

Greenfield Community College, A Specialist Arts and Science School

Greenfield Way, Newton Aycliffe, County Durham DL5 7LF

Inspection dates

10–11 May 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The merger of the predecessor school with a neighbouring school in January 2015 was handled badly by all involved in the process. Consequently, standards of achievement declined in 2015 and 2016 for almost all groups of pupils.
- In 2016, too many pupils did not make the progress they should from their different starting points. Disadvantaged pupils and most-able pupils underachieved by the time they left the school.
- Pupils also underperformed in a range of key subjects in 2016. This included mathematics, science and humanities.
- Pupils' writing skills are weak. They act as a barrier to their success in examinations across the curriculum.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies across subjects and year groups.
- Teachers do not yet routinely plan learning that challenges most-able pupils to excel. Expectations of what these pupils can achieve are not sufficiently high.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities but who are not supported through an education, health and care plan have not achieved as well as they should.
- Pupils' attendance, although rising, is below average for all key groups at the school. The reduction in absence reflects the ongoing improvement in pupils' attitudes to their learning.

The school has the following strengths

- After a period of instability following the merger of two schools in 2015, the executive headteacher and governing body are now acting effectively to improve the school.
- The governing body, which is skilfully led, now supports and challenges leaders well.
- Teaching is improving in all areas of the curriculum, including mathematics, science and humanities.
- The school supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils very effectively. Its work leads to pupils developing a good sense of fundamental British values and increasingly mature attitudes to life beyond school.
- Pupils are safe and well cared for and the school is calm and orderly.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - school leaders continue to focus on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and those of higher ability
 - subject leaders become more consistent and effective in using assessment information to plan teaching and to intervene and support pupils whose progress is weak
 - the quality of provision in mathematics, science and humanities continues to improve at a rapid rate.
- Improve the quality of teaching, and thereby outcomes, by ensuring that:
 - the weaknesses in pupils' writing are addressed across the curriculum in a consistent and robust manner
 - homework is set more regularly and used to consolidate and extend learning that takes place in the classroom
 - teachers assess pupils' learning and progress more effectively and provide challenge and support to pupils when they need it
 - all teachers have high expectations regarding the standard of presentation in pupils' books.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by ensuring that:
 - all pupils attend school more regularly. This is particularly the case for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who are not supported through an education, health and care plan
 - the poorer attitudes to learning presented by a small group of Year 8 boys at the Sunnydale site are fully addressed.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The challenge involved in the merger of Greenfield Community College and Sunnydale Community College in January 2015 was much greater than had been anticipated and this has had a significant and detrimental impact on Greenfield Community College in 2015 and 2016.
- Leaders have not ensured that outcomes for pupils in mathematics, science and humanities are good enough. Disadvantaged pupils and most-able pupils do not make good progress. This is largely due to the predecessor school's lack of capacity and expertise in driving forward standards at two geographically separated sites in a context of significant underperformance at what was, prior to it merging with Greenfield Community College, Sunnydale Community College.
- The leadership of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement. Although there is emerging strength in subject leadership reflected in stronger teaching now in evidence across the curriculum, assessment is not yet being used to ensure that teaching is sharply planned and accelerates and consolidates the learning of all pupils.
- Leaders have been too slow in their actions to ensure that the attendance of all pupils is good. Although there is clear evidence that attendance has improved for almost all groups this academic year, this is not the case for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who are not supported through an education, health and care plan. Attendance remains below the national average overall for all pupils.
- Leaders have only just begun to ensure that pupil premium funding is used effectively. Prior to this academic year, plans that identify barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils, and the use of funding to overcome them, have lacked precision. This is now not the case and clear evidence seen during this inspection shows that disadvantaged pupils are now making much stronger progress, including the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- The quality of provision for most-able learners has been weak. Although this is now being addressed as a priority by the school, most-able learners do not enjoy the support and challenge required to ensure that they succeed at the highest level.
- The executive headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body are honest and accurate in their understanding of the school's position and the challenges that it faces. Plans now in place are robust and are already showing a clear impact, particularly regarding the quality of teaching in areas of the curriculum which were previously weak.
- Leaders have ensured that the quality of the school's work to develop pupils' reading and mathematical skills is effective. This is not the case regarding the development of writing, and weaknesses in writing skills for all pupils continue to act as a key barrier to their success in examinations.
- The school's curriculum is well planned and inclusive. Both sites within the school now enjoy a common curriculum and pupils recognise and appreciate the range of subjects

that are available to them. The school has not used 'softer' subjects, for example the ECDL qualification to improve its own performance; this is to the credit of leaders and reflects their integrity as they plan to take the school forward.

- Pupils enjoy access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities, and they participate with enthusiasm. This is particularly strong in physical education (PE) and the arts, which add considerably to pupils' success in those important areas of the curriculum.
- The school's work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a strength. This is reflected in a range of exciting and thought-provoking displays around the school, many of which have been designed by pupils themselves. The 'Time 4 Success' programme contributes well to the development of pupils' understanding of the values of modern Britain, providing excellent opportunities to debate issues around racism and homophobia.
- School leaders regularly monitor the progress of the small number of pupils who attend alternative provision. These pupils are now making good progress.
- The leadership of careers education and information, advice and guidance for pupils to successfully move on to their next stages in education, employment and/or training is a strength of the school. School leaders have a good understanding of the destinations of pupils who leave the school and follow their progress with interest.
- The leadership of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities requires improvement. Although their progress is now clearly improving, provision for pupils who receive additional support but do not have an education, health and care plan is not yet strong enough. This is reflected in their poor attendance, which the school has now identified as a key priority for improvement.
- Teachers, including those who are recently qualified, are very positive about the programme of ongoing training they receive. They recognise that it has improved significantly over the course of the last year. It has been particularly effective in ensuring that good and consistent safeguarding systems are in place.
- Performance management and pay progression are managed effectively. Targets which have been set by school leaders and governors for 2017 are ambitious but realistic. They include targets set which are related to the progress of disadvantaged pupils and most-able pupils. Where performance has been weak, teachers and leaders have been challenged appropriately. This has included the withdrawal of pay progression.

Governance of the school

- Governors have struggled to deal effectively with the challenges caused by the merger of two schools, one of which was inadequate, in January 2015. They are open, honest and accurate in their assessment of those failings and are now acting with much greater effectiveness to ensure that pupils achieve at a higher level across the whole school.
- School leaders are now challenged robustly by the governing body, which is very well led. This challenge is based upon the rigorous assessment of performance data. Governors are now asking more probing questions to ensure that the information presented to them is clear and accurate. Their scrutiny of the school's work this

academic year is particularly thorough in the area of pupils' progress.

- Governors have been very effective in leading and promoting the practice and culture of safeguarding at the school. They have now ensured that safeguarding is at the centre of all aspects of strategic planning.
- Governors now play a key role in the performance management of staff and school leaders, including the executive headteacher. They recognise that staff should only achieve pay progression if targets, including those relating to pupil outcomes, are met.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All pupils told inspectors that they felt safe in the school and that there are people they could go to if they had a problem or a concern. They were able to discuss the actions they could take to stay safe online. Pupils were particularly praising of the school's work around bullying.
- All staff are aware of their role in ensuring pupils' safety and welfare. Records show that they have received high-quality safeguarding training and that child protection policies are clear and understood by all staff.
- Processes and procedures for the recruitment of staff are compliant with current legislation.
- School leaders carefully follow required protocols in dealing with any pupils who attend or leave the school during the academic year or who undertake any education in alternative provision. The school's care and support for vulnerable pupils is good.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is not yet consistently good; consequently, pupils do not yet make good progress across a range of subjects. Some teaching fails to match work well to the level of pupils' ability and needs; this results in pupils losing interest and failing to make the progress of which they are capable. This is particularly the case for pupils with high starting points when they enter the school.
- Teaching does not consistently meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils. Prior to this academic year, pupil premium funding has not been used effectively to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Plans now in place are more sophisticated and show careful analysis of the reasons for underperformance in previous years.
- Although there is evidence of good work taking place in the development of pupils' reading and numeracy skills across the curriculum, the development of pupils' writing is weak. This acts as a significant barrier to their success in examinations. Across the curriculum, insufficient emphasis is placed upon the importance of technical accuracy in writing. As a consequence of this, pupils are inclined to rush their writing in a careless manner.
- In the main, teachers use their good subject knowledge well to plan learning that interests and motivates pupils. For example, teachers in modern foreign languages

promote high levels of engagement because they use good systems to break down learning and know how to support pupils to learn new vocabulary and grammar effectively. Pupils in PE work hard because teachers provide clarity about the steps pupils need to take to develop key skills and attributes. Some staff are less confident about planning the next steps in learning because they lack sufficient subject knowledge.

- Teaching is typically well paced and stimulating. Pupils respond with enthusiasm and show great interest in their learning. However, some teaching lacks passion and direction and, as a result, pupils become lethargic and lose interest.
- Homework is not yet being set in a consistent manner which extends learning and consolidates key skills.
- Assessment is being supported by the increasing use of external moderation and verification. However, the school's own systems for tracking and the use of data are not yet universally understood by all subject leaders and, therefore, are not yet being used consistently to inform teaching.
- Some teachers use questioning skilfully to explore and extend pupils' understanding, getting them to think more deeply about their learning. However, in other instances, teachers accept limited, superficial responses and do not challenge pupils further.
- Expectations about presentation in pupils' books are inconsistent. When poorly presented work is accepted, pupils' readiness to make a greater effort begins to slip.
- Leaders are ensuring that the most effective practice in teaching is now being shared to encourage more rapid improvement in teaching overall.
- Parents are positive about the quality of teaching and the progress their children make at the school. They value the information they receive and are increasingly supportive of the school, attending workshops and information evenings in greater numbers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Although there has been some improvement in attendance this year, absence rates remain too high and reflect a lack of value that some pupils place on their education.
- Most pupils are confident young people. They show respect for others and have positive attitudes to school, their peers and staff.
- Independent careers advice, together with school guidance, enables pupils to make appropriate choices about the next steps in their education.
- The 'Time 4 Success' programme, personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons, citizenship and a programme of assemblies help pupils to understand how to stay safe and healthy. Inspectors saw how pupils engage thoughtfully and maturely during lessons promoting unity and equality in Britain today.

- The school's records show that when incidents of bullying do occur, they are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils support this. They say that they feel safe. The views of staff and parents also confirm this.
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe and healthy. They learn how to reduce and manage stress and why they should have a healthy diet and stay fit. Pupils follow a programme of lessons and activities that teach them how to recognise risks and keep themselves safe online.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Most pupils are well behaved in and out of lessons. However, in a minority of lessons seen by inspectors, including those where expectations and academic challenge were low, pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour were not good. Pupils told inspectors that behaviour is not always good in lessons and referred specifically to the challenges presented by a small group of boys in Year 8 at the Sunnydale site.
- Pupils are generally well behaved around school and at breaktimes and lunchtime. They are friendly and polite. Pupils are almost always on time for lessons and generally arrive keen to engage in their work.
- The number of fixed-term and permanent exclusions has fallen significantly over the course of this academic year for all groups of pupils. This is because leaders have now ensured that secure and consistent systems are in place to deal with the rare incidents of poor behaviour when it does occur.
- Attendance remains below the national average for all groups of pupils. In Years 10 and 11 in particular, attendance for some pupils is poor. Although attendance is improving, insufficient emphasis has been placed on its importance for pupils prior to this academic year. This has acted as a key barrier to pupils' success in examinations in 2015 and 2016. The attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities but who are not supported by an education, health and care plan remains very low.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement in 2015 and 2016 was broadly inadequate. This is accepted by school leaders who recognise the underperformance of pupils in a range of subjects including mathematics, science and humanities. Because of the actions of leaders in bringing about improvements in teaching in response to this underperformance, there is compelling evidence now that pupils in all year groups are making much better progress.
- The attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils was well below the national average in 2016. This is because leaders failed to ensure that disadvantaged pupils were appropriately challenged and supported in lessons, and because the use of pupil premium funding was ineffective. This position has now changed significantly and there is clear evidence that disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged

pupils, are now making much stronger progress.

- The rate of progress for pupils with different starting points is inconsistent. Pupils with below-average starting points generally make progress which is in line with that of others nationally across a broad range of subjects. Pupils of higher ability make less progress, and the progress made by the most able pupils is much slower than that of other pupils nationally.
- There is clear evidence that pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9, including those who are disadvantaged, make better progress across a broad range of subjects, including English and mathematics, than those in Years 10 and 11. The progress of some pupils in Years 10 and 11 is limited due to poor attendance and a legacy of weak teaching while they were in key stage 3.
- Outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who are supported by an education, health and care plan are very strong. This is because they enjoy a tailored curriculum and a high level of personal support. Pupils on the special educational needs and/or disabilities register but who do not have an education, health and care plan in place make much poorer progress. This is because their attendance as a group has been very low and the school has not taken robust enough action to improve their engagement with school and their learning.
- The school's work to develop reading skills is good. Across all year groups, pupils read and discuss their reading with enthusiasm and a high level of understanding. A strong and effective numeracy policy is also in place. Pupils benefit from the peer mentoring programme which is in place to support all aspects of mathematical work. The development of writing is much weaker. Written work is often rushed and is technically inaccurate. Pupils' writing skills show little improvement over the course of a full year because teachers do not develop written skills in a consistent and ambitious way.
- The robust actions taken by leaders, including the governing body, since September 2016 to secure better outcomes for pupils and improvements in the quality of teaching are clearly accelerating the progress of pupils currently in the school. Achievement in English is now good. In mathematics, science and humanities there is a gathering momentum of improvement. Across the wider curriculum, there is clear excellence in the teaching of PE, modern foreign languages and the arts. The additional support and targeted teaching for specific groups of pupils who are in danger of underachievement is also helping to address the deficits in their skills and knowledge.
- The small number of pupils who attend courses away from the site benefit from provision that is well matched to their needs. Most are successful in securing a good range of qualifications.

School details

Unique reference number	114305
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10033713

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,008
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Ford
Executive headteacher	David Priestley
Telephone number	01325 300 378
Website	www.greenfieldschool.net
Email address	david.priestley@greenfieldschool.net
Date of previous inspection	3-4 October 2012

Information about this school

- Greenfield Community College was established in January 2015 following the merger of Greenfield Community College with Sunnydale Community College. At its previous inspection in October 2012, the predecessor school, Greenfield Community College, was judged to be a good school. Sunnydale Community College was judged to be inadequate at its last inspection, which took place in April 2014. The merger resulted in Greenfield Community College increasing in size from 658 pupils to 1,020 pupils. The school still operates across the two original sites.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is much higher than the national average.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic

backgrounds, or who speak English as an additional language, is well below average.

- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health or care plan is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities supported by the school is above the national average.
- A very small number of pupils attend alternative provision, Optimum.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress by the end of Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons and some of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and their attitudes to, and opinions about, their school, including teaching, behaviour and safety. They met with six focus groups of pupils. Inspectors observed pupils at breaktimes and lunchtime and as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors considered 171 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, senior leaders, other leaders and newly qualified teachers. The lead inspector met with representatives from the governing body and representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised several documents, including the school’s self-evaluation, minutes of governing body meetings and the school’s records about pupils’ behaviour, attendance and progress.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school’s policies and procedures related to safeguarding and pupil support and welfare, including child protection records and risk assessments.

Inspection team

Sir John Townsley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Moira Banks	Ofsted Inspector
Deano Wright	Her Majesty’s Inspector
John Paddick	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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