



The Dearne High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106656
LEA Barnsley
Inspection number 277603
Inspection dates 18 January 2006 to 19 January 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Jeremy Richardson HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Goldthorpe Road
School category	Community		Goldthorpe
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Rotherham, South Yorkshire S63 9EW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01709 892 211
Number on roll	1272	Fax number	01709 891 514
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr P Bird MBE
Date of previous inspection	3 April 2000	Headteacher	Mr P Shenton

Age group 11 to 16	Inspection dates 18 January 2006 - 19 January 2006	Inspection number 277603
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The Dearne High School is a larger than average size mixed comprehensive school in the village of Goldthorpe on the outskirts of Barnsley. The above average proportion of the pupils eligible for free school meals reflects the levels of deprivation in the area. Few of the pupils speak English as an additional language and the proportion of the pupils designated as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school has experienced difficulties in recruiting appropriately qualified teachers.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The Dearne High School is a satisfactory and improving school with some good features. Standards are low but are rising as a result of improvements brought about by the school's leaders. Most pupils make reasonable progress but weaknesses in their basic skills, particularly in literacy, remain a barrier to achievement. Pupils behave reasonably well in lessons and around the school. Their attendance has improved but is below the national average and too many are late to school. Teaching varies widely and some is outstanding. It is satisfactory overall. Lessons are generally planned well and pupils know what they are expected to learn. However, many teachers do not always ensure that all pupils are given work that is matched accurately to their different abilities and some do not enthuse pupils by giving them interesting activities to do. The curriculum is good but there is still some way to go in developing systematically the pupils' basic skills in all subjects. The school has made a good start in tackling the weaknesses in provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are good arrangements for helping pupils to behave and for tracking their academic progress.

The leadership and management of the school are good. Very good systems for checking performance are closely linked to detailed and comprehensive plans to improve areas of weakness. The school knows itself well and has made good progress in tackling the issues identified at the last inspection. Most notably, there have been significant improvements in science and a significant reduction in the rate of exclusion. Many improvements have been brought about through successful collaboration with a variety of agencies. The capacity to improve is good and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

The school knows what needs to be done. In particular, it should concentrate on:

- improving the pupils' basic skills
- improving the pupils' punctuality
- increasing the proportion of good and better teaching
- continuing to improve provision for the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, particularly in classrooms.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's view that achievement and standards are satisfactory and improving.

Pupils enter the school having achieved low results in their primary schools. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2005 were well below the national average overall, but considerably higher than in 2004. Standards were similar in the three core subjects. The school exceeded its ambitious targets and the overall trend in results is upwards.

The school is rightly proud that there has been a considerable improvement in the proportion of pupils gaining five or more higher grade passes in the general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) examinations in 2005. Nevertheless, standards are well below the national average overall and one in ten pupils leave school without a GCSE pass. The school reached most of its ambitious targets.

Information about pupils' achievement paints a very positive picture of improvement. The progress pupils make in each key stage has got much better over the last three years, reflecting the work the school has done. In 2005, progress was above the expected rate in both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Progress across the whole school is satisfactory, lagging behind progress in individual key stages because the impact of actions the school has taken has not yet become fully apparent. The school is aware that some groups of pupils, including middle ability boys and some of the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, did not do as well as they might. There are appropriate plans to tackle these issues.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, though their social values are better developed, as shown in their collaboration in lessons and their involvement in out of school activities. Pupils generally enjoy school, showing satisfactory attitudes to learning. The improving attendance rates and significant reduction in exclusions show that pupils value the efforts the school makes on their behalf to encourage them to take responsibility for their own actions. Behaviour in class and around the school is satisfactory, and strenuous efforts to pre-empt poor behaviour are beginning to pay dividends. Punctuality to school and lessons continues to challenge the school. Pupils say they feel safe at school because of the efforts of teachers, learning mentors, other staff and pupils who support those who are vulnerable to bullying, isolation or are experiencing other difficulties.

Pupils make a good contribution to the community through the school council and representation on the Barnsley Youth Council, which has improved provision within school and outside, and which equips pupils well for the future.

Pupils learn about healthy lifestyles through the personal, social and health education programme, but despite healthy options in the dining area, many pupils decline this provision. Pupils value the provision of work experience, links to further education colleges and the basic skills education, which has improved the rates of transition to further education colleges and beyond.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are judged satisfactory by the inspection team and the school. Teachers keep tabs on each other by watching colleagues teach; in this way, the school

knows where good qualities are to be found. Some of the teaching is outstanding. In these lessons, teachers share a passion for their subject and take pupils along with them, prompting them to develop thinking with questions such as, 'how did you come to that conclusion?' or 'why do you think that?'

Lessons are well planned with clear objectives that are shared with pupils. However, work is not particularly exciting or interesting and it is not always matched accurately to the pupils' different abilities. Pupils and adults get on well with each other, to the extent that most pupils make little fuss when sometimes they are asked to undertake very basic tasks that do not challenge them.

There has been a concerted effort to give pupils more opportunities to speak aloud in class but the reality is patchy. Not all teachers are good role models for standard English. Pupils were rarely heard speaking confidently and giving answers of more than a couple of sentences. Through its continuous audit of teaching and learning the school has rightly identified a need to bring greater consistency to the marking of pupils' work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is relevant, meets national requirements and is well matched to pupils' needs. However, some of the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do not always receive appropriate help in classrooms. In Years 10 and 11, the evolving range of courses and effective careers guidance prepare pupils well for educational or employment opportunities when they leave. Some innovative collaboration with colleges and the local business community results in vocational and work-related opportunities for all pupils. Alternative arrangements provide effectively for pupils seeking a less academic programme. These motivate pupils who might otherwise lose interest in education and keep them within a safe and supportive learning environment. Increasing emphasis on the importance of citizenship and personal, social and health education contributes well to pupils' understanding of healthy and safe lifestyles and their personal development. Pupils' enthusiastic involvement in the wide range of learning opportunities outside the classroom makes a strong contribution to their personal development and enjoyment. However, pupils' basic skills, including those in literacy, are not developed consistently across the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for and supported. The school has good systems, including the 'Behaviour Improvement Project', for identifying and supporting pupils across the ability range. Academic monitoring and intervention are well directed, and out of hours provision to support learning, particularly for Year 11 pupils, is valued. Pupils generally understand their targets for improvement. Systems for supporting vulnerable groups and individuals through the behaviour support programme, learning mentors and external agencies are good. Arrangements for child protection are robust. The curriculum, including alternative arrangements for work related and vocational learning,

ensures that the majority of pupils benefit sufficiently to help them in the next stage of their career development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good and have brought about significant improvements to the behaviour of the pupils and their achievement, most notably in science.

The school is governed well. Governors are passionate advocates for the pupils and provide a thoughtful balance of challenge and support to the school, rightly taking pride in recent improvements while being keenly aware of what remains to be done. The headteacher provides very good leadership and management. In particular, the well considered way in which he has reorganised the senior leadership group has played a major part in improving the school. This, coupled with some shrewd appointments, underpinned by thoughtful financial planning, has ensured that senior staff have played a key role in leading developments. Recruitment difficulties have been managed well. Many staff appreciate and have benefited from the headteacher's firm commitment to professional development. He rightly describes the leaders of the core subjects as 'the engine room of school improvement'. They have made a very good contribution to the school's work, leading their areas with vision and determination. They have responded very well to the high expectations of the headteacher and other senior leaders. The support and guidance they receive has made a difference.

Arrangements for checking performance are a strength of the school and involve managers at all levels. Analysis of information about pupils' attainment and progress, lesson observations and other activities are all combined effectively to provide the school with a detailed picture of its strengths and weaknesses on which comprehensive and thorough plans are based. A strength of the planning is the way in which it draws together a variety of initiatives. The school actively seeks the views of the pupils and does its best for them.

Resources are deployed effectively. Parts of the accommodation are inadequate. The appalling state of some of the toilets is detrimental to the pupils' self-esteem and does not promote healthy practices.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to let you know the judgements we have made about your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection by talking to us about your work, your life in school and all you do.

These are the main strengths of your school:

- your school is satisfactory and has some good features
- Mr Shenton and his team have done a good job in improving the school
- you learn reasonably well in most of your lessons
- you are well behaved in lessons and your attendance is improving
- the school keeps a close eye on your progress
- you enjoy the wide range of activities that are put on after school.

Your school needs to:

- help you to improve your basic skills (especially reading, writing, speaking and listening)
- help you to improve your punctuality
- make more of your lessons exciting and challenging
- make sure that the pupils who need extra help do well in lessons.