

Newton Abbot College

Old Exeter Road, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 2NF

Inspection dates

25–26 April 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, staff and pupils work well together, and this provides for a harmonious school, where pupils are thriving.
- Leaders have high expectations. By prioritising their actions carefully, standards and pupils' progress are improving. However, planning is not precise enough so does not provide a clear focus for some aspects of monitoring and evaluation.
- Leaders consider the curriculum annually in light of the current cohort. Consequently, pupils receive a suitable offer of subject choices.
- Pupils are respectful of each other and adults. Their behaviour is consistently of a high standard.
- Most teachers plan effectively, and pupils engage in their learning. On occasions, some teachers fail to challenge the most able pupils to extend their learning.
- Teaching in mathematics is not as strong as other subjects, particularly in key stage 3. Teachers do not use reasoning and problem-solving adequately and do not build on the prior achievements of pupils at key stage 2.
- Pupils attend school regularly. Very few pupils are persistently absent. Leaders use systems effectively to chase the few pupils who do not attend consistently.
- Pupils have a strong moral conscience and understand the consequences of their choices.
- Pupils have access to several experiences that enrich their lives, both in the school day and as part of extra-curricular activities. However, leaders have not yet planned a coherent personal, social, health and economic programme. Younger pupils do not feel that the curriculum fits their needs. Older pupils, including those in the sixth form, are unclear about extremism and its influences.
- The study programmes for 16- to 19-year-olds are effective. Students go on work experience and placements that prepare them for life beyond school.
- Students in the sixth form are achieving significantly above average in the majority of their A-level subjects because teaching is good.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should make certain that standards continue to rise by ensuring that:
 - planning is precise and is used effectively for monitoring and evaluating progress
 - there is a more coordinated approach to pupils' personal, social, health and economic education so that it has a greater impact on their understanding of life in modern Britain.
- Leaders should ensure that there is greater consistency in the teaching of:
 - the most able pupils in each phase, including those who are disadvantaged, so that they are challenged to think deeply about their learning.
- Improve the teaching of mathematics by:
 - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve in key stage 3
 - including more reasoning and problem-solving through the application of pupils' skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal is a role model for staff and pupils in the school. He leads by example and provides a well-balanced environment in which pupils are learning well.
- Leaders, including governors, know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have prioritised the areas for improvement accurately. However, some of the planning is weak and is not effectively coordinated.
- Leaders have improved teaching. They have provided useful training for staff. Most teachers use this well. Teachers are keen to improve, and the school has the right momentum to continue its improvements.
- Systems for monitoring staff are tight. Most leaders' roles are more specific, which provides stronger accountability. There are still some areas of responsibility in which leadership is less clear, such as the responsibility for the Year 7 catch-up funding and the sixth form.
- Pupil premium funding is being spent wisely this year. The leader of this area has used the careful evaluation of last year's work effectively to support disadvantaged pupils currently on roll. As a result, the difference between disadvantaged pupils and others is diminishing.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) leads her team of assistant learning coaches effectively. She spends the funding efficiently and, consequently, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are making strong progress.
- Senior leaders hold middle leaders to account stringently. This has enabled pupils to make better progress year-on-year. Middle leaders accept senior leaders' initiatives willingly as they have the interests of the pupils at heart.
- Leaders plan the curriculum to reflect pupils' abilities and interests. The curriculum offers pupils a wide-ranging set of subjects, academic and vocational pathways that enable them to move smoothly into training, apprenticeships or the sixth form.
- Extra-curricular provision complements pupils' academic work and supports pupils in cultural and physical development.
- Leaders have tried various models for delivering personal, social, health and economic education in the last few years. The teaching of safety initiatives, including when using the internet and social media, are successful and pupils are aware of different types of bullying. The teaching of the dangers of extremism and terrorism are less secure and pupils do not fully understand these issues.

Governance of the school

- Governors are effective because, in recent times, they have made sure that new governors have appropriate skill sets. They use relevant training to supplement their knowledge.

- Governors challenge leaders effectively. They use an external education specialist to carry out the performance management targets for the principal. This ensures that staff targets for improving the school are focused on the correct issues.
- Governors have questioned the use of pupil premium funding and this has led to more effective spending that is having an impact on the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors are less sure about the spending of the Year 7 catch-up funding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have implemented training to make staff aware of the new guidelines from the Department for Education. Leaders regularly check that staff have a secure understanding. Together, they take appropriate action to identify pupils who may be at risk of neglect or abuse. The designated safeguarding lead reports concerns in a timely fashion.
- Pupils learn well about keeping themselves safe in the community and when using the internet and social media.
- Administrative records are in order and staff checks for safer recruitment are stringent.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers' high expectations ensure that pupils engage well in their learning. Pupils come to school with the correct equipment and attitudes, so there is no learning time lost.
- Teachers question pupils effectively. They provide suitable strategies to support pupils who are reticent to answer or who feel insecure in their knowledge.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use subject-specific terminology regularly and intentionally improve and enhance pupils' vocabulary.
- Teachers consider how to teach different topics in the most effective way. Experienced practitioners support those new to teaching so that their practice improves rapidly.
- Teachers expect pupils to recall their learning routinely so that their knowledge increases. Pupils apply new knowledge in a range of circumstances.
- A few teachers do not challenge the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils. These teachers do not provide the stretch and challenge necessary to allow pupils to achieve their potential.
- There is variability in the teaching of mathematics. Older pupils receive teaching that prepares them well for the examinations in key stage 4. However, too often, mathematics teachers are not building on pupils' prior knowledge from key stage 2. There is an emphasis on calculations and fluency rather than expecting pupils to apply their knowledge to reasoning and problem-solving.
- There are a minority of pupils who are not checking their basic skills in English. Sometimes, teachers do not correct this, which compounds pupils' misunderstandings.

- Most pupils know what they need to do to improve their work and achieve their targets. Pupils apply themselves well to proofreading and correcting.
- Parents receive reports explaining what their children have achieved and what they need to do to improve further. In response to Parent View, 92% of parents believe that their children are taught well at the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and culture is promoted well.
- Pupils are confident and wear their uniform with pride.
- Leaders share their high expectations with pupils, who respond well. Pupils follow routines without having to be reminded of the rules.
- Leaders use rewards more frequently than sanctions. Pupils appreciate this positivity.
- Pupils take on positions of responsibility as ambassadors for such things as promoting anti-bullying strategies, mentoring younger pupils and providing mental health support.
- Pupils feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe in a range of circumstances. Pupils have good knowledge about staying healthy. They receive appropriate information about establishing secure relationships as they grow older.
- Leaders provide effective and impartial careers advice for pupils from Years 7 to 13. Pupils know about higher education establishments and apprenticeships that are available. There are strong systems in place to enable pupils to go on work experience in the community, as well as abroad.
- Pupils appreciate the vertical tutor system and commented positively on the support that younger pupils receive from older ones.
- Leaders promote fundamental British values but there are some aspects that need better evaluation, such as pupils' understanding of diversity.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils attend school regularly. Attendance is higher and persistent absence is lower than average and has been for the past three years.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in school, in lessons and at social times.
- Pupils are respectful of each other, staff and visitors.
- There is very little disruption to learning and on the rare occasions that it occurs, teachers deal with it swiftly.
- Exclusions have reduced over time because of the impact of high expectations. There have been no permanent exclusions in the current academic year.

- Although some parents expressed concerns about bullying, inspectors found no evidence of this. Pupils commented that bullying was rare and dealt with effectively when it did occur. In response to Parent View, 78% of parents believe that bullying is dealt with effectively and 16% say that they did not know about any bullying.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders' effective tracking and intervention have helped pupils to make better progress in every subject over time.
- As well as improvements in the core subjects, pupils do exceptionally well in the performing arts. Teachers are highly skilled and build pupils' knowledge practically as well as boosting their confidence.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making better progress as teachers plan more effectively to cater for their needs. Teachers consider seating plans carefully so that pupils can receive support more easily from teachers, assistant learning coaches and their peers.
- Pupils with SEND are well supported and make strong progress. The SENCo monitors their progress well.
- Pupils who arrive at school in Year 7 with literacy skills that are below average are making effective progress in their reading and spelling so that they are catching up with their peers in Years 7 and 8. Numeracy support is not as effective.
- Teachers encourage pupils to read widely and often. Volunteers support pupils who are weaker at reading, as do older pupils.
- In the end of key stage 4 examinations, pupils' progress in English and mathematics has improved and is in line with other pupils nationally. Pupils who take examinations in EBacc subjects make average progress currently.
- Pupils make strong progress in vocational subjects such as construction.
- Pupils are prepared well for their next stage in education, employment and training.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Managers know their students very well. They have regular updates with tutors to discuss any emerging issues on progress, welfare or attendance.
- Most students take A levels and make progress that is significantly above average.
- Students retaking level 2 courses in English and mathematics receive teaching from subject specialists. The curriculum leaders monitor the students' progress well. Most students improve their grades, but not always well enough to be able to go on to level 3 courses.
- Study programmes provide effective and sensible options for students who can take a combination of A levels and level 3 vocational diplomas. Also, leaders offer level 1 and 2 courses on construction and light motor vehicle maintenance. There are level 2 and 3 courses on hairdressing and beauty therapy. This wide and varied offer supports students in a range of academic and practical career paths. Subject specialists teach

these courses and students move on successfully to apprenticeships, training, employment and universities.

- The head of sixth form is a middle leader who is not overseen by one single senior leader, but by several. This has led to a lack of systematic evaluation of study programmes and destinations. Planning is not yet fully effective.
- Students receive enrichment packages that prepare them well for life beyond school. These packages include sport, first aid, volunteering, art and crafts and life skills such as cooking, washing and ironing. Students develop their own discussion groups with the support of adults and leaders, such as a mental health support group. External speakers, such as women who have rowed across the Atlantic, provide motivation.
- Year 12 students go on work experience that is risk assessed proficiently. Students on vocational courses go on local work placements to support their theoretical learning.
- Teachers have established clear boundaries, as they have in the main school. Therefore, students behave well in a respectful environment that is conducive to learning.
- Students work well together on their learning. For example, during the inspection, through discussion of research, students studying health and social care explored the impact of help provided to mental health patients.
- Students know their targets and are working at a suitable level to obtain them.
- Students' work is good consistently and much is of a very high standard. They use sophisticated vocabulary and technical language expertly when, for example, analysing science fiction and its different codes and conventions.
- Students are confident about the examination criteria and expectations of what to do to succeed in their end-of-course assessments.
- Students feel safe at school and know who to see if there are any concerns. Students are aware of online security and how to use social media responsibly. However, as with younger pupils, they are less sure about the 'Prevent' duty and the signs of extremist influences.
- Students attend regularly and there are effective systems in place to deal with any students who do not do so.

School details

Unique reference number	137124
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10056206

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1051
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	200
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair	Deborah Back
Principal	Paul Cornish
Telephone number	01626 367 335
Website	www.nacollege.devon.sch.uk
Email address	info@nacollege.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 May 2018

Information about this school

- Newton Abbot College is larger than the average secondary school.
- The school converted to an academy in 2011.
- There are more males than females in the school.
- The proportion of pupils who receive pupil premium funding is slightly lower than average.

- There is a greater proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan than average, but a lower proportion than average of pupils with SEND.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons jointly with senior leaders.
- A wide sample of pupils' work was scrutinised.
- Inspectors talked with groups of pupils from key stages 3, 4 and 5, as well as with other pupils informally across the site.
- Meetings were held with the principal, senior and middle leaders and members of the governing body.
- Documentary and other types of information were evaluated, including evidence relating to safeguarding and school evaluation.
- Inspectors took account of the 246 responses and 241 comments on the online Parent View survey, the 91 responses to the online pupil survey and the 84 responses to the staff online survey.

Inspection team

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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