

Demeter House

Bigby Street, Brigg, North Lincolnshire, DN20 8EF

Inspection dates	15–17 October 2013	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- Students meet or exceed expected rates of progress in English and mathematics, from starting points which are mostly below the national average.
- The quality of teaching across all subjects is good with examples of outstanding performance; this has a positive impact on the quality of students' achievement.
- Students make excellent improvement in the management of their behaviour and readiness to learn as a result of high expectations and good relationships with the staff.
- The staff know their students well and provide a high standard of care and challenge to enable them to learn in a secure and safe environment.
- The quality of leadership and management is good. School leaders have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and students' achievement, and they plan well for improvement.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Not enough of the teaching is outstanding and students do not consistently achieve the highest possible standards.
- The breadth of the curriculum does not provide sufficient opportunities for some students to study courses best suited to their learning needs.
- The monitoring of teaching does not give sufficient attention to teachers' use of assessment to evaluate students' rates of progress and to plan for the next steps in learning.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was conducted with one day's notice.
- Fourteen lessons were observed, taught by nine teachers. The majority of these were jointly observed with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with a group of six students and, separately with five parents and carers. Informal conversations took place with a number of additional students. Insufficient responses were received to the online 'Parent View' questionnaire for these to be published.
- Questionnaire responses from 29 members of staff were considered. Meetings were held with members of the senior leadership team and with a number of individual teachers. A range of documentation was scrutinised, including policies and records, students' work, and school data, including information about the progress made by students.

Inspection team

David Young, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Demeter House School is an independent day special school which is registered to admit up to 40 boys aged from five to 19 years.
- Students have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties including autistic spectrum disorders.
- The school opened in Scunthorpe in September 2006 and in November 2009 relocated to its current site in Brigg.
- There are currently 32 full-time students on the roll; the youngest is aged eight and the oldest is 19. All students have a statement of special educational needs and most have previously experienced a disrupted education and poor attendance at other schools.
- Students have been placed at the school by three local authorities.
- Demeter House aims to equip its students with the skills they need to experience success in all areas of their lives. The school focuses on helping students to develop their self-esteem through activities that promote self-confidence and the development of their basic skills.
- The school makes use of alternative provision to extend the curriculum, particularly for older students.
- The school's last full Ofsted inspection was in July 2010; in May 2013 the school received approval to extend the upper age limit from 16 to 19 years.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to increase the proportion of outstanding lessons by:
 - developing a consistent approach to the assessment of students' progress
 - matching lesson planning accurately to students' current levels of achievement
 - providing regular feedback to students about the extent of progress they are making
 - ensuring that all students make the rate of progress of which they are capable.
- Further develop the curriculum by:
 - extending the provision for modern foreign languages and music
 - providing appropriate accredited vocational courses to supplement the existing academic provision.
- Ensure a consistent approach to the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching with an enhanced focus on students' rates of progress across all curriculum areas.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Students' achievement is good and the great majority make up ground which has been lost as a result of previous disruptions to their education as a result of good teaching and a mostly good curriculum. Their progress over time is good from starting points which are below expectations for their age on entry to the school. The proportions of students who make at least expected progress in English and mathematics is above the national average. Good results in a range of GCSE subjects demonstrate the extent of improvement made by students completing their Key Stage 4 education at the school. Post-16 students are making good progress towards their A level studies in a number of subjects, despite the disruption and poor attendance which characterised their education in previous schools. Students respond positively to the quality of teaching and care in the school and accelerate their knowledge and understanding markedly. Their skills in reading, writing and numeracy are developed well and provide a secure basis for learning across the curriculum. They demonstrate significant improvement in their attitudes to learning and the ability to work independently. The majority of students make sufficient progress over time to attain good results in GCSE and a number are on course to succeed at A level. There is scope for further improvement in the number of students who exceed national rates of progress in both English and mathematics.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

Students' good behaviour has a strong positive impact on the quality of their learning. The majority are interested in their work and engage in tasks and activities willingly. Students' ability to work independently makes a major contribution to their rates of progress, particularly among older students. There are excellent relationships between adults and students across the full age-range of the school and a number of students respond particularly positively to one-to-one support from staff. Students state that there is very little bullying and that they feel safe in school; this view is strongly supported by parents and carers. Parents and carers state that they have experienced massive improvements in behaviour and readiness to learn since their sons joined the school. Punctuality to lessons is good and students settle quickly to their learning tasks. Attendance is a little below the national average and includes a disproportionately negative impact from small number of poor attenders. Overall attendance for many students shows a big improvement from their attendance at previous schools. The school's records of incidents and rewards for good behaviour demonstrate good progress in reducing the number of incidents and students, parents and carers confirm this. The staff demonstrate considerable expertise in helping students to manage their frustration and anger and, as a result, classrooms present a positive and productive learning environment.

The school provides appropriately for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students. Students' personal development includes growing self-esteem and the ability to accept responsibility for their work and attitudes to learning. The school provides good opportunities for students to learn about diversity and differences in national and wider communities and cultures, including through the celebration of various festivals and a termly multicultural day. Good opportunities are sought and provided for students to engage in the wider community, for example through the use of facilities in other local schools, work experience and college induction programmes for older students. The school provides good preparation for students' transition to life after school, particularly through effective annual reviews of their statements of special educational needs. Students develop their awareness of public institutions and services through visits to the school by representatives from the police and fire services, the Mayor and the local Member of Parliament. Balanced views are presented in the teaching of any potentially controversial political or religious themes.

Quality of teaching**Good**

The quality of teaching is good overall and enables students to make good progress with their learning. Almost all teaching is good or better and examples of outstanding lessons were seen during the inspection. Teachers demonstrate excellent management of students' behaviour, often through active and challenging learning. The staff have good subject knowledge and a range of teaching expertise across the curriculum. Planning for lessons is mostly good with clearly identified lesson objectives which enable students to understand what is expected of them. There is an exceptional focus on learning targets and strategies to develop learning in small steps in some subjects, particularly in mathematics for the younger age groups and in art. Strengths in the quality of teaching also include the pace of lessons, good use of visual resources and information and communication technology (ICT), and good opportunities for students to work by themselves.

In the most successful lessons teachers demonstrate excellent examples of questioning skills which build on and extend students' oral responses. The use of additional adults in some classrooms is exceptional with teachers and support staff sharing responsibility for teaching, continuous engagement with individual students, and high expectations of work rate and achievement. Much good use is made of individual learning targets for students and the quality of assessment of students' learning ensures that the majority of teachers understand how well their students are achieving in comparison with national expectations. Students report that the quality of feedback from staff about their current levels and progress with personal targets is more variable. Senior managers' use of data about nationally expected rates of progress and how attainment compares with national norms is good and having an increasingly effective impact on students' achievement. However, this level of insight and application is not spread sufficiently across all those members of staff with responsibility for assessing students' progress within individual subjects. As a result, teachers do not make consistent use of assessment criteria to judge the extent of their students' progress over time and to plan the next steps in learning for individual students. Occasionally, work is not well matched to all students' needs.

Quality of curriculum**Good**

The quality of the curriculum is good and enables all students to make good progress with their learning. The subjects on the timetable and the organisation of teaching groups are tailored well to meet the individual learning needs of all students. All the required areas of learning are included in the curriculum although there are limited opportunities for students to pursue the study of modern foreign languages and music across the full age range of the school. Good attention is given to meeting the requirements of students' statements of special educational needs, with particular emphasis on appropriate experiences in English, mathematics, science and ICT. All students have access to a variety of subjects up to GCSE level in Key Stage 4. Post-16 students are able to study a range of subjects as diverse as mathematics, physics, ICT, art and photography to A Level. No student has left the school to date without an appropriate pathway into employment or further education.

Appropriate planning ensures careful transition and increasing challenge in learning as students move into the older year groups. The staff have a good understanding of the requirements of the external examinations and there is an increasing range of external accreditations available at GCSE and A level. These provide high expectations and appropriate challenge for many students. The curriculum for older students provides appropriate qualifications to aid their transition towards leaving school. There is currently limited access to vocational opportunities for those students who will enter employment, or require further training opportunities on leaving school. Enrichment opportunities, including a successful chess club, are suitable and popular among the students. The school make effective use of its facilities, including the sports hall and outdoor space. Staff make good use of the display and presentation of students work and there is a welcoming environment in many rooms. The display of students' work in art, including high-quality photographs, is exceptional.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety**Good**

Arrangements for students' welfare, health and safety are good and provide a secure environment for successful learning. All regulatory requirements are met. There is a consistently good quality of care for students in classrooms and around the school. Any students at risk are identified early and appropriate support strategies are implemented. High levels of adult supervision and support ensure that students feel safe; this is confirmed by students, their parents and carers. External agencies, including school nurses and therapists, are used effectively to attend to the identified needs of individual students. Parents and carers are very pleased with the attention given to the identification of students' personal development needs and the diligence with which strategies to support students are implemented. The school gives good attention to the safeguarding of students. All the required checks on staff suitability are completed rigorously and entered into the required single central register.

There are good arrangements in place for the training of staff, including training to the required levels in child protection, first aid and fire safety. There is a calm atmosphere for learning throughout the school with little disruption. The school has devised and implemented appropriate policies for the management of behaviour, the prevention of bullying, health and safety, and the safety of students on off-site activities. Risk assessments are completed diligently for a range of activities and eventualities. Students are provided with good opportunities to learn about various aspects of healthy lifestyles, including diet, substance abuse and personal relationships. Premises and fire safety are attended to appropriately, and all routine checks on fire safety are completed and recorded as required. There is an appropriate use of risk assessment and minimising of risk in all aspects of school's activities.

Leadership and management**Good**

The quality of leadership and management is good and has a positive impact on what students learn and achieve. The school's proprietors and leaders have ensured that all the statutory requirements are met. A good quality of self-review and forward planning is evident in the school's documentation; the school knows itself well. The quality of teaching and outcomes for students have improved over time and continue on an upward path. Morale is high and relationships between adults are excellent and positive. Proprietors and senior staff work as one and have a shared vision for the continued development of the school. Senior leaders have achieved a culture of high expectations and ambition for the students.

The premises are fit for purpose and facilities for learning are suitable for the curriculum provided; they are particularly good for physical education and for art. The exterior of the school buildings and the grounds are in need of some attention to ensure a welcoming appearance but the internal environment is welcoming and attractive. Leaders are aware of this matter. The school provides a good quality of information for parents, carers and others; and parents/carers confirm that there is good communication between the school and home and appropriate access to the staff and school leaders. There are suitable procedures in place for the management of any complaints, including effective arrangements for the informal resolution of any concerns from parents and carers or students. The staff responses to the inspection questionnaire demonstrate strong support for the work of the school, its leadership and positive impact on students' lives. Good attention is given to staff training and development resulting in high-quality staff who work well together to provide an effective learning environment. The school's development and the commitment of staff demonstrate the school's capacity for continued improvement.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	135247
Inspection number	422790
DfE registration number	813/6005

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Day special school for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	5–19 years
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	32
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mr Rod Wardlaw
Headteacher	Mrs Linda Wardlaw
Date of previous school inspection	8 July 2010
Annual fees (day pupils)	£27,000 to £30,000
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