

# Durham Gilesgate Sports College and Sixth Form Centre

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114310
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	325989
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Andrew Johnson 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>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	1426
Sixth form	1121
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dr Les Holloway
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Michael Brett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 January 2006
<b>School address</b>	Bradford Crescent Gilesgate Durham County Durham DH1 1HN
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 3847505
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 3840025

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<b>Age group</b>	11–19
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Durham Gilesgate Sports College and Sixth Form Centre is a school with two distinct parts: a relatively small cohort of 11 to 16 students drawn from the city of Durham and a very large sixth form that attracts students from the whole of the county and beyond. The school has specialist sports college status and provides extensive extended provision for the community. The vast majority of students are of White British heritage. More girls than boys attend the school. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is above the national average. An above average proportion of students in the 11 to 16 part of the school have a learning difficulty and/or disability.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Durham Gillesgate Sports College and Sixth Form Centre provides a satisfactory education for its students. Students enter the school with prior attainment in English, mathematics and science which is well below average. Standards in Key Stages 3 and 4 remain below average but are rising as a result of improvements brought about by the school's leaders. The proportion of students who achieve 5 A\* to C grades in GCSE examinations is below average, however, there has been considerable improvement in students' progress this year, which is now satisfactory overall.

Students enjoy going to school, as is reflected in their good behaviour and positive attitudes. They are very well cared for and students make great strides in terms of their personal development. Parents and carers are very satisfied with the education provided for their children. Until recently a small but significant minority of students did not attend school as frequently as they should. The system used to support and encourage these poor attenders has improved and this has significantly increased attendance levels.

The curriculum is well matched to students' needs and now allows many of them to successfully take and pass qualifications early in Key Stage 4. This also allows teachers to focus on groups or individuals who are at risk of under-achieving. The specialist status in sport has increased students' participation in extra-curricular activities. Partnerships between schools are very well developed.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with some good and outstanding lessons and very few inadequate ones. Activities in Key Stage 3 and 4 lessons are often used successfully to encourage the development of writing, spelling and presentational skills, although sometimes more able students are not fully challenged by their work. Behaviour is good in lessons and teachers develop a very good rapport with students, particularly in Key Stages 3 and 4.

The tracking of students' progress in English, mathematics and science has improved, challenging targets are set and most students work at an appropriate pace. Pastoral care is extremely good and students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. The arrangements for safeguarding students follow current national guidance. Transition arrangements between Gillesgate and other schools ensure a smooth transfer of students. Bullying and racial incidents are rare and, when they do happen, dealt with effectively.

Leaders and managers are very successful in promoting the inclusive ethos that ensures all students are welcomed to school no matter what their prior educational achievement or background. Equality of opportunity is promoted through action. Local community cohesion is enhanced significantly by the school because it welcomes thousands of adults onto its campus every year to take part in a wide variety of activities. Although the school knows itself well, many of the judgements it came to when self evaluating its effectiveness were too generous. The system to observe teaching and learning accurately identifies strengths and weaknesses in lessons but does not always lead to improvement.

## Effectiveness of the sixth form

### Grade: 3

Achievement and standards in the sixth form are satisfactory. Students enter the sixth form with standards that are around average. Pass rates are around the national average in most subjects, although the proportion of students achieving high grades at the end of Years 12 and

13 is below average. Attendance rates are high. Value added data shows that a significant proportion of students do not reach their predicted grades based on their prior attainment in Year 11. Success rates on vocational courses are around average. Inspectors observed students making at least satisfactory progress in most lessons. Very few students drop out of the sixth form, however, many students leave at the end of Year 12 having completed their programmes. After completing their studies a high proportion progress into higher education or employment.

The personal development of students in the sixth form is outstanding; they develop into much more confident young people and are very well equipped to succeed in later life and work. Teachers in the sixth form have particularly good subject knowledge although sometimes the development of independent study and research skills could be improved. Lessons are usually satisfactory and some are better but sometimes they lack challenge for the more able and are too dominated by teacher led work. The curriculum is broad and promotes inclusion very effectively. Pastoral care and support in the sixth form are good. Leadership and management of the sixth form have a good impact on students' personal development and well-being. However, the use of data is not robust and does not lead to accurate self-evaluation or effective plans for the improvement of achievement in some subjects.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve lessons by ensuring all students are challenged by their work, particularly the more able.
- Improve the progress made by students in English and mathematics.
- Use data more effectively to measure overall performance, particularly in the sixth form.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

When students arrive in Year 7, most have levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science that are well below average. National tests in 2007 and school data in 2008 indicate that, at the end of Key Stage 3, standards remained below average. GCSE results improved significantly in 2008, but remained below average. When English and mathematics are included the proportion gaining 5 or more A\* to C grades also improved, but was still below the national average. There is robust evidence to indicate that the trend of improvement in standards has accelerated in Year 10 and 11. Over the last three years students made broadly satisfactory progress overall in Key Stages 3 and 4, however, progress made in English has been slower.

Students join the sixth form from all parts of County Durham. They have a wide range of prior qualifications and experience, but those who enrol on GCE programmes have broadly average prior attainment. Pass rates at A and AS level are around the national average with considerable variation between subjects. The proportion gaining higher grades is below average. Progress made in the sixth form varies considerably between subjects and a significant minority of students do not reach their target grades. Success rates on vocational programmes vary but are around the national average. The number of students in Year 12 is much higher than the number in Year 13 because many students successfully complete their courses and decide to leave the school.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Students make good progress in their personal development and well-being between Years 7 and 11 and outstanding progress in the sixth form. As a result of the school's specialist status in sport, many students participate in physical exercise and have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Students know how to keep safe in school and bullying is rare. Students enjoy school and in Key Stage 4 they were particularly keen to tell inspectors of the good relationships they had with teachers. Students behave very well in lessons and around the school. There were no permanent exclusions last year and the numbers of students excluded from lessons is very low. Several students join the school each year having been excluded from other schools. They are well supported although often do not reach high academic standards. The school council is well established and enables students to have an effective voice in many aspects of the schools life.

Most students enjoy school. A small number of students in Years 7 to 11 did not attend school as often as they should and this had a detrimental effect on their development. This number has recently been greatly reduced.

The economic well-being of students is particularly well developed in Years 11 and 13 where very few students leave the school without progressing to employment or further training. Students develop self confidence and excellent work skills. Their contribution to the local community is very good. For example, several sixth formers volunteer to use their sports skills to staff the local 'Soccerarena' facility. Many students take part in charitable work and there is a regular 'thought for the day' that often focuses students' attention of how they can help the less fortunate.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, although there are some good and outstanding lessons and very few inadequate ones. In many lessons, especially in Years 7 to 11, students are fully involved and enjoy their work. They have good relationships with teachers and behave very well. Marking is done frequently and in the best examples refers directly to levels of achievement and gives clear guidance on how to improve. Despite teachers' strong subject knowledge, in some lessons work fails to challenge more able students or fully capture their interests. Teachers of all subjects try to build literacy activities into their lessons to help students improve the way they express their ideas in writing.

The school has identified some issues for improvement in lessons and is taking action that is beginning to have an impact. However, in some lessons there is still too much teacher led activity and students, particularly in the sixth form, are not involved sufficiently in the development of their own ideas. As a result, in some lessons there is too little dialogue and too little independent learning outside the classroom. In the best subjects, students' views are used effectively to review and improve the quality of teaching and learning.

## Curriculum and other activities

### Grade: 2

Effective partnerships with other schools and organisations enable the school to offer a very broad range of subjects. As a result, students take part in activities that are well matched to their needs and this keeps them interested in their education. Sport, as the school's specialism, plays a key role in improving participation rates and opening up educational opportunities. Other curriculum areas such as the expressive arts are increasingly expanding students' potential career paths and interests.

Sixth form students develop their confidence by taking advantage of the many leadership roles offered, for example working with disabled students on sports programmes. Many courses are enriched by work related activities that prepare students to pursue their chosen paths. For example, law students worked with a barrister and a judge to play out a mock trial in a local court. Participation rates in extra-curricular activities are high because they are well chosen to meet students' needs.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

The pastoral care students receive is a real strength of the school. As a result, there is a friendly and welcoming atmosphere around the school. Strong partnerships have been developed with support agencies that promote students' well-being. The new arrangements to promote good attendance are proving particularly successful. Arrangements to ensure the safe recruitment of staff follow the recommended guidelines. The procedures to measure and enhance academic progress have improved and are accelerating students' progress, particularly in the core subjects in Key Stage 4. Arrangements in Key Stage 3 are less well established. In the sixth form most students are aware of their targets and current level of progress. There are very effective arrangements in place to support students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and as a result they make good progress.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leaders and managers are very successful at instilling the inclusive ethos that is at the heart of everything the school does. The management and co-ordination of pastoral care is particularly effective. Measures aimed at improving standards have been implemented as part of the National Challenge initiative. As a result, there has been a rapid improvement in achievement. However, performance in some subjects and by some groups remains too low. Senior leaders have developed a very clear rationale for significant curricular changes across all phases of the school to improve achievement.

The school knows itself quite well and senior leaders recognise that there is variation in the effectiveness of some lessons. However, there is a tendency for judgement of the effectiveness of lessons to be overgenerous. The use of value added data in the sixth form is not sufficiently robust and therefore does not allow the school to formulate accurate judgements about its performance. Governors are supportive, strongly committed to the school and are determined to bring about improvement. However, they are not always in a strong position to hold the school to account and compare its performance with other similar institutions. There has been

steady improvement since the previous inspection that indicates the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.



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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	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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**Overall effectiveness**

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3	3

**Achievement and standards**

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2	

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	1
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	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	3	3
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	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	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	3	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

13 March 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Durham Gillesgate Sports College and Sixth Form Centre, Durham, DH1 1HN

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 with interest the questionnaires completed by your parents. This is a summary of our main findings; a fuller report is available from the Ofsted website.

The school provides you with a satisfactory education overall with some good and outstanding features. GCSE examination results are improving and you make satisfactory progress at school. In the sixth form pass rates are around average. Although relatively few of you reach the highest grades, your progress is satisfactory. Most of you obviously enjoy school and feel safe. Behaviour is good and any rare incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively. There is a good curriculum that is carefully matched to your needs and interests.

Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and sometimes good or outstanding. You make the best progress when tasks are varied and challenging. Many of you take part in sporting activities and the school makes a significant contribution to what goes on in your community. The school does a very good job in caring, guiding and supporting you and makes sure you are well prepared for the next stage of your education.

We have asked your school to concentrate on the following things in the future:

- Improve lessons by ensuring all of you are challenged by your work.
- Improve the progress made by students in English and mathematics.
- Use data more effectively to measure performance, particularly in the sixth form.

The inspection team would like to wish you every success for the future.

Andrew Johnson HMI