

Sedgefield Community College a Specialist Sports College

Hawthorn Road, Sedgefield, Stockton-on-Tees, County Durham , TS21 3DD

Inspection dates 27–28 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher's high aspirations and crystal clear view of just how successful the college can be, has led to rapid improvement. Senior leaders, including governors, know exactly what else the college needs to do to sustain the considerable gains made.
- Good and sometimes outstanding teaching enables students from all starting points to achieve at least well. At times, progress is rapid and achievement high, such as in English. This includes those supported by extra government funds.
- The college's specialism in sport contributes exceptionally well in developing performance, personal skills, confidence and self-esteem.
- The level of consideration, respect and courtesy shown by students is exemplary and is supported by their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Consequently, students are extremely positive in their attitudes towards the college.
- The needs and interests of students are extremely well understood by staff and the courses they follow are exceptionally well shaped to their individual requirements and interests.
- Students very much enjoy school life in the happy, relaxed atmosphere. They take immense pride in their achievements and those of the college.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Rapid progress and the highest levels of achievement are not yet fully sustained in all subjects, especially in science.
- Occasionally, the work that teachers give to students is not sufficiently thought-provoking and hard enough or presented in imaginative ways.
- Now and then, teachers miss opportunities to enable students to manage their own learning, challenge each other's views more actively and scrutinise their own progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 42 lessons. Eight of these lessons were observed alongside senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons, conducted walks around the college site to check the quality of what is provided for students and listened to students read.
- Inspectors held discussions with students, members of the governing body, college staff, including senior leaders and those with responsibilities (such as the leadership of subjects), and a local authority development partner.
- Inspectors took account of the 54 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors observed the school's work and examined a range of documentation, including the college's own records of student's current progress, records from the observation of lessons, students' books and the school's improvement planning. Records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding were also taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Clive Petts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Colin Scott

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Mark Simpson

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Paul Copping

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sedgefield is an average sized secondary school, which has specialist sports college status.
- The proportion of students eligible for pupil premium funding (which is provided by the government to support the learning of pupils who are known to be entitled to free school meals, in the care of the local authority or the children of members of the armed forces), is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is half the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- Almost all pupils are White British. Very few are from minority ethnic groups with none at an early stage of learning to speak English.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Ten Year 11 students attend New College, Durham for one day each week and two Year 10 students attend the local authority Key Stage 4 pupil referral provision full-time.
- The school moved into a new building in January 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Making certain that more teaching is inspiring and exciting, eliminating the small amount of teaching that requires improvement, to ensure a consistent pattern of high achievement by:
 - sharing teachers' imaginative and thought-provoking approaches more widely across the college, especially in science
 - maintaining a relentless focus on getting the best out of students in lessons by giving all students work that constantly stretches their thinking
 - providing students with even more opportunities to manage their own learning, work actively and collaboratively and carefully reflect on the progress they have made.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students achieve well in lessons because they are eager and committed to succeed. In English, progress is rapid and attainment consistently high. Current school information, confirmed by lesson observations and scrutiny of work, reveals that current students are now performing as well in mathematics as they are in English.
- Students enter Year 7 with skills typical for their age, although they do vary year on year. By the time they reach the end of Year 11, they attain standards in GCSE examinations which are above the national average, with a clear trend of improvement year on year. In a very few subject areas, including science, achievement patterns have been less consistent. Senior leaders have responded decisively to address the causes and as a result, rates of progress are accelerating and achievement and standards rising quickly.
- Students who are entered early for examinations achieve well. Careful thought is given to when they should be entered for examinations depending on the individual needs of each student. Disabled students and those with special educational needs make the same good progress and achievement as their classmates.
- Students who are supported by the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible to free school meals, make similar rapid progress to their classmates. This additional funding is exceptionally well-targeted to meet the individual needs of this group of students, such as in small group tuition in Year 7 and enrichment experiences and booster classes throughout the college. As a result, their achievement and the standards they reach are at least as good as that of other students. Consequently, there is no gap in attainment in English and mathematics between this group and others in the college.
- Excellent progress is made in fostering an enjoyment of reading. Students are regularly encouraged to read in lessons. They readily discuss aspects of their choice of books and authors. Students appreciate the opportunities that the college provides to apply their key literacy and numeracy skills in all of their learning. As a result, this prepares students very well for the next stage of education, employment and training.
- The small numbers of students, who are educated off-site attend regularly, enjoy their practically based learning and achieve well.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and in some lessons outstanding. Since the previous inspection, senior leaders have worked tirelessly to improve the quality of learning. Underperformance has been tackled resolutely and speedily.
- Teachers have high expectations of what students of all starting points can achieve. Teachers are extremely enthusiastic and provide a wide variety of often interesting and thought-provoking tasks. Approaches that encourage students to think critically, explain their thoughts, make deductions, give reasons and make decisions capture and hold their interest very well.
- When students' progress is most rapid and achievement high, teachers:
 - set high expectations for what all students can achieve
 - use skilfully students' progress information to tailor activities to match their individual abilities and interests
 - question effectively and constantly check and test students' thinking, knowledge and understanding
 - set problem-solving tasks which motivate students and encourage discussion with a partner and critical thinking.
- In those lessons in which teaching requires improvement:
 - challenge to students' thinking is variable

- approaches are sometimes mundane and lack the essential spark to create interest and debate
 - demands made of students do not stretch their thinking enough
 - teachers' questioning does not consistently follow a student's thinking and probe and check their understanding.
- When achievement is highest, such as in English, inspirational teaching fires up the imagination of students and continually tests their thinking. For example, in an English lesson, students were totally absorbed discussing the emotions and feelings of two migrant workers in the novel, 'Of Mice and Men'. Nevertheless, this inspirational teaching is not yet fully shared in all subject areas.
 - Teachers mark work frequently and thoroughly, making certain students are aware of how well they have done against their challenging targets and what they need to do to improve. Nevertheless, opportunities are sometimes missed for students to take responsibility for their own work and challenge each other's thinking and ideas even more rigorously.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students' behaviour around the school is almost always impeccable. Social areas are calm and welcoming and students polite and thoughtful. Routines are exceptionally well understood and boundaries for their conduct explicit. Their relationships with staff are excellent with much mutual respect evident, a direct response to the high quality of care that the staff provide. Students' positive attitudes make an exceptional contribution to their own learning.
- In conversations, students report that the college's anti-bullying strategies, 'get the message over really well'. Students express total confidence that the staff will resolve any worries or concerns they may have. As a consequence, students feel safe and happy. Almost all parents agree. In assemblies, tutor time and lessons in different subjects, students' achievements are regularly celebrated. Sanctions and rewards are used consistently and fairly.
- Classrooms are harmonious places in which to work. Students whose needs are complex or whose individual circumstances might put them at risk, are managed skilfully and sensitively. As a result, they are able to enjoy school and achieve well.
- Students are safety conscious and are able to recognise potential risk and danger. They are particularly well informed about the dangers of new technology. Students thrive on the responsibilities that they are given, although now and again opportunities are missed to ensure they play an even bigger part in college improvement.
- The college has highly effective routines for managing attendance, which is high compared to the national average. This is a remarkable improvement, along with the low persistent absence, since the previous inspection.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- In the highly successful drive to improve, the headteacher has led the college with passion, drive and steely determination eradicating any weaknesses. Together, outward looking senior leaders relentlessly build upon the college's many strengths. Those with management responsibilities, such as for subjects, have a first-class grasp of how to use checks made on students' progress to guide the drive to sustain high achievement. Staff are ambitious for the students and lead by example. The highly effective leadership and management underpin the marked improvement from satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection to good now.
- The college's procedures for checking on its own performance are very rigorous. Consequently, senior leaders have an accurate view of how well the college is doing. They have a very sure grasp of the further changes that are needed in order to strengthen its performance even more.
- Teaching is very well led and managed. Lessons are regularly observed and staff given constructive help and guidance, closely matched to appropriate training opportunities, to add to their expertise. Those newly qualified teachers and those in training at the college are extremely

well supported. A thorough system to check on staff performance is in place with targets for improvement closely linked to incentives and rewards. Consequently, teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection.

- All students, including disabled students and those with special educational needs, are thoughtfully included in all aspects of college life. Any form of discrimination is not tolerated. Any slippage between the performances of different groups of students are accurately pinpointed and quickly remedied.
- The excellent curriculum is extremely well matched to the abilities and interests of students. The continuous process of adapting what the college offers to the range of students' needs, including the more able and talented ensures a skilfully managed match of vocational and academic opportunities. For example, students were seen keenly and proficiently tending their garden in preparation for the growing season.
- Sport receives a high priority in the curriculum. This has clear benefits enriching students' skills and their personal development.
- The local authority development partner and subject specialists provide senior leaders with robust challenge, which supports the college's rapid improvement extremely well.
- Although a very few parents expressed some disagreement with aspects of the college's work when responding to Parent View, the online questionnaire, other school-based surveys carried out reflect the extremely high level of parental appreciation of the significant improvements in what the school does for their children.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements, with much best practice underpinning the high quality of care and support provided for students. For example, child-protection procedures are exemplary. The college takes all reasonable steps to check that students are safe when attending off-site provision.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - In discussions, the astutely led governing body show an accurate grasp of the quality of teaching. It plays a strong role in controlling finance, including the pupil premium funding, which has ensured that the progress and achievement of those students eligible for that support is at least as good as their classmates. They display a confident grasp of college performance information, enhanced by their regular training. They make certain teachers' rewards and career progression are closely matched to performance.

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

Unique reference number	114317
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	401425

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	850
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Bowler
Headteacher	David Davies
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2009
Telephone number	01740 625300
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