

# The King Edward VI School

Cottingwood Lane, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 1DN

## Inspection dates

30 April 2014–1 May 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Ambitious and excellent leadership and governance, and extremely skilled and dedicated staff, have ensured that the school's high performance has been sustained since the previous inspection.
- All groups of students make rapid progress from their different starting points. A small exception is the small proportion of students who join the school with lower than expected reading skills, which slows their progress in some subjects.
- Teachers are highly skilled and enthusiastic; they are relentless in their drive to help students to achieve their very best.
- Students behave extremely well in and out of classrooms. They show high levels of respect and self-discipline at all times. Excellent pastoral care ensures that they feel safe and are safe in school.
- Middle leaders are unwavering in their drive to bring about further improvement and learn from each other's excellent practices.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Outstanding leadership of this highly inclusive sixth form underpins a broad curriculum and the exceptional performance of students. Results at A-level are significantly above national averages, so that the vast majority of students move on to their first choice universities, which include Oxbridge and universities in the prestigious Russell group.
- The curriculum is continually developing in response to students' needs so that it helps them meet their aspirations successfully. The rich extra-curricular programme has a very positive impact on students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school makes an extensive contribution towards school improvement in the region.
- Governors are steadfast in holding leaders to account for the quality of teaching and students' progress. They successfully promote the school's further improvement through skilful fund-raising.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 45 lessons or parts of lessons, five of which were observed jointly with senior staff.
- Discussions were held with the Chair and other members of the governing body, senior and middle leaders and students.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding policies and procedures, information about students' progress and attainment, and the school's own evaluation of its performance.
- Inspectors examined work in students' books and listened to groups of students in Year 9 read.
- Inspectors took account of the 144 responses to the on-line questionnaire, (Parent View), and of 83 questionnaires returned by staff.

## Inspection team

Moira Fitzpatrick, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Kevin Broadfoot	Additional Inspector
Jim Hall	Additional Inspector
Patrick Hargreaves	Additional Inspector
Darren Stewart	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The King Edward VI School is an above average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is small; so too is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided for students known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is below average; so too is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school makes use of off-site provision for vocational courses for fewer than 10 students.
- The King Edward VIth High School is the founding school of the Three Rivers Trust, which was formed in December 2011. The Trust comprises one high school and two middle schools. The executive headteacher is a National Leader of Education.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the reading skills, and thereby accelerate the progress, of the small proportion of students who join the school with reading skills that are lower than expected for their age, by:
  - implementing current plans to introduce a common approach to the teaching of reading across all of the schools in the Trust
  - training staff to teach the new programme effectively
  - monitoring the effectiveness of the new programme and responding quickly to any perceived weaknesses.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Students enter the school with attainment that is broadly average. They make excellent progress so that by the end of Year 11 their attainment is very high on all measures. This high performance has been maintained since the previous inspection. The proportion of students making expected and better than expected progress is very high compared with national averages. In 2013 84% of students made expected progress and 51% made more than expected progress in English; in mathematics the figures were 90% and 53% respectively. The progress of students in receipt of pupil premium funding, was above the average for their group, and at the national average for non-pupil premium students.
- The most able students are extremely well supported to consistently achieve the highest grades. Teachers are ambitious for them to do well and spot any slowing in progress through their close checks on students' work. They quickly take action to remedy this, should it occur.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make the same progress as that of other groups because teachers plan carefully for their learning. They give high quality support in lessons and in their feedback to help students to improve. Any students with difficulties that persist are referred to the Access Centre where one-to-one support and appropriate interventions are provided, which help students overcome these difficulties.
- Students who occasionally attend vocational off-site provision achieve as well as other students do.
- Students supported by the pupil premium achieve well from their starting points. Funding is well targeted to help them overcome difficulties in learning and any barriers to their progress, so their progress exceeds that of their peers nationally. In 2013 the gap between their attainment and that of their school peers was approximately one GCSE grade. Inspection evidence and school data suggest this gap has reduced significantly for students currently in Year 11.
- Reading is promoted well in all subjects; students read widely and with enjoyment. For the vast majority, high level reading skills means they can read independently at a good speed which accelerates their progress in lessons. A small minority do not develop such effective skills and their progress slows in some lessons where reading is central to their learning. The school is aware that a proportion of students join in Year 9 with low reading skills, and have plans in hand to implement a reading programme across the Trust's family of schools.
- Early entry for GCSE mathematics is used for all students in Year 10. Thereafter, all students resit the examination in Year 11.
- Outstanding, inclusive provision in the sixth form ensures that all students make excellent progress, whatever their starting points. Students thrive in the highly ambitious ethos because their progress is closely monitored and supported. They develop academic rigour, resilience and the determination to succeed and reach their goals. Students' social skills are also extremely well developed, so that they are very well prepared for the next stage of their lives with a wide range of high level skills.

### The quality of teaching is outstanding

- High quality teaching over time has a notable impact on students' progress, especially in the key areas of English and mathematics. There is much outstanding teaching across the school, especially in the sixth form.
- Teachers know their students well and are ambitious for them to do their best. Targets are challenging and activities pitched at different levels so that all students are stretched. In response, students work with great enthusiasm and determination. Their concentration and perseverance are outstanding and this accelerates the rate at which they learn.
- Teachers make good use of their exceptional subject knowledge to assess how well students are

mastering new learning; then they develop it further. For example, in Year 13 students were learning about vectors and were challenged to justify their solutions to problems, then skilfully guided to discover alternative methods. They made rapid progress because of astute appraisal of their efforts, which helped them deepen their understanding and find new ways of working quickly.

- Highly effective questioning both deepens students' understanding and allows them to learn from each other. Year 11 students made exceptional progress when exploring textual themes in English. Probing questions assessed students' knowledge and made them think deeply. Other students added to the pool of ideas so that they spurred on each other's thinking and understanding.
- Constructive feedback and high quality marking gives students excellent advice on how to improve their work and progress to a higher level. Teachers are particularly assiduous about this in the examination classes in Years 10 to 13. Here, students are seen carefully redrafting work and improving their potential for examination success. There is less emphasis on such rigorous feedback and regular sessions to improve work in Year 9 classes.
- Frequent opportunities for students to engage in discussion drive their learning at a very good rate because they learn much from each other. Groups are carefully chosen so that there is a good mix of knowledge and thinking skills to support rapid learning. This works extremely well because students have high levels of respect for themselves and others. They are sensitive to the needs of all in the group and ensure that everyone's ideas are listened to and valued.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. It is exemplary in classrooms and during social times. Movement around the school is extremely orderly and civilised, which is particularly noteworthy, given the size of the site and the number of students moving between lessons. Behaviour records confirm this high quality behaviour over time. Exclusions are very rare in this highly inclusive school.
- Students consistently demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning. They are keen to succeed and rise enthusiastically to the many challenges that teachers set. In lessons, they confidently express their views or ask questions to improve their understanding, because they know they will be shown respect by their peers.
- Students have a detailed understanding, gained through effective teaching, of the different types of bullying, including prejudice-based and cyber-bullying. They say bullying is a rare occurrence and always dealt with swiftly and effectively. Students have absolute trust in their teachers to resolve problems.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Excellent pastoral care means that students are very well known to staff, who are alert to any changes in students' performance or mood. Very effective systems are in place to respond to students' needs, for example, the Access Centre where one-to-one tuition and support are readily available for students with learning or emotional difficulties, as well as those seeking specific help to catch up. Students speak highly of the support and care they receive and their parents overwhelmingly agree that their children are well cared for.
- Students welcome opportunities to make a difference to the school and value their roles as form representatives on the school council where they can influence improvements to the school. Sixth-form students are excellent role models for younger students through their own impeccable behaviour and the many volunteer roles they have within the school and the local community.

**The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The executive headteacher, Head of School, senior staff and governors share an ambitious vision which drives improvement in this and all schools in the Trust they lead.
- Leaders at all levels, including middle leaders, are relentless in their determination to sustain the highest quality provision and outstanding outcomes for students. Their monitoring of the school's effectiveness is extremely robust. Evaluation is incisive and accurate, and the school's actions bring about the intended result.
- Students' rapid progress is driven by aspirational target-setting, the rigorous and frequent checks on students' performance, and swift, effective intervention whenever underachievement is spotted.
- Outstanding teaching has been developed through the rigorous management of teachers' performance and frequent high quality professional development for all staff. Strong collaboration between departments ensures that outstanding practice is shared and expertise is used very effectively to promote the development of other colleagues. Consequently the school has a track record of 'growing its own' leaders, and of sharing their expertise to support other schools in the region.
- Close partnership within the Trust of schools enables the school to develop improvements across all schools. For example, the planned introduction of new assessment and reading programmes, intended to ensure that students are well prepared for the challenges of the high school and that transition is smooth and successful for all students.
- The dynamic curriculum is regularly reviewed and adjusted to ensure that the learning needs of individual students are fully met. For example, the introduction of a common approach to teaching reading across the Trust is planned to ensure that those few pupils who have not fully achieved good levels when they join the school can continue in the programme until they do. Curriculum developments in the sixth form have created an exciting and extensive range of choice for students of all abilities. Students speak highly of the opportunities they have beyond school because of the choices they can make in the sixth form.
- Extra-curricular activities are extremely diverse and appreciated by students. The school's ethos, the rich experiences provided for students and the taught curriculum promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well.
- Students are well informed about progression routes as they move through the school. This, combined with links with other providers and employers ensures that students can make fully informed choices about their qualifications that match their aspirations and interests.
- The school benefits from external verification of its work from an external consultant. There are also close links with the local authority because leaders and staff support wider school improvement in the local area.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors show exceptional commitment to the school's continuous improvement. Active links across all areas of the school's work provide them with a strong basis for their evaluations, and give them a good understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. They ensure that funding is carefully allocated to achieve good value from spending decisions. For example, they are aware of the impact of pupil premium spending and hold leaders robustly to account. Governors are rigorous in their management of the headteacher's performance and are closely involved in agreeing the salary progression of teaching staff. They ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met, and that students and staff are safe on site.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137746
<b>Local authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	443203

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	13–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1459
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	470
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Roger Vaughan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Simon Taylor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 July 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01670 515415
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