

Sedgefield Community College Sports Specialist College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114317
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	289876
Inspection dates	26–27 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Brian Dower

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	868
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr William Hopps
Headteacher	Ms Lynne Ackland
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2002
School address	Hawthorn Road Sedgefield County Durham TS21 3DD
Telephone number	01740 625300
Fax number	01740 625334

Age group	11–16
Inspection dates	26–27 April 2007
Inspection number	289876

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Sedgefield Community College is an average-sized comprehensive school. Almost all students are White British; very few are from minority ethnic backgrounds and none is at an early stage of learning English. The full ability range is represented in the intake. Overall attainment on entry to the school is average and the proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also average. The college has specialist sports status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Sedgefield Community College is a good and improving school. Standards are above average and all students, whatever their background, make good progress and achieve well. Students with learning difficulties are well supported and make the same progress as other pupils. Students have good literacy, mathematical and computing skills and the personal qualities for future success. Students' personal development is good.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. However, the school's policy for matching work to the students' abilities is not implemented consistently by all the teachers and this leads to occasional loss of attention and interest. The school's curriculum is good; there are extensive enrichment and extra-curricular activities and the students' participation in them is high. The college's specialist sports status has enhanced the curriculum. It has extended opportunities for students to work in the community and take responsibility, contributing significantly to their self-confidence and well-being. Students enjoy their work and say they feel safe and secure in this supportive environment. They understand what they must do to stay fit and well and they adopt healthy lifestyles. Behaviour is good overall although some instances of misbehaviour do occur when the college's approach to managing behaviour is not followed consistently by all teachers in lessons. Attendance is average and the college is doing all it can to improve it further. Students are involved in a variety of charitable activities and fund-raising events in the local and wider community.

The college has a good system for monitoring progress and addressing weaknesses in students' performance and this has contributed significantly to rising standards. All students receive the personal care and academic support they need. For example, students say that many teachers remain at college into the evening to offer extra tuition to examination classes: the teachers also provide additional help for students in the outlying villages.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides strong leadership and is well supported by able senior staff. Governors are knowledgeable and work effectively for the college's success. They have a strong commitment to giving every student the best possible start and to removing barriers to their learning. There have been significant improvements in overall standards since the previous inspection and recent staffing difficulties have been largely resolved. Recent appointments to the leadership of mathematics and science have led to improvements; the teaching and learning in these subjects are good and standards are beginning to rise. Parts of the college's accommodation are poor and limit what can be done to enrich students' learning; for example, outstanding work is being done in textiles but space is so limited that students' designs cannot be exhibited to full effect.

What the school should do to improve further

- The school should ensure that the school's policies for teaching and learning are implemented consistently by all teachers, especially the policies for matching work to students' abilities and for managing behaviour in lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and standards are above average by the end of Year 11. Pupils make good progress throughout the school. The results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 have

improved over the last two years and were average in 2006. The college's tracking and assessment of current Year 9 work indicate that standards have risen further. Improvement is particularly marked in mathematics because the staffing difficulties of recent years have been resolved. The college met its performance targets for GCSE in 2006. The proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE A* to C grades in 2006 was above average for boys and girls, a significant improvement on the results at the time of the previous inspection. The school's tracking of students' progress indicates that the proportion of them whose work is now of this standard is higher than last year. The results in information and communication technology, physical education, business studies and textiles were well above average and pupils make excellent progress in these subjects. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the small number of students with different cultural heritages make the same progress as others and their achievement is good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Attendance rates have improved since the previous inspection and are now average. The number of fixed-term exclusions from college is falling. Some parents said that they were concerned about students' behaviour. The inspection did find that there was occasional inattentive behaviour in lessons but the attitudes to work and the behaviour of the vast majority of students are good. Students say they feel safe in the college and that rare instances of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively. They eat healthily and take plenty of exercise. Most say they enjoy their work. Students assume responsibilities willingly; for example, as sports leaders with younger students, and make significant contributions to the local and wider communities in their sports activities, fund-raising and charitable giving. Students work well, independently and with others. These personal qualities, together with their good basic skills, prepare them well for the next stage of their education and for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall and account for pupils' good progress and rising standards. Nevertheless, teaching could still be improved. Some lessons are outstanding and students make exceptional progress in these lessons. Students generally enjoy lessons because learning activities spark their interest and lead to good achievement. Typically, teachers have good subject knowledge; they ask challenging questions, foster good relationships and manage students' behaviour and time effectively. In turn, students become engrossed in their work, make good progress and confidently show the extent of their knowledge. Work is marked regularly and helpful information given to let students know how well they are doing and how to improve. Occasionally, work is not sufficiently well matched to the students' different abilities and therefore lacks the challenge needed to motivate the students to learn. Also, the college's approach to managing behaviour is not followed consistently by all staff, which sometimes results in inattention in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It meets statutory requirements and students' needs. The personal, social, health and citizenship curriculum offers productive opportunities for students' personal development. Drama and textiles make a significant contribution to the creative aspect of the curriculum. The curriculum is significantly enhanced by the school's specialist sports college status. Many students enjoy a wide range of additional opportunities to develop their physical skills and, for example, complete junior sports leaders' awards. Gifted and talented students particularly benefit from additional courses and support. All students have the opportunity to develop responsibility and skills by working with local primary schools. Appropriate pathways for students aged 14 and over have been developed with vocational courses and good opportunities for work-related learning. Students' understanding of the world of work is developed by effective guidance, work experience and enterprise activities. Most students go on to further education and there are effective links with partner colleges. A very good range of well-planned enrichment and extra-curricular activities takes place and the take-up by students is extensive. Students express great satisfaction with the residential activities and enrichment days.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Students receive good care, guidance and support. They are well known by teachers and are monitored and supported in pastoral and academic matters by learning coordinators and senior staff. Data on students' performance are used to set challenging targets and check on progress: these are shared with parents through 'snapshot' reviews and tutor consultation days. Transition to the college is carefully managed in Year 6 so that new students quickly feel at home, and comprehensive guidance about the next stages of education is provided in Years 9 and 11. Individual education plans and vulnerable student profiles are used well to ensure that students' needs are met. Regular meetings in school maintain good relationships with external agencies. Other support is offered to vulnerable students in the college's withdrawal facilities. Additional academic support for students who live in local villages is provided through the innovative 'freezone' provision. These out-of-college lessons are well attended. All requirements for child protection are in place and comprehensive risk assessments are undertaken.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides strong leadership and her drive has been the impetus behind the rise in standards. She is well supported by able senior staff who are committed to giving every student an equal chance in life. The inclusive nature of the college's work is a strength. Improvements have been made in the leadership and management of mathematics and science, resulting in better progress. There is now greater stability in staffing, which is a key factor accounting for the rise in standards. Governance is good. The governors are very well informed; they are committed to the values of inclusion and provide effective leadership and challenge.

Significant progress has recently been made in improving the effectiveness of the learning co-ordinators in monitoring teaching and learning and standards are rising as a result. There

are very effective links with partner institutions. Resources are good but the accommodation is poor and limits what can be achieved in the creative subjects of the curriculum. The school is to undergo a full re-build starting in 2008 for completion in 2010. The school's self-evaluation is good and accurately identifies strengths and matters for improvement. There have been significant improvements since the previous inspection and the college's capacity to improve further is good.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	2
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?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	2
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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

27 April 2007

Inspection of Sedgefield Community College: A Sports Specialist College, Sedgefield, TS21 3DD

Dear Students

Thank you for the welcome you extended to us during our recent visit and the time many of you gave to talk to us about your college. You gave us a lot to think about and made a good contribution to the inspection. We enjoyed our short stay and only wished we had had time to see more of the activities you are involved in outside lessons.

We found that Sedgefield Community College is a good and improving school. Many of you spoke about the improvements and your appreciation of the extra time teachers give to students wanting to improve their work and to those preparing for examinations. You are making good progress and you have the personal qualities to be successful. You impressed us with your energy and good humour and how well you work together. You are confident young people and you take full advantage of the wide range of extra curricular activities.

You told us that you learn best when you are made to think for yourselves, when learning activities are challenging and interesting. Most of the lessons we saw provided this challenge but on a few occasions the pace of learning was slow, and we have asked the school to consider ways of improving this.

Thank you again for showing your college off to us. We wish you all every success.

Best wishes

Brian Dower

Lead Inspector