



North Tyneside Council

**School Improvement Service
Education Skills and Innovation**

Secondary Assisted School Review

School Whitley Bay High School

Headteacher Adam Chedburn

Dates of the review 6 – 7 October 2009

Review Team Jean Griffiths
Jonathan Chicken
Julia Craddock
Brian Davison
David Griffiths
Lynne Horton
John Marshall
Mark Patton
Rob Smith

Introduction

A team of LA officers carried out the Assisted Review. The team visited 52 lessons and held meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, governors, members of staff and groups of students. The Review observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including performance information, internal monitoring reports and governing body minutes. Samples of students' work were scrutinised along with a sample of parent, staff and student questionnaires.

The review team considered many aspects of the school's work. It looked at detail at the following:

- The progress of the mathematics department since the Ofsted inspection of 2006
- How the school's senior and middle leaders support the development of teaching to ensure consistency in the quality of learning in all phases, and in the small number of lessons where teaching has previously been identified as weak.
- How effectively the school manages transition and the impact of this on learners' progress.

Information about the school

Whitley Bay High School is larger than average with a very large sixth form. It is a highly popular school regularly over subscribed. Students enter the school with above average standards and the proportion of students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average. There are a small number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and a few who have English as an additional language. The proportion of students who are eligible for free school meals is well below average. Currently 8 students who are looked after attend the school. The school has a number of awards including Healthy Schools, Sports Mark and Investors in People. It has Leading Edge Status and received a National Award in October 2009 for Outstanding Innovation.

Inspection grades:

1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Review findings

Overall Effectiveness: how good is the school:

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement:

1

The Assisted Review judges Whitley Bay High School to be outstanding. The overwhelming majority of students achieve highly and are prepared for life in the 21st Century as confident, articulate and independent learners. Behaviour in and

around the school is exemplary. Students feel safe, are happy and make an outstanding contribution to the school. They show consideration and support for each other when they learn. The quality of teaching is outstanding and is a significant factor in the school's capacity to improve even further. The outstanding effectiveness of the leadership team is evidenced by the strong sense of ambition for learning, high morale amongst staff and students, and high outcomes.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop the use of new technologies to support students in their learning.
- Ensure consistency of practice in the use of written diagnostic feedback
- Continue to develop a whole school approach to lesson planning which details specific assessment for learning criteria.

1

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

Students enter the school with attainment which is above the national average at key stage 2. However, over the last three years there has been an increase on entry in lower ability students with fewer upper ability. By the end of key stage 4 students make very good progress and achieve significantly above national averages. Since the Ofsted inspection in 2006, further improvement in overall standards has resulted in outstanding achievement. This is based on significantly high attainment on all measures and contextual progress scores which in 2008 showed an upward trend and has continued to rise in 2009.

Students enter the school two thirds of the way through key stage 3 so the impact of the High School on achievement in Year 9 has to be interpreted with care. However, the improvement at this key stage (noted in the Ofsted inspection) has been maintained and FFT analysis of 2009 results shows significantly positive added value at Level 5+ in English and mathematics and in the mean score of all core subjects. Review evidence of current learning confirms that students continue to make consistently good progress in Year 9.

At key stage 4 attainment is securely high. 2009 results released by the school indicate one in three passes are at A*/A. There is a variable pattern of progress emerging from validated data. Progress between key stages 3 and 4 is more rapid than from key stage 2 to 3. KS3-4 indicators demonstrate significantly high rankings both overall and in English, with mathematics in line, and significantly low in 2007 only. The upward trend evident in 2008 has continued in 2009 with marked improvement at five good passes achieved by almost nine out of ten students. When English and mathematics are included attainment has also risen and met a challenging school target. The progress of groups is also positive with significantly high progress by boys, particularly lower and middle boys.

Non-contextualised added value based simply on prior key stage 2 attainment is significantly high from 2006-8 with a high 15th percentile ranking in 2008. Concerns over variation in mathematics performance have been resolutely

addressed and achievement in all three core subjects, which make up the school specialism, is now significantly high when 2009 results are included. Review evidence confirms that current students continue to make very good progress. The school tracking of current performance suggests further improvement in outcomes in the next two years. In lessons there is strong evidence of the impact of CPD and action research on high quality teaching and learning with a large majority of students able to work independently and articulately.

In science, changes to the curriculum have improved equality of opportunity and differentiated learning. Core and additional science, applied science or three separate sciences are now all offered. This has led to improved outcomes across all ability groups. Focused support and challenge has also led to improved performance in subjects with relatively low residual scores. In 2009 no underperforming subjects have been identified in terms of school based comparisons.

The progress of vulnerable groups, including free school meal students and those with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly in line with national averages and at least good. The number of students is relatively small, but provision is excellent and monitoring and evaluation ensure appropriate and focused support is provided. High quality learning is strongly supported by proactive school systems and highly effective team work from the ECM Coordinator, Learning Support Department, subject leaders and Year Heads ably led by the Senior Leadership.

All groups including free school meal, SEN School Action, SEN Statemented and lower ability students showed above average value added progress between key stages 3 and 4 over a three year period. Latest 2009 unvalidated data also shows improved performance by EAL and ethnic minorities. Additional staffing, strong pastoral support, personalised learning, mentoring/coaching, SEN support and robust application of the equal opportunities policy have all played a part in recent school improvement. Gender difference does not inhibit attainment or progress outcomes which for both boys and girls are significantly high.

The vast majority of students feel safe in school. They are confident that bullying incidents are taken seriously and dealt with effectively; parents also endorse this view. During the Review staff were able to provide striking examples of support for vulnerable groups.

Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils show consideration and support for each other in lessons and this impacts directly on learning. Very good behaviour is evidenced through no permanent exclusions in the last three years and very few which are fixed term.

Students have an excellent understanding of the importance of being healthy and their knowledge of factors which contribute to a healthy lifestyle are good. The school is well resourced to provide very effective targeted support for vulnerable groups. However it is aware that more work needs to be done to improve students' approach to healthy eating.

Students have enormous pride in their school and appreciate the work of all the staff in making Whitley Bay High School a very enjoyable place to learn. The enthusiasm they have for the school reflects the leadership team's vision for a community that develops a passion for learning. Students take advantage of the wide range of activities that are offered and take on responsibility enthusiastically. The revised 'Student Voice' initiative to replace the Student Council has been well received.

Students develop outstanding skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being. This is evident in their confidence and enthusiasm for learning, their aspiration to succeed and the large number who wish to stay on to the sixth form. Attendance is well above average the school has very few students not in Education, Employment or Training or who are persistently absent.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	
Taking into account:	1
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1

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

The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The Review Team agrees with the school's self-evaluation that the quality of teaching is outstanding. Out of the 52 lessons observed the vast majority were at least good with a significantly high number judged to be outstanding. No inadequate teaching was observed. This, along with the school's highly effective tracking system, means that students make outstanding progress across the range of subjects. Students are provided with challenge and they learn new skills and knowledge at a rapid rate. Because teachers have a real passion for

their subject and work hard to provide engaging, interactive and enjoyable lessons, students are enthusiastic and very motivated. As a result behaviour is consistently good in class and frequently exemplary. This is an outstanding factor in their successful learning and creates an extremely positive climate. The school's focus on collaborative learning is embedded and consequently students are highly considerate and very supportive of each other in lessons. Those students with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve in line with their peers due to effective support in class, close monitoring of their progress and ongoing support from other pupils.

In the vast majority of lessons students make rapid progress. The transition from one activity to another is smooth and contributes to learner progress. Teachers set challenging targets, which are understood by the vast majority of students. Skillful questioning effectively develops high order analytical and evaluative skills in a significant number of lessons. These qualities were very evident in a Year 10 Media lesson and a Year 10 Science class where scaffolded questions were used to fully take account of the varying needs of the students in each class. Where teaching is outstanding, assessment for learning practices are embedded in lessons. Teachers effectively share learning outcomes with students and opportunities are provided for them to regularly assess their understanding and progress. Differentiation is used to outstanding effect to personalise the learning for groups and individuals. For example, in one Year 11 English lesson effective seating arrangements, differentiated resources, targeted feedback and the highly successful use of volunteer sixth formers, contributed to the fast progress made by all students.

In those lessons where students made less progress, there was an inconsistent application of assessment for learning and often activities were differentiated by outcome rather than addressing the needs of groups of learners. Diagnostic marking is inconsistent across the school. Where it is outstanding, as evidenced in some English and geography books, it identifies where students are working well and what they need to do to improve.

In a number of lessons marking was less effective when focused on basic spelling and punctuation rather than the assessment objective. Teachers should ensure that samples of excellent diagnostic marking are evident in the classroom.

The school's curriculum is outstanding. It is broad and balanced across all key stages, including post-16 provision. This is evidenced through indicators such as high attainment, outstanding student behaviour, personalised curricula for students and very high recruitment, retention and success rates post -16.

Transition arrangements and activities – including inter-school teaching between middle and high school teachers – ensure the school is aware of individual students' strengths and weaknesses and can build on these in Year 9. Student and parental surveys show a very high degree of satisfaction with transition arrangements and the Year 9 curriculum, including the innovative options choice in Year 9. The curriculum is responsive to parent and student demands. For

example, the Leisure & Tourism programme periodically appears according to demand. The school's specialist subjects have supported improvement across the curriculum. This leads to a broad and balanced offer in KS5 with high uptake by students. Current vocational provision is flexible and meets the needs of those students who require a different type of provision, e.g. CoPE, Asdan and WBL placements. The school has plans to widen this offer still further as part of the 14-19 entitlement through, for example, leading on the Science Diploma and being a delivery partner in the Creative & Media Diploma. Highly effective information advice and guidance – spearheaded by the senior leadership team who conduct one-to-one interviews with students – ensures students are recruited to appropriate programmes or are signposted to appropriate external provision. The school has successfully implemented a number of curriculum changes in the recent past, for example the introduction of Applied Science at Level 2 and Level 3.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, senior leaders and governors provide innovative and inspirational leadership. The headteacher's vision of the school as an inclusive learning community is pivotal to the success of the school. The emphasis on preparing students for life in the twenty-first century, enabling them to flourish in a community that has developed a 'passion for learning rather than an acquisition of knowledge' is evident in all aspects of the school. This shared ownership of ambition has resulted in very high morale, high levels of confidence and high expertise amongst pupils and staff. The vast majority of staff hold the leadership of the headteacher and leadership team in very high regard as evidenced in the Staff Self-Evaluation Survey. Moreover the strong culture and ethos of the school translates into high levels of attainment and achievement whilst nurturing and celebrating all qualities of a young person.

The leadership and management of teaching is outstanding. Senior leaders provide visionary and dynamic leadership; the evidence of their ambition is demonstrably embedded in the vast majority of engaging lessons through target setting, effective planning, and a shared vision for collaborative learning. These significantly contribute to the personalised offer for all students. It can also be identified by the number of teaching and learning discussion groups timetabled each week. Teachers identify the leadership of teaching and learning as a key strength of the school. They highlight innovative and ambitious CPD

opportunities and a culture that encourages risk taking. The school is proactive in encouraging all staff to contribute to CPD delivery as leaders of learning as 'every teacher is a potential trainer'. Coaching has a significant impact on improving the quality of teaching. The innovative use of cross curricular triplets, subject specific mentoring and middle leaders coaching combine to ensure that teaching and learning remains at the heart of school improvement.

The highly effective systems and structures that are in place to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning accurately, identify strengths and areas of underperformance. As a result of this individual staff are well supported to improve. Robust self evaluation by middle leaders through department SEFs, action research carried out by the teaching and learning groups and the recently introduced training programme for second year teachers are some of the many examples of innovative practice that drive ambition. As a result of their actions leaders and managers at all levels are taking highly effective steps to drive up the quality of teaching still further. The impact of this can be seen in the significantly high outcomes for the vast majority of students.

The governors have an excellent understanding of the school which enables them to offer outstanding support and challenge. The chair of governors has regular contact with the school. This ensures that he and the governing body are clear about main priorities and can shape strategic direction. Robust systems are in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the work of the school and professional challenge offered to the mathematics department is evidence of their ability to hold the school to account. The governors are innovative and flexible and adapt to new ideas quickly supporting the work of the staff in improving outcomes for all young people. This is evidenced in the outstanding progress of the vast majority of students. The school meets all of its statutory requirements. Safeguarding procedures are in place and child protection staff have received regular and appropriate training.

The school values and acts upon the views of parents. Relationships with parents and carers are strong and the school has systems in place to ensure that students are well supported at transition points. Parental surveys record high levels of satisfaction in the service the school provides with the care guidance and support offered by the school valued highly. The use of data for tracking pupil progress is comprehensive and robust allowing the school to monitor individual progress as well as the progress of groups of students. It includes a tagging system for vulnerable groups which allows prompt support and intervention following progress reviews. This data is also used to review progress in individual subjects.

The school has developed an impressive range of partnerships, with a wide array of organisations, including Leading Edge, Specialist College, SEIP and Practical Learning which have contributed to high standards for the vast majority of students. In addition it enjoys successful collaboration with all North Tyneside secondary schools, training agencies and various work placements. It is also a lead partner in the Gaining Ground.

The specialist school status has had significant impact on the outcomes for young people and has supported the improvement in mathematics. It has generated weekly dialogue involving core subject leaders and senior staff which has prompted a more strategic shared approach to raising attainment in **all** subjects. Core subjects have recorded the best ever results in 2009. In addition, curriculum changes in science have extended student choices which fit a range of learning styles and expectations. The community objectives have been well met and embrace a range of outreach projects and partnerships.

The school strives relentlessly to achieve an environment where there is equal opportunities for all and discrimination is tackled robustly. This is evidenced in the meticulous records of incidents that are logged and also in the way in which students behave towards each other. They show high levels of tolerance and acknowledge the rights of others to hold different opinions and beliefs.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Sixth Form

Sixth form achievement is outstanding because of high attainment across the full range of subjects on a rapidly rising trend. Overall, A and AS Level results are well above average and improving incrementally. There were no underperforming subjects in 2009, in part because of focused school action working with departments analysed as less strong than others. Attainment in 2008 was significantly high and value added progress outstanding. This improvement is within a context of expansion as recruitment and retention in the

sixth form increase, including a marked rise in the number of applicants from other schools.

2008 A level results show attainment significantly high in art, biology, DT(Products), English literature, general studies, media, music and psychology. Applied A level shows significantly high scores for ICT, Science and Health & Social Care. Applied Science has been identified nationally as a model of good practice. All other subjects are within the national range with a large majority above the national average. Girls are significantly above, and boys above, but not significantly different from the national average points score at A level. Both are significantly above at Applied A level. Boys' performance at the higher grade levels possibly merits scrutiny as the 2008 gap is greater than the KS4 gender performance difference for this cohort. In 2009 half of all grades achieved at A Level were at A or B.

An ultimate outcome measure is provided by a markedly high number of successful higher education applications largely for the first choice university. The ethos and culture of the sixth form is a key driver of increased performance, Sixth form students display a mature attitude to their work and are good role models for the rest of the school.

The quality of teaching in the sixth form is outstanding. Teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge and up to date expertise at a level consistent with effective teaching and assessment of the course. The personalised approach to transition ensures that students are well prepared for the challenges of sixth form learning. This is particularly evident in the post 16 questionnaire where students are asked to evaluate their key stage 4 performance and identify favourite learning strategies. This is excellent practice particularly for those students who have previously attended another school. Highly effective teaching provides students with the wider demands and expectations of independent work in higher education, training and employment.

The head of sixth form works with his team to provide outstanding leadership in a large and inclusive sixth form. He and his team have a clear vision for the sixth form which reflects the school's values and ethos of ambition, aspiration and high standards. Outstanding outcomes are the result of highly effective practice; this is particularly evident in the school's monitoring and evaluation systems, support for personal development, and information, advice and guidance processes. Rigorous monitoring and exhaustive tracking, including regular progress checks ensure that intervention strategies can be implemented swiftly and with maximum impact. The excellent CPD opportunities for staff overall naturally include the sixth form and they are currently preparing for the introduction of A* at A level. Transition arrangements are excellent with the school working with students on entry in year 9 to ensure personalised provision.

The management of resources is highly effective and can be evidenced by; outstanding outcomes; very high retention rates; the attractiveness of the sixth form for students not in the school and very successful progression rates. Sixth form students comment very favourably on the quality of teaching they receive. They recognise that the school works hard to provide a wide range of strategies

to support learning. They judged the support they receive in the sixth form to be excellent and feel that they are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.

Students' engagement with parents and carers is excellent; with the school offering a wide range of opportunities to involve parents in their children's learning, for example, parents information evenings and individual parent and student meetings.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	
Taking into account:	1
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for 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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in the Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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