

Fyndoune Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114289
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	378836
Inspection dates	28–29 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Moira Fitzpatrick

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	335
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Bell
Headteacher	Anne Lakey
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 25 lessons, taught by 22 teachers. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and students. The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including data relating to students' progress and attainment, improvement plans, attendance data and documentation relating to the safeguarding of students. Inspectors took account of questionnaires returned by staff and students and 73 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How students' attainment has improved quickly.
- How well analysis of data is used to provide support for students' learning and progress.
- How provision is adapted so that all groups and individuals succeed.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than average for its type. It serves a predominantly White British community, with very few students from minority ethnic groups and none who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average; the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. The school holds numerous awards including Healthy School status, Student Voice award, Investing in Children award, Impetus Award for Citizenship, Year of Food and Farming Award and the Learning Outside the Classroom award.

The school has been federated with Durham Community Business College since 2005. It shares the chief executive and a number of senior leaders and managers with the college and works in close collaboration with it to provide a range of vocational courses. Up to seven schools make use of the courses available within the federated schools provision. There are also reciprocal arrangements with several schools for Key Stage 4 students to access their vocational courses. The school has recently been awarded Studio School status to develop its land-based courses further.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Fyndoune Community College is an outstanding school. It serves the needs of all groups of students exceptionally well and is highly responsive to any individual needs students may have. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress from their starting points; they sometimes exceed the progress made by their peers. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, feel fully involved and are delighted with the provision for their children's education. Excellent leadership and management at all levels have driven the school forward at a rapid rate since the previous inspection. The chief executive leads the school with a clear vision of how to turn high ambitions into reality and is unflinching in her determination to get the best from, and for, students. Her considerable entrepreneurial skills lead to excellent partnerships and leading-edge provision for students. Staff, students and the governing body are inspired by her vision and reflect this in their total commitment to continually improving the school.

Students' attainment is high and their achievement is outstanding. Results in GCSE examinations are significantly above average on all key indicators and have been on a steeply improving trend since the previous inspection. Attainment in English and mathematics has improved dramatically because of the school's determination to ensure all students reach the expected level in these subjects by the time they leave in Year 11. Students enjoy school immensely because they have so many opportunities to succeed and to develop special interests in an exciting and well-tailored curriculum. As a partner in the Durham Federation, the school is continually developing new opportunities and dimensions to enhance provision. Students are extremely well taught by teachers who are ambitious for them to do well and have high expectations of their effort and involvement in learning. Teachers make excellent use of assessment information to set the correct level of challenge and make high but attainable demands on students in nearly all lessons.

The excellent systems which have driven improvement in Key Stage 4 have been successfully adopted in English and mathematics in Key Stage 3. Here, a very sharp focus on meeting the wide range of needs in each class is finely tuned through careful planning and well-adapted tasks. This is not always as fully developed in some other lessons where teaching sometimes does not match closely the students' differing levels of development. The school recognises the need to extend its successful strategies across the curriculum at Key Stage 3 to further strengthen students' preparation for the challenges of Key Stage 4. Excellent care, guidance and

support underpin the school's highly successful inclusion practices. Staff go to great lengths to demonstrate to students that they are valued and they make excellent links with their parents and carers to keep them well informed of their children's progress and achievements. This provides an extremely strong foundation for students' success as learners and they are rightly convinced that 'the teachers won't give up on you'.

Students develop excellent social and personal skills. They behave extremely well, feel very safe and are committed to staying healthy and fit. They respect themselves and others and show a strong sense of citizenship by making excellent contributions to their own and other communities. By the time they leave, students are extremely well prepared as good citizens and have the confidence and excellent basic skills to succeed in the future.

The school's rigorous and accurate monitoring and evaluation of its work by all staff, the unflagging support and challenge from the outstandingly effective governing body, combined with its many excellent achievements since the previous inspection, demonstrate an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve progress in some other lessons at Key Stage 3 to match that in English and mathematics by:
 - planning teaching so that it closely matches the students' differing levels of development in the subject
 - planning tasks that allow students to work at their own best rate and at the appropriate level.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Students have excellent attitudes to learning and their attendance is high. They relish lessons where they are set challenging tasks and have opportunities to work with their peers. For example, Year 8 students made rapid progress in their mapping skills by working extremely well in teams. Throughout the lesson the teacher's tight timescales kept them very well focused and cooperating to meet her high expectations. Students' delight at their success was evident in their wide smiles of satisfaction. Students work hard to succeed. They are eager to please their teachers with their efforts because they have total trust in their teachers' commitment to them.

Students make a huge contribution to developing the school and to creating a strong sense of community and belonging. Corridors and classrooms are safe, friendly places where students contribute to the positive atmosphere with their excellent behaviour and supportive attitudes. Students make an excellent contribution to the wider community through their national and international charitable fundraising, for example supporting projects for Water Aid in Ghana. They are recognised by the county for their contribution to community gardening and are appreciated for their community parties and contributions to local farmers' markets of produce grown on

the school farm. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because of the opportunities they have and their very positive response to these.

All students make excellent progress from slightly below average starting points when they join the school, especially in literacy. The achievement and progress of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is notable even within this very positive picture. In recent years, their progress has exceeded that of other groups in the school and has been close to twice the national average rate of progress for their group. Incisive use of data to identify, support and challenge students is at the heart of the school's success in closing the achievement gap between different groups of students and ensuring that close to 80% of students reached the expected GCSE grade in English and mathematics in 2011.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

High quality teaching is based on very good subject knowledge and a shared ambition for every student to achieve their best. The high level of consistency in planning and lesson structure makes a significant contribution to how well students learn across different subjects. Teachers show an excellent understanding of how students learn best and plan a wide variety of activities from which they can learn independently or collaboratively. Students report that most lessons are fun, and there is certainly evidence of a buzz in classrooms around the school. Teachers have high expectations of students, which together with excellent relationships, drive a brisk pace of learning in lessons. The exceptions are very occasional lessons when teachers spend too long in explanations and students do not have enough time to get up to their best working pace before the lesson ends. At Key Stage 3, teaching is finely tuned in English and mathematics to meet the diverse needs of students of all abilities and to allow them to work at their best rate and appropriate level. The school acknowledges there is room to extend this good practice to other lessons in Key Stage 3 so that learning is equally good in all subjects. The use of assessment information is excellent and very well used to spot any student at risk of falling behind or experiencing difficulty. All staff follow the school's robust marking policy.

They give students recognition for their successes and effort, and advice on how to improve their work, or pose questions to develop their thinking further.

The school's federated status and exciting curriculum innovation make a massive contribution to raising students' achievement. Students in Key Stage 4 are offered an outstanding range of academic and vocational pathways, which is rapidly raising students' aspirations. The school's excellent partnerships through its federation have produced outstanding opportunities for students, for example in land-based studies for which the school has received national recognition as a model of best practice. Students travel from a number of schools in the locality to work at the school farm and take advantage of other vocational provision offered by the federation. The creation of special pathways for Year 7 and Year 8 students is preparing them very well to become independent learners by the time they reach Year 10. A dedicated reading lesson each week throughout Key Stage 3 affirms the school's commitment to every student being a competent reader when they leave the school, and is much enjoyed by students of all abilities. Extra-curricular activities abound, and the high uptake by students is testimony to the range and popularity of these.

Outstanding care, guidance and support are key to the rapid rise in students' attainment since the previous inspection. Form tutors know their students well and are alert to any changes in their performance or well-being. Achievement leaders are sharply focused on tracking students' progress through the wealth of data collected from teachers. They take swift and effective action whenever concerns are noted. High-quality, individualised provision when students need it is fundamental to the school's ethos and commitment to success for every student. Pastoral staff make excellent links with external providers to provide prompt, high-quality support for students whose circumstances place them at risk of becoming vulnerable. This ensures that these students receive all they need to take their place alongside their peers in accessing all that is on offer, in making a contribution and enjoying the same success in school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers at all levels demonstrate the ambition, expertise and determination to continually move the school forward. Close links with its federation partner school have made a strong contribution to the school's improvement since the previous inspection. Shared leadership, robust systems and the development of middle leader roles have enabled the school to move forward quickly on many fronts. Teaching has improved significantly because a collegiate ethos has developed. Professional dialogue and sharing good practice are the norm in weekly professional development sessions where staff 'show and tell' about any successful practice they have developed. This has created a vibrant and challenging environment where staff

are continually looking for ways to improve, and they support each other to do so. Improvements to teaching and an excellent curriculum are fuelling exceptional improvement to outcomes for students. Self-evaluation is extremely well delegated, accurate and rigorous.

The governing body is highly effective and makes an excellent contribution to the work of the school. Members of the governing body are robust in their challenge and dedicated in their service to the school and its community. The governing body's role in strategic development is outstanding and has the school well prepared for the challenge of changes to examination requirements at the end of Year 11. Members of the governing body ensure that safeguarding requirements are met with excellent practice and thorough systems to ensure the well-being of students and staff. Child-protection procedures are exemplary. Governors also ensure that equal opportunity is extremely well promoted in this highly inclusive school and that discrimination in any form is not tolerated. Partnership with parents and carers is excellent in drawing the learning community together and giving parents and carers guidance on how to support their children's education. The promotion of community cohesion is outstanding. The school knows and meets its own community's needs and aspirations extremely well. Students have an excellent understanding of national and international communities through numerous links which provide excellent opportunities to contribute to community development.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and all that it does for their children. They are particularly pleased with the care and support provided for their children to help them succeed. Parents and carers of students who joined the school in September are delighted with how well the move from primary school was organised, with one saying, 'Excellent transition programme from juniors to seniors. The school makes my child feel important and an individual'. Other parents and carers expressed delight with how well the school has improved in recent years and with how well their children are progressing. Inspection findings endorse these positive views. There was a very low level of disagreement in the questionnaires

returned and there was no distinct pattern to this. Nevertheless, the issues raised were discussed with the school and investigated as part of the inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Fyndoune Community College 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 73 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 335 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	47	64	25	34	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	77	16	22	0	0	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	61	84	12	16	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	56	77	16	22	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	55	75	18	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	49	67	23	32	0	0	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	53	30	41	2	3	0	0
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)	55	75	16	22	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	55	75	16	22	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	57	78	14	19	1	1	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	49	67	23	32	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	54	74	18	25	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	57	78	15	21	1	1	0	0

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



30 November 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Fyndoune Community College, Durham, DH7 6LU

Many thanks to all of you for making the inspection team feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. You will be delighted to know that we judged your school to be outstanding. Well done, because you have made a huge contribution to our judgements. You have excellent personal qualities because you seize the many opportunities the school provides, such as being part of your huge school council, taking part in the World Challenge, or being a community gardener: the list goes on. You work extremely hard and have a great deal of self-belief which spurs you on to make excellent progress in your learning by the time you leave. Your excellent behaviour and caring attitudes make your school a warm and welcoming place, where everyone feels exceptionally safe and valued. Your contribution to local, national and international communities is remarkable. These qualities, together with your high standards in learning by the end of Year 11, mean you are exceptionally well prepared for the future, and you know what it means to be a good citizen.

Teachers take excellent care of you and are determined to remove any obstacle in your path to success. They know you very well and we totally agree with those of you who told us, 'no one is allowed to fall behind'. You are extremely well taught and enjoy a good variety of learning experiences each week. Your curriculum is outstanding in its range of subjects, especially at Key Stage 4, and in the way it makes provision for you to be skilled readers in Key Stage 3. Your school gets a 'first' for being the only one the inspectors have visited which has a farm!

Your headteacher, teachers and members of the governing body are constantly looking for ways to improve the school further. We have suggested that making slight changes to how some lessons are planned in Key Stage 3 would help to accelerate learning there. You can help by letting teachers know when you are finding work too difficult or too easy and, of course, by working as hard as you now do.

The inspection team joins me in wishing all at Fyndoune Community College a very successful year.

Yours sincerely

Moira Fitzpatrick
Lead inspector

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