

# Easington Community School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114318
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	311565
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Hancock HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	851
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dr Jane Taylor
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Toni Spoors
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 October 2004
<b>School address</b>	Stockton Road Easington Village Peterlee County Durham SR8 3AY
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 5270757
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 5270160

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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

Easington Community School is a Specialist Science (with mathematics) College located in a village close to an industrial town. Many students come from significantly below average social and economic circumstances. Nearly all students have English as their first language and there are very few students from minority ethnic groups. The number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Easington is an effective school which is quickly improving as a Science College. It is working well to make further improvements and the school's own evaluation of how well it is doing is entirely accurate.

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are rising. All learners, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress. The achievement of students at Key Stage 4 has improved and school predictions for 2008 results indicate progress is more rapid this year. The school is aware that students are not achieving as highly at Key Stage 3.

Attendance has significantly improved from below to above average. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and improving. The school knows it needs to increase the proportion of good teaching and share good practice to continue the positive trend.

Care, guidance and support are good and make a strong contribution to students' progress, enjoyment and well-being. Parents are complimentary about the school and one comment reflected the views of many when saying, 'I have great confidence in this school to take my child forward to adulthood'.

Personal development is good because the school has the safety and well-being of students at the heart of its work. The school is improving the curriculum in Years 10 and 11. Plans to make improvements in the lower years are well advanced. Specialist College status has made a significant impact in a short space of time, for example links with partners have strengthened, achievement and standards are rising, and the curriculum is improving.

Successful and sharply focussed leadership by the new headteacher, who is well supported by senior leaders and the governing body, is driving the school forward. Resources are effectively deployed to achieve satisfactory value for money and the school is right to think capacity to improve is good.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise levels of achievement and improve standards at Key Stage 3.
- Help students achieve more highly by increasing the proportion of good and better teaching.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Inspection evidence confirms the school's view that currently standards are rising and achievement is satisfactory. Students are not achieving as highly at Key Stage 3 as they are at Key Stage 4.

Students' attainment on entry is below average but better in science than in English and mathematics. Few are higher attaining students and significantly more enter with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than is usual.

Year 9 test results in 2007 were below average in English, mathematics and science, as they have been for the last three years. However, given their below average starting points, this represents satisfactory achievement. Students made the best progress in English. Lower attaining boys and some students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieved less well than other groups.

GCSE results in 2007 remained below average, overall. Nonetheless, they were an improvement on 2006. These results represent satisfactory achievement and demonstrate the quickened progress in Years 10 and 11. Students achieved best in English and design technology, and least well in geography, history and religious education. The percentage of students gaining 5 A\*-C at GCSE (including mathematics and English) has risen steadily towards the national average. Challenging targets have been met.

Leaders have recognised the need to raise standards. Strong, effective action has included setting challenging targets and providing extra help to boost the learning of those likely to underachieve. The result is rising attainment with students in KS4 reaching broadly average standards in their mock examinations.'

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Student's personal development is good. Relationships between students are positive and behaviour seen in lessons is good. Fewer students are now excluded from school than previously. Students say that they feel safe and enjoy school and that bullying is not a major concern. If it does occur, they say it is dealt with appropriately by the school. These views are shared by parents who comment that the school is 'a warm and friendly place'.

Attendance is good and is now above the national average. This represents significant improvement since the last inspection and students respond well to the effective systems in place to monitor and reward good attendance.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A wide range of activities, trips and visits enhance students understanding of other places and cultures. Assemblies and tutor time are used effectively to provide students with time to reflect on the thought for the day. Students show respect for these occasions and for the teachers and students who present and perform.

Students have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and a significant number take part regularly in physical education and sport. Students have a voice on the school nutrition advisory group which meets to give advice on school lunches.

There are many opportunities for students to contribute to the life of the school, for example through the school council, the eco committee or as a prefect. Students feel they are listened to by the school and they play an important part in key decisions such as in the appointment of new members of staff. Improvements in standards in the core subjects at Key Stage 4, increased provision of vocational subjects and good quality careers advice ensure that students are well prepared for their future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and improving as the result of concerted action by school leaders. The positive impact of this action can be seen in the improving standards in Key Stage 4, in the common approach to planning lessons, and in the routine sharing of lessons objectives with students. The widespread use of interactive whiteboards is adding another positive dimension to both teaching and learning. The school knows it needs

to increase the proportion of good teaching and share good practice to continue the upward trend.

Confident teaching drives many lessons and ensures positive progress. In the most successful lessons, teachers' planning is extensive and includes a good variety of teaching approaches. They make sure that students understand what it is they are learning and why. Students particularly enjoy working together and taking part in practical, challenging activities. In some lessons, activities are not sufficiently varied or matched closely enough to the range of learning needs and capabilities in classes. The use of questioning is not always targeted sharply enough to ensure appropriate challenge for the more able, or support for those finding the work difficult.

Systematic use is made of a good range of pupil assessment information to set students' targets and to check on their progress. Homework supports learning well, but marking is inconsistent and provides too little feedback for students on how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive helpful support from learning support assistants, and make satisfactory progress because their learning and behavioural needs are well assessed.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

Curriculum provision is satisfactory. The school is working hard to introduce new courses that provide greater relevance for its students. Its flexible approach is beginning to tailor students' learning programmes more closely to their individual needs and aspirations. Students say they appreciate the school's work in this respect.

In Years 7 to 9, students study a balanced curriculum that gives priority to improving their literacy and numeracy skills. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met. In Years 10 and 11, specialist status has enriched the curriculum and helped the school to expand the range of science courses it offers to students. In turn this is having a positive impact on standards. The personal effectiveness course followed by all students is a feature. Other alternative courses, including those provided in conjunction with the local college, provide effectively for many students including some who are not well suited to a full GCSE programme.

Most students find courses that interest them and suit their ambitions. The low number who leave school without qualifications is indicative of the school's success in this respect. Students enjoy taking part in a good range of extra curricular activities including sport, music and art. An extensive range of subject booster classes is well supported, enjoyed by students and effective in helping to improve standards.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides good levels of care, guidance and support for its students. Health and safety routines and risk assessments are routinely incorporated into lessons where appropriate. Appropriate child protection policies are in place and vulnerable children are well supported by a variety of outside agencies which are well coordinated by the school. Support for students with severe learning disabilities and specific medical needs is particularly effective and every attempt is made to help them overcome barriers to learning and integrate successfully into school life.

The student services centre offers support on a wide range of pastoral issues ranging from careers advice to bullying issues and parental enquiries. In addition there is a multi-agency pastoral liaison group which meets monthly to discuss and provide support for individual students. In recognition of its successful pastoral work, the school has received the local authority anti-bullying charter mark for the third consecutive year.

Behaviour and attendance are monitored rigorously by the school and the five home school liaison officers have contributed significantly to the improvement in both areas since the last inspection. A learning support unit has been set up by the school and this has been effective in reducing considerably the number of fixed term exclusions.

The substantial study support offered by the school is taken up by an increasing number of students in Key Stage 4. It is mainly focussed on assisting students in the completion of coursework. Provision has now expanded to working with specifically identified groups of underachieving students in all years. This support links to improved student tracking systems which have been developed since the last inspection. Individual subjects hold detailed information on student progress which is shared with parents and students.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher is highly focussed on raising standards and improving achievement for all students. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive of the school and keen to contribute to its improvement. Middle management is satisfactory and developing.

All staff are being made increasingly accountable for the impact of their work. The headteacher has an accurate awareness of where the school is now and what needs to be done to move it forward. She is communicating this vision successfully to both staff and governors. Areas for development are more clearly identified and better prioritised. The strengths and skills of the senior team are used well to follow these through.

Departmental self-evaluation is improving, the monitoring of teaching and learning is becoming more rigorous and students' progress is more carefully tracked. These actions are resulting in improvements in students' attainment at Key Stage 4 but have so far had limited impact on standards at Key stage 3. However, on the basis of the improvements the school has made since the last inspection, for example in raising attendance and improving results at Key Stage 4, it has good capacity to improve further. The very determined leadership of the headteacher is a crucial factor contributing to the schools good capacity to improve. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

16 May 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Easington Community School, Durham SR8 3AY

Thank you for all your help when I inspected the school with my colleagues. Please would you pass on my thanks to your parents and carers for returning the questionnaires and say we took all their views into account. I thought you might like to know what we thought about your school.

- Easington is an effective school which is quickly improving as a Science College.
- Successful and sharply focussed leadership by the new headteacher who is well supported by senior leaders is driving the school forward.
- GCSE results improved last year and are well set to be even better in 2008.
- Some of you are not doing as well as you could in the lower years and the school is taking appropriate action to rectify this.
- Attendance has significantly improved from below to above average.
- The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and improving.
- The way the school cares, guides and supports you is good and makes a strong contribution to your progress.
- Personal development is good because the school has your safety and well-being at the heart of its work.

Your teachers and the staff work very hard and want to make the school even better. To help them do this, I have asked if they would: