

# Seaham School of Technology

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114286
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	338331
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ann Wallis

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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	922
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Pauline Ramshaw
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David Shield
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	Burnhall Drive Seaham County Durham SR7 0EN
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 38 lessons, and held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and groups of students. The lead inspector also spoke by telephone with a representative from the local authority and the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at students' books, the school improvement plan, school tracking data, the school's analysis of recent examination results and other documentation. They also analysed 73 questionnaires returned by parents, 133 student questionnaires and 28 staff questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the impact of the school's work to raise attainment and achievement in English and mathematics
- the quality of teaching across the school, particularly how well work is matched to students' needs and how well they are helped to learn independently
- students' behaviour and their attitudes to learning
- the quality, consistency and use of assessment data
- the quality of leadership and management at all levels and its impact on the school's capacity to improve.

## Information about the school

This is an average sized secondary school with very few students from minority ethnic groups or who are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The school has been a specialist technology college since 2000 and holds a Sportsmark award.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?****4****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****4**

## Main findings

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its students an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Although Seaham School has successfully developed some aspects of its work since the last inspection and has some strengths, attainment across the school remains too low. Students are making inadequate progress, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and their achievement and enjoyment of learning are inadequate. This is because, although many examples of good practice were seen, there are still many lessons where teaching is inadequate or barely satisfactory. In these lessons, teachers' expectations are often too low, lesson objectives are not made clear to students, the pace of learning is not quick enough to hold students' interest and work is not well matched to their needs. The quality of marking is variable and the results of assessments are not used consistently to identify weaknesses and plan students' future learning.

Students' behaviour has improved, particularly around the school building where a calm and orderly atmosphere prevails. Students' attainment and their rate of progress have improved in several subjects, such as design and technology and business studies, where examples of good and occasionally outstanding teaching were seen. The tracking of Year 11 students' progress in English and mathematics has improved markedly. Since September 2009, the recently appointed data manager and subject leaders in English and mathematics have introduced much improved systems to identify students who are not meeting their targets and need extra help. However, these systems have not been extended to all year groups or subjects and are too recent for their impact to be fully felt. The school also has strengths both in the satisfactory curriculum it provides and in the satisfactory care, guidance and support it gives to students.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that students make adequate progress. The areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have not been remedied and the proportion of students gaining five or more A\* to C grades, including English and mathematics, has declined. The school's self-evaluation of some areas of its work, such as the quality of teaching, has been over-generous. Systems to monitor students' progress and teaching and learning are not sufficiently rigorous or well embedded. As overall improvement since the last inspection has been inadequate and self-evaluation is not accurate, the school is not showing that it has sufficient capacity for sustained improvement.

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The impact of the school's specialist status as a technology college is satisfactory. It has enhanced links with feeder schools and other partners. It has also helped to promote improvements in attainment in design and technology, enabling this department's specialist targets to be met.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise attainment in English, mathematics and science and ensure that all students make at least satisfactory progress by improving the quality of teaching and learning in these subjects
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
  - identifying clear lesson objectives and sharing them with students
  - increasing teachers' expectations of learners
  - ensuring that work is closely matched to the needs of all students
  - encouraging students to learn independently
  - improving the quality, consistency and use of assessment data.
- Increase the rigour with which the school evaluates its own work, particularly the quality of teaching and learning, in order to bring about sustained improvement by:
  - ensuring monitoring procedures are consistent across the school
  - developing the expertise of middle managers so the monitoring of their areas is sharply focused and leads to improvements in teaching and learning.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****4**

Students enter the school with attainment which is a little below average. They make inadequate progress as they move through the school and the standards they reach in English, mathematics and science are low. Examination results for 2008 show that students' attainment was significantly below average on all measures except the figure for students gaining five A\* to G GCSE grades which was average. The unvalidated results for 2009 indicate a very mixed picture. There were some improvements, albeit from a very low base, in the percentage of students gaining five or more higher grade GCSEs in some subjects. However, students' overall attainment in English and mathematics declined and the proportion of students gaining five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE, including these subjects, dropped to 28%. In the best lessons seen during the inspection all groups of students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, made satisfactory and sometimes better progress. However, because teaching in over a quarter of lessons was inadequate or barely satisfactory and progress in these lessons was too slow, students' achievement overall is inadequate. Although the progress of students in Year 11 in English and mathematics is now accelerating, this is not the case in science or across all year groups. Scrutiny of student's work, particularly in English and mathematics confirmed that attainment is low and the rate at which many students make progress is too slow.

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Most students say that they feel safe in school and that any bullying is dealt with adequately. They understand how to lead a healthy lifestyle, although not all make healthy choices of meals at lunchtimes. Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are satisfactory in lessons, but behaviour is good around the school at breaks and lunchtimes. Students have good opportunities to contribute to their school and the local community in a wide range of roles, for example, as peer mentors and through the Youth Centre and Crime Forum. Attendance is average and improving. Students develop workplace skills satisfactorily. In spite of low attainment in English and mathematics, over three quarters of Year 11 students did achieve a basic literacy and numeracy qualification in 2009 and students' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and teamwork are developed well. Students have a sound awareness of social and moral issues, although their cultural development is less strong.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching varies from outstanding to inadequate. However, because too many lessons are inadequate and lead to students making slower progress than they

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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should, teaching overall is inadequate. Strengths in teaching were: relationships with students; the use of ICT; subject knowledge and the use of resources, but these were outweighed by weaknesses in the delivery of lessons and in the quality, consistency and use of assessment.

The curriculum is improving and meets both statutory requirements and students' needs. For example, the curriculum is well matched to the needs of the recently introduced 'transition group' for lower attaining students in Year 7. Improvements to the curriculum to better develop students' skills as well as their knowledge, are at an early stage of development. A satisfactory range of academic and vocational subjects gives both higher and lower attaining students a suitable choice of courses. Extra-curricular and enrichment activities are satisfactory and add to students' enjoyment of learning. Students speak positively about the satisfactory care, guidance and support they receive. They are particularly appreciative of facilities such as the 'chat room' where they can discuss issues that are worrying them. Recent improvements to systems to support good behaviour, improve attendance and reduce exclusions have had a beneficial impact. Transition arrangements allow most students to settle well into Year 7. Links with outside agencies enhance the quality of support for vulnerable students and the guidance given to those leaving school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>4</b>
	4
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders are committed to school improvement and receptive to advice. Governors, leaders and managers have correctly identified some of the school's weaknesses, but progress in resolving these important issues and driving improvement has been too slow. In English, mathematics and science, the lack of a robust system to track students' progress, insufficient good teaching and, in the case of English, staff absence, have all prevented attainment and achievement from rising securely and strongly. The quality of middle management is variable and, despite external support, middle managers' monitoring of teaching and learning is not sufficiently sharp or consistent enough to bring about sustained improvements. Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses well and have worked hard to challenge the school and drive forward improvements.

Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and checks on the suitability of all staff to work with young people, risk assessments and health and safety arrangements are all

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satisfactory. The school has a good understanding of its own community and makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. However, it has not fully evaluated the impact of this work and links with communities further afield are limited. The school does not tolerate discrimination and values the skills and talents of all students equally. However, because it does not have sufficiently precise information about the performance of all groups of students across the school, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, its promotion of equal opportunities is inadequate. Because outcomes for students are inadequate, the school does not provide satisfactory value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>4</b>

## Views of parents and carers

Most parents who responded to the questionnaire were positive about the education their child receives. Several parents commented that their child was happy at school and had settled in well. A few parents were concerned about their child's progress and specific comments were made about poor GCSE results and lack of progress in mathematics. The inspection team agreed with these comments. Inspectors found no evidence to substantiate the concerns of a very few parents about poor behaviour and a lack of safety in the school.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Seaham School of Technology to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 73 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 922 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	25	47	64	5	7	3	4
The school keeps my child safe	11	15	55	75	6	8	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	21	29	41	56	5	7	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	25	41	56	8	11	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	14	19	47	64	3	4	2	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	18	42	58	8	11	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	18	47	64	7	10	2	3
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	20	27	44	60	3	4	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	19	50	68	6	8	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	26	40	55	4	5	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	16	43	59	5	7	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	18	25	46	63	3	4	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	25	49	67	3	4	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



20 October 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Seaham School of Technology, Seaham, SR7 0EN

Thank you so much for making us welcome when we visited your school recently. We are particularly grateful to those of you who took time to talk to us about the things you valued and the things you liked less about your school. We were particularly impressed with your improved behaviour, the welcoming atmosphere and the fact that most of you attend school regularly. However, we believe your school needs to improve as a matter of urgency and have made it subject to special measures. These are some of the main findings in our report:

the curriculum you follow and the care, guidance and support you receive are satisfactory

attainment is low and achievement is inadequate, especially in English, mathematics and science

the quality of teaching and of leadership and management require improvement.

This is what we have asked your school to do.

Raise attainment in English, mathematics and science by ensuring that you all make at least satisfactory progress.

Improve the quality of teaching by:

- identifying clear lesson objectives and sharing them with you
- increasing teachers' expectations of you
- ensuring work is closely matched to your needs
- encouraging you to learn independently
- improving the quality, consistency and use of information about your achievement.

Leaders and managers carefully checking how good the school's work is so they know how to improve the school further.

You can help your school to improve by all working with your teachers to achieve the very best you can.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Ann Wallis

Lead Inspector

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