

Ferryhill Business and Enterprise College

Merrington Road, Ferryhill, County Durham, DL17 8RW

Inspection dates 19–20 November 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students achieve well at Ferryhill. Students' accelerating rates of progress over time are resulting in an upward trend in examination results, with a sharp rise in 2014.
- The proportion of students attaining a good GCSE examination grade in English and mathematics and at least three other subjects in 2014 was above the national figures.
- Students of all ages make good progress in most subjects.
- One of the reasons for the good achievement is that teaching is good overall with some that is outstanding. Teachers want students to do well and work effectively to ensure that they do.
- Learning is most effective when students are enthused by their lessons, when close account is taken of their different needs and when they are given detailed feedback about how to improve their work.
- Students appreciate teacher's efforts and respond by working hard and behaving well both in lessons and around the college. They are polite and respectful to each other and to adults.
- The college knows all students well as individuals and takes its duty of care towards them very seriously, providing outstanding support for them. As a result, students feel extremely safe. The excellent relationships within the college help students feel very secure.
- The curriculum meets students' needs and the extensive opportunities provided for them to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding and values means that these aspects of their development are strong. This prepares them well for their life beyond Ferryhill.
- The headteacher is leading the college very well. He has a clear vision based on high aspirations for students and provides a strong sense of purpose and direction. Senior leaders monitor the college's work rigorously and have an accurate view of it. The steps they are taking are rapidly improving teaching and achievement.
- Middle leadership is developing well and governance is strengthening.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teachers use the information they have about students to match work well to their different starting points or targets, or give them detailed feedback on how to improve their work.
- Students concentrate well in lessons but their enthusiasm for learning is not always fully promoted through the use of stimulating tasks and approaches.
- There are some differences in attainment between groups and some differences in achievement across subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 parts of lessons during the inspection and they made further visits to classrooms to look at students' work.
- Inspectors had meetings with college leaders and had discussions with other staff. They also had meetings with several governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors had meetings with two groups of students and spoke to other students in lessons and around the college at break and during lunchtimes.
- Inspectors took account of the views of the 39 parents who had completed the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), the additional information from the parents who made their views known to the team and information collected by the college about parents' views. Fourteen questionnaires returned by staff were also considered.
- A wide range of documents were scrutinised, including information relating to students' achievement and attendance, safeguarding, the monitoring of teaching, performance management and governance.

Inspection team

Joan McKenna, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Christine Kennedy	Additional Inspector
Anne Smedley	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This college is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Almost all students are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is well above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students is above average. These students receive support through the pupil premium funding which supports those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of a local authority.
- The college meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The college makes use of the YMCA to provide alternative education for a very small number of students.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding so that students make outstanding progress in all subjects by ensuring that all teachers:
 - make use of the good quality information they have about students and their previous learning to take specific action to eliminate gaps in attainment between individuals and groups and ensure that all achieve equally well
 - provide regular subject-specific feedback that tells students what they must do to improve, and give students frequent opportunities to act upon comments their teachers have made
 - promote high levels of enthusiasm for learning through the use of stimulating tasks and approaches.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher talks about 'no student being left behind' at Ferryhill, and he embodies this aim in all aspects of his leadership. His commitment to the students and vision for the college has been clearly communicated and is shared by others so there is a common sense of purpose and direction. Equality of opportunity is assiduously promoted.
- Since his appointment, the headteacher has devised and implemented a clear, well-conceived and successful strategy for improving the college, with an appropriate balance of urgency and attention to sustainability.
- Systems for monitoring the effectiveness of provision, including teaching, and especially for monitoring students' attainment and progress, are very robust. The analysis and evaluation of the resulting information is rigorous and a particular strength is the way key issues emerging are summarised in a succinct and easily accessible way. This helps all within the college know and understand the key priorities.
- Senior leaders are effective and are playing their full part in leading the college.
- Steps are being taken to ensure that middle leaders are equipped to be effective in their roles. The improved and mainly good or better outcomes show the success of this work, although the fact that not all areas are equally strong indicate that middle leadership is not fully and consistently effective.
- Developing teachers and leaders is accorded a high priority within the college. There are high expectations of staff and the management of their performance is rigorous. Support is given to individuals where it is identified to be necessary or potentially helpful. Many opportunities are provided for professional development and there is a range of mechanisms in place for sharing good practice. Ultimately, teachers know that students' achievement is paramount and that is how their impact will be judged.
- There has been a thorough review of the curriculum with changes made to ensure it meets with national requirements while best meeting the needs of students. An appropriate range of academic and vocational courses are provided. The curriculum enables students to explore the values of tolerance, democracy and other elements which prepare them well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively as seen in the accelerating progress of disadvantaged students and the fact that gaps between them and other students are closing.
- The college is a lead school within the local authority for careers' information, advice and guidance. The effectiveness of this is seen in the fact that for the past two years every student has progressed to an appropriate destination within the next phase of education, training or employment.
- The promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong. Its impact is seen in many ways, from how they conduct themselves to their mature, positive and supportive relationships and the cohesion of the college community.
- Safeguarding arrangements are rigorous and meet government requirements. This includes the meticulous monitoring of the attendance of students at alternative provision, along with their behaviour and progress.
- The college is open and regularly seeks the views of parents, and of external professionals to help validate the judgements it makes about itself and to identify any further ways in which it could improve. The local authority provides appropriate support and challenge through the education development partner who knows the college well and has an accurate view of its position.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are committed to the students and are supportive of the college. They are developing the level of challenge they provide, and in this they are helped by the high quality information that they receive from leaders about teaching, students' progress and other aspects of the college's performance. This helps them understand strengths and areas for development. The Chair of the Governing Body in particular is working to ensure that knowledge is spread more widely throughout the governing body.
 - Governors receive clear information about the performance management of staff and play their part in decisions about pay progression. They have given the headteacher full support when difficult decisions have had to be made.
 - The governing body has ensured its membership contains the financial expertise necessary to manage finances appropriately. Governors know how much money they receive via pupil premium funding, how it is spent and the impact it is having.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Students come to college well prepared for their lessons. They are smart, punctual and have the right equipment. They follow instructions and work hard. Students take a pride in their work as seen in the good levels of presentation.
- Students almost always display positive attitudes towards their learning. This is particularly so when activities are well-designed, stimulating and help students develop a range of skills that aid their learning. This results in high levels of enthusiasm, engagement and involvement, with clear gains in confidence and independence. These aspects are not promoted consistently well in all lessons.
- Students behave very well around the college and in classrooms. Lessons almost always proceed smoothly, and only very rarely, when teaching is less effective, is there any lack of engagement evident on the part of a very small minority of students. Students and the large majority of parents who made their view known say that behaviour is good. Exclusions have reduced over time and are now below average.
- Relationships within the college are excellent and mutually respectful, both between students and between students and adults, whatever their role. Students chatting pleasantly to lunchtime supervisors as well as to teachers is a common sight. This leads to a warm and supportive atmosphere which contributes to students' feelings of safety.
- The care provided for students and especially those who are vulnerable in any way is an outstanding feature of the college. Some parents gave striking examples of the steps taken to support their children for which they were very grateful.

Safety

- The college's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Exemplary procedures result in students saying how very safe they feel and that any rare incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly and successfully by adults.
- Examples of the extra steps the school takes to care for its students include support from an experienced counsellor as well as the popular 'Ferryhealth' provision where information on a wide range of health related issues is available.
- Students learn how to keep themselves safe. They are fully aware of issues such as different kinds of bullying and those relating to e-safety.
- Robust arrangements are in place to ensure that students using the alternative provision are safe.
- Students' attendance has improved and is now average. Persistent absence has reduced and is below average.

The quality of teaching is good

- The impact of teaching on students' learning and progress over time is good in most subjects and is sometimes outstanding.
- Teachers subscribe to the college's ethos of promoting maximum achievement for all students and they work hard on their behalf. They have high expectations of students' behaviour and attitudes towards their work and establish serious but supportive climates within classrooms. Because students know teachers care about their learning they try hard to do as they are asked and many are confident to ask questions when they do not understand.
- Students learn well in most lessons because teachers have good subject knowledge, plan lessons conscientiously, give clear explanations of the topic being studied, provide appropriate tasks to promote the required knowledge, understanding or skills and check students' understanding throughout lessons. Students therefore receive a thorough grounding across subjects.
- They learn even better when teachers' own enthusiasm for their subjects comes across; when this is the case lessons are stimulating and enjoyable and this helps to promote students' enjoyment of the subject in turn.
- Students also learn most effectively when teachers use the high quality information they have about their different levels of attainment, progress and targets to make sure the work they are doing is matched well to their needs. In these lessons, the most able students are appropriately challenged and those who need extra support receive it. Where teachers show a knowledge of any gaps that exists for students and take action to promote this, progress accelerates.

- These positive features are not consistent across all teaching which means that students' learning is not always fully or equally effective. They are more widespread in the teaching of English than in mathematics, although there are good examples in the latter subject.
- Students' work is marked regularly and conscientiously. They sometimes receive very detailed feedback on how well they have done and guidance on how to improve further. When students are expected to respond to comments, most do so and so make demonstrable progress. However, students do not always receive sufficient subject-specific advice about how to do better and this limits their learning.
- Teaching assistants give some very helpful support to students, such as those who have special educational needs or who are less able, which helps them make more progress.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students generally enter the college with attainment that is below the national average. Examination results at the end of Year 11 shows that their attainment by the age of 16 is increasingly at least in line with the national average and in a range of subjects it is above average. This represents good, and in some subjects outstanding, progress from their starting points.
- Outcomes in English and mathematics both show a rising trend over time. There was a dip in English in 2013. The effective action taken to tackle the reasons has resulted in a marked increase with the students concerned making securely good progress. Current students are continuing to do so. Progress in mathematics is improving but at a less rapid rate. As a result of the improvements, the proportions of students attaining a good examination grade in English and mathematics in 2014 was above the national figures in both subjects, albeit for a group that, unusually, entered with broadly average attainment.
- The work of current students shows that they are making good or better progress across most subjects and are attaining increasingly higher standards in their work. This is evident across all year groups.
- All groups of students are achieving well. Nevertheless, there are some differences in attainment, representing their different starting points. Boys' attainment on entry to the college is lower than that of girls, and, although both groups make good progress, gaps in attainment remain.
- Disadvantaged students also enter the college with lower attainment than other students. They are making accelerated progress and as a result gaps are closing. Nevertheless, in GCSE English in 2014 disadvantaged students attained half grade lower than other students nationally and in the college. In mathematics they attained almost a grade lower than others both within the college and nationally.
- Over time, disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress from their starting points. They receive good quality support which has a positive impact on their attainment and progress.
- Year 7 catch-up funding, which is directed at those students who are behind their peers when they enter college, is used well. This is helping these students catch up with others in mathematics and even more so in English.
- Outcomes for the most able students have been steadily rising, with many, although not all, making better progress than similar students nationally in English and mathematics. There was a dip in the proportion of students gaining 3 or more GCSE A and A* grades in 2014, reflecting students taking more academic courses than previously. The most able students currently in the college are making good progress.
- The college does not make widespread use of early entry to examinations, and only considers its use on a case by case basis when it is judged to be in the best interest of the individual students.
- The very small number of students who attend off-site provision make good progress because they are kept engaged in education and gain some success in accredited courses.

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	114299
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	448777

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	570
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Keith Lumsdon
Headteacher	Kevin Brennan
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2010
Telephone number	01740 651554
Fax number	01740 654980
Email address	ferryhill@durhamlearning.net

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