

Fyndoune Community College

Findon Hill, Sacriston, Durham, County Durham DH7 6LU

Inspection dates

13–14 March 2019

| Overall effectiveness | Requires improvement |
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| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Requires improvement |
| 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 | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving; however, it remains inconsistent. School policies which are designed to improve pupils' progress are not consistently applied across and within subjects.
- Sometimes learning is disrupted in English, mathematics and science, by the low-level and off-task behaviour of a small minority of pupils.
- Pupils' workbooks do not consistently reflect the high expectations of senior leaders, in the quality of work that pupils produce.
- Most-able pupils are not consistently stretched and challenged to develop their learning. Consequently, they make much less progress than other pupils nationally, who have similar starting points.
- Pupils enter the school with well-below-average starting points. However, although progress is improving, they still do not make the progress other pupils do nationally who have similar starting points.
- The personal development pupils are timetabled to receive in form tutor sessions is inconsistent in its quality.
- Due to staff turbulence, particularly in mathematics, leaders have been unable to make the improvements which are required as quickly as they would have liked.
- Middle leadership of English, mathematics and science has not been effective in ensuring that pupils' progress in these subjects improves quickly enough.

The school has the following strengths

- School leaders have established systems which reliably monitor both pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning.
- The interim executive board (IEB) and school leaders are passionate about, and determined to improve further, the quality of education that pupils receive.
- Leaders have developed a curriculum which provides pupils with learning pathways which meet their needs.
- The overall attendance of pupils has improved over time. The number of disadvantaged pupils who are regularly absent from the school, has reduced significantly.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the policies for monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are applied consistently and result in appropriate actions by leaders at all levels, which bring about the necessary improvements quickly
 - middle leadership in English, mathematics and science is further developed so that the progress of pupils is improved more rapidly in these subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and increase pupils' progress by ensuring that:
 - all pupils, including those who are most able, are stretched and challenged so they make good progress from their starting points
 - learning is not interrupted by low-level disruption and off-task behaviour, especially in English, mathematics and science
 - all teachers share leaders' high expectations for pupils' work.
- Improve the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils by ensuring that:
 - all pupils are encouraged to have positive attitudes towards their learning in English, mathematics and science, so that the quality of their work in these subjects improves and supports their progress
 - form tutor sessions are delivered to a consistently high standard and in line with the school's tutor programme policy

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have established reliable systems to identify areas of strength and weakness in teaching, learning and assessment. However, leaders do not use these systems consistently to identify the development needs of teachers. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent. The progress of pupils in all subjects is monitored regularly and thoroughly. However, leadership is not rigorous enough to identify consistently, where pupils are making weaker progress due to a lack of challenge and high expectations. Consequently, although pupils' progress is improving, it is not improving rapidly enough.
- Middle leadership in English, mathematics and science is inconsistent in its quality. Consequently, although some improvements are being made, there are also examples where the necessary improvements required, are not being made quickly enough. This is limiting the progress that pupils are making.
- Although leaders have worked hard to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school, it remains variable. Teaching and learning is not consistently strong enough in mathematics and science to support the good progress of pupils, including those pupils who are disadvantaged.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences are provided through a programme of personal, social, health and economics (PSHE) sessions, assemblies, external speakers, visits and form tutor periods. However, during the inspection, the form tutor periods visited were not consistently planned, delivered or utilised productively.
- Leaders have planned a curriculum which is designed to meet the needs of the pupils by providing distinct pathways which allow a choice of subjects according to pupils' interests and abilities. In addition, as a new initiative introduced in the current academic year, enrichment sessions are planned into each day, which are a strong feature of the pupils' entitlement.
- The school's programme of professional development is valued by teachers and support staff. Themes within the programme are closely linked to the identified school priorities for improvement. Staff report these sessions have improved their practice. Teachers who are new, feel supported and enjoy working at the school. They believe, rightly, that the professional development they receive is improving their practice and therefore is having a positive effect on pupils' learning.
- Senior leadership has been strengthened recently, and leaders have taken decisive action to merge two schools onto one site to improve the quality of education of all pupils. They have been successful in this. The small number of parents who responded to the parent survey are positive about the school. Pupils are mostly positive about the new arrangements which have been in place since September 2018.
- In recent times the school has undergone substantial turbulence in staffing, particularly in mathematics. These circumstances have hampered progress and rapid improvement,

which leaders have worked hard to overcome.

- The leadership of the school's provision for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a strength, resulting in effective support for these pupils.
- Leaders with a responsibility for improving attendance and reducing persistent absenteeism amongst pupils have been particularly successful in their roles, contributing to significant improvements in this area.
- The local authority provides a range of support to develop continuously school leadership and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, for example the school improvement partner. Improvements are being made in the quality of leadership and management through this support, and it is beginning to have an early impact upon the effectiveness of middle leadership.

Governance of the school

- Members of the IEB are committed to improving the school further. They hold school leaders effectively to account through a series of school steering group meetings which consider detailed school performance information.
- The IEB has a detailed knowledge of the school's performance and members regularly visit the school. However, they are less informed about leaders' impact on improving pupils' work so that they make better progress.
- The IEB holds leaders to account effectively for the use of the additional funding the school receives for those pupils who are disadvantaged and those pupils with SEND.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have established a culture in the school where pupils are kept safe, and they feel safe. School records evidence a thoroughness of practice, which show that leaders act quickly and effectively in response to any concerns of a safeguarding nature.
- The single central register, which records all of the necessary checks on staff or visitors, is rigorous and compliant.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Leaders rigorously monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and consequently, it is improving. However, teaching and learning remains inconsistent across and within subjects. In some examples, weakness has been identified but leaders have been slow to provide the support and impetus required to make the necessary improvements quickly.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is a strong feature, and this ensures that pupils are provided with work which is appropriate to their age and course of study. However, beyond this, the level of challenge is variable both across subjects and within them. Most able pupils do not always receive the stretch and challenge in their work which

they require to make strong progress.

- The expectations which teachers have of pupils, including those pupils who are most able, is inconsistent across and within subjects. In mathematics, for example, inspectors observed poor-quality, missing and incomplete work which remained unchallenged and unchecked. In science, pupils were provided with further work to develop their understanding. However, pupils routinely did not attempt to complete this work over a long period of time, and this, too, remained unchallenged.
- In most lessons observed, pupils' attitudes to learning were positive overall. However, in a minority of lessons, pupils' attitudes to learning were less positive and resulted in low level disruption having a detrimental effect on the learning of others.
- Inspectors observed pupils' work which allowed them to develop their skills in writing and literacy through extended writing tasks. In other examples, any subject-specific literacy mistakes were corrected. However, these approaches are inconsistent across subjects. Consequently, in some pupils' work, where spelling, punctuation and grammar mistakes had not been corrected, these mistakes have become routine in pupils' writing.
- Pupils with SEND are supported effectively in classrooms. Leaders have ensured that teaching assistance has a focus on facilitating learning opportunities within lessons for those pupils with SEND, providing the support that these pupils need when required, but also encouraging and allowing independent learning to take place.
- The school provides a 'nurture' facility, which offers 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 reintegrated back to the main school as soon as possible. Through a combination of planned work, which considers the prior learning of the pupils and strong teaching, this aspect of the school's provision is an emerging strength.
- Pupils, especially those who are older, report that since the two schools merged onto one site, teaching has improved, and they feel that they are now making better progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Most pupils wear their uniform well and meet the high expectations of school leaders. However, a small minority of pupils do not adhere to the school's policy on uniform. These pupils are not consistently or effectively challenged.
- Pupils are courteous, respectful and polite to their peers, staff and visitors. Equally, they are helpful and willing to discuss any school issues they are concerned with in a mature and positive manner.
- The vast majority of pupils report they are positive about the merging of the two schools onto one site. Many believe that they now have 'more space' and teaching has

improved.

- The school provides pupils with personal development and welfare programmes of study in curriculum sessions, form tutor periods and assemblies. However, during the inspection, those form tutor sessions observed were not consistently used so that pupils were constructively engaged.
- Pupils have mixed views about bullying and the frequency with which it occurs. School records suggest it is not frequent, and pupils generally agree with school leaders that, where it does occur, the school responds appropriately and any issues are resolved quickly.
- Pupils report universally that they feel safe. They are aware of who to go to if they have any concerns or worries and are confident that they will receive the support they might need.
- Pupils speak positively about the information, advice and guidance they receive when making choices for options and further education.
- Those pupils who attend alternative provision make the progress in their studies expected of them. Leaders ensure that the quality of provision is regularly monitored and, where necessary, make changes to individual programmes of study, or to the whole provision, if appropriate.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Most pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. However, the disruptive and off-task behaviour of a small minority of pupils, has a negative effect on the learning of others.
- A strong and focused attendance team have applied a wide range of strategies to encourage better attendance. Consequently, the attendance of pupils has improved to just below the national average. The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent, although reducing, remains above the national average. However, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who do not attend school regularly has significantly reduced, and is a particular success story.
- Leaders have been effective in reducing fixed-term exclusions. The school has moved away from using internal isolation as a punitive provision and now uses the behaviour support area in the school to isolate pupils so that dedicated staff may work to re-engage them with a learning culture.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Typically, pupils enter the school with attainment levels which are well below the national average. In the recent past, most pupils have left the school making much less progress than their peers who have similar starting points do nationally.
- The progress of those pupils who are most able has been particularly weak in the past. Currently the progress of these pupils is beginning to improve. However, their progress

in mathematics and science remains weaker than in other subjects. Their overall progress still has some way to go, to catch up with their peers nationally who have similar starting points.

- Pupils' progress in mathematics has been particularly weak in the past. Currently, pupils are beginning to make improved progress in this subject. Those pupils in key stage 4 are making the strongest progress. These pupils are supported to develop a stronger knowledge base to address the weaknesses resulting from a legacy of weak teaching, staff absence and staffing turbulence.
- Historically, those pupils who are disadvantaged and those with SEND, have made weaker progress than other pupils who have similar starting points. Currently, these pupils are beginning to make improved progress in line with those others in the school. However, they still do not make the progress other pupils make nationally who have similar starting points.
- As a result of more effective teaching, most pupils make good progress in modern foreign languages, history and geography.
- Although pupils lag behind other pupils nationally with similar starting points in terms of progress, they move on to appropriate destinations, given their results, for the next stage of their lives.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 114289 |
| Local authority | Durham |
| Inspection number | 10048172 |

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

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| Type of school | Secondary comprehensive |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 332 |
| Appropriate authority | Interim executive board |
| Chair | Julia Millard |
| Headteacher | Alison Jobling |
| Telephone number | 01913 710277 |
| Website | http://durhamfederation.net/ |
| Email address | fyndoune@durhamlearning.net |
| Date of previous inspection | 4–5 May 2016 |

Information about this school

- Fyndoune Community College 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.
- 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 proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The school uses The Woodshed and Delta Independent School for alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons and registration sessions, some jointly with senior leaders.
- Discussions were held with members of the IEB, senior and middle leaders, other staff and the school's local authority school improvement partner.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in lessons and a sample of pupils' books.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour before school, during lessons, around school, in registration sessions, at breaktime and at lunchtime.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils in discussion groups and informally around school.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, its improvement plans, minutes of meetings of the IEB and school steering group, information about the attainment and progress of all pupils, records relating to behaviour and safeguarding, and information on the school's website.
- Inspectors considered six responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including four free-text comments, alongside 34 responses to the staff survey and 24 pupil survey responses.

Inspection team

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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.

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