

Danesgate Community

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121270
Local Authority	York
Inspection number	358970
Inspection dates	18–19 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Pauline Hilling-Smith

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Shelia Bridge
Headteacher	Mrs Tricia Head
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Eleven lessons were observed and nine teachers seen. Meetings were held with parents and carers, pupils, a representative of the management committee and local authority and staff. Inspectors visited outreach provision, observed the school's work, looked at the school's evaluation of its performance, the current development plan, minutes of meetings of the management committee and documentation to ensure that pupils are safe. The responses to 12 questionnaires from parents and carers were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a key number of areas.

- The rate of progress of all groups of pupils towards their targets especially the more-able.
- How well the curriculum and teaching matches the learning and behaviour needs of the pupils, especially at Key Stage 3.
- How effectively leaders are bringing about school improvement and how the school is helped by its partners.

Information about the school

Danesgate Community is a larger than average size pupil referral unit, which caters for permanently excluded pupils and those at risk of exclusion, on short or long term placements, due to their behavioural social and emotional needs. It operates an outreach service for all the primary and secondary schools in York. It has arrangements for joint teaching of 14-19 courses with all York secondary schools, Applefields Special School, Askham Bryan Further Education College and York College of Further Education. It also operates work-based learning on a number of sites. Danesgate Community has been reorganised and extended since the last inspection and incorporated primary pupils for the first time at the beginning of this school year. The majority of pupils in the centre are boys and most pupils are White British. A few of the pupils are from Travellers families. The number of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or are undergoing assessment is well above average. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The school has achieved Healthy School status. The current headteacher was appointed April 2010.

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

This is a satisfactory and rapidly improving pupil referral unit. Arrangements for care, guidance and support for pupils are good and these enable pupils to feel safe. The way in which partnerships contribute to the curriculum and to achievement and enjoyment is also good. The curriculum, an area for improvement set at the last inspection, is now good.

Progress on addressing weaknesses since the last inspection is satisfactory overall, but now improving quickly as clarity about the role and remit of the centre and the appointment of a new headteacher have started to have an impact. The recent rapid progress of improvement is linked to clear plans to bring about changes. Staff now work together closely with the centre's partners, parents and carers so that pupils can make the most of the opportunities available. Leadership has a clear vision for the development of the centre and has established an enthusiastic team with high morale who share these ambitions. Accurate self-evaluation gives leaders a clear view of strengths and areas for improvement and takes good account of the views of others. However, the process does not yet make enough use of the data on pupils' progress to inform priorities because procedures to collect and analyse information are not yet fully in place. Leaders have a very clear understanding about how teaching can be improved and actions taken have shown good impact so far. Pupils' progress is satisfactory and improving securely as the quality of teaching improves. As a result, attainment, although well below average overall, is rising. All this demonstrates that there is satisfactory and improving capacity to sustain improvement. Everyone involved with Danesgate Community shows a deep understanding and respect for individual differences. Its entire ethos is underpinned by the belief that any obstacles to progress can be removed.

Close partnership with a small but growing number of parents and carers is having a striking impact on pupils' well-being. Teaching is satisfactory and improving. However, staff do not always check frequently enough that all pupils are being challenged throughout a lesson. When this happens progress slows. Behaviour is satisfactory and improving because pupils are well supervised and they respond to additional guidance from individual members of staff about how to modify their behaviour. Although attendance is below average overall, many pupils quickly improve their attendance when they start at Danesgate Community.

Pupils say they feel safe in school and are confident in the staff to deal with any issues they may have. This is based on the good attention paid to safeguarding procedures, particularly risk assessment in practical subjects.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attendance by at least 10% by :

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- October 2011
- improving the recording of reasons for absence
- analysing data to inform actions taken.
- Ensure that data about pupils' attainment and progress consistently informs improvement priorities by :
 - putting systems in place to enable efficient collection about pupil's attainment and progress
 - undertaking a detailed analysis of the data collected.
- Ensure all pupils are challenged throughout the lesson by adjusting questioning and tasks to match pupils' understanding as the lesson proceeds.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. A few pupils make good progress in lessons because they enjoy learning and rise to the challenges presented to them. In lessons, given on a one-to-one basis, work is extremely well matched to the pupils' needs and they make excellent progress. For example, in one lesson a pupil enjoyed completing a mathematical pattern faster than the teacher. In another lesson, pupils were having a Mad Hatter's Tea Party, which meant that they needed to do things backwards and solve riddles. In this lesson, pupils enjoyed the challenge and discussed answers confidently at the same time as sharing tea and toast.

Procedures to establish attainment when pupils start at Danesgate Community are robust and show that most pupils arrive with attainment well below average. This is because their behavioural difficulties have not allowed them to learn as effectively as other pupils. Pupils' progress is improving securely and quickly and, although attainment is still well below average, overall it is rising. A few pupils make better progress and successfully reach the nationally expected level before they leave school. Pupils' targets are reviewed and adjusted frequently, but occasionally pupils are not sufficiently challenged and could make more progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make satisfactory progress towards the targets set for them.

Parents and carers agree with their children when they say they feel safe and secure which helps them to learn. The staff form good relationships with pupils who relate well to each other. Behaviour is satisfactory. Pupils consider moral and social issues, both in classrooms and in a variety of contexts where they come into contact with a wide range of adults. They think carefully about their own and others' experiences and how this affects what they do. Pupils have a strong voice in lessons and confidently share their ideas and opinions knowing they are well received. However, they have not as yet made a strong contribution to the school community because structures are not yet in place to allow this to happen and leadership opportunities are limited. Pupils' attendance is below average but rises considerably as they settle into the expectations and regime at Danesgate Community. Pupils learn to enjoy healthy food by growing fresh food and harvesting it so

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that it can be cooked in lessons and in the school kitchens. Pupils show an understanding about what they should do if they begin to feel anxious.

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	4
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	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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?

Teaching is satisfactory overall and some good teaching was observed. In good lessons, work is closely matched to pupils' needs, expectations are high and behaviour is good. In these lessons, teachers' knowledge of the subject is good and they make skilled use of questioning to extend learning. Ideas and understanding in these lessons are developed well during discussions, which maintain pupils' progress. However, in some lessons, activities lack challenge or involve too many worksheets and work is not matched well enough to the pupils' capabilities. Understanding is not checked frequently enough and as a result, interest is lost and the pace of learning is too slow. All adults are skilled at ensuring pupils understand how well they have done and what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum is good. It has improved at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 since the last inspection. At Key Stage 4, the curriculum is broad and well matched to the needs of individual pupils. Good vocational opportunities are provided through good partnerships that enrich learning. Personalised programmes and planned activities and experiences are designed to meet the pupils' needs and then accreditation for the course is sought. Courses offer appropriate progression and lead to most pupils securing a placement after

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leaving. The curriculum is a key in successfully re-engaging and improving attendance. At Key Stage 3, the curriculum is designed to support reintegration to mainstream school and is enhanced by partnership with the Danesgate Skills Centre. Attendance at alternative provision by a small minority of pupils in order to meet their needs is carefully planned and monitored. However, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and the curriculum for the youngest and newly arrived pupils is not yet fully developed.

Care guidance and support is good because staff gain pupils' trust and confidence, which enables them to make the most of the opportunities available to them. Staff know individual pupils well and are successful in meeting their needs through good relationships and teamwork. Staff are prepared to 'go the extra mile' to support pupils and this includes collecting pupils from home to take an examination or helping a pupil to complete coursework after they have left, so that accreditation can be achieved. Careful attention is given to transition arrangements at all times when a pupil returns to mainstream school. This ensures that when pupils move on to the next stage in their life they make the change successfully and with minimum stress, which is reassuring to parents and carers.

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 is highly effective. Over a short period, and against a background of expansion and rapid change, she has raised expectations and put in place clear plans to raise attainment. She is well supported by the leadership team. The management committee plays a part in strategic direction and development of the Community. The composition of the management committee reflects the needs of the centre but has yet to find sufficient parent and carer members. Steps taken to improve teaching have been effective. Training for all staff is seen as a priority and this has impacted positively on pupils' progress. Improved processes for tracking pupils' progress have been put in place but are as yet not fully developed. Pupils' targets, reviewed and adjusted frequently, are communicated to parents and carers. Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory overall. Procedures for safeguarding and health and safety are good and include rigorous checks on the safety of the wide range of locations which pupils may attend.

The contribution of highly developed partnerships to improve all aspects of learning and well-being both for pupils at the centre, and for the pupils in the mainstream schools and colleges that the school supports, are effective. Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily through the outreach links which have helped many pupils to remain at their mainstream school. Wider links are as yet not fully developed. The commitment of leaders to ensure equality of opportunity is satisfactory and improving as staff gain more data on

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pupils' academic needs. Nevertheless, a harmonious atmosphere is felt throughout the buildings. This includes pupils from a special school accessing courses within the Skills Centre and socialising alongside pupils at lunchtime at Danesgate Community.

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	3
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

Ten per cent of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. The overwhelming majority of these were positive. A very few expressed some concerns and these were followed up by inspectors throughout the inspection and form part of the evidence used to arrive at the judgements.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Danesgate 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 12 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 120 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	2	17	10	83	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	6	50	6	50	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	10	83	2	17	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	2	17	10	83	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	6	50	6	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	8	67	4	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	2	17	9	75	0	0	0	0
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)	9	75	3	25	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	67	3	25	1	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	75	3	25	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	3	25	9	75	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	6	50	6	50	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	8	67	4	33	0	0	0	0

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.



20 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Danesgate Community, York, YO10 4PB

Thank you for being welcoming when we inspected the community a little while ago. We enjoyed talking with you and visiting lessons. We were impressed by how attractive and well cared for the inside of the centres were. Thank you for taking the time to give us your views of the school. It was clear from talking together and the questionnaire replies we received from you, your parents and carers that you feel safe at school and are confident that the staff would help you if needed.

We found that Danesgate Community is satisfactory overall, but rapidly getting better, and it is good in the way it cares for you. A few of you are making good or better progress because you enjoy coming and attend well.

We have asked the teachers to do the following things to make Danesgate Community even better:

- to check frequently in lessons how well you understand what you are learning so that tasks are more often at just the right level of difficulty to keep you challenged
- by collecting more information about how well everyone is doing so that plans can be made to help you make better progress and reach higher standards
- to help more pupils to improve their attendance.

We know you will do all you can to help your teachers by attending as often as possible and we wish you every success in your future.

Yours sincerely,

Pauline Hilling-Smith

Lead Inspector

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