

Inspection of Durham Community Business College for Technology and Enterprise

Bracken Court, Ushaw Moor, Durham DH7 7NG

Inspection dates:

16 and 17 March 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Durham Community Business College for Technology and Enterprise was federated with Fyndoune Community College. In September 2018, leaders brought pupils from both schools together onto the Ushaw Moor site. The two schools merged in April 2021. This has been a period of change for the school. New staff have joined. Some of this has happened against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pupils' experiences of school life vary widely. Some pupils feel well supported at school. Their experience of learning in lessons is positive. However, too many lessons are disrupted by pupils' poor behaviour. Some pupils do not feel safe in school. Although staff deal effectively with bullying as soon as they are made aware of it, many pupils choose not to report incidents of bullying. Leaders have not done enough to address this culture.

Pupils in key stage 3 receive an effective 'well-being' curriculum. Pupils in key stage 4 do not receive the same provision. Leaders plan for this to happen in the summer term 2022. Leaders support pupils with a range of mental health needs and this work is very effective.

Leaders have introduced a 'bread and butter' initiative, where families can buy groceries at reduced prices. Pupils are proud to support their local community through this scheme.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have improved many aspects of the curriculum. More still needs to be done to make sure the delivery of the planned curriculum is consistent across all subjects. In some subjects, such as French, planning is extremely detailed. Teachers know precisely what pupils should learn from each activity. Assessment, especially in mathematics and history, is sharply focused to check exactly what pupils have learned. However, in a few subjects, planning is not detailed enough. In lessons, teachers are not sure consistently about what pupils should learn. Some staff do not use carefully chosen questions to deepen pupils' understanding. Some teachers do not check that all pupils have learned what they need to know before they move on. Occasionally, pupils struggle to complete tasks independently because they do not have sufficient knowledge.

Leaders have improved pupils' behaviour. Serious behaviour incidents have reduced significantly over time. In some lessons, staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. In these lessons, pupils are focused and ready to learn. However, too often, teachers' expectations are low. Pupils disengage. Staff use the behaviour system differently depending on their subject area. Disruption in

lessons is not consistently challenged. This disruption means that valuable learning is lost.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well. They receive tailored support within the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision). Some pupils with SEND are taught together in small classes. These pupils receive a more-structured version of the same curriculum as other pupils. Teachers adapt lessons appropriately for pupils with SEND.

Pupils who struggle with reading are very well supported. There is a comprehensive programme to help them catch up. Struggling readers benefit from regular, individual support. Pupils read high-quality texts in English lessons. However, leaders have not done enough to embed a broader culture of reading throughout the school. Pupils do not read widely enough.

Pupils in key stage 3 follow a 'well-being' curriculum. It prepares them well for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn how to stay safe online and offline. They learn to be respectful to each other and people from many different backgrounds. However, pupils in key stage 4 do not have well-being lessons. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is mainly delivered through 15-minute sessions at the start of the school day. These sessions are of poor quality. Teachers do not have enough training in how to talk about sensitive issues with teenagers. Some teachers do not see these sessions as a high priority. On some occasions, teachers do not deliver the content at all. In key stage 4, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not a high priority. Leaders do not provide enough opportunities for these pupils to talk in-depth about issues, rights and responsibilities. Pupils in key stage 4 do not receive the support and guidance they need at a crucial time in their development.

Leaders are introducing an ambitious programme of careers events and experiences. This is a clear priority for all pupils right from the get-go. For example, pupils in Year 7 take part in an educational visit to Sunderland University. Pupils who are disadvantaged are well supported to make the right choices for their future. Not surprisingly, extra-curricular clubs ceased during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some extra-curricular provision has started once again. The number of clubs is increasing as the term progresses.

Leaders have engaged well with parents to secure better attendance from pupils, especially those with mental health needs. Leaders provide a free breakfast to all pupils. This encourages pupils to attend school punctually.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are aware of local risks to pupils, such as the risk of radicalisation by extremists. Leaders know their pupils and the struggles they sometimes face outside school.

Many pupils come from areas of high deprivation. Leaders are extremely proactive in supporting pupils who need help, including referring cases to the local authority in a timely manner. Leaders recognise that the pandemic has had a profound effect on some young people. A multi-agency approach supports pupils with mental health needs well. This has been transformative for some pupils. They have grown in confidence and are happier in school.

Rigorous recruitment checks are carried out when new staff join to make sure pupils are safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils in key stage 4 do not follow an effective PSHE curriculum. Vital learning is being missed or delivered in a way that lacks impact. Pupils are not being supported to grow and develop into young adults well. Plans to deliver an equivalent curriculum in key stage 4 to that which exists in key stage 3 should be implemented.
- Staff do not have consistently high expectations of pupils' engagement in lessons and behaviour in school. Lessons are often disrupted by pupils' behaviour. Pupils' learning suffers. Leaders should make sure that all staff act in accordance with the school's behaviour policy.
- Aspects of curriculum planning and delivery in some subjects are weak. Pupils do not learn consistently well in all subjects. Leaders should make sure that teachers focus pupils' attention on the most crucial knowledge and check it is securely understood.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	114311
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10227432
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive- comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	357
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Julia Millard
Headteacher	Alison Jobling
Website	http://durhamfederation.net/
Date of previous inspection	16 March 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school roll increased after the closure of Fyndoune Community College in April 2021.
- The school has specially resourced provision that has places for 14 pupils with needs relating to cognition and learning. This currently caters for one pupil.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school makes use of four registered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have

taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: history, art, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects. Inspectors visited specific lessons to check provision for pupils with education, health and care plans.
- Inspectors met with those with responsibility for pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors met with the chair and three members of the governing body.
- Inspectors met with two representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors took into account the 32 responses to Ofsted's staff survey, the 116 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey and the 13 responses from parents to Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors met with several groups of pupils to discuss their views about the school.
- An inspector spoke with the school's alternative provision providers who are currently educating a small number of pupils who usually attend this school.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record of recruitment checks. They spoke to governors, the designated safeguarding lead and the behaviour lead. They looked at how incidents are logged and followed up. Inspectors explored a range of case studies in detail. Inspectors also spoke to a range of teaching and non-teaching staff to check their understanding of safeguarding training.

Inspection team

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