

Fyndoune Community College

Findon Hill, Sacriston, Durham, DH7 6LU

Inspection dates 17–18 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Governance is inadequate. The governing body is an obstacle to the college’s improvement rather than a champion. A break down in the relationship between leaders and some members of the governing body has meant that the governing body is not fulfilling its role in holding leaders to account for the college’s performance.
- College leadership is also inadequate. Senior leaders have an inflated view of the quality of teaching. They have not moved quickly enough to tackle the decline in standards, especially in Key Stage 4, since the last inspection.
- Inadequate middle leadership has resulted in an inaccurate view of students’ progress and an unacceptable variation in students’ performance between different subjects.
- Teaching requires improvement because too often it lacks challenge, particularly for the most able students, and expectations of those students supported by pupil premium funding are too low. Both groups underachieve as a result.
- Behaviour requires improvement. Although there have been recent improvements, there is still too much low-level disruption in lessons.

The school has the following strengths

- Students are well cared for and feel safe. Those who expressed an opinion say they enjoy coming to the college.
- While inspectors observed notable examples of students taking pride in their learning and making strong gains in their work, this was infrequent.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at no notice under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. It was subsequently deemed a section 5 inspection due to the extent of concerns surrounding a decline in standards and the quality of leadership and management.
- Inspectors observed 31 part-lessons, two of which were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors visited a range of lessons, including the college’s Inclusion Suite where students who require additional support are sent for short periods of time.
- Meetings were held with the acting principal of the two colleges in the federation, the senior leader at the college, other senior and middle leaders and staff. Other meetings included discussions with a representative of Durham local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with students in lessons and at various times during each day.
- The inspection team looked at a range of students’ workbooks, college documentation, including attendance, exclusion and behaviour information, the most recent review of the college by the local authority, the Principal’s reports to the governing body and a variety of governing body minutes and records of their visits. They reviewed a range of policies.
- At the time of the inspection, not enough parents had completed the on-line inspection survey (Parent View) for inspectors to take account of their views. Inspectors reviewed the college’s own surveys of attendance at parents’ meetings. Inspectors took account of 25 responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors were aware during this inspection that serious allegations against a member of staff not relating to this school were being investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, actions taken by this setting in response to the allegations were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time to inform inspectors’ judgements.

Inspection team

Mark Evans, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
David Griffiths	Additional Inspector
Lynne Horton	Additional Inspector
Darren Stewart	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- Fyndoune Community College is a much smaller-than-average sized secondary school.
- Approximately 40% of disadvantaged students are known to be supported by the pupil premium. (Additional funding to support the learning of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.) This is higher than that found nationally.
- The college is part of a federation with a local secondary school. The two colleges share a single governing body.
- The vast majority of students are White British. Less than one per cent of students have English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students with a disability or special educational needs receiving extra help at the school action level of support is slightly above the national average. Almost double the national average of students is identified as needing school action plus support or has a statement of special educational needs.
- There has been significant change to leadership over the last two years. The chief executive of the college has been suspended 'without prejudice' from her post since December 2012. A Principal has had oversight over the two colleges with a senior leader taking responsibility for the day-to-day work of each college.
- The college currently meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently improve governance so that:
 - the college, working with the federation, has a clear, well-informed and ambitious vision and strategy for the education of all the young people in its care
 - college leaders are held to account for the quality of education in the college, especially of disadvantaged students, the most able and those with a disability and special educational needs
 - all policies meet requirements, are up-to-date and ratified by the governing body, especially those relating to the impact of pupil premium funding, the curriculum, the impact of Year 7 'catch-up' funding and the support offered to those students who are disabled and have special educational needs.
- Urgently improve the quality and impact of leadership and management, including that of special educational needs, by:
 - ensuring that senior leaders are capable of leading sustained improvement and challenge to all staff and this results in all students making rapid and sustained progress
 - establishing rigorous systems that accurately check and evaluate the college's work and ensure that the outcomes are consistently used by all leaders and managers, including middle leaders, to make rapid and sustained improvements
 - checking that disadvantaged students supported by the government's pupil premium funding receive high calibre support that underpins their progress.
- Improve behaviour across the college by:
 - urgently reviewing the role of the Inclusion Suite in the college's overall approach to behaviour
 - taking urgent steps to reduce the rise in persistent absence, especially that of disadvantaged students
 - making best use of the recently introduced rewards system, so that all students recognise the link

between positive behaviour and good quality learning.

■ Improve the quality of teaching by:

- ensuring that staff take full account of the learning needs of all students, especially the most able and those who are disadvantaged, when they are planning lessons and assessing students' progress
- improving the consistency and quality of marking so that all students are clear about what they need to do to improve.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- There has been a breakdown in relationships between members of the governing body and members of the senior leadership team. This has meant that the governing body is not holding personnel to account for the college's performance. As a result, there has been a decline in the quality of education provided for students and standards have declined.
- While the college's self-evaluation procedures are detailed, the information provided is confusing and inaccurate resulting in senior leaders having an over-inflated view about the work of individuals and departments. Improvement planning is inadequate because targets are based on inaccurate information. The vital role of governors in this process is vague and unfocused.
- The tracking systems that the college has in place are unreliable and do not give a clear picture of how well students are doing. As a result, it is difficult for the college to target its efforts to improve teaching and provide additional support where this is most needed. While leaders in Key Stage 3 have collected more detailed tracking information about students' progress, subject by subject, there is little evidence that anything has been done as a result of these findings.
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- The leadership of the special educational needs provision is inadequate. This aspect of the college's work lacks focus because the roles of key staff supporting these students are unclear. Procedures lack clarity about what is needed or whether students' needs are being met.
- There is wide variation in the performance of students across subjects in the college. While some middle leaders routinely hold their teams to account for the quality and impact of their teaching, most do not. Senior leaders are not directly supporting or challenging middle leaders with the diligence needed to ensure that all perform to the level needed.
- The systems for managing the performance of teachers are inadequate. Targets are not rigorous enough to hold staff to account for students' performance. Teachers choose their own targets and these are not directly linked to the college's priorities. As a result, there is no secure link between salary progression and students' achievement.
- Despite recent attempts by senior leaders to widen the curriculum on offer, progress has been too slow and the curriculum is ineffective in raising achievement for all. Not all students have access to the range of subjects and experiences they need move on to the next stage of their learning or the world of work.
- The information provided for parents about the curriculum offered by the college on its website does not meet statutory requirements.
- The college actively promotes fundamental British values and tackles discrimination through a range of existing and developing actions. For example, Year 7 pupils learn about what it is to be British in humanities lessons. The philosophy, ethics and life department focuses on both British values and other faiths and cultures. The college organises a wide range of educational visits so that students can experience other cultures and places. However, there is no clarity about how the impact of this developing work is to be assessed.
- The college may not appoint newly qualified teachers.
- Although the local authority has acted rapidly in response to serious allegations at senior leadership level, it has only recently engaged fully in supporting other aspects of the college's performance. As a result, it has not had sufficient impact on the issues related to variable teaching and learning and weak leadership.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors lack sufficient knowledge about the quality of education in the college to hold leaders to account. They are not aware of the variations in the quality of teaching across subjects. They do not have an understanding of the college's performance data and believe that students at the college are doing as well as they can. They cannot provide a clear summary of the use and impact of the pupil premium funding on students' learning and progress. Governors have some understanding of the link between teachers' performance and pay. However, there is a lack of understanding amongst governors about how the management of performance can improve teaching across the college.

The behaviour and safety of pupils require improvement

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. While students are generally quiet and attentive in lessons, they do not demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and some become easily distracted. However, when teaching enthuses students and sparks their interest in the subject being taught, they demonstrate high levels of interest and are able to talk animatedly about their learning and how they enjoy it.
- Attendance levels are broadly average but persistent absence rates are rising. Persistent absence rates of those students supported by the pupil premium are above those of their peers in the college and above those of similar students nationally. The proportion of fixed-term exclusions has increased recently but is below national figures.
- Student withdrawals from lessons to the Inclusion Suite have reduced recently but are still high. Boys are four times more likely to be referred to the Inclusion Suite than girls. Students report that the recently introduced rewards system has had a positive impact on behaviour but that there are still examples of low-level disruption in lessons. The vast majority of students are polite and show concern for each other. Most are usually punctual to lessons. They hold open doors and greet each other and staff with obvious pleasure around the college.
- The college's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students report that they feel safe and are looked after well. They also show appropriate care and concern for each other. Generally, movement around the college is orderly between lessons and at breaks. However, students report that there can be incidents of boisterous behaviour in, for example, the lunch queue, but these are dealt with promptly.
- Students report that incidents of bullying are low and when they occur, they are dealt with promptly. Students are aware of the different types of bullying, including homophobic bullying. Two students reported that they had been subject to this type of bullying but that it had been dealt with effectively and to their satisfaction. Students know how to keep themselves safe, including on-line. The college's work around e-safety is good.
- The single central record is well maintained and up to date. Safe recruitment and safeguarding training is regular. However, it is noted that the staff handbook does not contain the most recent Department for Education guidance on keeping children safe in education. Action taken by the college during the inspection has remedied this deficiency.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because there is too much variability between and within subject areas and between different year groups. This variability is sharply reflected in GCSE results at the end of Key Stage 4 in 2014.
- Teaching at the college lacks sufficient challenge to meet the needs of all groups of students; this is particularly evident for the most able. Teachers do not consistently offer these students the opportunity to extend their skills, knowledge and experience through work that stretches them. Too often these students have to wait for other students to catch-up, because the teacher has not planned challenging enough work for them. Teachers do not take enough account of students' prior knowledge or skills when lessons are planned.
- Not all teachers are aware of the different groups of students in their class. Those disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium, which represent a significant proportion of the student population, do not receive the focused support that they need to catch-up. Detailed information about the needs of these students is available in the college, but is not always communicated effectively with classroom teachers.
- Teachers' marking is variable, with examples of very good feedback where, for example, students enter into a written dialogue with their teachers and make strong gains as a result. Too often, however, in the workbooks and folders seen, marking is superficial, often just celebratory, and does not help students progress. Teachers' comments, where they exist, too often lack detail and students report that they do not always know how they are to respond. In a few cases seen, students' misunderstandings and misconceptions are not challenged.
- The presentation of work in books is often untidy and comments by teachers to students to re-do or extend work are ignored. Staff do not always pick up these omissions or challenge the lack of care from some students.
- The setting and impact of homework is haphazard. While students in Years 7 and 8 take real pride in this aspect of their learning and many work hard and do their best, Year 9 students complained that they do not receive enough homework to support their progress.

The achievement of pupils**requires improvement**

- Students enter the college with below average standards in English and mathematics, although these are rising year-on-year.
- Achievement requires improvement in a number of subjects including humanities and science. While the focus of the college's efforts has been on English and mathematics, this has been to the detriment of some other subjects. This is recognised by college leaders. Over the last two years, while there has been a more determined focus on making improvements in subjects other than English and mathematics, progress has been too slow.
- The tracking systems that the college has in place are unreliable and do not give a clear picture of how well students are doing. This is especially the case in Key Stage 3. As a result, it is difficult for the college to target its efforts to improve teaching and provide additional support where this is most needed.
- There was a decline in GCSE results in 2014 when compared to previous years. While results in English and mathematics held up quite well overall, the proportion of students gaining five good grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, is now below the national average. Too many students did not make the progress expected of them and, consequently, were poorly equipped for the next phase of their education.
- College leaders have been mostly ineffective in maintaining the performance of students supported by the pupil premium funding. Historically the average point score gap with other students has been negligible. In 2012, disadvantaged students at the college did as well as other students nationally in English and mathematics. In 2013, disadvantaged students' attainment at GCSE in English was two-thirds of a grade lower than other students nationally and half a grade lower than other students in the college. The gap continues to grow with provisional results for 2014 indicating that the percentage of disadvantaged students who gain five good GCSEs, including English and mathematics, is now 10% lower than their peers.
- The most able students have not achieved as highly as they should because their progress across the college has not been tracked carefully enough. As a result, the work they have been given often lacks challenge. Consequently, too few of these most able students are gaining A* and A grades in GCSE in a wide range of subjects, including sciences and modern foreign languages.
- The achievement of disabled students and those who have special educational needs also requires improvement, with relatively greater success in English and mathematics compared to other subjects, especially in Key Stage 4.

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	114289
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	440822

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	379
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Bell
Principal	Trevor Dunn
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2011
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