



Durham Gilesgate Sports College and Sixth Form Centre Centre

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114310
LEA Durham
Inspection number 279361
Inspection dates 18 January 2006 to 19 January 2006
Reporting inspector Ms Heather Barnett

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Bradford Crescent
School category	Community		Gilesgate
Age range of pupils	11 to 19		Durham, County Durham
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 3847505
Number on roll	1327	Fax number	0191 3840025
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Dr Holloway
Date of previous inspection	1 November 1999	Headteacher	Mr Michael Brett

Age group 11 to 19	Inspection dates 18 January 2006 - 19 January 2006	Inspection number 279361
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Durham Gilesgate Sports College and Sixth Form Centre is a school with two distinct parts: a small 11-16 school serving the local community and a very large sixth form centre attracting students from the whole of the county. A high proportion of the students in the 11-16 provision come from areas of high deprivation. The school has Specialist Sports College status and extensive community links. It is also involved in a wide range of partnership work.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Durham Gilesgate Sports College and Sixth Form Centre provides a satisfactory education for its students, who make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in the sixth form. Standards at Key Stages 3 and 4, although improving, are below national averages. Standards in the sixth form are consistently above average. Recent changes to the curriculum at Key Stage 4 are beginning to have a positive effect on the school's main priority, which is to raise standards. The school's specialist status has been an important factor in the shaping of the curriculum, which is now good for all students and well matched to their needs. It also has a key role in the development of a very wide range of beneficial extra-curricular activities and the school's extensive links with the local community. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and good in the sixth form. Where teaching is less than good, independent learning skills are underdeveloped and there is not always sufficient challenge to students. In addition, poor literacy skills hinder progress in Key Stages 3 and 4. The school provides high levels of care for the students and fosters their personal development effectively. It works successfully with its wide range of partners.

The leadership of the school provides a clear direction for developments and all managers work well together. There are annual planning and review cycles, which link in to the overall development plans. The self evaluation is good and in most areas agrees with the findings of the inspection team. The school is aware of areas where improvement is required and is now implementing strategies to further improve teaching and learning to raise achievement. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. The school has demonstrated that it has good capacity to bring about further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards throughout Key Stages 3 and 4.
- Raise achievement in Key Stages 3 and 4 by providing more challenge in teaching and by encouraging students to think for themselves and learn independently.
- Improve students' ability to speak and write fluently.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The achievement of 11-16 year olds is satisfactory and for those in the sixth form it is good. When students arrive in Year 7, their attainment is well below average and literacy skills are particularly weak. All groups of students make broadly satisfactory progress and attain national test and GCSE results that are largely as expected, given their low attainment on entry. In 2005, the Year 9 national test results in English, mathematics and science were well below average. They were strongest in mathematics and weakest in science. GCSE results are well below average but improving. In 2005,

they represented satisfactory or better achievement for most students. However, the school acknowledges that a small group of girls underachieved. There is robust data to indicate that standards in Years 10 and 11 have risen again. Inspection evidence supports this. However, students' competence in written and oral communication is still slowing progress. In the sixth form, students' A-level and VCE qualifications are consistently above average and represent good achievement. Results have improved over three years and provide a good base for individual students' further study. Nevertheless, the school acknowledges that results in a very small number of A-level subjects ought to be better.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students enjoy school and most have positive attitudes towards their work. Students' behaviour is good in lessons and around school and has improved since the last inspection. The small minority that exhibit challenging behaviour are managed well by suitably qualified staff. Attendance is at expected levels. Students feel safe in school. The occasional incidences of bullying are swiftly dealt with. Students learn the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, for example, healthy eating and keeping fit. A large majority of boys and girls participate in extra-curricular sporting activities. They are taught about the dangers to health of smoking, and of the abuse of drugs and alcohol. Provision for moral, social and cultural education is good. The school is working to improve the provision of spiritual education; it does not provide a daily act of collective worship. Students make a massive contribution to what goes on in the community, for example, by organising a Christmas party for senior citizens and producing musical events at Gateshead Metro. The good enterprise education programme, which includes work-related learning and careers guidance, ensures that students are well prepared for adult life. The personal development of sixth form students is outstanding because it leads to good achievement and highly confident, independent young adults. Most students who join the sixth form complete their studies.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and good in the sixth form. Many students in Years 7 to 11 have low aspirations and lack the confidence to work independently. Poor literacy skills also hinder progress. The school recognises that it must do more to get students to think for themselves and to speak and write fluently. Students in years 7 to 11 are keen to do well and learn best when they are actively involved in varied and challenging tasks. In the most effective lessons, the teachers' extensive subject knowledge and thorough planning enable students of all abilities to make

good progress. The lesson material is adapted well to meet the learning needs of any small groups, such as those with learning difficulties. Such good practice is not the norm, however, and learning remains satisfactory for most students. Teaching and learning in Years 12 and 13 are good because teachers know students well and plan lessons to meet their individual needs. These students show initiative and develop the confidence and skills to learn for themselves.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good for all students. Statutory requirements are in place and the provision for raising students' numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills is good. The school recognises it needs to improve provision for raising standards of literacy. The recently introduced vocational courses in Years 10 and 11 are well suited to the learning needs of many of the students. Choice has also been broadened by such GCSEs as the 21st century science course. The school has good links with partner institutions to provide additional vocational courses. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities. The specialist sports college status has led to improved monitoring of the appropriateness of the school's curriculum. This has resulted, for example, in a successful community sports leader award in the sixth form. The broad curriculum provision for students in Year 12 and 13 is good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school provides good care and support for students and this has a considerable impact on their well-being, academic progress and personal development. It is outstanding in the sixth form where all students are especially well prepared for the next stage of their education. The youngest students speak highly of the arrangements which help them settle to the new expectations, demands and challenges of secondary school. Good relationships exist between students and staff. The role of the form tutor is highly valued within the school and is a key part of the guidance and support arrangements. The system is effective in monitoring the achievements of all students through the regular tracking of progress. The school gives particularly good support to the large number of students with learning difficulties.

Child protection requirements and procedures are clear and understood by all staff. Links with outside agencies ensure that students at risk receive special support. Students feel that their views are listened to and respected, and that they can discuss concerns with staff. The health and safety procedures are properly underpinned by risk assessments.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory with some strengths, particularly in the sixth form. The daily operation of the school runs smoothly and a secure and caring atmosphere has been created. Senior managers set a clear direction for the school. They are ably supported by good middle managers who have a key role to play in raising standards. This aspect of the middle managers' role has developed over the last two to three years and has enabled senior managers to concentrate on strategic developments. The recent changes in the Key Stage 4 curriculum, taken after widespread consultation, have had a positive impact on behaviour and are starting to have a positive effect on achievement.

Effective self evaluation is supported by a regular pattern of monitoring and review. All staff are involved in the performance management process. This helps managers to identify the priorities for professional development and link them to personal, departmental and school targets. Governors play an effective role in the management of the school: they know the school well and have appropriate training. However, they are insufficiently focused on raising standards in the school. There is a wide range of partnership arrangements which are of benefit to the students, including extensive links with the local community.

The leadership and management of the sixth form are good. Leaders have created a climate that stimulates learning. Here, managers take effective action to raise achievement, both at subject and individual student level.

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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?	3	2
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	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	2
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?	2	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	2	
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	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

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?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	1

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?	3	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
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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20 January 2006

Dear Students

Thank you for the contribution you made to the recent inspection of your school. We enjoyed the chance to visit lessons and to talk with many of you. We also read the results of the questionnaires completed by your parents.

This is a summary of our main findings, which I hope will interest you.

The school provides you with a satisfactory education in Key Stages 3 and 4 and a good education in the sixth form. The senior leaders have a clear idea about what the school does well and are taking steps to make it better.

Although examination results at Key Stages 3 and 4 are improving, and you make satisfactory progress at school, standards are still well below national averages.

In the sixth form results are consistently above average, have improved over the last three years, and show you make good progress

You enjoy school, behave well and feel safe. Occasional incidents of bullying are swiftly dealt with. There is a good enterprise education programme which makes sure you are well prepared for adult life

The teaching you receive is satisfactory overall and good in the sixth form. You work best when tasks are varied and challenging.

Some of you lack confidence to work on your own and the communication skills you need to make more progress. Your school has recognised this and is working on improvements in this area

There is a wide range of subjects for you to study with lots of vocational opportunities. Many of you take part in extra-curricular activities, especially sporting ones and you make a massive contribution to what goes on in the community

The school does a good job in caring for, guiding and supporting you.

Your sixth form is good. Teaching is good there, you achieve good results and receive excellent advice and guidance. You speak highly of the quality of education you receive and are well prepared for the next stage of your education.

What we have asked your school to do now:

raise standards throughout Key Stages 3 and 4

provide more challenge in teaching and encourage you to think for yourselves and learn independently

improve your skills in speaking and writing fluently.

You have an important role to play here. Your school has improved in many ways since the last inspection and with your support can make even better progress in the future.

Yours sincerely

Heather Barnett

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex B

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