

# Staindrop School: A Business and Enterprise College

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114302
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	311557
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 December 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Deborah Wright

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	615
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Ruth Renton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Brian Kinnair
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 January 2004
<b>School address</b>	Cleatlam Lane Staindrop Darlington County Durham DL2 3JU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01833 660285
<b>Fax number</b>	01833 660833

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, on secondment to Ofsted, and three other Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Staindrop School is a small, comprehensive school. Numbers on roll have increased over the last few years. Students come from a relatively large, semi-rural area. The number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above average. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average. Nearly all students come from White British backgrounds and have English as their first language. In September 2005, the school was designated a Business and Enterprise College.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Staindrop School, A Business and Enterprise College, is a good school. It makes an outstanding contribution to students' personal development and well-being. Students speak confidently about their school and demonstrate good basic skills and personal qualities which provide a good grounding for the next stage of their education and future employment. Their behaviour is exemplary. Students show respect for each other and say they feel secure and safe in school. They take advantage of opportunities to take on responsibility in school and they contribute to the local community through charitable activities.

Good progress has been made since the last inspection and the school has good capacity to improve further. The recent restructuring of the senior leadership team and the appointment of a new deputy headteacher, leave the school well placed to undertake new challenges. Well targeted school activities have improved teaching and learning which are good and occasionally outstanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and convey enthusiasm for their subject to the students. Working relationships in classrooms are very good. The marking of students' work is inconsistent. Some is inadequate and this limits students' progress.

When students enter the school, their level of performance is just above average. They make good progress throughout their time at the school; at the end of Key Stage 3, standards are above average and, by the end of Key Stage 4, they are well above the national average. Students' good attitudes to learning are an important factor in enabling them to achieve well.

The school's good curriculum reflects its status as a Business and Enterprise college. The impact shows across the school in enhanced resources and wider opportunities for study. The school makes very good use of the expertise and resources afforded by its specialist status and as a result, the range and quality of provision for information technology has improved.

The care provided for students is good and the pastoral system supports students very well. Links with outside agencies enhance the work of the school. Students receive good quality information which helps them to make informed choices about courses of study and opportunities when they leave at 16. The quality of feedback students receive about the standards of their work and how to improve it, remains inconsistent.

Leadership and management are good overall. The school's self-evaluation demonstrates a good knowledge of the school with judgements which are broadly in line with inspectors' findings. The school enjoys the support of the overwhelming majority of parents who expressed their views about the quality of education it provides.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure greater consistency and precision in teachers' feedback so that students are clear about what they need to do to raise their performance.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

When students start in Year 7, standards are just above average. The majority make good progress in their learning and, by the end of Year 11, reach standards which are well above average. Given their starting points, this represents good achievement.

In 2007, at Key Stage 3, results were better than the previous year and above average in English, mathematics and science. In particular, there was improvement in the proportion of students reaching the higher levels in English and science. At Key Stage 4 in 2007, the proportion of students achieving five or more good passes at GCSE is greater than seen nationally and this represents an improving trend over the last three years. However, there were differences in students' performance between subjects. For example, students did particularly well in design and technology but results in combined science were lower than expected.

Although the proportion of girls achieving the highest grades at GCSE compares favourably with the national picture, boys do less well. This is largely due to differences between boys and girls standards when they enter the school. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress well and reach the standard expected for their age because teaching is well adjusted to meet their needs. Teaching and support systems usually facilitate good progress for all students.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Students' exceptional contribution to the community plays a strong part in developing their understanding of citizenship. They show sensitivity and concern for the world around them and work to support their local community, disabled children and to give aid to disadvantaged communities overseas. The Year 9 learning mentors have made a major contribution to reducing incidents of bullying in school and are rightly proud of achieving the prestigious Diana, Princess of Wales award for their work.

Students of all abilities speak confidently and in glowing terms about their life at school. They enjoy school very much and respond positively to the many opportunities offered to them, for instance in their take up of extra-curricular activities. Students are prepared exceptionally well for their future economic well being. In particular, their economic awareness is raised through participation in the Young Enterprise initiative.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their behaviour is exemplary in lessons and around school. They say that they feel safe and that any incidences of bullying or poor behaviour are dealt with swiftly and effectively.

The school is calm and well ordered, and students move purposefully between lessons. Relationships between staff and students are warm, respectful and supportive. Students' attitudes to learning are very good. They participate fully in lessons and are very attentive.

Students respond well to encouragement to lead a healthy lifestyle. Many participate in the good range of opportunities for sporting activities outside of lessons. The school provides healthy lunches which are taken by the majority of students.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Most teaching is good and in some lessons it is outstanding. This leads to good progress being made by the majority of students. This is an improvement since the last inspection and is a key reason for rising standards at the school.

The best lessons are well structured with a clear purpose and include a range of relevant and stimulating activities which engage students and sustain their interest. These lessons are characterised by brisk pace and the effective use of information and communication technology (ICT). In the majority of lessons, teachers use their good subject knowledge well, establish positive relationships with students and use good classroom management skills to motivate and engage students of differing abilities.

In outstanding lessons, for example in mathematics, design and technology and physical education, challenging new concepts were presented in interesting and exciting ways that enabled all students to understand them.

Well targeted staff training has contributed to improvements in teaching. There is now extensive and effective use of ICT, which students say supports their learning and helps make lessons interesting.

More able students are challenged appropriately in English, mathematics and science but in other subjects, activities are not always well matched to their needs. Good support is provided in lessons for less able students through activities which effectively support their learning needs. In addition, teachers use the technical support assistants to good effect, particularly in ensuring that practical lessons run smoothly.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good and it has been strengthened considerably since the last inspection. This is due in large part to the school's specialist status which has enabled the school to widen the opportunities for students to engage in enterprise related work. This aspect is exemplary. Facilities for ICT have also improved greatly, and staff and students make effective use of them to support both teaching and learning. The emphasis on literacy and numeracy has been strengthened with less able students receiving additional lessons, for example in spelling.

There is an increasing range of relevant vocational courses available to students, including additional courses in business, ICT and Enterprise which have been provided for those not wanting to follow a traditional academic pathway. Furthermore, work-related opportunities for small groups of students are supported through links with local colleges.

The support which students receive in making choices for further study, training or employment is very good. The school has been particularly successful in ensuring that many students go on to further education or take up employment when they leave at 16. There is good provision for extra-curricular activities in the specialist subjects and in other areas including sport.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Overall, care, guidance and support are good. Staff are highly committed to students' welfare and the school provides very effective pastoral care and emotional support for all students. Well established, child protection procedures are in place and staff have received relevant training. Appropriate checks and safeguarding procedures meet expected requirements.

Guidance and support at key times of change are good. Procedures for the transfer of students from primary schools are good. All students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, receive appropriate information and advice about future career pathways as they

move up the school. This work is effectively supported through very good links with external partners and outside agencies, particularly with Connexions.

The school has recently improved its procedures for analysing and tracking students' progress and achievement. Senior leaders and teachers check how well students are learning and suggest ways to support those at risk of falling behind. However, students are not always clear about the next steps they need to take to move forward in their learning. This is because marking and pointers to improvement are not always sufficiently precise. Strong pastoral support helps students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and other vulnerable students to progress well as their peers.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides strong direction with a focus on raising standards. Together with the senior leadership team, he has effectively built on the strengths identified in the last inspection report and made good progress in tackling those areas requiring improvement.

The school is a caring community founded on very good relationships between students and staff. This is a tribute to the hard work of the staff and good pastoral leadership. Leadership and management have established a calm and purposeful institution where students can learn without hindrance.

The senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, school improvement priorities are well targeted and effective work has been done to improve many aspects of provision. Nonetheless, not enough attention has been focused on specific strands, for example the performance of boys.

Middle leaders take increasing responsibility for their areas of responsibility but as the school acknowledges, not all have developed the expertise needed to monitor their departments rigorously. However, the school is taking steps to achieve greater consistency here, particularly in relation to how effectively middle leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their departments, and how they are held to account for students' achievement.

The school promotes equal opportunities well because of the breadth of learning it offers. This ensures that all students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities can participate in the full range of provision.

The school listens to and takes good account of the views of parents and students. As a result, parental support for the school is strong and parents feel that their children receive a good quality of education. Links with the local community are well established and have a positive impact on what the school has to offer.

Governors' knowledge of the school is good and improving through activities such as links to departments and monitoring days in school. They hold senior leaders and staff to account. The school currently provides good 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?	2
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	2

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

### 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?	2
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>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
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	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**

10 December 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Staindrop School: A Business and Enterprise College, Durham, DL2 3JU

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to thank you for your help during the recent inspection of your school. We very much appreciated your willingness to talk to us in meetings and informally around school.

Staindrop School provides you with a good education. It makes an outstanding contribution to your personal development and well-being.

The school has many strengths. Mr Kinnair, the staff and governors are working hard to ensure that you all achieve the best you can. Teaching and learning are mainly good and some is outstanding. This helps you to make good progress and reach standards which are well above the national average. We observed how well you work together in class and how you try to achieve your best.

We were impressed by your excellent behaviour both in classrooms and around school. You clearly enjoy being at school and appreciate how hard the staff work and the many opportunities they provide for you. The curriculum meets your needs well and there is a good range of extra-curricular activities. You told us that Year 7 has settled in quickly. It was also good to hear how well you older students are being helped to make decisions about what to do when you leave school.

We have asked the headteacher, governors and the staff to track your progress more sharply and, when they mark your work to give you clear guidelines on how to improve. I am sure you can think of ways to in which you can help to make this happen.

Please accept our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Deborah Wright

Lead inspector