

Inspection of High Tunstall College of Science

Elwick Road, West Park, Hartlepool TS26 0LQ

Inspection dates:	28 and 29 January 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

High Tunstall College is a very inclusive school, where pupils are happy and safe. It is a diverse community, where pupils are known as individuals. Pastoral care is strong. The school often goes to great lengths to support pupils and their families. As a result of this care, relationships between pupils and staff are positive.

The school has high expectations. However, there are inconsistencies in the quality of education that pupils receive. As a result, the depth of pupils' knowledge and what they can remember is varied. This is also reflected in published examination results that show pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, do not achieve as well as they should.

Lessons are focused, purposeful and typically free from distractions. Pupils are polite and conduct themselves maturely, including at social times. They make an active contribution to school life in the various leadership roles they are offered as part of the school's 'leadership academy'. Pupils who are in the 'make a difference' team help their peers when they need support. Those who are the school's 'pupil poet laureates' write poetry for significant school occasions.

The school's programme to support pupils' personal development is very effective. Pupils are offered an extensive range of opportunities to develop their interests and talents. Pupils appreciate this offer and often take the lead in running extra-curricular clubs.

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

The school's curriculum is broad and ambitious. However, across the curriculum, the impact of teaching is variable. Pupils do not secure or develop deep knowledge and understanding sufficiently. The school has identified the important knowledge and skills that pupils should learn. However, in some subjects, this needs refining so it is more precise and embedded where recent changes have been made.

Teachers are subject specialists. They explain concepts clearly. However, they do not consistently check pupils' understanding closely enough, correct pupils' misconceptions or address gaps in pupils' learning in a timely way. This limits the progress through the curriculum that some pupils make.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported closely. Pupils who access the additionally resourced provisions benefit from specialist support. The school identifies pupils' needs quickly. Teachers receive detailed information about the ways to meet pupils' needs. These strategies are used consistently and pupils access the curriculum appropriately. However, pupils with SEND are limited by the same inconsistencies in the curriculum as their peers and do not achieve as well as they should.

The school recognises the importance of reading. It has recently begun work to improve this part of the curriculum. This work is in its infancy. The school has not identified the weakest readers across the school consistently. This means that some pupils are not

receiving the support they need to become confident readers and access the curriculum securely.

Leaders' work to ensure that pupils attend school regularly is effective. The school works successfully to support pupils when it is needed. Pupils' attendance, including for those who are vulnerable, is high.

The school's personal, social, health education (PSHE) programme is planned carefully. Pupils learn about important issues, such as healthy relationships and online safety. The school adapts this programme according to emerging needs. The programme teaches pupils about British values, such as democracy and the rule of law.

The careers programme helps pupils to make informed decisions about their next steps. Pupils learn about the world of work through visitors to school and by undertaking work experience.

Leaders are respected by staff and the wider community. They are committed to inclusion and ensuring that pupils remain engaged with their education, particularly when they face barriers. There is some variation in how consistent the school's expectations relating to the teaching of the curriculum are reviewed.

Governors are skilled and committed to their duties. Staff appreciate leaders' focus on their well-being and feel supported with their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The implementation of the curriculum does not consistently enable pupils to learn, remember and apply key concepts in sufficient depth. Many pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are not achieving as well as they could. The school must improve the implementation of the curriculum, so that pupils secure their understanding of important knowledge and achieve more across the subjects that they study.
- The school's programme to support pupils with their reading is in its infancy. In some cases, the pupils who could benefit from have not been identified and support programmes have not been fully rolled out. This means that some pupils are not given the support they need to overcome barriers to reading and the wider learning this underpins. The school needs to intensify its actions to identify swiftly those pupils who need extra help with their reading and implement the support that they need rapidly.
- There is some variation in how well the school's policies for teaching the curriculum and checking pupils' subject-specific learning are implemented across subjects. In some cases, variations in the depth of pupils' understanding in subjects are not

sufficiently identified or acted upon. The school should work with staff to further apply the school's policies for the teaching and assessment of important concepts in the subjects that they study, so that pupils' learning can be deepened.

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	111748
Local authority	Hartlepool Borough
Inspection number	10346282
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1387
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Timothy Blades
Headteacher	Mark Tilling
Website	www.htcs.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	1 and 2 July 2021

Information about this school

- The school has specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. This provision is for pupils with autism and medical and physical disabilities. The school has a second specially resourced provision for pupils with moderate learning difficulties.
- The school currently uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- 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

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 members of the governing body. Inspectors reviewed documentation relating to governance, including minutes from governor meetings.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, geography, modern languages and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work.
- Inspectors also visited lessons from a range of other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils’ interests first.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils formally during the inspection and spoke with them at social times and in lessons.
- Inspectors met with groups of staff formally during the inspection and spoke with them throughout the inspection. Inspectors also considered the opinions expressed through Ofsted’s staff survey.
- Inspectors took account of responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Dan McKeating, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
Nicola Reed	Ofsted Inspector
Philip Wheatley	Ofsted Inspector
Bernard Clark	Ofsted Inspector
Jill Bowe	Ofsted Inspector

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