

St Dunstan's Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123867
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	359533
Inspection dates	6–7 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Robert Pyner HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	590
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Keery
Headteacher	Jo Stevenson
Date of previous school inspection	7 October 2010
School address	Wells Road Glastonbury BA6 9BY
Telephone number	01458 832943
Fax number	01458 831220
Email address	sch.533@educ.somerset.gov.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 1234 234

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 32 lessons and observed 28 teachers. They held meetings with senior leaders, governors, staff and groups of students. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at progress tracking and performance data, the school development plan, the governing body's minutes of meetings, students' work and numerous policies, guidelines, plans and reviews. The questionnaire responses from 170 parents, 112 students and 19 staff were also analysed.

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

- The extent to which teaching and learning improve the achievement of all students.
- How well teachers use assessment, progress tracking and target setting procedures to support the students' achievement.
- How effectively the curriculum meets the needs and aspirations of all students.
- The effectiveness of governors, senior and middle leaders in bringing about improvement.

Information about the school

St Dunstan's Community School is smaller than average and serves the town of Glastonbury and surrounding villages. The school shares its site with Glastonbury Leisure Centre. St Dunstan's is an arts college, with the specialist subjects English, drama and art, and a centre for graduate teacher training in the region. It undertakes support work within the local authority in its specialist subjects, modern foreign languages and sport. The headteacher took up her post in September 2008.



The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average and the proportions from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language are both well below national figures. The number of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities has been increasing but remains below average as is the percentage with a statement of special educational needs.

◆ The school is an Investor in People organisation, has achieved the Financial Management Standard, and has Eco School Bronze, Career Mark and Artsmark Silver awards and National Healthy Schools Status.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

St Dunstan's Community School provides a satisfactory standard of education. The care, guidance and support for students are good, and students report that they feel safe in school and appreciate the work of the staff to help them. The school is rightly proud of its nurturing approach and this was a common feature of parents' responses to the questionnaire distributed as part of the inspection. A significant strength is the involvement of students in developing provision. Students work as heads and deputies of the four houses, as peer mentors, prefects and on the school council. The student teams working as part of the learning to lead programme are having a noticeable impact on the school community through, for example, the promotion of healthy lifestyles. Developments in the curriculum have meant that a good range of opportunities is available to meet students' needs, particularly at Key Stage 4. This has, for example, helped to improve attendance so that overall it is now average. However, although the rate of persistent absence from a small group of students is reducing, this remains above average. The school's specialism provides a broad range of opportunities for students and effective links with the community.

The school is in a satisfactory position to accelerate improvement across all aspects of its work because the headteacher is determined to improve the achievement of all students. Self-evaluation demonstrates a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the senior leadership team is now stable and clear about what needs to be done.

All groups of students achieve satisfactorily. Over the last three years, attainment has been average overall, with some signs of improvement. Within the specialism, attainment in drama is above average and students spoke of how much they enjoy the practical elements of this subject. Taking students' starting points into consideration, they make satisfactory progress overall. However, their progress has not been consistently satisfactory in mathematics, with 2010 data showing a decline in the proportion of students making expected progress. Although tracking systems are in place, there is some variability in the use of these by senior managers and curriculum team leaders to develop planning, raise achievement, hold teachers to account for students' achievement and ensure the consistently high quality of teaching and learning.

Students are proud of their school. They are polite and friendly, and behave satisfactorily. They readily discuss their work and say they particularly enjoy the practical learning. All aspects of their work are celebrated. For example, at the time of the inspection many of the students spoke to inspectors about the display of the 'tickets' they earn for good behaviour, working hard and being helpful to others.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but variable in quality across the school. There are some models of very effective teaching but in other lessons the lack of pace,

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variety and activities matched to students' needs and interests mean that some students lose concentration and progress slows. Marking is of very variable quality. Inspectors did find some examples which provided students with a clear idea of how well they were doing, but there was limited evidence of marking which gave students specific advice on what they needed to do to improve. Where marking is poor the presentation of students' work suffers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve rates of progress, especially in mathematics, by:
 - rigorously tracking all students' progress and intervening appropriately so that all middle and lower ability students make at least three levels of progress from Years 7 to 11, and high ability groups make four levels
 - developing the programme of regular review and analysis of the progress made by individuals and key groups of students by senior leaders to ensure that middle leaders and teachers are held to account
 - reporting on the analysis of the progress made by students, including key groups, at each full governors' meeting so that senior leaders can be held to account in a regular and systematic way.
- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching to at least 80% by July 2011 by ensuring that teachers consistently:
 - use assessment information to plan lessons that take account of prior attainment and the learning needs of individuals and groups
 - use teaching methods that provide pace, variety, interest and challenge for students of all abilities to accelerate their progress and build positive behaviour and attitudes ♦ ensure that marking is regular and engages students so that they know how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve.
- Build on the successful work undertaken by the school to raise attendance and reduce further the rate of persistent absence.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The 2009 examination results show some improvement in students' attainment over the previous two years with the proportion gaining five GCSEs at grades A* to C in line with the national figure. However, this improvement is uneven and unvalidated data for 2010 show that the proportion of students achieving these grades including English and mathematics has fallen. The strongest performing subjects in 2009 were French, design and technology and statistics.

All groups of students make satisfactory progress, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most students are keen to do well, respond thoughtfully to adults and other students in lessons and demonstrate satisfactory attitudes to learning and behaviour. However, where lessons lack pace and challenge, learning and progress are weaker. Discussions with students show that they generally enjoy their lessons.

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Students say they feel safe and this is reflected in the views of parents and carers. Students recognise the needs of others well and this is reinforced by the systems which develop the meaningful involvement of students in the life of the school and wider community. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and well supported in the specialist subjects, for example through community arts events.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

In effective lessons good relationships make possible a variety of approaches and challenging questioning by teachers; activities may include paired and group work where students can discuss and test their own ideas. Where teachers are less effective they take up too much time talking to the whole class, which means that students have less time to practise their understanding and skills and the pace of learning slows. This, in turn, can lead students to lose interest in the lesson and become distracted. There are systems for tracking students' progress but this information is not used sharply enough to ensure activities are well matched to ability.

An imaginative curriculum reflects the successful efforts of this small school to improve this aspect of its provision. Options for Key Stage 3 students demonstrate breadth and in Key Stage 4 the recent development of Diploma courses in creative and media, information and communication technology, and sport and active leisure have proved popular with the two thirds of the cohort enrolled in them. Other alternative provision is

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well matched to individual needs and is having a positive impact on attendance and behaviour.

The students receive good care, guidance and support and these are a strength of the school. The learning support centre provides a safe and welcoming facility to reintegrate vulnerable students and this has had a clear impact on attendance. Vulnerable students receive individual programmes that meet their social needs well. Students spoke positively about the way the restorative justice project deals with conflict and staff and parents gave examples of how the school has dramatically improved the life chances of individuals by working alongside families and outside agencies.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a calm and determined approach and students, staff, parents and governors speak positively of the developments at the school since her appointment. Following a period of change the senior leadership team is now settled and beginning to focus clearly on structured improvement strategies. At middle management level, most curriculum team leaders are knowledgeable, enthusiastic and committed to improvement. There are established procedures in place for performance management but these are not yet used in a consistent and focused way to improve outcomes and progress and hold teachers to account. Governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are developing appropriate systems to provide effective support and, increasingly, challenge.

The school has developed good partnerships with other schools and the wider community, particularly through its arts specialism. The school plays a leading role in the development of Diplomas through a local consortium and supports primary schools through sports provision and teaching modern foreign languages.

The procedures to ensure the safeguarding of students are good. Policies, procedures and training are subject to regular review to ensure effective compliance with regulations. The school is satisfactory in meeting its duties to promote equality and tackle discrimination. Nonetheless, there is a relatively underdeveloped analysis of the impact of provision on different groups. There are good opportunities for students to contribute to the school community. However, there is less evidence of students developing a thorough understanding of life beyond the local community, both nationally and further afield. ♦

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers are happy with their children's experience at the school. Responses show that parents and carers feel strongly that their children enjoy school and are safe and cared for, that they are informed about their children's progress and that teaching is good. Most parents also feel that the leadership and management of the school are effective. A small minority believes that the school is less effective in helping parents to support their children's learning and development of a healthy lifestyle and in dealing with unacceptable behaviour. The inspection team found no evidence to substantiate these relatively negative views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Dunstan's Community School 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 170 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 590 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	43	29	92	54	17	10	9	5
The school keeps my child safe	51	30	98	58	10	6	4	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	57	34	91	54	16	9	3	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	22	96	56	22	13	7	4
The teaching is good at this school	40	24	99	58	15	9	5	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	17	105	62	29	17	3	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	17	96	56	33	19	1	1
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)	40	24	89	52	18	11	4	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	20	97	57	19	11	8	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	14	91	54	21	12	15	9
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	15	90	53	21	12	7	4
The school is led and managed effectively	40	24	93	55	15	9	7	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	46	27	95	56	21	12	5	3

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



8 October 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of St Dunstan's Community School, Glastonbury BA6 9BY

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome when we inspected your school recently. Special thanks go to the student guides who helped us find our way around and to those of you who completed the questionnaire; we found this very useful. We enjoyed talking to you and found what you had to say very informative and relevant. This letter is to tell you about our findings.



St Dunstan's Community School provides a satisfactory standard of education. We were impressed by the mature way you support the development of the school through, for example, the learning to lead teams. Your attainment at the end of Year 11 is broadly average; the progress you make in most of your subjects is satisfactory. The opportunities you have through your school's arts specialism are a strength of the school. However, your overall achievement could be improved. You are cared for and supported well and you told us that this makes you feel safe and that you enjoy school. Your teachers provide you with a good curriculum that increasingly meets your interests and needs and teaching is satisfactory overall.

The headteacher, senior staff and governors provide clear leadership. They recognise that there are always areas for improvement, and we have asked them to:

- increase the progress that you make in your learning
- improve all teaching to that of the best at the school
- improve attendance, particularly that of those of you who have poor records in attending school.

You too have an important part to play by continuing to work hard, making the most of the range of opportunities you have at school and attending regularly. I am sure that you will and wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Robert Pyner Her Majesty's Inspector

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