

# Biddick School Sports College

Biddick Lane, Washington, Tyne and Wear, NE38 8AL

**Inspection dates** 3–4 October 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is above average and standards are rising every year. Students make good progress and achieve well.
- Students have the opportunity to choose from an extensive range of subjects in Key Stage 4. These include many vocational qualifications in which students achieve very well.
- Autistic students and those with special educational needs make equally good progress because of the high level of individual support they receive.
- Teachers have good relationships with their classes and provide them with a variety of interesting activities. This ensures students are motivated and learn well.
- Changes in the way the school is led and managed have led to considerable improvements in achievement and teaching since the previous inspection.
- Students behave well and feel very safe in school. Staff take very good care of them.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The rich curriculum produces well-rounded individuals who are thoroughly prepared for life after school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment in English, though rising rapidly, remains below average.
- Some of the most able students do not progress fast enough to enable them to attain the highest levels.
- In a minority of lessons, teachers do not design activities or use time efficiently to maximise the amount students learn.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 37 lessons. These included four joint observations with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors held meetings with four groups of students; with the vice-chair of the governing body and one other governor; with school staff, including senior and middle managers; and with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents including the school’s self-evaluation summary, development plan and assessment information.
- They analysed 35 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and 76 questionnaires returned by school staff.

## Inspection team

Derek Neil, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Peter Harrison	Additional Inspector
Michael Wardle	Additional Inspector
Julie Rimmer	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Biddick School Sports College is slightly larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- Almost all students are White British.
- The percentage of students who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium is about average.
- The proportions of those supported through school action and of those supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs are broadly average.
- The school has been a specialist sports college since 1997.
- It is a centre for specialist provision for autistic students. Currently, it provides support for 14 students.
- The school is responsible for the Harraton Centre, which offers vocational courses on a separate site.
- The school has a number of awards including Sportsmark and Artsmark Gold.
- It meets the government's floor standard, which is the minimum expected for students, attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise attainment, especially in English, by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of what the most able students can achieve in class
  - developing students' basic writing skills by working closely with partner primary schools and planning remedial work in Key Stage 3 for students who need it
  - encouraging students to read more widely out of school.
- Improve teaching by:
  - using time in class more efficiently to increase the amount students learn
  - building more lessons around activities that stimulate students' interest and develop their understanding
  - establishing greater consistency in the way teachers provide feedback to students on their work and in the way students learn from this.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is above average. It has risen considerably since the previous inspection. Further improvements are in the pipeline for students currently in school. The number of students who achieve the very highest GCSE grades is rising but remains some way below average.
- Students make good progress in most subjects to reach these standards. Students make the progress expected of them in mathematics and many exceed it. However, not enough students progress at the same rapid rate in English.
- Students following vocational courses make good progress and their attainment in these qualifications is above average.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs also make good progress. This is due to the high level of expert support they receive, meeting both their academic and social needs. Staff identify their needs quickly and plan suitable work to help them progress in class. When necessary, they build students' self-confidence, or help them deal with difficulties at home. The same effective provision also enables those pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium to achieve well.
- Autistic students are greatly assisted by specialist staff who help them adapt to the new environment when they arrive. For example, they are helped to cope with the noise of the large building, or the crowds at lunchtime. They receive unobtrusive one-to-one support in class, enabling them to achieve well by undertaking work that is in line with their ability.
- Many students improve their reading skills by attending sessions designed to improve their accuracy and comprehension. Students do not read widely outside school; staff know this and are taking steps with younger students to encourage them to read for pleasure.
- Students' writing skills are variable. Many younger students struggle with punctuation. Their handwriting is often immature.
- Students have positive attitudes to learning. They concentrate well in class, and give of their best. They take discussions seriously, and tackle their written work assiduously. When an activity is well designed to stimulate their interest, they show high levels of motivation. A routine workbook-based session in the library, for example, suddenly came to life when students had to use their retrieval skills actively in a team game. In some lessons, however, students dutifully carry out a task without fully understanding its purpose.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Lessons are characterised by teachers' good subject knowledge, their lively presentation and clear explanation of new work, and the good relationships they have established with their classes. They successfully use praise and encouragement to boost students' self-confidence and to motivate them to try hard.
- Lessons are well organised. Teachers manage resources and students' behaviour very effectively.
- Many lessons entail a good variety of activities, which students clearly enjoy. These often involve a range of well-selected resources, such as film clips to stimulate discussion.
- In the best lessons, teachers develop students' understanding of difficult concepts by planning well-sequenced activities and asking carefully chosen questions to extend students' thinking. In a mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher improved everyone's understanding of correlation graphs by asking open-ended questions such as, 'What does this suggest to you?' and by relating the concept to real-life situations. Students are actively involved throughout such lessons, which inspire their interest and curiosity. For instance, they made outstanding progress in a science lesson by investigating the effect of eating chocolate on their pulse rate.
- The quality of teachers' feedback on students' work is inconsistent across the school. At its best,

it points out strengths and identifies pertinent areas for development, and the student learns from this. In other instances, marking is superficial, and students do not learn from their mistakes or from the teachers' guidance.

- A minority of lessons are marred because the teacher does not make the best use of time, particularly at the start of the session. Sometimes the chosen activities do not stimulate students' interest or lead to good learning. Teachers do not always tailor the work to challenge the most able.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- A more systematic approach to the way behaviour is managed has resulted in considerable improvement since the previous inspection. The school is calm and orderly. Students show respect for each other, for adults and for the excellent facilities they enjoy. The number of students excluded for poor behaviour has been greatly reduced.
- Students behave well in class. Although they report that sometimes learning is disrupted because of the poor behaviour of a small minority, they recognise that teachers deal with these situations swiftly and effectively.
- Behaviour around the school, though occasionally boisterous, is good. Investment in equipment such as table tennis tables and a climbing wall has contributed to good behaviour as students are constructively occupied at recreation times. Students new to the school quickly settle in and do not feel at all intimidated at break and lunchtimes.
- Staff at the school's student support services provide valuable support for individuals with, for example, social, behavioural or domestic problems. The service is highly valued by the students. It plays an important role in removing potential barriers to learning and in ensuring that students behave and learn well.
- Students feel very safe in school. They say that bullying is rare and staff deal with it effectively when it occurs. They are extremely well supervised throughout the day in all parts of the building. They appreciate the measures taken to keep them safe, such as the use of lanyards to identify *bona fide* visitors.
- Attendance, after a recent dip, has improved because of staff's close work with parents; it is now about average.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The school has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Changes in the membership and organisation of the senior leadership team have contributed significantly to this.
- A concerted drive by leaders to raise standards by providing regular professional development has stimulated huge interest among staff in finding ways to improve teaching and learning. The humanities department, for example, has been involved in reflection and research into how students learn, and as a result of this, has raised the number of its A\*/A grades at GCSE.
- Leaders make excellent use of data about students' progress to pinpoint areas that need to improve. Ambitious development plans focus on relevant areas such as attainment in English. These plans tend to emphasise Key Stage 4; leaders recognise the need to concentrate attention on Key Stage 3, too.
- Leaders use detailed analyses of examination results to demonstrate how different groups of students are making ever better progress. Judicious use of the pupil premium, for example, has resulted in significant gains made by those who are known to be entitled to this.
- The school's success in raising the attainment of different groups and the full integration of the autistic students in the life of the school are testimony to staff's commitment to equal opportunities.

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- The curriculum has many strengths. It offers students an extensive range of qualifications at Key Stage 4. It caters very effectively for individual needs and interests. Some subject departments, such as performing arts, provide exciting opportunities for developing creativity. An impressive variety of enrichment activities, many under the aegis of the sports specialism, are well supported by students.
  - The curriculum makes a powerful contribution to students' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As one parent wrote, 'My daughter has had endless opportunities to develop as a person, acting as peer mentor and Olympic ambassador.' Students are prepared very well for life after school. Very few leavers are not in education, training or employment.
  - Some updating of the curriculum is already underway; further modifications are under discussion. Students do not have the opportunity to learn two modern languages, for example. The practice of entering students early for some external examinations has inhibited good teaching and needs review. For example, too much time in some lessons is spent preparing students for assessment tasks.
  - The local authority provides effective support, contributing to recent improvements and to the successful provision for autistic students.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Governors are committed to the school and have great confidence in staff and students.
    - The governing body have an accurate, detailed knowledge of the school's strengths and concerns, because they are kept well informed and because they are closely involved in the life of the school.
    - Members of the governing body provide an appropriate balance of challenge and support for senior leaders.
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## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	108866
<b>Local authority</b>	Sunderland
<b>Inspection number</b>	401019

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,081
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Christine Ford
<b>Headteacher</b>	Richard Wilkinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 May 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 561 3680
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