

Doncaster School for the Deaf

Leger Way, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN2 6AY

Inspection dates 14–15 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Throughout the school, pupils make good progress from their starting points as a result of expert teaching and pupils' very positive experiences in school.
- By the end of Key Stage 4 and sixth form, students have achieved well and are able to tackle and succeed in GCSE examinations as well as equivalent awards and many other nationally recognised tests.
- Children in the early years make good progress. Effective leadership and management ensure Reception children are taught well. They have a broad range of work and activities with a good balance of play, including opportunities to select their own tasks.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good. Individual plans are made for each student in consultation with them about their studies, interests and aspirations for the future. They are well prepared for leaving school and the next stage of education.
- Teaching is consistently good. Teachers and their assistants bring high levels of expertise to their teaching and continuous professional development builds their knowledge and skills very effectively.
- Pupils' behaviour is of a very high standard. The very good relationships, the ease of communication between pupils and with adults and effective management of behaviour all contribute significantly to the school's calm, secure and orderly atmosphere.
- Pupils feel safe and are kept safe. They enjoy school and value greatly all the experiences it offers.
- Leaders, governors and the staff make a positive contribution to the leadership and management of the school by bringing their excellent knowledge and skills to meeting pupils' needs, and to progressing the aims and values of the school.
- Leaders, governors and managers take effective steps to ensure the quality of teaching is good and pupils make good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The checks by leaders and managers on the progress pupils make and on the quality of teaching do not identify sharply enough what must be done to improve further.
- There is some inconsistency in the quality of teachers' marking of pupils' work and very occasionally the work pupils are asked to do is too easy.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning across the school. The deputy headteacher joined the inspector for some of the observations.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, teachers, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the Doncaster Deaf Trust.
- The inspector listened to a small group of pupils reading.
- A discussion took place with Year 9 and Year 11 pupils on their views of the school, their progress and their safety.
- The inspector looked at a range of school's documents including information on pupils' progress, the school improvement plans, the school's own evaluation of its work and policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils.
- Too few parents completed Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) to allow the inspector to take account of parents' views. The views of the 20 staff who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire were examined.

Inspection team

Alan Lemon, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a school specialising in the education of pupils with hearing impairments. All of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs and many are profoundly deaf.
- Pupils are admitted to the school at any point in their education and at different times during the school year. Their places at the school are funded by local authorities across England and Wales.
- There are small numbers of pupils in each key stage. Currently, there are no Year 5 or Year 10 pupils on roll. There are two children in their Reception year receiving full time early years provision. The sixth form currently has four students on roll. Other than in early years and the sixth form, most classes are organised into mixed year groups.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is well above average. Currently, all but four pupils of the 30 on roll are supported through the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- Four pupils live at the school in residential accommodation registered as a children's home. This was inspected at the same time and a separate inspection report will be published for this provision.
- The executive principal oversees the work of the Doncaster Deaf Trust including the school, the Communication Specialist College and the Little Learners Day Nursery. The college and nursery are inspected separately. The deputy headteacher leads and manages the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and managers, including governors, should improve their analysis of the progress pupils make and their checks on teaching so that they can identify more clearly how to drive improvement even faster.
- Strengthen teaching by:
 - making all teachers follow consistently the school's policy on marking pupils' work and emulate the excellent practice of some teachers
 - ensuring teachers always plan carefully and avoid tasks which are easy or do not contribute to pupils achieving the lesson objectives.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and staff are dedicated to their work. They are expert and very professional in their approach. Together they ensure the school maintains its good standard of education and serves well its pupils, their parents and the local authorities who fund pupils' places. Staff are deeply committed to equality of opportunity for all pupils and they abhor all forms of discrimination. The school has a high reputation in the deaf community and beyond for its work.
- The Doncaster Deaf Trust provides the school with expert management services and support, leaving leaders to focus on running and improving the school.
- Leadership roles such as for curriculum subjects and key stages are more defined and widely distributed than they were at the time of the last inspection. This has lightened the work load of the deputy headteacher creating space for her to concentrate on driving school improvement.
- Improvement is continuous but leaders do not have enough information to drive forward improvements at greater speed. The deputy headteacher and her small senior leadership team gather and analyse information on pupils' progress and make regular checks on the quality of teaching. This rightly confirms to them that the work of the school is good, without clearly pointing precisely to what is required to further raise achievement or the quality of teaching. The deputy headteacher acknowledges current tracking of progress does not provide detailed insights and a new system is being introduced.
- This is mirrored in some of the performance of middle leaders. The objectives of their action plans are not all sharply focused on the most relevant priorities for moving the school to outstanding. Currently middle leaders are engaged effectively in bringing about planning for the new National Curriculum and the arrangements for assessment. Like all staff, they know their pupils very well and their progress and they have an accurate knowledge of the quality of teaching.
- Leaders provide clear direction on the professional development of all staff and ensure new, less experienced staff are well supported and developed in the context of a school for the deaf. Teachers' performance management gains rigour from the sharp focus on improving their knowledge and skills.
- The curriculum is very well adapted to the needs of deaf pupils and provides effectively for any learning difficulties pupils may have. Deaf Studies includes British Sign Language but also topics dealing with the deaf community, its identity, history and culture.
- An appropriate emphasis on communication, language and literacy ensures pupils achieve the skills they need in order to access all of the learning opportunities the curriculum offers. There is a good breadth and balance of age-appropriate study throughout the school. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the opportunities their greatly enriched curriculum offers through activities such as sports, drama, music, visits and residential experiences.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements to the full and school procedures are effective at keeping pupils safe.
- Pupils in Key Stage 4 and sixth form students are well supported in preparing for, and moving to, the next stage of education and training.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted to an outstanding extent and good contributions are planned throughout the curriculum and in assemblies. These teach tolerance and improve pupils' knowledge and appreciation of the diversity found in British culture. Pupils are taught British values and are prepared very well for life in modern Britain.
- A very large proportion of the pupil premium has been retained by most of the local authorities placing pupils at the school. Although the large majority of pupils attract the pupil premium, in 2014 the school received the premium for one pupil only. This was spent well on extra resources and additional support impacting on improved progress.
- The primary physical education and sports grant is spent effectively on extending sporting opportunities, team sports and competitions in particular. Staff have improved their expertise in teaching physical education. Pupils greatly appreciate the increased choice of sports and respond positively to the new emphasis on exercise and fitness.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors bring a significant amount of experience and expertise to managing provision for deaf pupils. They are well organised and fulfil their responsibilities effectively carrying out the breadth of their work through sharply focused meetings and visits to the school. As a matter of course they make thorough checks on attendance, behaviour and safeguarding. Their challenge, for example, to leaders to raise attendance levels has had the desired effect. Governors look critically at their impact on school improvement and this has sharpened how they view the school's work. They have acted on the areas

for improvement from the last inspection which have ensured rigour in checking teaching and in maintaining consistently good quality work. Governors make a thorough assessment of the outcomes of teachers' performance management and satisfy themselves that leaders have made good decisions on promotion and teachers' pay. However, governors are not as assured in responding to information on pupils' progress to question and challenge robustly. They see the broad picture of progress but not a detailed explanation of what is good or not so good and what leader's intentions are to raise achievement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The school's high expectations have significant impact on promoting very positive behaviour. The effective 'respect' policy ensures high levels of mutual regard between pupils and with staff. Pupils are very considerate of each other and helpful.
- Pupils who have difficulty with behaving well have their needs carefully assessed and plans are put in place ensuring they are managed effectively and treated consistently by all staff. Their behaviour improves significantly as a result.
- Pupils say behaviour is always very good and they found it hard to recall any examples of poor behaviour in their experience. They feel this is the best school they have attended and thoroughly enjoy all it has to offer them. The fact that they all sign and can communicate with each other means a lot to them and it has very positive impact on their attitudes to school. Attendance is good.
- Attitudes to learning are outstanding. Pupils concentrate hard in order to communicate effectively and therefore hold attention extremely well in the course of lessons. They take their work seriously and stick to the task, doing their very best to complete work to a good standard. Their contribution to lesson discussions is thoughtful and confident.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Staff are comprehensively trained to understand and deal with a wide range of issues that present risks to pupils' safety. The outcomes of this training have found their way into the curriculum so that pupils are knowledgeable of the risks they need to manage.
- Pupils feel very safe and found it hard to pinpoint any examples of bullying they had seen or experienced personally. Their view is that there is no bullying in school, which is supported by the school's records.
- The many forms of bullying are understood by pupils, reflecting leaders' efforts to ensure they learn to recognise these. Anti-bullying and cyber-bullying booklets published in school are given to pupils and their parents. Community police officers and other visitors give talks to pupils on staying safe, developing the pupils' awareness of substance misuse and e-safety in particular.

The quality of teaching is good

- Leaders keep a close check on the quality of teaching and maintain its good quality. As a result, consistently good teaching across the school is effective in promoting learning and progress. New and recently qualified teachers are well supported and settle quickly to teaching effectively.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are expert communicators with deaf pupils and, in teaching from early years onwards, pupils learn sign language with increasing fluency and develop communication skills.
- In Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form, teaching gains strength from teachers' good subject knowledge. The teaching of examination courses is done expertly, ensuring pupils rise to the challenge and learn the knowledge and skills they need with confidence.
- Reading, writing and mathematics are all taught skilfully. Learning to read and write are especially challenging for many pupils. However, they are well supported in learning to distinguish between the order of their sign language and English.
- Teachers and their assistant keep up a constant challenge for pupils to read accurately and to understand what they are reading. They inject interest and enjoyment into reading tasks so pupils tackle books with enthusiasm. Key words and phrases are prominently displayed in classrooms for each subject and pupils are encouraged to use dictionaries to check the meaning of words. Signing, finger spelling and the sounds letters make are combined effectively to tackle reading.
- Teachers' expectations throughout the school are often high and they make sure pupils do work that

matches their abilities and their point in learning. Very occasionally pupils are given easy tasks that do not contribute to learning and progress, such as cutting out and gluing work into their books. Assessment is generally thorough and, in marking pupils' work, teachers nearly always provide detailed advice to pupils on improvements they can make. There are excellent examples of high quality marking, although occasional failures to mark work regularly and in line with the school's marking policy leave pupils with little indication of success and what needs improvement.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils have very positive views of school. Being with deaf peers and being able to communicate easily means a great deal to them. Their excellent attitudes to learning count significantly towards the good gains made in knowledge, skills and understanding.
- The picture provided by the school's data shows that, although attainment is below average at the end of key stages for the majority of pupils, they all make expected progress or better. Good achievement is confirmed by pupils' consistently good progress in lessons and in the improvements in their work over time.
- The most able pupils each year succeed at GCSE in gaining up to six subjects.
- Almost all pupils are disadvantaged in that they are eligible for support through the pupil premium although very little of the extra funding has reached the school. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress, achieve well and show no difference in their performance compared with other pupils.
- Pupils gain a very good command of sign language and access all areas of learning as a result. They make very good progress starting in early years and by the time they reach sixth form their communication skills match that of their teachers.
- Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 have a strong interest in books and gain a lot of enjoyment in reading stories. They read and order instructions correctly. Their good efforts to read mean they build their knowledge and understanding of words quickly. Towards the end of secondary school and in the sixth form pupils confidently tackle demanding texts for GCSE such as *Romeo and Juliet* and ably examine the deeper aspects of characters in Shakespeare's drama.
- Literacy skills improve rapidly with good opportunities in many subjects for reading and writing such as writing up science experiments or making notes in history from researching topics. Writing skills and accuracy of writing improves well over time. Rigorous marking of pupils' work contributes to significant improvements in spelling, grammar, sentence construction and presentation.
- Over time pupils achieve a wide range of mathematical knowledge and skills, and progress more rapidly in mathematics than they do in literacy as the barriers to learning are not as substantial. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils tackle counting and calculation confidently. They tell the time and solve problems using money. By Key Stage 4 all are ready to meet the demands of Entry Level tests or GCSE mathematics and succeed.

The early years provision is good

- Early years assessment is thorough and its accuracy is checked against similar assessments in other early years settings.
- Strong links between early years and Key Stage 1 mean children are well prepared for Year 1 and move up easily to the next class.
- Children make expected progress from their starting points. By the end of their Reception Year most meet the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning except in communication, language and literacy.
- Children are confident users of sign language and use a good range of vocabulary to join in discussions and say what they have learnt. In the dinosaur topic they described dinosaurs fighting each other and ones that use their long necks to reach high into trees to gather leaves to eat. In their drawings the children controlled pencils well and made detailed images of dinosaurs from a good knowledge of their physical features.
- Teaching encourages a good flow of communication extending children's signing skills. The teaching assistant makes a significant contribution to their progress. Children also make a good start to developing speech by learning the sounds letters make by reading signs for sounds. These children are competent in the letter sounds at the beginning and end of words and some of the sounds combined letters make in the middle of words.
- Children are exceptionally well behaved and thoroughly engaged in learning. They enjoy their work and

were enthralled in finding out about dinosaurs. Staff keep children safe and children are happy in school.

The sixth form provision

is good

- Sixth form provision is well led and managed. Staff know students well and have a good understanding of the curriculum appropriate to meeting each student's needs.
- Students' studies and examination courses are agreed on a realistic assessment of what each student should strive to achieve. Individual plans are tailored well to each student's preparations for moving to the next stage of education and training, which for most will be the Trust's Communication Specialist College.
- Good links with the college provides a broad range of vocational work for students to choose such as motor vehicle maintenance and horticulture. There are some opportunities for work experience such as ground maintenance at Doncaster Football Club and at Headingley.
- All students study English and mathematics. The most able take these at GCSE. In conjunction with the college, students have the option of a wide range of GCSE and AS Level courses. By the time they leave the sixth form all have achieved one or more GCSE's as well as certificates in a number of Entry Level, adult literacy and numeracy certificates and other courses including a British Sign Language qualification.
- Students behave extremely well and their attitudes to learning are excellent. They conduct themselves with age-appropriate maturity and commit themselves well to studying hard and completing good assignments. They act on their good knowledge of staying safe which means they move independently and safely within the campus and in travelling beyond the school.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge ensures students are taught effectively. Sign language is a very effective means of communication and by this stage students are signing as effectively as their teachers. As a result, students make good progress over time. In their written work they improve their command of language, confidence in recording facts and expressing their thoughts clearly and convincingly. Students write at length and set out their work well.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	106818
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	447931

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils	4–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	30
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	4
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pamela Allen
Headteacher	Alan Robinson
Date of previous school inspection	19 June 2012
Telephone number	01302 386733
Fax number	01302 361808
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