

Deansfield Community School, Specialists In Media Arts

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104387
Local Authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	377077
Inspection dates	5–6 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Mark Sims 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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	593
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	24
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keith Inston
Headteacher	Dean Coombes
Date of previous school inspection	07 May 2009
School address	Deans Road Wolverhampton WV1 2BH
Telephone number	01902 556400
Fax number	01902 556401
Email address	deansfieldcommunityschool@wolverhampton.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 23 lessons taught by 23 teachers. Inspectors also held meetings with the headteacher and other staff, members of the governing body, students, and the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including safeguarding documents, improvement plans, progress reports, minutes of governing body meetings and records of students' progress. Inspectors analysed questionnaires from 100 parents and carers and took account of student and staff questionnaires.

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

- How well do students achieve in mathematics at Key Stage 4?
- What is the effectiveness of the school's measures to improve attendance?
- What has been the impact of the governing body in bringing about improvements?
- How good are the outcomes for students in the sixth form?
- How appropriate is the curriculum to meet the needs of different groups?

Information about the school

Deansfield is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is high, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is very high as is the proportion of those who have a statement of special educational needs. The school has specially resourced provision for special educational needs. This is a deaf resource base which caters for seven students. It is managed by the head of the base. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is very high and student mobility is higher than the national average. Since the last inspection, the school has joined a new consortium for sixth form provision where students study almost all of their subjects at other providers. The school's specialism is in media arts.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Deansfield is a good school which is rapidly improving. Attainment has risen sharply to the extent that the percentage of students achieving five good grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, has doubled over the last three years. In the most recent GCSE examinations, attainment was in line with the national average having previously been very low in English and mathematics. Students join the school with below-average attainment at the start of Key Stage 3 but, under the inspirational leadership and ambition of the headteacher and his senior leadership team, a culture of high expectations of achievement has been established. Consequently, students make good progress from their low starting points, and some, particularly in English, make exceptional progress.

Alongside this drive to raise standards, the school excels in the care, guidance and support it offers all its students, but particularly those whose circumstances may make them the most vulnerable. One parent summed up the views of many others, stating, 'Deansfield put 110% effort into supporting my child who is partly deaf. He has grown in confidence and has become very independent. I am very proud of all his achievements due to the hard work and effort of his teachers.' Deansfield can claim rightly to be an inclusive school in its commitment to zero exclusions and willingness to admit students who have not succeeded elsewhere. The school enables students to achieve well who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who are hearing impaired, by ensuring their individual needs are met both within the unit where they are supported by specialist and highly dedicated staff and in subjects where with the help of signing support they are challenged to do as well as they can. Similarly strong provision ensures that students who speak English as an additional language achieve well.

Partnerships are an outstanding strength of the school, both in supporting pupils' individual needs and providing more curriculum opportunities. Engagement with parents and carers is good but the school acknowledges from the views expressed by them that not enough is done in helping them to support their children's learning, promote healthy lifestyles and prepare well for their children's futures.

In recent years, students have done well by the end of Key Stage 4 through the wide range of vocational courses which are well suited to individual needs. Consequently, the curriculum is good. Until recently, success in English and mathematics was harder to come by but, as students saw they could succeed and achieve five good GCSE equivalent grades, their confidence and self-esteem have grown so that, in the

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most recent GCSE examinations, over half of all Year 11 students achieved a grade C in English and mathematics which is close to the national average. The school is now gradually reducing the proportion of vocational courses as more students succeed at GCSE. Not as many students make the expected progress in mathematics compared to English, as the English department has a more established team that is able to offer consistently good teaching. Teaching is good overall although, at its best, it is outstanding when students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. About a third of teaching is satisfactory, including in mathematics overall.

The governing body, which is satisfactory, offers strong support to the school; it has backed the headteacher's judgement on key decisions and has a clear vision for the school's future. Now that the school has changed its consortium for sixth form provision, there is just one subject taught on site, art, which was not timetabled during the inspection. Students are otherwise taught at other providers; therefore it was not possible to come to a judgement about the provision and outcomes for students. In line with the rest of the school, the support and guidance sixth formers receive is outstanding before starting and during their courses.

The school has been successful in rapidly reducing the proportion of persistent absence, which was previously exceptionally high. Although overall absence is also on a three year falling trend it is still too high, and the school recognises there is more to do to reduce it further and at a faster rate. Behaviour of students in lessons and around the school is good and, from feedback from students and the school's monitoring of incidents, it has improved. Students make a good contribution to the school and local community, not least the number of students who act as carers for members of their family. Students report that they feel safe in school and this is supported by feedback from staff and parents and carers. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good; they get on very well with each other regardless of gender, ethnicity or additional need and all students are well integrated into lessons. Students have the opportunity to reflect, especially in creative work. The media arts specialism plays a strong part in their social and cultural development with a range of community projects such as the the Safe Night Out Oceana Nightclub project, the Tarrans Estate Regeneration project as well as artistic and performance opportunities in and outside of school.

Leaders and managers drive improvement and raise ambition exceptionally well. The school has a good capacity to improve because it has raised standards in GCSE over the last three years and with a strong leadership team in place is well placed to improve further. Leaders know their school very well and have a very accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure a rapid improvement in overall attendance by ensuring that:
 - there are additional incentives for students to promote their good attendance

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- all lessons are consistently enjoyable so that students will want to attend regularly
 - the school is relentless in following up all unauthorised absences.
- Ensure that teaching and learning in mathematics are consistently good by sharing the features of the best lessons that are taught within the department and in other subjects.
 - Work closely with parents and carers to ensure they are well informed and equipped to support their children at home in their:
 - revision, homework and completion of coursework
 - development of healthy lifestyles
 - preparation for their next steps in education, training or employment.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Students learn well in lessons as a result of the opportunity they have to work independently or in groups where they have to find information from each other and explain it to members of their own group. They also learn well because of their positive attitudes and responses and the way they get on so well with each other. Learning is occasionally satisfactory when students have fewer opportunities to be actively involved in their work. Students with additional learning needs do well as the result of the additional support they receive, for example signers interpreting for hearing-impaired students or teachers arranging for key vocabulary to be translated for students who speak English as an additional language. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities learn well because of the high quality of the support they receive and lesson planning that takes account of their starting points. They join the school at an exceptionally low level of attainment and by the end of Year 11 their attainment is below average but closer to the national average. Overall most students enjoy their lessons and consequently achieve well.

Students have a satisfactory understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles. Most eat a healthy school meal each day and there are a number of additional sporting activities on offer but the school recognises it does not do enough to promote healthy lifestyles with parents and carers or offer more incentives to students to live healthily.

Students can identify unsafe practices and potentially dangerous situations and how to respond appropriately. They are confident that if any bullying incident occurs the school responds quickly and deals with it effectively. Students are orderly when moving around the school and are considerate towards each other. Where, on rare occasions, behaviour is not good or better in lessons, it is generally as a consequence of the slow pace of the lesson or a less engaging activity that does not engage students' interest.

The school actively seeks students' views and engages them as mentors or

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ambassadors for the school. Students willingly respond when asked to organise and participate in charitable events or help with reading in primary schools, but there are fewer opportunities for them to initiate their own activities. The extent to which the students develop workplace and other skills is satisfactory. There is a Year 11 skills programme and in Year 10 a business and enterprise group and students can acquire a range of vocational skills. Their literacy and numeracy skills are broadly average and attendance is below average although persistent absence has improved rapidly.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good because teachers provide a range of activities suited to individual needs and which encourage students to discuss their work. Lessons are well planned. The majority of lessons are good or better. Teachers show good subject knowledge when responding to unexpected questions. Additional adults in the classroom are deployed well to support individuals and groups of learners. Relationships between adults and students are good. While information and communication technology is used regularly in lessons by teachers, its potential as a learning tool for students is underdeveloped. In less effective lessons, students are not given sufficient opportunity to take responsibility for their learning.

Assessment is a strong feature of lesson planning, including opportunities for students to assess their own work and that of their peers. Teachers respond well in lessons to adapt activities if students do not understand the work. Students receive detailed oral and verbal feedback, including guidance on how to improve, although

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

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not all students are secure in retaining this information. In the best lessons, questioning is targeted at particular students and the questions are designed to elicit longer replies. The needs of different groups are not consistently planned for in all lessons, however.

The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum which caters for both the academic and vocational aspirations of individuals, and for the additional needs of groups of students. There are extensive enrichment opportunities and a high take-up of extra-curricular activities. Subject leaders are actively engaged in evaluating all areas of the curriculum and the views of students are also taken into account. There is an extensive provision for gifted and talented students and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities have full access to the curriculum through the good quality of the additional support they receive. The number of full GCSE courses is relatively small.

As a result of the highly inclusive nature of the school, there are no exclusions and hardly any student leaves without going on to further education, training or employment. This is a direct result of the highly effective care, guidance and support students receive. Students whose circumstances mean they might be vulnerable are particularly well looked after, especially those who are young carers. Staff know the students well and are therefore able to tailor individual support plans. Transition arrangements from one phase of students' education to the next are exceptional, and highly valued by the students themselves. They feel very well prepared for their futures even though the school acknowledges that it does not do all it could. Students who are hearing impaired, speak English as an additional language or have special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Since the headteacher's appointment, there has been a sharp increase in attainment in English and mathematics at GCSE from previously low results. He has set out a clear vision for the school based on high academic expectations combined with exceptional care, guidance and support. Leaders at all levels including the governing body are united in this ambition. The leadership of teaching and learning is good because teaching has been consolidated as good and is improving. Senior leadership and leadership of English and mathematics are good and have led to rapid improvements in outcomes and provision. When progress in mathematics last year

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was not as high as expected, leaders took direct action to improve provision for this year. The governing body have been exceptionally supportive of the headteacher’s ambition and made an important contribution to maintaining the finances of the school and planning of the new building. They are less secure in challenging academic outcomes of the school. The school’s specialism in media arts has made a successful contribution to raising attainment in English and media subjects, and providing a wider range of extra-curricular activities and resources.

The range of partnerships with other agencies is exceptional both in meeting students’ individual pastoral needs and providing a wider range of curriculum opportunities for example in the sixth form when the school had limited capacity to deliver provision on its own. The zone collaborative project with primary and junior schools is also highly effective. The school engages well with parents and carers and most are happy with all aspects of the school although there is more to do so parents and carers can support their children at home more effectively. Equality of opportunity is promoted well. Extensive and rigorous analysis of data and progress of all groups of students ensures that the school is well informed if any group or individual is falling behind and can put in place effective measures to address this. The ethos of the school is such that it is largely free of any racist behaviour. Safeguarding arrangements are good because they are thorough and detailed and remain a very high priority for the school. The school promotes community cohesion well. Its work with the local community is exceptional but less developed in the national and international dimensions. Overall the school provides good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

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As a result of the school’s new consortium arrangements it has not been possible to judge the overall quality of the sixth form. The very small number of students on roll are now taught all their subjects except one on other sites which has enabled them to gain access to a wider range of courses and facilities than would otherwise have been possible and with viable group sizes providing better value for money than previously. Art is the one subject taught in the school and was not timetabled during the inspection. The school makes outstanding arrangements for students’ support and guidance which, according to students spoken to, lead to their strong personal development and well being.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	*
Taking into account:	*
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	*
The quality of provision in the sixth form	*
Leadership and management of the sixth form	*

Views of parents and carers

Most of the parents and carers who responded agreed with all of the statements on the questionnaire. A very large majority agreed that their children enjoy school and that the school keeps their children safe and that teaching is good. A small minority of parents and carers did not agree that the school helps them to support their child’s learning. A small number of parents and carers commented about the lack of homework. A very small minority said the school does not help their child to have a healthy lifestyle or that overall, they were not happy with their child’s experience at the school. Inspectors investigated their concerns and found that that the school’s engagement with parents and carers overall is good but that the school could do more to help parents and carers support their children’s learning at home. The extent to which the school promotes healthy lifestyles is satisfactory. Overall inspectors judged students have a good experience in the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Deansfield Community School, Specialists In Media Arts 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 100 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 593 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	34	57	57	6	6	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	37	37	54	54	7	7	1	1
The school informs me about my child’s progress	39	39	47	47	14	14	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	33	52	52	14	14	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	25	25	64	64	5	5	3	3
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	24	24	55	55	17	17	4	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	15	64	64	14	14	3	3
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)	33	33	50	50	11	11	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	28	28	55	55	11	11	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	25	58	58	8	8	6	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	23	59	59	8	8	4	4
The school is led and managed effectively	26	26	57	57	10	10	4	4
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	38	38	46	46	13	13	3	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



7 October 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Deansfield Community School, Specialists In Media Arts, Wolverhampton, WV1 2BH

You will know that we recently came to inspect your school. Thank you to those of you who spoke to us or showed us round your school of which you are rightly proud. We found that Deansfield is a good school which is rapidly improving. The school offers you an exceptional level of care, guidance and support, whatever your individual needs may be, whether you are learning English as an additional language are hearing impaired or find learning difficult. At the same time, you are doing increasingly well in your GCSE results, especially the proportion of you gaining five good grades including English and mathematics, which is now in line with the national average. This represents good progress from your starting points in Year 7. The school knows it cannot do this on its own and has engaged very well with a range of other providers and partners to give you the best start possible.

The headteacher and senior leaders are driving these improvements but you are clearly playing your part in response to the challenge to do as well as you can. Most of your lessons are good or better, especially when you are in the driving seat and taking responsibility for your learning. The curriculum offers different pathways for you to achieve success and you respond well to the additional activities on offer with a very high take up of these. You have told us you feel safe in school and that behaviour is mostly good.

There are a few things we have asked the school to do which we think will help the school improve further. These are firstly to make sure attendance improves further and a faster rate. At present it is below average and you can play your part by making sure you attend regularly and on time. Secondly, to make sure your lessons in mathematics are as consistently good as they are in the best subjects; thirdly to work with your parents and carers so they can support you more in your learning, help you lead healthier lifestyles and prepare well for your future.

We very much enjoyed coming to your school and meeting some of you and I would like to wish you all a very successful future.

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector

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