



Greenfield School Community and Arts College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114305
Local Authority Durham
Inspection number 289871
Inspection dates 8–9 November 2006
Reporting inspector Paul Hancock HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Greenfield Way
School category	Community		Newton Aycliffe, County Durham
Age range of pupils	11–16		DL5 7LF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01325 300378
Number on roll (school)	764	Fax number	01325 379058
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Peter Bergg
		Headteacher	Mr Mike Thornton
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–16	8–9 November 2006	289871

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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

Greenfield is a specialist Arts College which has achieved the 'Arts Mark' Gold award for a second time. The school has a Community and Arts Centre which was partly funded by the National Lottery supported by the Arts Council of England. It is very well used by the local community. Nearly all the students have English as their first language and come from White British backgrounds. There are more students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than is usually found in schools nationally.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Greenfield is a very good school and arts college. Inspection evidence agrees with the school's own evaluation that it is doing very well. Students make good progress in their academic and personal development. The school is not complacent and is working very well to make further improvements.

Students enjoy learning, feel safe, and behave well. Results are above average, very often from a low starting point. The number of students gaining higher GCSE grades has increased from 36% to 60% in the last five years. Not all subjects are performing at the same high level. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in the first three years but this slows down in Years 10 and 11.

The school has improved the curriculum. It is outstanding and the provision of individual study programmes is a particular feature. Staff work closely as a team and know individual students very well. A typical parent said, 'School staff have gone out of their way to extend my child's learning by arranging individual science A-level lessons after he gained GCSE A grades in Year 9'.

The high quality teaching and learning, particularly in the visual and performing arts, is another strength. Arts college targets have been met and links with outside agencies and specialist teachers are excellent. The community and arts centre is very well used and visiting performers are a regular feature, such as the two professional dance groups who visited during the inspection. The main impact of specialist status has been to enhance the achievement and well-being of students.

The highly effective leadership of the headteacher, supported by a good senior management team and governing body, is steering the school in the right direction. Resources are effectively deployed to achieve good value for money and the school is right to think capacity to improve is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure results in all subjects compare well with the best in the school.
- Improve the rate of progress for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities at Key Stage 4.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

A high proportion of students start with attainment and skills that are below average. They make good progress during their time at the school, as do all students across the full range of ability. By the end of Year 9, standards are above average and the most recent results show significant improvement in mathematics and science.

The 2006 GCSE results are the school's best ever. The number of students gaining higher GCSE grades has increased to 60%. The results of boys have improved significantly, particularly in mathematics and English. This was an issue identified by

the school and has now been addressed. There is still a variation in the results achieved in different subjects, which is too great.

The needs of individual students are carefully analysed and programmes are tailored to help students achieve as well as they can. A group of Year 10 art students have gained GCSE grades A to C two years early and are studying

A level in Year 10.

The specialist college has made a significant impact on standards in creative and performing arts subjects. Standards are highest in art, drama, design and technology, English and music. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in the first three years but this slows down in Years 10 and 11 because targets for improvement are not always specified well enough.

Evidence from school data indicates that current Year 11 students are on course to achieve their targets. The school sets challenging targets for GCSE results. The comment by one parent echoes the views of many others, 'My child has made huge progress since coming to this school due to the help and support of all staff'.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development and well-being are good and aspects are outstanding. Spiritual, moral and social development is good. Cultural development is outstanding because arts college activities introduce students to a wide range of cultures they would not normally experience. The school provides a stimulating, lively and safe environment for students, parents and the wider community. It works extremely hard to ensure that everyone is included. Students want to come to school and display a determination to succeed. This is reflected in the good, improving attendance and the desire to learn by all groups of students. They enjoy school life and display good behaviour both in lessons and at social times.

Older students are particularly proud of their own roles and responsibilities, such as supporting and helping those in the lower years. Students listen carefully to staff, follow directions and respond positively to praise and encouragement. Relationships between students and staff are excellent. Sport is very successful at promoting healthy lifestyles for all students. The community arts programme provides a wide range of excellent opportunities for students to enhance their personal qualities and skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is very good. This matches the judgements made by senior managers when they observed lessons. The much improved GCSE results in 2006 reflect the recent improvements in teaching. In the best lessons, teachers have

very good subject knowledge, which captures the interest of the students. A good tracking system is in place and results are used well to monitor progress and plan for additional learning needs.

The teaching consistently engages students in high quality question and answer sessions to help them learn. This is because the school has a common framework for planning teaching and learning. Monitoring and evaluation by the leadership team is highly effective. A proportion of the teaching is outstanding and the school shares good practice to help others improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding and is successfully promoting rising levels of achievement. The school meets the needs of students exceptionally well by providing a very broad and balanced curriculum. It includes an excellent range of extended activities beyond the school day, community activities, and individual programmes tailored to specific needs.

The specialist status of the school results in a strong emphasis on the visual and performing arts. Work with external agencies to introduce new vocational courses and work based learning is excellent. There are many opportunities for students in Years 10 and 11 to explore work opportunities for the future, such as the very good Young Apprentice scheme in health and social care. Learning in all years is reinforced by a popular enrichment programme, which takes place after school in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). Provision for enterprise education is very good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school looks after its students very well. There is an exceptionally strong staff commitment to providing effective approaches to full service provision. As a consequence students feel safe, well looked after and supported with little intimidation or harassment. The school goes to great lengths to ensure that both students and families access the full range of services it has to offer.

Students feel confident to approach staff if they have any concerns or worries. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support in Years 7, 8 and 9. Pupils at risk are identified early and key staff are effectively deployed from a range of professional support. This ensures that students successfully cope with school life. Academic progress is closely monitored and guidance on how to improve is provided. Procedures for child protection are well embedded and understood by staff. Risk assessments are carefully assembled and systematically reviewed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The highly effective leadership of the headteacher supported ably by other managers provides purposeful direction, which includes raising standards, improving learning and further enriching the curriculum to meet students' needs. This helps students maximise their progress and increase their understanding of the wider world.

All areas of leadership and management are regularly and rigorously monitored. The school's self-evaluation is good, highlighting areas that need to be improved, such as ironing out some inconsistencies in teaching, and then taking action to put them right. This links closely to a well established performance management system and reflects a clear commitment to improve further the quality of teaching and raise standards. There is a well developed programme of staff development in place. Since the last inspection, the school has acted decisively to bring about significant improvements. The school acknowledges the leadership and management of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is still an issue. Vetting procedures for all staff that work with students are in place.

Governors rigorously check how well the school is doing and work with department heads to discuss developments. Good consultation with stakeholders gives everyone, including students, parents and staff, a say in the school's future.

Achieving specialist school status has brought benefits both in terms of an enriched performing and visual arts curriculum and links with the wider community. The school has good plans to improve ICT provision. Resources are deployed well and the school provides good value for money.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
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	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

The Students

Greenfield School Community and Arts College

Greenfield Way

Newton Aycliffe

County Durham

DL5 7LF

10 November 2006

Dear Students

Thank you for all your help when I inspected your school with my colleagues on 8 and 9 November. We particularly enjoyed hearing your views and listening to you talk about the work you were doing. 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.

- You go to a very good and improving school.
- GCSE results in 2006 are the best so far.
- You have a highly effective headteacher who works closely with all the staff to make sure you do as well as you can.
- The quality of teaching and learning is high, particularly in the visual and performing arts.
- You have an excellent community and arts centre, which is very well used.
- The care, guidance and support you receive are good and helps keep you safe.
- It was great to see you involved in a very wide range of activities.

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 could:

- ensure results in all subjects compare well with the best in the school
- make the provision for those of you who find learning difficult in Years 10 and 11 even better than it is now.

I wish you every success in all you do in the future. It is very well deserved.

Paul Hancock

Her Majesty's Inspector