

# Durham Community Business College for Technology and Enterprise

Bracken Court, Ushaw Moor, Durham DH7 7NG

## Inspection dates

4–5 October 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils have not made the rapid progress needed to overcome previous considerable underachievement and weak teaching, especially in mathematics.
- Staffing turbulence and difficulties in recruiting teachers, most notably in mathematics, have hampered leaders' efforts to bring rapid improvements to the quality of teaching and outcomes of pupils.
- Teaching, learning and assessment, although improving, remain inconsistent in their effect on pupils' outcomes. Teachers do not all consistently use questioning and pupils' prior assessment information to ensure that learning meets all pupils' needs and keeps them engaged.
- From their below-average starting points, pupils do not make good progress over time. Standards by the end of Year 11, while improving, are still below average.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are sometimes too low. Consequently, the level of challenge limits the progress pupils make in some lessons.
- Strategies to improve pupils' literacy skills are not embedded across the school. Consequently, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to improve their progress by developing extended writing skills.
- Pupils' persistent absence and the number of fixed-term exclusions increased in 2018.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has a clear and focused vision for the school. She has taken effective action to tackle weak teaching and is well supported by her competent senior leadership team. The curriculum and teaching, as well as pupils' outcomes, are improving.
- Senior leadership has strengthened. Leaders have an accurate picture of what is needed to improve the school. As a result, the pace of improvement is starting to gather momentum.
- Governors have supported the school well through a period of challenge and change. They use their wide range of relevant experience to support school leaders in every aspect of school life.
- Pupils in Years 7 and 8 are making increasingly strong progress, having only experienced the school under its new good leadership. Progress overall is improving from a very low base.

## 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?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school so that pupils make good progress from their starting points, by ensuring that:
  - teachers use assessment information to plan learning effectively to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly the most able pupils, and sustain their focus in class
  - teachers in all subjects have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, including the most able pupils
  - teachers use questioning that deepens pupils' knowledge and understanding
  - the teaching of literacy is strengthened across the curriculum.
- Improve outcomes by continuing the leadership's good work to improve pupils' progress, at an accelerated pace, including in English and mathematics.
- Improve further the attendance, behaviour and welfare of pupils, by reducing:
  - persistent absence
  - the number of fixed-term exclusions and repeat fixed-term exclusions.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The dedicated headteacher, supported well by newly appointed senior leaders, is focused and committed to continuous whole-school improvement. Despite recent difficulties in the recruitment of specialist teachers, leaders are dealing swiftly with the shortcomings identified at the previous inspection. As a result, they have secured improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes in a range of subjects.
- The headteacher has taken appropriate and decisive actions to eradicate weak teaching. As a result of these actions, there have been considerable staff changes over the last two years and, consequently, outcomes for pupils have improved. However, the resulting instability in staffing in some subjects, including English and mathematics, has slowed the rate of improvement of the progress of some pupils from their starting points.
- Leaders have a detailed understanding of the weaknesses in teaching, outcomes and pupils' behaviour. These are linked to effective systems of monitoring and support, which in a short time are securing improvements for most pupils.
- Senior leaders responsible for teaching and learning ensure that procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are effective. Leaders identify accurately teachers who need support and put in place appropriate strategies to help them improve their practice. Leaders' regular visits to lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work are helping to secure improvements in teaching.
- Governors and senior leaders have developed a strong culture of accountability. They work closely with middle leaders through frequent meetings. Consequently, middle leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of their departments well and increasingly take appropriate and effective actions to support individual pupils.
- Leaders use well the additional funding, including the pupil premium and that intended to help pupils catch up, as well as the funding to support pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Leaders evaluate all aspects of the school's performance to make sure that their actions are making a difference. The outcomes of disadvantaged pupils are now close to those of the non-disadvantaged pupils and are improving in most year groups. The outcomes of the pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are also improving.
- Senior leaders continuously review the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils, in both key stage 3 and key stage 4. Leaders have made sensible year-on-year revisions to the range of subjects available to pupils, including the recent introduction of some vocational courses, to ensure that all pupils' needs are met. They ensure that learning in subjects is effectively enhanced through a wide range of enrichment activities on offer, for example, poetry, chess club and cooking.
- The local authority has provided timely and effective support. It recognises that the school's leadership is now effective and that more needs to be done to improve further pupils' overall attendance, the quality of teaching and learning, and outcomes. The school's information, visits to lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work confirm that there is

an upward trend in pupils' progress.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governance is making a strong contribution to the development of the school. Governors, ably led by the experienced chair of the interim executive board, have a wide range of skills and expertise in school improvement. Consequently, they provide effective challenge and support to school leaders, including middle leaders.
- Governors receive succinct and accurate information from school leaders. They are linked to different areas of the school and evaluate the leaders' and the school improvement partner's findings regularly. As a result, they know well the strengths and areas for improvement of the school.
- Governors frequently satisfy themselves that all additional funding, for disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for catch-up support, and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, is spent wisely. As a result, the outcomes for these groups of pupils are improving.
- Governors ensure that their legal duties in relation to safeguarding are met. They keep their safeguarding training under review so that they continue to be well informed about safeguarding issues.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- School leaders responsible for safeguarding are appropriately trained and knowledgeable and ensure that all staff have relevant and up-to-date safeguarding training, including about the dangers of radicalisation. As a result, staff are knowledgeable about child protection procedures, the signs to look for and how to report concerns.
- The safeguarding team records safeguarding concerns effectively and makes timely referrals to the local authority social care services where necessary. It keeps an accurate record of conversations and actions. Senior leaders check safeguarding records regularly and the school has comprehensive policies for safeguarding. As a result, the school takes timely, supportive and appropriate actions.
- There is appropriate supervision on entry to school in the mornings, at lunchtimes and between lessons. Consequently, the conduct of pupils around the school is calm and orderly and pupils are punctual to lessons.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

## **Requires improvement**

- Leaders have taken effective action to deal with the weak teaching reported at the previous inspection. Following a turbulent time, with difficulties in recruiting specialist teachers, especially in mathematics, leaders have ensured that the school is now fully staffed. Teaching is now improving at pace, although the legacy of weak teaching has had a negative effect on the rate of progress of the older pupils. Although some teaching is effective, it is still too variable in quality between and within subjects and,

therefore, requires improvement.

- In some subjects, expectations of what pupils can achieve are sometimes too low. In particular, work for the most able pupils lacks challenge. The high expectations and challenging work seen of pupils in, for example, history, creative arts and geography, are resulting in their better progress.
- Not all teachers use assessment information to plan learning effectively to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly the most able pupils. As a result, some pupils struggle to sustain their focus in class.
- The quality of teachers' questioning to probe pupils' responses and deepen their understanding is also variable and overall requires improvement. Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to pick up on, and correct, misconceptions swiftly. Pupils make repeated mistakes as a result. Visits to lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work confirm this.
- The teaching of literacy requires improvement. Opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in subjects beyond English are sometimes overlooked. Teachers do not consistently insist that pupils' handwriting and the presentation and layout of their work are of a high enough standard.
- Leaders very recently introduced a specialist curriculum at the Sacriston site, for pupils who require additional support, especially in Year 7. These pupils follow a personalised timetable and are re-integrated back to the main school as soon as possible. Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching and the progress of these pupils. It is, however, too early to evaluate the full effect of this work.
- Leaders frequently check the quality of teaching and learning across the school. A detailed and bespoke professional development programme is supporting staff to improve their practice. New middle leaders in mathematics and English are making sure that planned improvements in teaching in these subjects are under way.
- Consistently, the relationships between staff and pupils are strong and, as a result, pupils are keen and confident to contribute to the lessons.
- Leaders encourage pupils to read often, both in and out of school. Inspectors listened to pupils read with clarity and fluency and pupils could use their phonic skills well to break down unfamiliar words.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils do not consistently take pride in their work. Consequently, presentation is poor in some books.
- Sometimes, pupils lack confidence to ask questions when they are unclear as to what they are learning. In some subjects, pupils are uncertain about what they need to do to improve. Inspection evidence and scrutiny of pupils' work confirm this.

- Pupils present themselves well, wear their uniform smartly and are proud of their school. Pupils overall conduct themselves well and show respect for each other and staff. They feel proud of the school, and as one pupil commented, 'We are proud of the school and the recent work it has done to improve.'
- Overall, pupils feel supported by the school. Since September 2018, they appreciate the increased number of staff on site. They are taught how to stay safe online and can articulate how to avoid potential dangers when using social media. Pupils feel safe and know whom to report concerns to should any arise. Inspection evidence and discussions with pupils confirm that bullying is rare and when it happens, teachers deal with it swiftly.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well by the school. The weekly form-time activities and themed assemblies for all pupils in Years 7 to 11 provide opportunities to raise awareness of moral and ethical issues, such as the environment and care for refugees.
- Leaders effectively check the welfare, behaviour, attendance and progress of the small number of pupils who attend alternative education provision. Communication between school staff and the providers is good. Pupils follow a personalised curriculum that is well suited to their needs. Consequently, the very small number of pupils who are educated in the school's alternative education provision are well cared for and behave well.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- There is variation in the pupils' attitude to learning, across subjects. Where the planning of learning is not effective, pupils are compliant but not fully engaged with the activities. As a result, learning is not consistently effective.
- Leaders have reinforced high expectations around behaviour. As a result, the number of days of fixed-term exclusions of pupils and repeat fixed-term exclusions increased last year, although the number of pupils who were excluded decreased. The number of permanent exclusions also increased in 2018. School information and inspection evidence indicate that the school's internal exclusion centre is having a positive impact on improving pupils' behaviour.
- Pupils say that, in many lessons, behaviour is positive. They agree that behaviour has improved. Pupils are very clear about the consequences and sanctions associated with specific types of behaviour.
- Leaders monitor pupils' attendance regularly. In 2018, attendance declined due to a number of pupils with medical needs. Attendance over time is broadly in line with the national average. However, the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school has been above the national average and increased further in 2018. Leaders recognise that this area needs improvement and have reviewed their strategies for the current academic year. It is too early to see the effect of their actions.

**Outcomes for pupils**

**Requires improvement**

- Typically, pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are below average. By the end of key stage 4 in 2018, the standards attained improved but remain below average. Most pupils by the end of Year 11 did not make good progress from their starting points and as a result, outcomes require improvement.
- In 2017, at GCSE level, only 21% of all pupils attained a grade 4 (formerly grade C) in English and mathematics. Pupils' progress was well below the national average. There are many entwined reasons behind these low GCSE results. The previous poor teaching, an unsuitable curriculum and other factors such as difficulties in recruitment, contributed to this.
- 2018 unvalidated assessment information indicates a substantial improvement in the proportion of pupils achieving a grade 4 in English and mathematics. The same information also indicates a considerable improvement in the attainment of pupils in English. Attainment also improved in range of subjects, including history, geography, creative arts and modern foreign languages.
- Schools leaders have effective systems in place for monitoring the progress of pupils, at appropriate assessment points. The local authority has worked closely with staff to ensure the accuracy of their assessments.
- School assessment information about the progress of current pupils in school indicates a continuing improvement in the progress for all pupils, from their starting points, in a range of subjects. A legacy of weak teaching has slowed down the rate of progress in some subjects, including in mathematics, for the older pupils in the school. There is evidence of stronger progress for pupils in Years 7 and 8. Inspection evidence and scrutiny of pupils' work confirm this. Leaders are aware of the need to accelerate the rate of progress for all groups of pupils in the school, in a range of subjects, including in mathematics.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make similar progress as other pupils. Improvements to the ways in which pupils' achievements and needs are assessed are helping to ensure more targeted support is put in place for those who need extra help. However, as with other pupils, their progress varies between subjects.

## School details

Unique reference number	114311
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10054499

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 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	321
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Julia Millard
Headteacher	Alison Jobling
Telephone number	0191 373 0336
Website	<a href="http://durhamfederation.net">http://durhamfederation.net</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:durhamdbc@durhamfed.co.uk">durhamdbc@durhamfed.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	17–18 September 2014

## Information about this school

- Durham Community Business College for Technology and Enterprise is part of the Durham Federation. The federation is responsible for two secondary schools.
- Since the last inspection, there have been considerable changes to staffing and leadership. The current headteacher was appointed in her substantive role in May 2017, following a period of supporting the school as a local authority consultant and acting headteacher. The local authority replaced the governing body with an interim executive board in January 2015 and the previous headteacher left the same year. Leaders appointed a new permanent deputy headteacher in January 2016, and new assistant headteacher in September 2017. A second new assistant headteacher and a leader for English were appointed in May 2018. A leader for mathematics and computing was appointed in September 2018.
- In September 2018, leaders brought pupils from both schools in the federation together, onto one site. The majority of lessons are taught on the Durham Community



Business College for Technology and Enterprise site; the learning and inclusion centre, along with the teaching of vocational subjects, are based on the Sacriston site. The school's interim executive board is currently working with the Department for Education towards the amalgamation of both of the federation's schools.

- The local authority provides a range of support to continuously develop school leadership and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. For example, the school improvement partner and specialist consultant teachers provide targeted support.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The school uses The Bridge and Delta Independent School for alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited parts of 31 lessons across most subject areas, including form-time activities, and observed a Year 7 assembly. Some of the visits to lessons took place with senior leaders. During visits to classrooms, inspectors looked in pupils' workbooks and questioned pupils about their learning.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, other senior leaders and most subject leaders. Inspectors also held discussions with members of the wider body of staff, including newly qualified and recently qualified teachers.
- Inspectors visited pupils in alternative education provision and held a discussion with the representative from the local authority with responsibility for the education of children looked after.
- Discussions also took place with the local authority school improvement partner, and the chair and another member of the interim executive board.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils from all year groups, about what it is like to be a young person at the school. Inspectors also listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school, including between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtime.
- Inspectors took into account the 43 responses to the staff survey and analysed the 59 responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors examined records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors also scrutinised documents, including school development plans, minutes of interim executive board meetings, leaders' monitoring notes and information about pupils' achievement.

## Inspection team

Dimitris Spiliotis, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Moira Banks	Ofsted Inspector
David Penny	Ofsted Inspector
Jim McGrath	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. [www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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