

Seaton Burn College, A Specialist Business and Enterprise School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108647
Local Authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	356400
Inspection dates	22–23 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Gillian Salter-Smith

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
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	629
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	83
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Muriel Green
Headteacher	Ms Alison Shaw
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2009
School address	Seaton Burn Newcastle-upon-Tyne Tyne and Wear NE13 6EJ
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Thirty-nine lessons were visited and 33 teachers were seen. Meetings were held with groups of students, governors, staff and the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors observed the work of the college and documentation looked at included the self-evaluation form, the college improvement plan, information on students' progress and attainment, policies relating to safeguarding and child protection. They analysed 109 questionnaires from parents and carers together with a sample from staff and students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Whether teaching and learning are consistently effective enough to sustain improvements in students' achievement.
- Improvements in attendance and how close it is to the national average.
- The effectiveness of the specialist school status in promoting improvement.
- The effectiveness of subject leadership in bringing about improvements.
- The effectiveness of the work on community cohesion in helping students to understand and communicate with people from different backgrounds in the wider national community.
- The improvements being brought about in the sixth form.

Information about the school

Seaton Burn College was subject to a notice to improve at the last inspection. It is smaller compared to other schools of the same type. An above average proportion of students are known to be eligible for free school meals. Almost all students are from White British backgrounds. Very few speak English as an additional language. An above average proportion of students are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. There are a very few students who are looked after by adults other than their own parents. An above average proportion of students leave or join the school at times other than at the usual start in Year 7.

Sixth form provision is offered in collaboration with two other local schools. The college has a specialism in business and enterprise and is a full service extended school. The college has become a Foundation school and since September 2010 has been part of the North Tyneside Learning Trust.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

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.

Seaton Burn is a satisfactory school. It is improving rapidly and leaders and managers demonstrate a good capacity to improve further. Morale among staff is good and there is a shared determination to continue the improvements made. The effectiveness of leaders and managers has been strengthened since the previous inspection. Staff are held more closely to account for students' progress and there is a good balance between making demands of staff and providing support. Largely accurate self-evaluation by senior and middle leaders is informed by rigorous monitoring of outcomes and provision helping staff to focus on the right priorities. More challenging academic targets for individual students and the college are raising aspirations of staff, students and their parents or carers. Students' progress is tracked more closely and potential underachievement identified quickly. A wide range of support, in good partnership with many local agencies and through the full service extended school provision is provided. This helps students to overcome difficulties they face in their lives that prevent them from learning, and to catch up in their academic work. Care, guidance and support, including arrangements for safeguarding students, are now good and students feel safe and secure in college and attendance has improved and is securely in line with national averages.

Overall, students' achievement is satisfactory. The 2010 unvalidated GCSE results show significant improvement on previous years. Attainment is now broadly average with some indicators above average. Inspection evidence confirms that the progress of students currently in school continues to accelerate. Although progress in mathematics is improving, it is not as strong as many other subjects. Teaching and learning and the use of assessment are satisfactory. While there are examples of outstanding teaching and there is much good teaching in Key Stage 4, it is not as consistent in Key Stage 3 and the sixth form.

Students are consulted fully and contribute to decision making on improvements to the college and the local community. The specialist status provides many opportunities for students to take part in enterprise activities focusing on improving the college. Links with schools in Europe and Africa broaden students' understanding of different cultures globally and the college recognises the need to broaden students' tolerance and understanding of the breadth of cultures in the wider United Kingdom community.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement and accelerate progress in mathematics by:
 - providing more challenging tasks to match students' needs in lessons

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- ensuring students have more time to persevere and consolidate their mathematical skills and apply their knowledge to mathematical problems.
- Increase the proportion of lessons where teaching, learning and progress are good or outstanding, particularly in Key Stage 3, in subjects that are performing less well and in the sixth form, by:
 - ensuring that every student understands what they need to do in each lesson to reach their own targets
 - improving behaviour management, especially in Key Stage 3, to ensure all students are able to remain well focused on learning in all lessons
 - building students' confidence in oral communication through providing more opportunities for well-structured talk and discussion
 - increasing students' confidence to learn independently and be more actively involved in their learning
 - ensuring a consistent approach to developing students' basic business and enterprise skills across all subjects.
- Improve the impact of work done in community cohesion by:
 - providing more opportunities for students to understand and communicate with people with different cultural, religious and social backgrounds, from the wider United Kingdom community
 - improving the systems used to evaluate the impact of the work on students' outcomes.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

In most lessons students settle quickly to tasks and gain satisfaction from learning. In the best lessons they apply themselves well, willingly discuss their work with others and are gaining confidence in discussing their work. They set their own targets for success and collaborate well in pairs and groups to fulfil tasks. In the lessons where learning is less effective, students lack confidence in expressing their ideas and need much encouragement from staff to take responsibility for tasks and learning. Occasionally, younger students do not settle well to tasks and inappropriate behaviour holds back the pace of learning.

From broadly average starting points in Year 7, students make satisfactory progress and reach average attainment by the end of Year 11. Progress is more rapid in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3 because teaching is more consistently effective. The 2010 unvalidated results show that attainment and progress are improving rapidly. Some subjects, including English, reach above average attainment. Other indicators such as the proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades and five or more A* to G grades are above average. Although attainment and progress have improved in mathematics, they remain weaker than in most other subjects.

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Observation of learning in lessons confirms that progress is accelerating, most rapidly in Key Stage 4. Boys' progress is better than that of girls but the gap between them is closing. The progress of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory. The attainment targets for the specialist subjects in 2010 were met for business and communication, exceeded for information and communication technology and not quite met for mathematics. The target for students gaining three or more A*/A grades was exceeded.

Students are increasingly proud of their college. Most enjoy school and are happy that they are cared for well. They say that incidents of bullying are rare and they are confident that staff will sort them out quickly. Behaviour is orderly in most areas of the school, although a very few students find it difficult to conform to the expectations for learning in lessons. Students take part in many community activities, enjoying luncheon clubs with local elderly people and volunteering to lead sporting activities, to take part in gardening projects, or take part in performances by the choir and instrumentalists. A good proportion take part in extra-curricular sporting activities but the school is aware that more needs to be done to improve the diet and active lifestyles of some students. Students are increasingly developing workplace skills through enterprise projects. The proportion of students leaving at age 16 with no clear route into education, training or employment has reduced significantly and is below the national average.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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How effective is the provision?

Teaching and the use of assessment are improving and helping to accelerate the progress of students. In most lessons, rewards are used well to encourage positive attitudes. Teachers' secure knowledge underpins good questioning that develops students' thinking and understanding. Information and communication technology and other resources are used effectively to present a variety of activities that engage students. A consistent approach to planning ensures that lesson objectives are clear and students understand the purpose of lessons. Assessment is accurate and most students know their target level or grade. However, tasks are not always planned to match individual needs, especially in mathematics, and some students do not know what they need to do in a lesson to reach a specific target grade or level. Increasingly, students assess their own and each other's progress improving their confidence. Teachers' marking recognises strengths and gives useful feedback on what to improve.

In less effective lessons there are few opportunities for students to be actively involved in their learning, to learn independently or to use well-structured talk and discussion to build confidence in verbal communication. In a very few lessons students' behaviour is not managed well enough. In some mathematics lessons there is insufficient time for students to persevere and consolidate their skills and apply their knowledge to mathematical problems.

A balance of academic and vocational courses meets students' needs and is supporting improved academic progress. The impact of the specialism on the curriculum has improved and all students in Key Stages 3 and 4 now follow courses designed to develop business and enterprise skills and their wider learning skills. The development of students' basic business and enterprise skills through all subjects is less consistent and not coherently planned. The extended services provision has enhanced the programme of extra-curricular activities and out-of-school hours additional study support, benefiting students' personal development and academic progress.

Students' greater involvement in setting their own targets, more frequent review of progress and well-targeted interventions planned by the integrated support team are helping to improve students' attitudes to learning and progress. Students, whose circumstances make them more vulnerable, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those looked after by carers, are well supported. The college works in good partnership with external agencies, often through the full services extended provision, to provide effective support for students and their families. There is good support for students coming into the school, at transition from Key Stage 3 to 4 and on transition into the sixth form.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers set high expectations for students, staff and themselves. There is a common sense of purpose and drive for improvement. Academic targets are challenging and realistic. Key areas of weakness have been rigorously tackled and improved. Subject leaders are monitoring progress and provision in their areas effectively and keeping staff well focused on improvement. Teaching and learning are improving but are not yet consistently good. Compulsory staff development has been well focused on college priorities and led to improvements in teaching and learning. More frequent and better focused monitoring of lessons by senior leaders has helped to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

The governing body is supportive and ambitious for the school. Recent training is improving the rigour with which it holds the principal and senior leaders to account. The governing body ensures that safeguarding arrangements are securely in place. Systems for vetting staff and adults working with students fully meet government requirements. Staff are thoroughly trained and informed of child protection procedures. Risks are closely assessed and action is taken to reduce hazards to students when on and off the college site.

Leaders and managers are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and tackling racial discrimination. Academic progress is analysed closely and as a result of focused attention to groups and individuals, gaps in performance between groups of students are closing.

Parents and carers are supportive of the work of the school and have been increasingly involved in improving attendance.

The school understands the context of its own and local community in relation to developing community cohesion. The school is a cohesive community and students develop an understanding of different cultures locally and globally. The school has identified the need to develop a wider understanding of people with different cultural, religious and social backgrounds, from the wider United Kingdom community. The college is in the early stages of evaluating the impact of community cohesion on student outcomes.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Most students progress in line with their prior attainment and results in examination courses are broadly average. In some subjects, such as law, attainment and progress are stronger. There is an upward trend in attainment and progress but inconsistencies between subjects remain. Students apply themselves well to their studies and the rate of retention to courses is good. Students make a good contribution to the school community taking on responsibilities, for example, for improving elements of the school and they enjoy working alongside younger students in a support or leadership role.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Relationships between staff and students are positive. Students mostly engage well in lessons and they are encouraged to develop independent learning skills. Where high demands are made of students in lessons and in their independent study, such as in law, progress is better. Students' progress is monitored closely and students appreciate the support they receive to keep them on track. The curriculum provides a good balance of vocational and academic subjects and is enhanced by the good partnership with two local sixth forms. Leaders and managers, including a dedicated governing body sub-committee, ensure provision and outcomes are monitored closely and that the deployment of resources and staffing to courses optimises student outcomes.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers appreciate the improvements that have been made in care, guidance and support, and leadership and management. Inspection evidence supports these views. A few parents or carers are not convinced that healthy lifestyles are well promoted, and a number of comments expressed concern about the way behaviour is dealt with. Inspection evidence found that students are briefed on how to live a healthy lifestyle but do not always take up healthy choices. Although inspectors found improved systems to manage students' behaviour in lessons, there remain a few lessons where behaviour was not managed well enough.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Seaton Burn College, A Specialist Business and Enterprise School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 109 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 629 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	37	61	56	8	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	34	65	60	5	5	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	39	36	62	57	5	5	3	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	39	59	54	5	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	31	28	71	65	5	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	21	71	65	11	10	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	20	67	61	18	17	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	37	34	58	53	9	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	30	66	61	5	5	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	32	53	49	11	10	4	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	18	69	63	10	9	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	36	33	62	57	5	5	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	40	57	52	6	6	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



24 November 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Seaton Burn College, A Specialist Business and Enterprise School, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE13 6EJ

The inspection team appreciated the welcome we received when we visited your college. We enjoyed talking to many of you about your experiences. Thank you to those of you who completed questionnaires for us.

Seaton Burn College provides you with a satisfactory education. It is improving rapidly. The vast majority of you say you feel safe and secure in school and the school does a good job in ensuring your safety. Most of you make the progress expected of you and your achievement is satisfactory. The 2010 results reflect a securely improving upward trend in your achievement. There is variation between how well you achieve in different subjects with progress in mathematics, although improving, relatively weaker. Teaching and the use of assessment are improving. More lessons are interesting and demanding. However, there are still lessons where progress could be better and you are not actively involved in learning. It is good to see how many of you are involved in improving your own college and the local community. The governing body, leaders and managers work well with local partners in schools and other agencies to provide you with good care and support and an improving curriculum. They are determined to improve the college further. We have asked them to focus on these areas.

- To improve achievement and accelerate progress in mathematics.
- To increase the proportion of lessons where teaching, learning and progress are good or outstanding, particularly in Key Stage 3, in subjects that are performing less well and in the sixth form.
- To provide more opportunities for all of you to understand and communicate with people with different cultural, religious and social backgrounds, especially from the wider United Kingdom community.

You can support the improvements being made by continuing to apply yourselves well to your studies. A few of you need to ensure you improve your behaviour in lessons.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Salter-Smith

Lead inspector

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