

# The school on a high!

A NORTH-EAST school has been named as the most improved of its kind in England and Wales.

Sedgefield Community College was recently honoured by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT).

As well as the national award, the school was recognised as being the most improved North-East specialist school of any type.

Headteacher Lynne Ackland said the award came after four years of continually improving results and hard work from students and staff.

The number of students leaving with five A\* to C-grade GCSEs has risen from 30 to 77 percent, with 96 percent of students now going into training or further education.

Ms Ackland, who took over as headteacher seven years ago, said the results showed the specialist sports designation, awarded in 2003, was working.

She said: "People do not really believe that sport can help, but sport can teach students self-discipline, leadership and teamwork, in school and in the future.

"There is a different approach to teaching and learning in the school now, a more modern approach, to

get the students more engaged in their learning.

"In the past, underachieving students have been isolated, and in some cases literally.

"In 2002, we did not have a good year. We were underachieving and we were ranked 34th out of 36 Durham schools, but now we are about fourth equal."

Ms Ackland said the results and the awards were a credit to students, governors, teachers and managers.

To be considered, schools had to have achieved more than a ten percent improvement in A\* to C grades between 2004 and 2007.

34 North-East schools and 61 sports colleges in England and Wales were shortlisted.

Elizabeth Reid, the chief executive of the SSAT, congratulated Sedgefield Community College for "outstanding" results.

She said: "It is important that we recognise success in the education system, as it is the product of hard work, good leadership and innovative approaches to teaching and learning.

"This is the success that enables more young people to reach their potential." (Northern Echo)

**SEDFIELD STUDENTS:** Delighted with Sedgefield success

