteacher	Dr Paul Kelley
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2004
School address	Seatonville Road Whitley Bay Tyne and Wear NE25 9EQ
Telephone number	0191 2979700
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Age group	13–19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Monkseaton High School is a Trust School serving Whitley Bay, North Shields and Wallsend. Students come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The number of students who are entitled to free school meals is below average although a high proportion in the sixth form are entitled to educational maintenance allowance. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (including those with statements of special educational need) is around average. The school is a designated resource base for students with physical disabilities. The majority of students are of White British origin. In recent years an increasing number of students have joined the school who do not speak English as their first language, although the proportion is low compared with the national average. The school provides a large number of primary schools with resources for French and Spanish teaching and additional support to primary schools in the North Tyneside. At the time of the inspection the school was in the process of applying for specialist status in science, mathematics and computing to match the aims of the Trust. The school was awarded the Sportsmark in 2007 and hosts a Football Academy. The school received the BECTa excellence award 2008 for best whole school use of information and communication technology (ICT) in the North East.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Monkseaton High school is an inclusive and innovative school that provides a good quality of education to its students. Significant improvements to achievement and standards have been made in the last year. Students join the school with broadly average standards in Year 9 and make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3. In Key Stage 4 they make good progress. There has been a rising trend in the proportion of students who gain five or more GCSE passes at grade C or above when mathematics and English are included and in 2008 the school reached the national average. A significant minority of students join the school later in their school career with lower than average levels of attainment; they make good progress.

Staff work extremely hard to provide a stimulating and interesting environment. Students enjoy learning and develop very effective independent learning skills. The school's pioneering work in improving learning has assisted partner primary schools in their approach to languages teaching. There are several examples of the outstanding use of ICT to promote learning. Inspectors agree with the school that the current buildings present significant barriers to learning. The new school building planned to be opened in September 2009 has been carefully designed to ensure that these barriers are removed and new exciting opportunities are offered.

As a result of the school's rigorous monitoring, attendance although currently below average is improving. The persistent absence of a small number of students skews the figures adversely. Almost all students behave well and there is a good system to ensure that standards of behaviour are high. However, inspectors did observe a small number of lessons in which this system was not being consistently applied to low level disruptive behaviour. Innovative work has been carried out to identify potentially vulnerable or isolated students and this has resulted in early intervention to provide good support. The school welcomes students who have additional learning needs including those who have previously been bullied. Those who attend frequently enough are well supported and settle down to learning. The way in which students are prepared for the transition to the world of work and further education is outstanding. For example, several sixth form students become 'apprentices' within the school taking on the roles of support staff and gaining employment, as well as taking degree programmes through the Open University.

The pastoral care provided for students is excellent and students comment on how safe and well supported they feel. The school has effective transition arrangements to ensure students feel secure when they enter the school in Year 9. The headteacher bases himself in an open plan area in the centre of the school and this means students have ready access to him throughout the day. Senior staff take their pastoral responsibilities very seriously and supervise pupils effectively at lunchtime, and the beginning and end of the day. The parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire were very positive about the education and care their children receive. Longer and fixed rate exclusion figures have been significantly reduced in the last two years due to the school's new support arrangements. Most students are set challenging targets; however, the monitoring of students' academic progress is not sufficiently effective in all areas of the school. Some students do not know their current targets or what they need to do to improve.

Teaching and learning are good overall with many examples of outstanding and innovative teaching. In a few cases the marking of students' books is not of a consistently high quality. The curriculum is good and in the sixth form academic choices are particularly broad to ensure

that they are well matched to students' needs. Students take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities and the Football Academy is a significant strength of the sixth form.

The headteacher and staff have a clear vision and commitment to inclusion and innovation. In the last two years the work of senior and middle managers has had a significant impact to ensure this vision is translated into improved achievement and standards since the last inspection. These recent advances demonstrate the school has a good capacity to improve. The school has an accurate understanding of most of its strengths and areas for improvement; however, it overestimates some strengths within its self-evaluation. Some of the criteria used to formulate judgements about the quality of the school's work are underdeveloped. Governors provide good support to the school and make particularly good use of technology to share information. The school has developed an outstanding range of partnerships to promote students, personal development and well being. The Trust partners enable the school to innovate successfully, for example in its approach to teaching and learning, support and the use of technology and the successful development of partnerships.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The school is rightly proud of its inclusive approach to entry to its sixth form. Unlike the rest of the school the number of students has grown in recent years. When taken in the widest context, sixth-form students make good progress, although the school recognises that standards reached by some students in GCE A levels could improve. Although the grades attained improved in 2008, they remain below national averages. Inspectors observed students making good progress in sixth form lessons. Their other achievements include the high pass rate in Open University qualifications. Teaching is good and particularly effective when staff test students' thinking and set challenging targets. The dedicated ICT facilities coupled with online support materials successfully develop students' independent learning skills. However, a number of students and parents expressed concern about the limited space for quiet study within the current building.

The new creativity, action and service programme is successfully encouraging students to volunteer for overseas and national community work. The school has developed excellent links with universities and sporting clubs both in this country and the United States of America that assist students in their future study and training. Most students who leave the sixth form successfully gain entry to the higher or further education programme of their choice. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good and managers have a clear and accurate view of areas for improvement. They have set a very clear agenda to tackle weaknesses including a more effective approach to self-evaluation via the recently introduced departmental review process.

What the school should do to improve further

- Eradicate the inconsistencies in the tracking of students' academic progress.
- Improve evaluation to produce a more concise and accurate overview of the impact provision has on outcomes for students.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

School assessments taken on entry to Monkseaton indicate that they have reached standards that are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Test results at the end of Key Stage 3 present a similar picture. In 2008 the proportion of students who obtained five GCSE examination grades including English and mathematics at A* to C improved significantly and reached the national average of 48%. Currently, standards are rising rapidly and students make good progress in lessons. The rate at which students made progress in Key Stage 4 and in Year 12 improved significantly last year. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in the development of learning skills as do those whose first language is not English. Many students enter the school throughout the year; for example, the current Year 11 group have 37 entries other than at the beginning of Year 9. The majority of these students are making up lost ground in achievement.

Students enter the sixth form with levels of attainment that are below the national average. A high proportion of students leave the sixth form at the end of Year 12 having successfully completed a one year course and move on to other education, employment or training. A significant number of students make excellent progress on Open University courses and gain qualifications. The proportion of students achieving high grades at GCE A level and AS level is low in comparison to the national average. Value added data indicates that at GCE AS level some students do not achieve their target grades, although there has been an improvement in 2008. The school has prioritised this as an area for improvement and inspectors observed almost all students making good progress in lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development and well-being, including their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, are good. Their development of workplace and independent learning skills is outstanding as a result of the innovative work done by the school. Students say that they enjoy coming to school and have good relationships with their teachers. Behaviour is good but in a few lessons low level disruption by a few students impedes their progress and hampers the enjoyment of others. Students report that they feel safe in school and that the rare instances of bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Attendance, though still below average, has improved due to the rigorous measures the school has taken to follow up persistent absenteeism. Students understand the importance of a healthy diet and lifestyle. They take advantage of the range of sporting and extra-curricular activities offered, and increasing numbers are cycling to school. The school's work on avoiding risks related to sexual health is good and has had a positive impact. Some Year 11 girls extended and developed this programme and delivered it to local middle schools. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. For example, students work with local charities and have developed a link with a school in Malawi. Students take responsibility in the school through the school council. This has had an impact for example in the redevelopment of the toilet areas. Students are generally confident and their capacity to use ICT in support of their learning is outstanding.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's self-evaluation that teaching and learning are good. The school places considerable emphasis on developing innovative approaches to learning. Staff make good and sometimes outstanding use of these approaches to promote learning. Students commented on how staff arrange additional lessons and activities in order to support their learning. Planning is thorough, lessons are conducted at a good pace and teachers have good subject knowledge. The school's new approach to reviewing the work of departments is having a positive impact on teaching. In the most effective lessons, students have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve, teaching is characterised by effective challenge and high expectations, and behaviour is systematically and effectively managed. In the rare cases where teaching is less effective, the work is insufficiently tailored to the needs of students, staff do not check students' understanding and there is some low level disruption. Good support is provided in lessons for those students for whom English is an additional language. The school has developed an online assessment and review system and this is improving students' understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. However, there are inconsistencies between subjects and groups in the quality and frequency of marking.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good because it meets the needs of most students and matches the school's inclusive vision. The school has recently successfully introduced an applied ICT course for all students in Years 9 to 11 and is involved in a national initiative to develop a digital learning curriculum course to students and the community. This approach is contributing well to raising achievement and standards. There is a developing programme for gifted and talented students who are entered early for GCSE or in some cases GCE A level. At Key Stage 4, there is now more flexibility in subject choice. A wider range of vocational courses is offered, including some in cooperation with outside providers such as the fire service. As a result, there are now more opportunities for personalised learning. The school is in the process of applying for specialist status in mathematics, science and computing to match the aims of the Trust. The post-16 curriculum is particularly wide and has some outstanding features including provision for Open University courses, and programmes linked to the Football Academy. Students participate well in a range of extra-curricular activities. The school is particularly strong in terms of sporting activities but also offers opportunities in drama and music.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This is an inclusive school which values all students. Students feel confident that staff have their interests at heart and appreciate the pastoral support provided. The welfare and safety of students are a high priority and all necessary safeguarding and health and safety arrangements are followed. Innovative systems are in place to identify vulnerable students and provide support so that they achieve at least as well as their peers. The school has strong links with outside agencies and works well with them to ensure student progress. Students receive good advice and guidance at points of transition. Induction procedures help Year 9 students to integrate confidently. The school has systems in place to monitor students' academic progress that usually

enable appropriate intervention to be put in place quickly for students at risk of academic underachievement. However, the tracking and monitoring of academic progress are not always consistently applied across all departments.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are innovative and founded upon an inclusive vision. Ensuring everyone is given a fair and equal opportunity is at the core of the school. There is a real excitement about the future underpinned by the move to the new building. The work of senior and middle managers has been effective in driving forward the recent improvements made to achievement and standards. The school's observation process for checking and improving the quality of teaching and learning is well established and understood by all staff. The new departmental review system is also beginning to have significant impact on its ability to evaluate performance. Staff's performance management objectives link well with subject reviews. This ensures that training is focused so that it benefits the students' learning. Self evaluation is satisfactory. The school is constantly seeking ways to innovate and improve and this is extremely well supported by the Trust and board of governors, However, it sometimes does not stand back and produce a concise, accurate evaluation of where it has reached on its journey.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2	

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

3 December 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Monkseaton High School, North Tyneside, NE25 9EQ

Thank you for welcoming us to your school last week. We appreciated the time many of you gave up to talk to us and explain your views. What we tried to do was find out what your school does well and help it identify areas that might be improved. We think that you attend a good school that has many exciting features. A fuller report is available on the Ofsted website but here are our main findings.

- You make good progress in school and recently examination results have improved significantly.
- You behave well and most of the parents who responded to the questionnaire were very positive about the education and care you receive.
- Your teachers work really hard and lessons are usually good and many are excellent. The approaches they use to helping you learn are often new and exciting, especially in the use of ICT.
- The curriculum you are offered is good because it tries to meet the needs of everyone. There are many highlights including the Open University courses available in the sixth form and the Football Academy.
- We agree with the school that the attendance of a relatively small number of students is much lower than it should be. The school is working very hard on this and there are signs that things are beginning to improve.
- We also agree that the school building provides some real barriers to your learning and know that you are excited by the prospect of your fabulous new building.
- Not all of you know what your targets are or what progress you are making towards them and we have asked the school to improve this.
- The headteacher and senior staff provide good leadership and many of the recent improvements are as a direct result of their work. We have asked them to be a little clearer in evaluating the work of the school.
- There is a good sixth form that tries to offer something for everyone; we know that staff are working hard to improve A level results in some subjects.

We wish you every success in the future and hope that you will continue to work hard to help the school go from strength to strength.

Andrew Johnson

Her Majesty's Inspector