

Norton College

Langton Road, Norton, Malton, North Yorkshire, YO17 9PT

Inspection dates 2–3 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have taken incisive action to bring about rapid improvement.
- GCSE results have improved significantly and the weakness in achievement at the last inspection has been overcome. Students now make good progress in English and mathematics.
- Teaching is good: it is well-planned; assessment is used effectively and relationships in the classroom promote learning well.
- Behaviour is good and students feel safe because of the clear communication of common values, consistent procedures for managing behaviour and the pro-active approach to helping students.
- The good sixth form is an emerging strength of the college. Achievement is now in line with national expectations at A level and in vocational courses.
- Senior and middle leaders communicate clear purpose and demonstrate a rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluation. Staff share a strong commitment to professional development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some teaching requires improvement, particularly in science. On occasion, students are not fully engaged in learning and they do not have enough skills and sense of responsibility to work independently.
- Improvement in the sixth form is very recent and achievement at AS level is inconsistent.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 39 part lessons, including a few joint observations with senior leaders.
- Inspectors met with a group of students from each year group and talked informally with others in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders, a group of teachers and representatives of the governing body and the trust.
- A wide range of documents were scrutinised including the school improvement plan, evidence about the work of the governing body, data relating to students' attainment and progress, and records of behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of the 78 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) and 50 questionnaires completed anonymously by staff shortly before the inspection.

Inspection team

Bernard Campbell, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Pauline Pitman

Additional Inspector

Pamela Hemphill

Additional Inspector

Peter Eves

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- Norton College became an academy in 2011. It is the only school in the Evolution Schools Learning Trust.
- Norton College is a smaller-than-average secondary school with a sixth form.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium (this is additional funding to support pupils who are known to be eligible for Early Years Foundation Stage, those students who are in the care of the local authority and children of service personnel) is below average.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is low.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is low. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- A small number of students in the main school and sixth form attend off-site provision for part of each week. The college uses Askham Bryan College, The Academy, and Ryedale Out Of School Education.
- In 2012, the college exceeded the government's floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring that all staff consistently engage and challenge students in their learning
 - continuing to extend the range of strategies to enable students to take more initiative and responsibility in their learning and to work more independently
 - ensuring that teaching in science is more consistently good or outstanding
 - continuing to share best practice in college and increasing opportunities to learn from other schools.
- Further improve achievement in the sixth form by ensuring that students make at least the expected amount of progress in all subjects, especially at AS level.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Since the last inspection, GCSE results have improved significantly. Attainment rose markedly in 2012 and has risen further in 2013. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, has more than doubled from the low point of 2011 and is now above the national average for 2012.
- GCSE results improved significantly in mathematics in 2012 and in English in 2013. In 2013, Year 11 students made more progress than average in English and mathematics from their starting points at the end of Key Stage 2. Improvements in English and mathematics have been brought about by effective subject leadership, rigorous analysis of data about students' progress, well targeted support for underachieving students and improved teaching.
- Early entry in mathematics has changed and now ensures that all students continue with mathematics in Year 11. For example, those who gain the top grades early start the AS level course in Year 11 and gain additional accreditation even if they do not take up mathematics in the sixth form.
- GCSE results in science are lower than in 2012. This is due to discontinuity in teaching, which is now more stable, and some weaker teaching, which is being tackled. Results in geography that were not as good as other subjects have improved as a result of better teaching and leadership.
- Staff are more aware of students eligible for the pupil premium and are meeting their needs more effectively through a wide range of well targeted activities. The gap in attainment and progress in GCSE English and mathematics, between students eligible for free school meals and others, narrowed markedly in 2013.
- The outcomes for students identified with special educational needs and disabilities are good. This is because of the rigorous monitoring, and the introduction of pertinent and bespoke student support to enable students to catch up or to gain confidence as learners.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 was low for a small core of students who attended alternative provision. As a result this provision is being phased out and has been replaced by in-house provision of vocational courses with greater scope to gain accredited qualifications.
- Achievement in the sixth form has improved recently and is good overall. In 2013, analysis by the college indicates that progress at A level was in line with the 2012 national averages. Progress on vocational courses is regularly in line with national averages and is strong in media and performing arts. At AS level, progress is inconsistent due to underperformance on a few courses. Lower performance at A and AS level was due to lack of experience in teaching these courses and weaknesses in guidance and admissions criteria which meant that some students were on inappropriate courses. These issues have been resolved for the current Year 12.

The quality of teaching is good

- Students make good progress in the great majority of lessons. Lessons are well planned and structured and have a clear focus. Lessons build effectively on the work of the previous lesson and students know what they are working towards. Resources are well-prepared to support independent learning and develop students understanding of key words. Home learning is well planned and managed, and makes a positive contribution to learning in lessons. Students appreciate the care that is taken to ensure that homework is regular and manageable.
- Teachers' enthusiastic and positive relationships with their classes encourage participation and motivation. The good quality of classroom dialogue encourages students to contribute to discussion. Teachers' questions probe understanding and challenge students to explain and justify their thinking. Teaching assistants are well prepared for lessons and are flexible in the ways in which they provide support for individuals and groups.
- Opportunities for writing have been extended across subjects, including in mathematics. Students are given helpful guidance on how to write for different purposes when doing their

homework. The promotion of reading for pleasure has resulted in increased rates of borrowing from the school library.

- Assessment takes place regularly and is checked carefully for its accuracy. As a result data about student progress informs teaching well. Teachers' planning regularly includes strategies to support the progress of underachieving students and those with special educational needs. Marking gives students specific feedback about what they have achieved and provides constructive guidance on the next steps. Teachers often give helpful verbal feedback to individuals during lessons. Peer- and self- assessment are used frequently, which extends students' understanding of what they are learning.
- In a few lessons, strategies for managing behaviour are not fully effective and off-task behaviour limits learning. On occasion, the teacher talks too much and does not involve students in productive activity or motivate them to be independent and improve their skills. More teaching requires improvement in science than in other subjects. An example of outstanding teaching was observed in science where high expectations and multi-sensory activities challenged students' understanding of electrical and light energy and generated strong enthusiasm for learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students are keen to learn. In lessons, they work in an atmosphere of trust and respect, which promotes dialogue and discussion between students and with adults. The college is calm, orderly and friendly and students are polite and helpful.
- The college's successful drive to raise academic standards has been linked closely with actions to improve students' behaviour for learning. All students wear a badge with 'ASPIRE' on it which reinforces the college's higher aspirations. Recent initiatives such as the 'behaviour charter' have made expectations and consequences clear and have led to greater consistency in the management of behaviour.
- Strategies to engage students more actively in lessons have led to improved behaviour and learning. As a result there are fewer exclusions and fewer occasions when staff ask for help to deal with behaviour in a lesson. Students are pleased with these improvements and most parents responding to the survey say behaviour is managed well. On occasion, students in a few lessons do not take enough responsibility for their own behaviour and learning.
- Incidents of bullying are very rare and students say they are well supported by adults. Senior students take responsibility for looking after areas of the school at break and lunchtime and supporting younger students. Students feel safe. Online safety for students has been made a priority as the college trials ways of increasing the use of social media to enhance learning.
- Attendance is consistently a little above average. Punctuality is good. Persistent absence has been steadily reduced over the last three years and is now better than average. This is the result of rigorous monitoring, rewards for good attendance and effective work with parents.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders have overcome the key weakness at the last inspection. Achievement, which was inadequate, is now good at GCSE and improving strongly in the sixth form.
- The quality of teaching has improved as result of rigorous lesson observation and sustained and well-targeted professional development. Stronger teachers have been identified as lead professionals and coaching has increased the proportion of good and outstanding teaching. Innovative approaches have been implemented to extend strategies for teaching and learning. For example, all staff attended a short and imaginative professional development session before school started on the second day of the inspection. However, few have had opportunities to learn from practice in other schools.
- Performance management has been made more effective by formally identifying, supporting and reviewing the progress of teachers or managers whose performance caused concern. Individual targets have been tailored to whole-school priorities for improving teaching. Pay increases were

not awarded to higher-paid staff when school performance was weak or where concerns existed and this policy has recently been extended to all teachers.

- The quality of the sixth form has improved as a result of effective leadership. Leaders have an accurate picture of strengths and weaknesses and a determination to bring about further improvement. Effective systems are in place to monitor and improve the quality of sixth-form teaching and the progress of students. These have not eradicated inconsistency in a few courses at AS level.
- Weaknesses in information, advice and guidance have been tackled. Students who have recently made choices about education, training or employment post-16 have had appropriate and impartial advice. The college has established good links with local universities and employers, which help students make the right choices. This is reflected in improved retention rates and the low proportion not in education, training or employment.
- The curriculum meets the needs of most students well. At Key Stage 3, students who fall behind have opportunities to catch up in a programme taught by subject specialists. Additional support for students with a low reading age is well organised. At Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, the balance between vocational and GCSE and A-level courses has been adjusted, with more students following recognised academic courses than in the past. Strong provision for sports and the performing arts enhances students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. The college has international links which contribute to students' awareness of diversity. The college plans to make a link with an urban multi-ethnic school.
- Leaders have set high standards and encourage high aspirations. Effective policies and procedures have established strong common values and a consistent approach to behaviour and learning. The development of a new team of progress leaders has sharpened the focus on the needs of individual students. The analysis of data is rigorous and the accuracy of assessment is checked systematically. Close monitoring and accurately targeted action has improved the progress of individual students and groups, including students eligible for the pupil premium. This approach is now being extended to Key Stage 3.
- The headteacher provides strong direction. Accountability is strong and at the same time staff share a strong sense of common purpose, loyalty and teamwork. He has made many changes in staffing which have strengthened the quality of teaching and of leadership and management. Middle and senior leaders, including those new to the role, have taken an increasingly strong lead, which has accelerated the pace of change. Senior leaders are tackling aspects of middle leadership which are not as strong.
- The college has good relationships with parents, as shown by the improved and now high attendance at parents' evenings. The online questionnaire shows that most parents have positive views of the school. Staff make concerted efforts to engage with parents who have concerns or are hard-to reach.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors and trustees know the school well and use their expertise effectively to closely monitor and question the quality of teaching and the progress of students. They were actively involved in decisions that have brought about improvement, for example, by providing additional staffing in English and mathematics. They are ambitious for further improvement. Their reflective self-evaluation led to a well-managed changeover of Chair of the Governing Body and the vice-chair. Governors have engaged positively with staff in introducing new policies on performance pay. They are outward looking and plan to extend their links with other schools and governing bodies in order to sharpen their practice further.

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

Unique reference number	136728
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	408882

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	789
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy Judson
Headteacher	Phil Loftus
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2012
Telephone number	01653 693296
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Email address	admin@nortoncollege.net

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