



Seaton Burn College, A Specialist Business and Enterprise School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108647
Local Authority North Tyneside
Inspection number 294533
Inspection dates 28–29 November 2006
Reporting inspector Chris Penter

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Dudley Lane
School category	Community		Seaton Burn, Newcastle upon Tyne
Age range of pupils	11–18		Tyne and Wear, NE13 6EJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 2361700
Number on roll (school)	712	Fax number	0191 2007917
Number on roll (6th form)	70		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Cllr Muriel Green
		Headteacher	Mrs Alison Shaw
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2005		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–18	28–29 November 2006	294533

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of four Additional Inspectors over a period of two days. This was a re-inspection carried out 13 months after the college was given a notice to improve.

Description of the school

Seaton Burn Business and Enterprise College serves a diverse community, made up of a series of former mining villages. It is slightly smaller than the average 11 to 18 school. The small sixth form is part of a consortium with two other local schools, allowing it to offer a wider curriculum. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. Almost all students have English as their first language and the number of students from minority ethnic groups is very low. The college has significantly more boys than girls on roll. The number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average but the number with statements of special educational need is around average. There has been a high turnover of staff in the last two years and staff numbers have been reduced. The attainment of students on entry is broadly in line with, or slightly above, the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The college views itself as increasingly effective and inspectors agree. Over the past year there has been a clear and unrelenting focus on learning and on raising standards in all aspects of the college's work. This has led to the development of a 'can do, will do' culture amongst staff and many students. As a result, the college is now providing a satisfactory standard of education and has developed many good features. As one parent remarked, 'The place is on the up!'

The many improvements since the last inspection are due in no small part to the very effective leadership of the principal. She has a clear vision for the college and a belief that it is still capable of significant improvement. She is ably supported by other senior and middle leaders. College self-review frameworks are now robust so leaders and managers are clear about future priorities and what actions need to be taken to achieve them. Equally importantly, they possess the necessary skills and confidence successfully to manage future change. Governance has improved and the college is now held more closely to account. For these reasons the college has demonstrated good capacity to continue to improve.

Standards improved in 2006 in both national tests and in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations. Improvements in English were particularly good but concerns remain about the relative performance of boys and the small numbers of A* and A grades gained at GCSE. There has been some improvement in performance in mathematics but there is still further work to do in this subject. In the sixth form, achievement is good. Across the whole school, improvements are underpinned by new and effective systems for setting student targets, assessing and monitoring progress and providing support for those who underachieve.

Students' personal development and well-being are satisfactory overall. They are good in the sixth form. Most students enjoy college, say they feel safe, know how to stay healthy and behave well. A minority have poor attitudes to learning and low aspirations and as a result can slow the pace of lessons by causing low-level disruption. Teaching is satisfactory overall and working relationships are generally good. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported but the more able are not always sufficiently challenged. Teaching in the sixth form is well matched to the needs of individuals and collaborative curriculum arrangements work well. The continuing development of more vocational elements has enhanced the curriculum in the main school.

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

- Address the poor attitudes to learning exhibited by a minority of students in Key Stages 3 and 4.
- Increase the quantity of good teaching in the school to more effectively meet the needs of all students.
- Raise achievement for all students paying particular attention to the most able and to boys.
- Raise achievement in mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Standards are rising throughout the college because leaders and managers have concentrated on improving them through a variety of effective interventions. This represents an improvement on the position which existed at the time of the previous inspection when achievement in the 11 to 16 phase was judged to be inadequate.

Students join the college in Year 7 with attainment around or slightly above average. Between 2003 and 2005, national test results in Year 9 in English, mathematics and science were below average and represented unsatisfactory achievement. In 2006, results improved in all three subjects and particularly so in English. These latest test results represent satisfactory achievement. Good support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them to make valuable advances with their reading and helps them to achieve equally with other students.

GCSE results between 2003 and 2005 were below average and represented inadequate achievement for students. Girls' achievement was better than boys' by more than the average national difference. The success of a variety of management initiatives, especially the setting of targets for individual students and the rigorous monitoring of them, has improved matters considerably. In 2006, the college's GCSE results improved and represented broadly satisfactory achievement. A very sharply increased proportion of students gained five or more results in the range A*- C. Most individual subject results improved with a particularly strong performance in English and literature leading the way. Boys' results improved but this still remains an area for concern. There is still further work to do in improving results in mathematics and in ensuring that more pupils reach grades A and A* in most subjects.

In the sixth form, achievement is good. Learners recognise that they get a good deal and speak very highly about the teaching, support and guidance that they receive. On entry to Year 12, attainment is below average for a sixth form but by Year 13, results are broadly average in A-level and Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education examinations. This represents good progress and provides learners with a solid platform to build upon when they leave.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Grade for sixth form Grade: 2

Students' personal development is satisfactory and improving, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Opportunities for students' spiritual and moral development have been strengthened since the last inspection. The new behaviour management system, which promotes a more consistent approach to rewards and sanctions, is having a positive impact on attendance and behaviour. Behaviour is satisfactory overall and the relatively high rate of exclusions is steadily decreasing in response to greater clarity and consistency of expectations. Absence is now rigorously monitored and followed up through the use of electronic registration. It is improving but absence rates remain above average.

Most students enjoy college and show positive attitudes to learning. A few, however, do not share these positive attitudes and there are occasions when low-level disruptive behaviour, particularly in middle and lower ability sets, affects the pace of learning and slows progress. Students say they feel safe and value the good relationships they have with their teachers. The new anti-bullying framework, led by the integrated support team, is proving to be effective and is highly rated by students. They know where to get help or advice if needed.

Students are encouraged to make informed, safe choices in all aspects of their college life, especially concerning healthy lifestyles. They take full advantage of healthy menu options and a wide range of sporting opportunities. College and year group councils encourage students to take responsibility and make a positive contribution to the community whilst developing skills that will help them in the workplace. The specialist nature of the college offers students opportunities to further their skills for future economic well-being. In the sixth form, learners' personal development is good. Learners are very well focused on their studies and have a good knowledge of their current progress.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Grade for sixth form Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. They are good in the sixth form. Teachers have a good understanding of their subjects and good working relationships with the students. The increasingly consistent use of independent and group activities gives students the confidence to learn for themselves and from each other. The improved use of assessment data to set students appropriately challenging targets is helping

students to make faster progress. Teachers make good use of tests and formal assessments to track this progress. A few teachers are not sufficiently using assessment to inform lesson planning and to adapt work to meet the needs of the most able students. At times, the routine marking of students' work lacks rigour and relevance. Effective intervention strategies are used to support individuals and groups when weaknesses are identified. This is most apparent in the additional support given to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Misbehaviour by a minority of pupils occasionally slows learning and reduces the effectiveness of some teaching. Teaching in the sixth form is well matched to the needs of the learners and fosters independence in their approach to learning. This results in their good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Grade for sixth form Grade: 2

The curriculum is satisfactory in the main school and good in the sixth form. It is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. A good range of enrichment activities extends students' understanding and enjoyment of their work. A curriculum review has been undertaken and the citizenship curriculum has been improved and extended. Provision for science now meets the needs of all students. Specialist status has allowed the college to build on the strengths of the work-based learning courses by ensuring that they receive GCSE equivalence in their vocational accreditation. It has also extended the range of practical vocational subjects available to students. Satisfactory arrangements are in place for developing students' basic skills. Occasional enterprise days provide students with the opportunity to show initiative and become involved with local businesses. Improvement in the provision for higher attaining students, particularly in mathematics and science, has been identified as a development priority. Curricular provision in the sixth form is good because of the effective partnerships with two other schools. This means that learners have access to a wide choice of academic and vocational courses. Such provision is now more suited to their individual needs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Grade for sixth form Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support for students is satisfactory in Key Stages 3 and 4 and good in the sixth form. The quality of care has been improved by the formation of the 'Integrated Support Team' and students speak highly of the help they receive. Students are well safeguarded and appropriate risk assessments are in place. Effective procedures for child protection are well understood by staff and regularly reviewed. Teachers know the students well and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or at risk of exclusion are quickly identified and supported. Links

with parents and other agencies are well established and the college promotes an effective co-operative approach to supporting students. This is evident in the good arrangements made to support disaffected students in the well-resourced 'Integrated Support Centre' which are helping to reduce the number of exclusions. Procedures for caring for vulnerable students and helping excluded students back into school are also good. The process for assessing and monitoring students' progress has improved significantly across the school and in the sixth form. The college now has a rigorous system for tracking students' progress and for taking action when underperformance is identified. These new systems have not yet had time to have a sustained impact on achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Since the last inspection the college has seen a major change in culture. The focus of its work is now firmly concentrated on learning and raising attainment. This is due in no small measure to the strong leadership of the principal and the unrelenting and highly effective emphasis placed by her and the senior team on standards and progress. This shift in culture has been achieved by significant changes in staffing and the empowerment of senior and middle leaders who have been supported by good professional development. Leadership at all levels is becoming increasingly effective.

The college has developed well-judged systems for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing all aspects of its work. These range from the monitoring of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' marked work to canvassing pupils' views of teaching and learning. This has led to greater consistency of practice and to higher expectations and aspirations of both students and staff. Data analysis is rigorous and the college now has an accurate picture of the achievement of students relative to national expectations. School leaders and managers at all levels have an increasingly realistic view of the strengths and weaknesses of the college. Leadership and management are judged satisfactory because, although new systems have the potential to have a significant impact on standards and achievement, more time is needed for their full effect to be felt. The sixth form continues to be led and managed well.

The membership and structure of the governing body has changed over the last year and frameworks have been put in place to hold the college more closely to account. These include a monitoring, evaluation and review committee, link governors and regular meetings with the principal. With the support of the local authority, the budget deficit is being effectively addressed. Governance is now satisfactory and the college provides satisfactory value for money.

School leaders at all levels understand that although standards are rising there is still much to be done. They are well aware of exactly where improvements need to be made, have well developed action plans to address these weaknesses and operate within a framework of shared endeavour, optimism and clarity of vision. For this reason, the college has good capacity for further improvement.

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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 effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
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	3	3
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?	3	2
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	3	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	
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	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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.

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	3	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	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

Seaton Burn College, A Specialist Business and Enterprise School

Dudley Lane

Seaton Burn

Newcastle upon Tyne

Tyne and Wear

NE13 6EJ

28 November 2006

Dear Students

May I begin by thanking all of you who made us feel so welcome when we visited the college recently and particularly those of you who gave up some time to talk to us and give us your views on college life. We think the college has improved significantly since it was last inspected in 2005 and now provides a satisfactory standard of education. As a result we have removed the 'Notice to Improve'.

Before you start to celebrate, it is fair that we should say that the college still has a number of things to do to ensure that you have the best possible chance of making good progress and achieving well. Teaching is satisfactory and some of it is good. In the sixth form it is good. We believe it needs to be even better so that you can all be stretched and challenged to reach your full potential. More of you should be achieving the highest grades A* and A at GCSE. Many of you should be doing better in mathematics.

We think that the college is a safe place and that most of you are happy there and feel well supported if you have problems. Most of you behave well but a minority of you do not seem to value learning and can cause some disruption in classes. This not only affects your learning but that of others. You can help the college to continue to improve by understanding the value of your education and what it might help you achieve in the future. You should work to the best of your ability and support your teachers who want to help you to succeed. Finally we would like to wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Chris Penter

Lead inspector