

Inspection of Haydon Bridge High School

Haydon Bridge, Hexham, Northumberland NE47 6LR

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 February 2024 and 16 April 2024

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires Improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires Improvement
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Standards of behaviour at Haydon Bridge remain a concern for some parents and pupils. However, there are signs that leaders' actions are beginning to secure improvements. While incidents of poor behaviour and the use of suspension have increased over the last two years, the new 'restart' centre is having an impact on reducing the number of pupils who are repeatedly suspended. Most lessons are calm. However, this is not consistently the case.

Attendance at the school is not improving for some groups of pupils. Many pupils in older year groups attend poorly. The school has recently introduced new procedures intended to improve pupils' attendance. This is beginning to have an impact on some pupils.

The school's curriculum has been recently improved. This is leading to improved outcomes for pupils in some subjects. However, the school ethos of 'SCRIPT values' is not currently embedded or understood by pupils and some staff. Some pupils lack resilience and independence in their work.

Most pupils speak confidently about the school's ethos of tolerance and acceptance. However, sometimes pupils experience derogatory language targeted at them. If issues of bullying do occur, pupils know that staff will help resolve them. Pupils are beginning to benefit from the wider pastoral work of the school. This includes an appropriate curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and independent careers advice.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has identified several important priorities for improvement. In some areas, such as curriculum design, the school has made greater strides than in others. Issues with appointing and retaining staff have negatively impacted on the school's improvement journey over time.

Leaders are taking action to ensure they have the staff they need in important roles. Training is being provided to staff. For example, staff have been supported to use 'warm words' as a strategy to build positive conversations with pupils and to allow them to follow the behaviour policy more consistently. Attendance remains an issue for many pupils. This is because leaders do not routinely make effective use of the data they collect. Where data is used to target interventions, there are signs of improvement among some pupil groups and for some pupils who have been severely absent.

Governors are aware of the challenges the school faces. They recognise that some pupils do not behave, attend or achieve as well as they might. Governors have acted on their concerns in some instances. For example, an additional working group to update statutory policies has recently been set up. New governors with specific knowledge and skills have been recruited to fill identified skills gaps.

Much of the school's curriculum is new. Leaders have focused on developing high-quality vocabulary in each subject. For some pupils, this is improving how well they can communicate verbally and in writing. Some staff use their subject expertise to bring lessons to life. In these cases, pupils are engaged and enthusiastic about their learning. Sometimes, however, the curriculum is implemented inconsistently. Expectations of pupils are variable. This limits the progress that some pupils make in their lessons.

The school has introduced a new assessment system. However, this is not embedded. In some cases, assessment is not used well to identify what gaps pupils have in their knowledge. Pupils do not consistently have sufficient opportunities in lessons to improve on their work. This impacts negatively on pupils' learning over time.

Adaptations to the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not as effective as they could be. Often, the quality of support depends on how well staff know pupils. Where relationships are strong, outcomes are more positive. However, recent training is helping to ensure staff are better prepared to support pupils with SEND.

Students in the sixth form have a more positive experience of education than pupils in the younger year groups. Staff and students share warm relationships. Lessons are well adapted to meet students' needs, including those with SEND. The curriculum in the sixth form includes an ambitious range of academic and vocational subjects. The wider curriculum for sixth-form students is also well considered. It helps them to prepare for their next stage in education, employment and training. For example, students carry out charity work and support younger pupils at the school with their learning.

The PSHE curriculum at the school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. It supports pupils to learn about different religions, cultures and how to stay safe. It emphasises healthy lifestyles and fundamental British values. However, some pupils do not have a strong understanding of the important messages this curriculum contains. The school has improved its careers programme over time. Careers advice and guidance are available to help pupils make informed choices about their future.

Parents and carers have mixed views on their child's experience at school. Many parents are positive about the range of subjects on offer. Some parents, however, do not feel the school responds effectively to their concerns. This is particularly the case for some parents of pupils with SEND. Many staff enjoy working at the school. Some staff say that they would benefit from additional support in dealing with incidents of poor behaviour.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the implementation of the curriculum and how pupils are assessed are inconsistent. As a result, pupils either do not learn the intended curriculum well or do not routinely know how to improve on their work. Staff do not consistently identify gaps in pupils' knowledge or act on them. The school should ensure that staff receive appropriate training to deliver the curriculum and that the new assessment system is thoroughly embedded.
- Expectations of pupils in lessons are sometimes low, and teachers do not routinely adapt lessons to meet pupils' needs. This leads to some pupils not achieving their potential. The school should ensure that high expectations are seen in all lessons and that staff receive appropriate training so that they are able to meet pupils' needs.
- Suspensions are too high. This means some pupils do not benefit from the curriculum and miss important learning. Leaders should continue to develop systems to reduce the number of pupils subject to suspension.
- Attendance among some groups of pupils has declined over time. This is impacting negatively on pupils' education. Leaders do not use the data that they have to help them develop targeted attendance strategies. The school should develop procedures for monitoring and addressing poor attendance. These procedures should be closely monitored to ensure they have a rapid impact on target pupil groups.
- Despite the progress made in developing the PSHE curriculum, some pupils have a limited understanding of what has been taught in the PSHE curriculum. This limits pupils' preparation for life after school. The school should take steps to monitor the impact of the PSHE curriculum, to support pupils to be better prepared for life in modern Britain.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need](#)

of help and protection; pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's pupil premium funding (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	122328
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10297332
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	423
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	46
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Anderson
Headteacher	David Nisbet
Website	www.haydonbridgehigh.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 July 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher and several other senior leaders are new to the school. The headteacher took up post in September 2023.
- This school currently uses one alternative education provider. This provider is not registered with the Department for Education.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
- The inspection was carried out on 27 and 28 February 2024. Inspectors returned on 16 April 2024 to gather additional evidence in line with Ofsted inspections and visits: Deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence policy.
- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority and members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: mathematics, English, science, art and design, and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with some pupils and teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created a strong culture of safeguarding.
- The school's PSHE and careers curriculum was also reviewed. Inspectors reviewed the provision for pupils with SEND, in addition to the school's strategy to improve pupils' literacy. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in a range of situations, including in corridors, at breaktimes, at lunchtimes and in lessons. They also spoke to pupils about behaviour and bullying.
- Inspectors considered the responses from parents to Ofsted Parent View. This included the comments submitted via the free-text facility. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey and staff survey.

Inspection team

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