

# Durham Trinity School and Sports College

Flambard Premises, Aykley Heads, Durham, County Durham, DH1 5TS

**Inspection dates** 20–21 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Students' progress in English in Key Stages 3 and 4 is not rapid enough and some students lose the interest in reading and writing that they had gained in earlier years as they go through these two key stages.
- Teaching is not consistently good overtime and pupils' progress is slowed because teachers do not plan work that precisely matches pupils' needs.
- Teachers' feedback does not always show pupils how they can improve their work.
- Teachers do not consistently use information on pupils' progress in order to provide sufficient challenge for the most-able pupils.
- Senior leaders and governors do not have a clear view of the progress of different groups of pupils and subjects because they do not fully analyse and make use of the range of data collected to improve the quality of teaching and learning. This prevents pupils from making more rapid progress.

### The school has the following strengths

- Behaviour is good in lessons and around school. Pupils feel safe. The good relationships they enjoy with staff ensure they can share any concerns and be confident they will be dealt with.
- Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and continue to make good progress in Years 1 to 6.
- Strong partnerships with local schools and community partners provide good opportunities for pupils' personal and academic development.
- The school is very successful in promoting pupils' participation in a wide range of sporting activities; as a result many pupils gain national, regional and school awards in a variety of sports.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 20 lessons. One lesson was observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with governors, senior and middle leaders, pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors checked the work in pupils' books and listened to some pupils reading.
- Inspectors took account of the Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View), the school's summary of recent parent surveys and letters from two parents.
- The views of the staff were gathered from discussion throughout the inspection as well as from the 34 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation including the school summary of its self-evaluation, the school development plan, safeguarding policies and records of attendance and behaviour.

## Inspection team

Angela Shaw, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Marian Thomas

Additional Inspector

Pauline Pitman

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Durham Trinity School and Sports College is an all age generic special school for pupils with a wide range of special educational needs including moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties, communication disorders (including specialist autistic provision) and profound and multiple learning difficulties. It is situated on three sites, two of which are close together.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is high. Pupil premium is additional funding for those known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children looked after by the local authority.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- Pupils come from across County Durham and many travel a long way to get to school.
- All pupils are supported through a statement of special educational needs.
- The school was designated as a Specialist Sports College in September 2010.

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

- Improve students' achievement and their attainment in English in Key Stages 3 and 4 by ensuring that:
  - teachers use data more effectively to plan learning more accurately matched to students' needs, particularly that of the more able
  - increase opportunities for writing across the curriculum
  - increase opportunities for pupils to develop their interest and enjoyment of reading.
- Improve the quality of teaching to consistently good or better, especially in Key Stages 3 and 4 by:
  - improving the quality of feedback to pupils so that they are clear about what they need to do to improve their work
  - making more consistent use of teaching assistant time to support the additional needs of the least-able pupils.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management at all levels including governors by:
  - improving the quality and consistency of systems by which pupils' progress is tracked and monitored so that all teachers can access data more easily in order to plan learning to raise pupils' achievement
  - ensuring that governors have better access to training in the use of school data so they can more effectively support school leaders in improving the achievement of pupils.
- An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the school's use of pupil premium funding, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils enter school with levels of skill that are significantly below those expected for their age and overall attainment is low as expected in a special school. Although progress is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2, students' progress slows in reading, writing and communication in Key Stages 3 and 4 with the result that their achievement overall requires improvement.
- Although the school tracks pupils' progress carefully and frequently, it does not fully analyse and make use of the range of data it collects to demonstrate that pupils are making the best progress they can. This prevents all groups of pupils, including those eligible for pupil premium funding, from making more rapid progress.
- Teachers do not always make full use of pupil data to plan learning activities that effectively challenge pupils, especially the more able. As a result their rates of progress are not as good as they might otherwise be.
- Phonics teaching (the ability to say the letter sounds correctly) helps younger pupils pronounce new and difficult words. Last year's screening check for Year 1 pupils shows they are taught well.
- Students in Key Stage 3 and 4 do not show enough interest in reading for enjoyment. Although many pupils progress to reading sentences and books, and understand some grammar and punctuation, there is little evidence to show that pupils are provided with opportunities to read for enjoyment.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage children make good progress. They settle well and quickly form good relationships. They make good progress in their communication skills by socialising and working with other children. The school's focus on developing the children's communication skills has also increased their access to the wider curriculum on offer.
- In Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils make good progress in English and mathematics because teachers know their needs well and match interesting activities to their next steps in learning.
- There are not enough opportunities for students to develop their skills in writing across the curriculum in Key Stages 3 and 4. For example students' science folders show missed opportunities for students to write up their science experiments.
- By the end of Key Stage 4 students gain accreditation in a variety of subjects including BTC sport and Young Leader awards. Last year several students, because of the school's strong emphasis on science, gained GCSEs at grades A\* to G in science as well as mathematics. However, no students were entered for GCSE examinations in English.
- Students in the sixth form enjoy school and make small steps of progress, but the current curriculum does not as yet offer the range of vocational and non-vocational courses necessary to help all students to make good progress and prepare for their future. The school has identified this and additional courses are planned for when the whole school moves into its new site.
- Pupils make good progress in their physical development and well-being because of a strong sporting and physical programme, featuring a good range of activities. For example, pupils stated that they really enjoy football, multi skills and other sports. Many pupils gain national or school awards and have opportunities to take part in a range of sporting competitions.
- Pupil premium funding has been used effectively to provide additional teaching assistant support across the school and support for younger pupils from a personal care assistant to promote self-help. This has increased learning time and achievement for the younger pupils through helping develop their independence in personal hygiene, but the impact of this support has not been evaluated.

**The quality of teaching requires improvement**

- Although the majority of teaching observed during the inspection was good, evidence from students' work in Key Stages 3 and 4 does not indicate that this is consistent overtime. No outstanding teaching was seen by inspectors.
- Teachers do not always make use of what they know about pupils' prior learning to provide pupils with the activities that move their learning on at a good rate, especially the most able.
- The quality of the teachers' feedback is not consistent across the school. In classes in Years 1 to 6, teachers give good feedback so that pupils understand what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. This is not done so well in Key Stages 3 and 4 and so some students are unaware of their successes and have little chance to improve on mistakes.
- In the majority of lessons, teaching assistants are used well. In weaker lessons, teaching assistants are not always effectively used in supporting those lower-ability pupils with additional needs, and so their progress slows.
- In the best lessons, teachers use careful questioning to engage pupils and to check their understanding. However, this is not consistent, and, as a result, opportunities to assess pupils' learning and provide additional support or challenge are sometimes lost.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is carefully planned and learning is accurately assessed. Staff listen and respond well to children, helping them to remain engaged in their learning. For example, in one lesson children were captivated by the story of a bear. Well-planned, independent activities linked to the story, together with good interventions by the teacher, which ensured that children remained engaged in their learning throughout the session.
- Teachers in the sixth form provide activities and learning opportunities that engage and motivate students. As a result they are able to focus on tasks for sustained periods and work sociably with each other.
- Teaching of physical education and sport is a strength across the school. As a result of the schools' good use of the primary sports funding, pupils now access an additional hour of physical education per week and extra coaching sessions in a variety of sports.
- All adults support and manage behaviour well, which means they are not spending time dealing with adverse behaviour. However, where lessons are less effective pupils do lose concentration and minor disruption occurs.

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

- Pupils like their school and enjoy coming in every day. One pupil told the inspector, 'I love learning and coming to school is the best bit of my life.'
- Pupils show good attitudes to learning, and behaviour only dips when the quality of teaching is less than good.
- Pupils say they feel safe and bullying is infrequent and is dealt with effectively by staff. Pupils know who to go to if they have a problem and know they will be listened to. Parents who responded to the online survey and wrote to inspectors share this view.
- Pupils make good progress in all aspects of their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Trips and residential visits are an important element of school life for all pupils and add much to pupils' experiences; great care is taken by the school to make sure all pupils are safe.
- Incidents of difficult behaviour are very carefully logged and meetings with a range of agencies are held. This and the recently implemented behaviour alert system has resulted in a reduction in the number of serious incidents.
- As a result of the school's efforts, attendance is good overall and has improved since last year. This includes involving the school nurse in reassuring parents that pupils' attendance at school is beneficial despite their medical needs.

**The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Senior leaders, including governors, do not fully analyse and make use of the range of data collected about pupils' progress. Consequently, they are not able to judge whether all pupils are making enough progress relative to similar pupils nationally or in comparison with other groups in the school. Without a clear view of the rate of each pupil's progress, leaders are unable to spot when pupils' learning slows and could do with more support, or when greater challenge could result in faster progress.
- The checking of the school's work undertaken by middle leaders has improved since the last inspection and fits well into the system for annual objectives set for teachers to support their professional development. However, senior leaders do not have the clear overview provided by analysis of assessments in order to ensure all teachers have appropriate challenge and support to develop their skills.
- Links with parents are strong and are based on good regular communication. In addition to frequent contact between teachers and home, the school and governors have done much to involve parents in the life of the school.
- The school has very positive relationships with a range of partners including local schools. The school is rightly proud of its intergenerational work and the opportunities that this gives its pupils to make gains in their personal development. Pupils' cultural and creative awareness is promoted through good international links and a range of opportunities provided for pupils to explore other religions and cultures.
- The school has successfully improved the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which was a key issue from the last inspection.
- The appointment of a secondary specialist science teacher has supported improvements in the curriculum and through the recent introduction of the well attended Stem club, which is one of the many enrichment activities and extra activities at lunch time and after school that enhance the curriculum. However, at Key Stages 3 and 4, the curriculum does not afford enough opportunities for students to develop their writing for a range of purposes or to develop their enjoyment and interest in reading.
- The local authority has had little involvement with the school. All external monitoring has been by commissioned consultants.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Members of the governing body are very committed to supporting and challenging the school. However, they do not have enough information on, or a clear analysis of, pupils' progress and achievement to fully challenge school leaders to ensure all groups of pupils are succeeding as well as they can. Their information is insufficient to judge whether the pupil premium funding has been used effectively to raise the achievement of eligible pupils. They have received appropriate training for safeguarding and are well informed about the school's procedures. Recent changes to committee structures have been made, but it is too early to judge the impact of this on the effectiveness of governance.

## 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>	114349
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	425898

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	188
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	23
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Christine Kirkwood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julie Rutherford
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 February 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 386 4612
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