



Seaton Burn College, A Specialist Business and Enterprise School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108647
LEA North Tyneside
Inspection number 278017
Inspection dates 19 October 2005 to 20 October 2005
Reporting inspector Adrian Gray

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Dudley Lane
School category	Community		Seaton Burn
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 2361700
Number on roll	840	Fax number	0191 2361701
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Kirby Robinson
Date of previous inspection	1 December 1999	Headteacher	Ms Alison Shaw

Age group 11 to 18	Inspection dates 19 October 2005 - 20 October 2005	Inspection number 278017
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of two of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools with three Additional Inspectors over two days.

Description of the school

Seaton Burn Business and Enterprise College is a smaller than average 11 to 18 school, but it is much larger than when it was last inspected. There is a sixth form, which is smaller than average, which forms part of a consortium arrangement with other local schools in order to offer a wider curriculum. The college gained specialist status for business and enterprise in 2004. The proportion of the pupils eligible for free school meals is slightly above average at 17.5%, but lower than at the last inspection. There are very few pupils who do not have English as their first language. The proportion of the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above average. There are notably more boys than girls on roll. The college principal took up her post two terms ago, previous to which there were two periods of acting headship. The college has also experienced a number of long-term staff absences and a period where the staff numbers have been sharply reduced.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

The college's view of itself is that it is effective overall but the view of inspectors is that it is ineffective, though improving. Standards attained by pupils in national tests and general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) examinations have been broadly in line with national expectations; however, as the college is aware, the achievement of more able pupils and pupils' progress in some subjects have been well below what might have been expected. The progress of less able pupils has often been better.

Pupils' personal development and well-being is satisfactory overall. Most pupils enjoy their time in the college, behave well and safely. Their social development is often good, especially where teachers set them more challenging tasks such as speaking formally to classes or evaluating each other's work. The college makes too little structured provision for their spiritual and cultural development and does not conform to requirements for a daily act of collective worship. Inspectors agree with the college's view that teaching is satisfactory overall, but there are weaknesses in how teachers use assessment information to plan lessons and inform pupils of their progress; some marking is inadequate. The college's curriculum meets the needs of most learners and its provision of work-related learning is good. The college provides satisfactory care, guidance and support for learners.

Following a period of substantial change, the college's leadership and management at all levels are not yet effective in raising achievement and supporting all learners. The new principal has a clear and relevant agenda for the college's improvement; however, because the college's systems for monitoring, evaluation and review are inadequate, she and the governors do not have a clear strategic analysis of the college's present situation. Monitoring is not being carried out effectively. The work of the governing body has been ineffective and a substantial budget deficit has led to an unsettling period of staff change; governors have not ensured adequate progress since the last inspection. The college does not provide sound value for money. Nonetheless, the principal and some of the leadership team have clearly demonstrated the capacity to secure the college's improvement.

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to: pupils' progress; the use of assessment systems to improve planning and teaching; systems for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the work of the college, and governance.

What the school should do to improve further

In order to improve the standards and progress students make, including in the sixth-form, the headteacher and the governors should:

- ensure a clear focus on pupils' progress and achievement, and that of the most able in particular

- improve the use of assessment data by leaders, managers and teachers in order to enhance teachers' planning and inform pupils of their progress
- ensure the effective use of monitoring and evaluation by the governing body and leaders and managers at all levels, in order to attain consistently high standards of teaching, learning and management.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Grade for sixth form: 3

The school judges standards and achievement to be satisfactory overall. The inspectors judged achievement and standards overall to be inadequate. Standards of attainment on entry to the school have generally been slightly above average, but standards attained at the end of Key Stage 3 have been generally below or at the national average. The achievement of the pupils who took Key Stage 3 national tests in 2003 and 2004 was inadequate overall; in 2004 progress was inadequate in mathematics and science. The progress made by the more able pupils was significantly weaker than that of similar pupils nationally, especially in science. Standards in English improved in 2004 and were broadly average in relation to similar pupils. Provisional data for 2005 shows that the proportion of pupils attaining at least Level 5 fell in English but continued to rise in mathematics and, to a lesser extent, in science; there was an improvement in the progress made by the pupils. However, the proportions reaching higher levels were below the national standards; the progress of higher attaining pupils was inadequate because it was much lower than expected, particularly in English.

Standards at the end of Year 11 in 2004 rose and were broadly average overall, although achievement was too low as pupils' progress between the ages of 11 and 16 was below that of similar pupils nationally, although in line with it for ages 14 to 16. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more higher grade passes was the highest for five years, as was the pupils' average points score. Pupils' achievement was satisfactory in English and good in English literature, but it was inadequate in mathematics and science. In 2005 standards attained fell in respect of average points scores and five or more higher grade passes, but were above the college's target; there was a significant fall in performance in science but an improvement in English. The college's analysis accepts that too few pupils achieved higher grades.

Standards on entry to the sixth form are generally well below average. Standards attained in the sixth form in 2004 were well below average, despite some improvements in the general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level) level average points score. In particular, the proportion of students who gained grade A or B passes was consistently low in advanced subsidiary level (AS level), A2 and vocational certificate of education (VCE) courses. The proportion of higher grade passes rose in GCE A level courses, but it fell in AS level and VCE courses to a very low standard. In 2005 the average points per entry in final year GCE A level exams fell marginally. However, students' progress has been generally in line with national expectations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils at Seaton Burn College enjoy their education, receive sound support and have a positive attitude to work. They make secure progress in personal development and their behaviour around the college is satisfactory and often good in lessons. Pupils are made to feel valued through initiatives such as the Sports Personality Award and the Celebration of Achievement

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall is satisfactory with social and cultural education more developed than moral and spiritual education. The assembly observed by inspectors included no act of collective worship and did not address the needs of pupils.

Pupils are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles. There are plenty of opportunities for physical activity and the college has a good extra-curricular programme of sport. The college provides healthy menu options, the use of water-bottles are commonplace and the college has achieved a non-smoking award.

Pupils make a positive contribution to the community through fund raising activities, sporting events and music productions with other schools and churches. College students have won the Rotary Club Young Citizen Award. The economic well-being of pupils is being achieved through the development of basic skills and computer literacy. Students gain experience of the 'world of work' through career education, work placement and business enterprise activities.

Attendance is below the national average but has improved and is satisfactory. The college has developed a new action plan and is working in cooperation with both the support services and parents to address this issue.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The college judges that the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory with much that is good and some areas of excellent practice. Inspectors judge that teaching is satisfactory overall with some of it good; in the sixth form it is good. The college has an agreed procedure for observing lessons but its use is not sufficiently regular or systematic for it to provide a full picture or to contribute significantly to improvement. Teachers have sound subject knowledge in all subjects other than citizenship. Relationships between teachers and pupils are positive, with teachers being friendly but firm and almost all pupils well behaved. Pupils are encouraged to work independently and contribute to class activities, though not consistently across the college.

However, some lessons have unsatisfactory features and a minority are inadequate overall. In these lessons the work is not well matched to the pupils' needs resulting in work being too easy and higher attaining pupils not being stretched. Occasionally tasks are too difficult and some pupils do not manage to complete them. This is largely a result of the teachers having inadequate knowledge of the pupils' progress. Stated learning outcomes are often simply lists of topics and do not help the pupils to progress towards learning goals. Marking of pupils' work is too infrequent with one result being too much incomplete work.

The college has assessment data available but its use in working towards challenging targets for pupils is variable across departments and overall is inadequate. Teachers make insufficient use of marking and assessment information in planning lessons that match the pupils' learning needs and pupils are not clear enough about what they need to do to make progress. The college recognises the need to improve this aspect of teaching and learning and has plans to develop systems and staff expertise.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 4

The college judges its curriculum to be good. Inspectors agree that there is a good range of enrichment activities but find that overall the curriculum is satisfactory. The college has identified that a curriculum review would be desirable in order to improve the match to learners' needs, interests and aspirations. Provision in science does not adequately meet the needs of individual learners. Citizenship is taught as part of the personal and social development programme. The time allocation for this is small and detailed guidance to staff is incomplete. The monitoring and evaluation of some aspects of the curriculum need further development, particularly the assessment of learners' capabilities in citizenship.

The college organises special days in which its business and enterprise specialism is celebrated. Enterprise activities are well supported and enjoyed by pupils. A strength of the curriculum is the work-based learning course followed by a small minority of pupils. This course is outstandingly led and managed and has enabled pupils to achieve well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

This aspect of the college's work is valued by both parents and pupils. Child protection arrangements are good and comply with statutory guidance and the Child Protection Officer works effectively with both college staff and outside agencies to ensure that pupils feel safe. The most vulnerable pupils are well cared for and supported by the college. There is satisfactory support in the college for pupils with behavioural difficulties which is now managed by faculties, subject leaders and class teachers.

The college has a health and safety policy that includes a risk assessment process and meets all of the statutory requirements. Staff are committed to promoting health and safety in college to ensure the safety of pupils.

The use of data and the monitoring of progress is inadequate. There are inconsistencies in the use of assessment data to plan learning across the college. Pupils do not consistently receive sufficient guidance through the marking and assessment of their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Grade for sixth form: 3

The college senior leadership has been through a phase of considerable turbulence. There have been two periods of temporary leadership following which the present principal took up post in January 2005. During this period, the college made too little progress. There has since been rationalisation of the senior management posts, following which roles have become more strategic so that some leaders are becoming more effective. The new senior leadership team has a good understanding of the necessary improvements to the college's work.

The principal has been hampered in her evaluation of the college by a lack of clear evidence due to the slow development of effective monitoring systems. Although the self-evaluation is broadly correct in identifying areas of strength and weakness, precise judgements could not always be formed due to lack of available information. Work on analysing the latest examination results has not been effective. Basic aspects of practice, such as the quality of marking, have not been monitored adequately by middle and senior managers. The college provides a good learning environment.

The governing body has not been effective in carrying out some of its duties. It allowed a situation to develop in which the college had no active development plan for a period of at least nine months and procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the college have been allowed to lapse. Minutes are dominated by the record of management procedures and there is a lack of evidence about the progress of the college or the holding to account of senior leaders. Weaknesses identified in the last inspection report have not been fully addressed.

The college had accumulated a deficit of approximately £540,000 by 2004. Part of the deficit was related to long-term staff absence. In order to redress the deficit, the college has made substantial staffing reductions; the appointment of the new deputy headteacher is being funded for the first year by the local authority. At present, governors do not evaluate the impact of expenditure and do not have an adequate analysis of the costs and benefits of the present sixth form arrangements.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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31 October 2005

Dear Students

All of us on the inspection team enjoyed visiting the college, where you helped to make us feel very welcome. We agreed that the college has a number of strengths and that it is making some important improvements, but we also felt that there are some things which could be more effective. We have asked the principal and the governors to put these right and to prepare for another inspection in about a year's time; the official name for this is a "Notice to Improve".

The inspectors agreed that behaviour around the college is generally good and it is a safe place for you work and learn. Many of you told us that you enjoy coming to the college, and we enjoyed talking to groups of you about it. Teaching is satisfactory with some of it good. In the sixth form teaching is good. The support given to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is often good. We felt that the college has started to improve, for example by putting life back into the College Council and by thinking about what new courses to offer to you.

However, not all students make as much progress in their exam courses as they should. This has partly been because there have been a lot of staff changes in some subjects, but we also think it is because some work is not marked and assessed as thoroughly as it could be. As a result, many students don't really know enough about how to improve their work. Also, the way in which some teachers plan their lessons means that not all students get sufficiently challenged. We also felt that those responsible for managing the college don't pay close enough attention to how well things like marking are being done.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Gray

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools

Annex B