

Fyndoune Community College

Findon Hill, Sacriston, Durham DH7 6LU

Inspection dates

4–5 May 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The achievement of pupils has declined in recent years. At the end of Year 11, far fewer pupils than nationally make or exceed the expected progress in English and mathematics.
- The college has only recently been able to demonstrate the positive impact of the additional funding provided through the pupil premium. Although the attainment of pupils supported by this money is increasing, it requires further improvement as these pupils are still not achieving as highly as they should.
- The quality of teaching, although rapidly improving, is not yet consistently good across subjects and within some subjects.
- Some teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough, particularly for the most-able pupils.
- Behaviour requires improvement because in some lessons pupils' low-level disruption reduces learning.

The school has the following strengths

- Following a long period of unstable leadership the senior leadership team brings ambition, enthusiasm and high expectations to the college. Senior and middle leaders work well as a team and are taking effective action to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement.
- Leaders have brought about important improvements in key areas of the work of the college and are now focused on driving further improvements and raising expectations.
- Governors know the college very well. They make good use of information on the quality of teaching and information on pupils' achievement to hold the college to account.
- The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. However, it is taking time for this better teaching to overcome previous levels of underachievement and weaknesses remain in some subjects.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves and others safe at college, in the wider community and online.
- Bullying is now rare and pupils are confident that staff will address any problems that arise.
- The college's arrangements to safeguard pupils are effective.

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise students' achievement by ensuring that all groups of students, including those supported by pupil premium funding, make progress which is at least good.
- Ensure that all teaching is consistently good by building on recent improvements to teaching by sharing best practice within the college. Ensure all teachers plan and deliver challenging lessons that are closely matched to pupils' needs and abilities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The acting headteacher, ably supported by two effective deputy headteachers, has a clear vision for the college. She enjoys the respect of all staff and has created a culture of supportive teamwork which has led to rapidly improving morale throughout the college.
- Leaders, including governors, now have a very clear and accurate view of where the college is performing well and where it could do better. As a result, they have successfully tackled the significant weaknesses identified during the last inspection, together with further issues identified during monitoring visits. More robust departmental self-evaluation has created a greater awareness of weaknesses in both the curriculum and in teaching, and has increased the focus on rapid and targeted improvements.
- Senior and middle leaders hold regular 'raising achievement' meetings where the progress of pupils is discussed and support arranged for those who may be in danger of falling behind. Leaders now work together as a very effective team and there is a strong sense of collective commitment among staff to improving the outcomes for pupils. The college has worked with a number of external partners from the local authority and from local schools to moderate and monitor the accuracy of this assessment information.
- Decisions about pay and promotion are rigorous and made in line with records of teachers' performance and national standards. Challenge and support are provided where improvements in teaching have not met leaders' expectations. Teachers are regularly observed and receive good-quality feedback on how to improve. Staff training is carefully targeted and has led to improvements in the quality of teaching, and coaching has supported improvements for individual staff.
- Pupils' progress is measured regularly and this information is carefully evaluated by senior and middle leaders. This assessment system is becoming more secure as teachers' skills in evaluating progress grow. As a result, teachers know which pupils are on track and can give extra help to those pupils who are falling behind. This work has had a positive impact on the achievement of all pupils and has helped to narrow and close the gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates. The additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and for Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up is now used to good effect.
- The curriculum is well planned and contains a good balance of subjects. In key stage 4, pupils are able to select and follow different curriculum pathways which are best suited to their individual interests, skills and abilities. Effective careers guidance helps pupils choose their next steps when leaving at the end of Year 11. The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development and well-being and pupils are well informed about diversity in British society. They are taught to respect and value different cultures and beliefs and recognise the importance of democracy.
- Communication with parents is not yet strong and a number do not recognise recent improvements in the college.
- The local authority has provided an extensive range of highly effective support that has contributed to the significant college improvement since the last inspection.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Members of the interim executive board of governors (IEB) have been very effective in supporting senior and middle leaders to drive the improvements necessary to raise outcomes for all pupils. They have not been afraid to tackle weak leadership and teaching through systems to manage teachers' performance, and this has helped the college to improve.
 - Governors are up to date with appropriate training and have a good grasp of the need to improve standards and narrow the gaps between groups of pupils.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. At the time of the inspection, the college met all government requirements in relation to safer recruitment. Record-keeping is exemplary.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Improvements to teaching have not yet resulted in pupils' overall achievement being good in a number of subject areas. However senior leaders have correctly focused on improving the quality of teaching in the college and have been largely successful in this work. All teachers are supported through a targeted and individual development programme. Lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work confirm that standards are rising as teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving increase. This has helped to create more positive relationships between teachers and pupils and develop better attitudes to

learning. A recently established teaching and learning group meets weekly and has updated the college marking policy and developed an updated lesson planning scheme used consistently by all teachers. The accuracy of teacher assessment has improved and teachers are now more aware of data relating to pupils' progress and better understand the needs of the different groups of pupils in their classes.

- Teacher feedback is effective at ensuring that pupils understand what they have learned and what they need to do to improve. Work in books shows that pupils are making better progress in English and mathematics, and across a range of other subjects, and that most now take more pride in the presentation of their work. The college is aware that more needs to be done to embed these improvements and ensure that best practice in teaching continues to spread throughout the college.
- The majority of lessons are planned with a variety of activities that interest and engage pupils. Teachers now have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. Where pupils make more limited progress, teachers do not use their knowledge of pupils' previous learning to make sure work is set at the right level. As a result, in these lessons pupils are not sufficiently engaged or challenged with the work they are given.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are positive and the support provided by teaching assistants is usually good. Inspectors saw examples of pupils being supported very effectively, in mainstream classes and when receiving targeted support both individually and in small groups.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Procedures and policies for safeguarding are fully in place and are reviewed regularly by senior leaders and the IEB. Staff receive appropriate training in managing pupils' behaviour and in safeguarding.
- Pupils spoken with were able to talk knowledgeably about online safety and the potential dangers of social media and have a clear understanding of what makes an unsafe situation. They are aware of different forms of bullying, including homophobic and racist bullying, and know how to report their concerns if they witness or experience it. Pupils report that bullying is rare at the college, and that they are confident that when it does happen staff deal with problems quickly and effectively.
- The college supports pupils' understanding of issues such as tolerance of others, the dangers of extremism, potential radicalisation, and sexual health through an effective programme of citizenship lessons and regular assemblies.
- The college has a well-established programme of careers advice and guidance.
- Pupils take on responsibility in a number of roles. The newly formed college council is active and effective, and makes an effective contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Pupils told inspectors that they are confident that adults listen to their opinions and respond positively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The behaviour of pupils in lessons is often good but, in lessons where weak teaching does not challenge or engage pupils, poor behaviour can disrupt learning. Pupils told inspectors that behaviour around the college site has improved since the introduction of the rewards and sanctions system and that this is applied consistently by the majority of staff.
- The work of the attendance officer, together with a more systematic approach to monitoring pupil absence, has led to continued improvements in attendance and in reducing persistent absence, in particular that of disadvantaged pupils. Attendance is currently close to the national average for secondary schools.
- Pupils' work, when in the inclusion suite, is closely aligned to the college curriculum. This, together with better teaching throughout the college and more targeted support in the inclusion suite, has significantly reduced the number of fixed-term exclusions from the college and the numbers of pupils who spend time in the suite is falling.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because until recently their progress has been too slow.

Outcomes for pupils completing Year 11 have not been good enough since the previous inspection. In 2015 the proportion of pupils achieving five GCSE qualifications including English and mathematics at grades A* to C declined for a third consecutive year. Too many pupils made limited progress in English or mathematics from the levels of attainment they had reached at the end of key stage 2.

- Outcomes for pupils in all year groups are now rising. The college's most recent analysis of assessment information, moderated by representatives of the local authority, indicates that the achievement of pupils will rise significantly this year. Observations of teaching, evidence from pupils' books and discussions with pupils confirm that they are making better progress in all areas of the curriculum. Increasing attention is now given to encouraging pupils to develop their literacy skills throughout the curriculum.
- In 2015, the average point score reached by disadvantaged pupils at the end of Year 11 was equivalent to around one half GCSE grade lower in English and in mathematics than other pupils in the school. Current college information indicates that these gaps are unlikely to narrow this year. However, senior and middle leaders have improved the way they use pupil premium money in order to target support more carefully and as a result the progress being made by disadvantaged pupils throughout the college is improving.
- The most-able pupils have not achieved as highly as they should. Until recently their progress across the college was not tracked carefully enough and as a result, the work they were given in lessons often lacked challenge. These pupils have not achieved the A* or A grades they are capable of at GCSE in a wide range of subjects.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is variable and there remain gaps between the achievement of many of these pupils and others. However, improved systems are now in place to check on how well pupils are doing and to provide appropriate and effective additional support where required.
- The college has an effective withdrawal unit to support pupils with behavioural difficulties and a small number of pupils attend alternative provision. These pupils are closely monitored and benefit from this provision.

School details

Unique reference number	114289
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10013045

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 comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	377
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Michael McDade
Headteacher	Alison Jobling
Telephone number	0191 371 0277
Website	www.thedurhamfederation.co.uk
Email address	fyndoune@durhamlearning.net
Date of previous inspection	17–18 September 2014

Information about this school

- This college caters for pupils aged from 11 to 16 years old and is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- At the time of the inspection the college was led by an acting headteacher appointed by the local authority.
- The college is part of a federation with a local secondary college. Plans for the college to become an academy are under consideration. The governing body was replaced by an IEB after the previous inspection.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have support for special educational needs is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is similar to the national average.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision, including the Green School run by the local authority.
- Few pupils leave or join the college other than at the beginning and end of the college year.
- The college meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- In 2015 the college did not meet the government's floor standards, which set out the government's minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection began as the fifth monitoring inspection of the college because it was judged to require special measures at its previous inspection in September 2014. Inspectors deemed the monitoring inspection a full section 5 inspection during the first day.
- Inspectors observed teaching in 17 lessons and part-lessons. Lessons were observed in a range of subjects and were taught by teachers across all year groups in the school.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher and deputy headteachers, middle leaders, members of the college teaching and learning group and two members of the IEB. The lead inspector held a meeting with the college staff and met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the college's work and scrutinised a range of documentation including the college's view of its own performance, local authority and college monitoring records, information about pupils' progress, improvement planning, minutes of meetings of the IEB, and records of behaviour and attendance. They looked closely at records relating to safeguarding and child protection, and at policies, including those published on the college's website.
- Inspectors looked at the work pupils were doing in lessons and over time in their books. They observed pupils working in the Apex inclusion suite.
- Discussions were held with groups of pupils, including representatives of the college council, about the quality of their educational experience and the standard of behaviour in the college. Inspectors also spoke with pupils in lessons, and at various other times, during both days of the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of the 29 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

David Brown, Lead inspector

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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