



Danum School Technology College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106780
LEA Doncaster
Inspection number 277630
Inspection dates 24 May 2006 to 25 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mr John Young HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Armthorpe Road
School category	Community		Doncaster
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		South Yorkshire DN2 5QD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01302 831385
Number on roll	1953	Fax number	01302 300109
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs E Hammill
Date of previous inspection	23 October 2000	Headteacher	Dr K Simmonds

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 18	24 May 2006 - 25 May 2006	277630

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Danum School Technology College is a very large split site 11 to 18 mixed comprehensive School with 1,923 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are White British. There are a small of number of pupils from a diverse range of minority ethnic backgrounds, but relatively few who are at an early stage of acquiring English. The school draws the majority of its pupils from areas containing significant pockets of deprivation, and the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. This contrasts with some pupils from areas of relative prosperity. Attainment on entry is broadly average, although there are a growing number of higher attaining pupils joining the school. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational need is above average, while the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. The school has specialist technology college status, it is also part of the national pilots for extended schools and low achievers. In addition the school has the Investors in People and Sportsmark awards as well as the Healthy Schools standard. Danum School is part of the local Excellence in Cities cluster (EIC).

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's view that overall effectiveness is satisfactory with good aspects.

Leadership and management are good at all levels across the school, and this is contributing to a number of improvements in key areas of the school's work. The school provides a sound education for its pupils and this is reflected in the satisfactory progress the majority of students make, the increasingly diverse and appropriate curriculum, and the commitment the school shows to assuring the personal development, care, guidance and support of its students. In addition, the school works well with a number of partners to promote pupils' well-being. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Although it is good in places there are issues to do with some teaching that does not meet the needs of the full ability range.

The school knows itself well, and its self-evaluation is accurate. However, the school still has much work to do in raising the standards and progress of pupils in mathematics at Key Stage 3, as well as improving the overall progress made by certain groups of pupils. These include some pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and lower attaining boys. In addition, at Key Stage 4, there is underachievement on the part of some average ability pupils. Because of the strengths in management, there is good capacity within the school to promote further improvements. The school offers satisfactory value for money, and the school has taken some effective steps to promote improvement since the last inspection.

Managers have invested specialist college funding carefully to build capacity across the whole school, and the impact is starting to be seen in the way pupils learn, their attitudes to learning, and their achievement.

The school runs a wide range of activities to develop work with its community through participation in the extended schools pilot. Although worthwhile, the evaluation of the impact of these activities on pupils and how well they are meeting the needs of different groups in the community, has not yet taken place.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's view that the sixth form is good overall. Standards reached are broadly average, although girls do not perform quite as well as boys relative to the national picture. However, students make good progress overall in their learning and usually achieve higher grades than predicted by their GCSE performance. A wide range of academic and vocational courses caters well for their needs. Teaching is good. Students value the expertise and commitment of their teachers and feel that 'they really care about how well we are learning'. Students' progress is monitored closely and they are given detailed feedback on how well they are doing and how to improve their work. Students also develop well personally. They have mature attitudes to their studies and take advantage of the good opportunities provided for them to participate

in activities beyond their studies. They are confident, articulate and have very good relationships with each other and their teachers whom they find friendly and easy to talk to. Not all girls participate readily in class discussions, however. All students are extremely positive about the sixth form and believe they made the right choice in coming to Danum. They also feel well prepared for life after Danum: 'guidance for applying to university is brilliant'. The sixth form is well led and managed and there is a strong and active commitment to building on its current success to improve it further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Tackle the underachievement of known groups of pupils, and improve the progress pupils make in recognised subjects, including mathematics at Key Stage 3 and English literature.
- Improve attendance, particularly amongst Key Stage 4 pupils.
- Eradicate the identified inconsistencies that exist in the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. Attainment on entry is broadly average, although there are fewer higher attaining pupils at this school.

In the 2005 Key Stage 3 national tests, the standards pupils reached were significantly below national averages overall. This reflected variations in subjects, as pupils made outstanding progress in science, satisfactory in English and inadequate progress in mathematics. Their overall progress, however, was broadly satisfactory when measured against their starting points. Some pupils made inadequate progress in the 2005 tests, for instance those with learning difficulties or disabilities.

In the 2005 GCSE examinations, the standards pupils reached were significantly below national averages. Pupils did, however, attain standards closer to the national average in the small number of GCSE short courses run by the school. The progress pupils make in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory overall, although some pupils with learning difficulties are not making enough progress.

In the sixth form, the standards students reach in intermediate and advanced courses are satisfactory, although girls do less well than boys which is against the national trend. Progress is good overall, evidenced not only by more recent standardised tests but also through inspectors' scrutiny of work and observations of the progress made in lessons.

Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make satisfactory progress in all key stages. Progress in the lessons observed during the inspection were satisfactory across the school, with progress good in the sixth form.

The school works with a number of external partners, including the local authority and the local EIC cluster to raise standards and achievement. Key changes to the curriculum, deployment of specialist staff and use of data have started to take effect, with the most recent internal assessment data revealing an improved picture. The school is on target to meet its specialist subjects objectives overall.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good overall. Well built relationships between staff and pupils are a major strength and key to the good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all. As a result, pupils are mature, sensitive, tolerant and appreciative of each other's differences and needs. This is particularly the case for sixth form students and reflected in their aspirations and ambitions for the future. Pupils identify instances of bullying as a concern but acknowledge there are good procedures for reporting it and the majority feel that teachers and other adults respond quickly and effectively. The involvement in national anti-bullying week has heightened the significance of standing up to any acts of bullying and telling adults about it. Through the school council, pupils voice their views, contribute to decision-making, develop their roles in making a positive contribution to the life of the school and grow in confidence and independence. Attendance is close to the national average; it is better in Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 4, where a greater proportion of pupils are absent without authorisation. Generally, pupils behave well throughout the school and adhere to the rules and routines that make learning easier and more enjoyable. Safe and healthy lifestyles are promoted well and pupils benefit from regular exercise and a good diet. The future economic well-being of all pupils is an increasing focus of the work of the school. Work experience, a good vocational curriculum and the emphasis on planning for the future ensure that pupils have a good understanding of how their learning will benefit them now and in the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The inspection confirms the school's evaluation that teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Good behaviour management and positive relationships ensure that pupils are well motivated to learn. In the best lessons, teachers plan varied and challenging activities for pupils to work independently and collaboratively. They use questioning particularly effectively, pushing individuals to think analytically, and assessing how effectively pupils are learning. In the best lessons, teachers have embraced recent management training on methodology in promoting more effective teaching and learning. In lessons with less than satisfactory features, there is insufficient emphasis on independence and discussion and pupils are more dependent on the

teacher. Activities are primarily aimed at the middle abilities, without stretching the most able or sufficiently supporting the weaker pupils. The less stimulating activities cause some pupils to lose concentration. Marking is not always sufficiently constructive in showing pupils how they can improve, and there is too little support for literacy so that some pupils are unable to express their understanding in their written work. The identified shortcomings have caused issues in particular for some groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and lower attaining boys in Key Stage 3.

Sixth form teaching is good. Teachers have very good knowledge of their subjects and course requirements, and students benefit from this expertise through well focused lessons. However, teachers do not always ensure that all students, especially girls, are sufficiently involved in class discussions. Students' work and progress are monitored closely and students appreciate the fact that teachers give freely of their time to ensure that they know how to improve their work.

Increased funding through the technology college status of the school has led to the installation of electronic whiteboards, supported by appropriate software and training for staff. This carefully planned approach has encouraged staff to use the technology more innovatively to enrich and enliven their teaching. Similarly, the refurbishment of specialist areas has enhanced the learning environment and improved attitudes to learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's curriculum is well matched to the needs of all pupils and is now good throughout the school. This is a substantial improvement on the situation at the time of the last inspection and statutory requirements are met.

In Key Stage 3, the school has been innovative in reviewing and adapting courses available to its less able pupils. One such course provides a coherent curriculum for Year 7 pupils whose standards on entry are low. The course concentrates on developing basic skills and the school already has evidence that their progress has improved as a result. The Key Stage 4 curriculum has been radically re-designed to better meet pupils' needs and includes a range of courses which are provided within the school and externally through effective partnerships with other providers. The full impact of this innovative provision on pupils' achievement has still to be fully realised.

Sixth form students are offered a broad range of academic and vocational courses which are appropriate to their abilities and interests. These are enhanced by good links with other schools.

The school offers pupils a diverse range of extra-curricular opportunities which they value. These span school productions, music and sports. For example, the school are the English schools basketball champions and participate with success in disabled sport at national level.

The school runs a wide range of activities to develop work with the community through participation in the extended schools pilot. Although worthwhile, the evaluation of

the impact of these activities on students and how well they are meeting the needs of different groups in the community has not yet taken place.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils including the most vulnerable are well cared for. Staff are committed to providing a high level of care and this is evident in the comprehensive risk assessments which are in place for individual pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Intervention and support by teachers, learning mentors and teaching assistants are effective in ensuring that identified groups of pupils behave well and show positive attitudes. As a result, most pupils make good progress in their personal development and engage positively in learning. Child protection systems are thorough and well understood. Guidance for pupils' academic progress through the use of target setting and verbal feedback is good. However, the quality of written feedback is inconsistent in informing pupils on how they can best reach their targets. This is not the case in the sixth form where it is consistently good. Support and guidance as pupils transfer from one phase of education to the next are good, resulting in pupils and students feeling settled, motivated and well advised about the next stage of their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school correctly judges leadership and management to be good. It is strong, purposeful and effective at all levels, and the school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis despite the challenges of working across a split site.

Staff have a strong collective sense of purpose and managers hold them to account for their work. Self-evaluation is systematic, thorough and accurate. For example, all leaders are involved in 'learning walks' (short, unannounced visits to lessons), with a focus on particular groups or themes. These enable them to assess the quality of teaching and learning accurately, and to identify areas for development.

The school seeks the views of parents and pupils in arriving at its judgements, and uses external advisers to check them. Good use is made of a number of external agencies to enhance provision. Links with parents are good overall; however, some parents feel their concerns are not fully acknowledged.

Although the school effectively translates its assessment of needs into priorities and actions, the impact on outcomes is not yet consistent. There has, for example, been very good progress in improving pupils' behaviour and the curriculum. However, progress in other areas has been limited, for example, improving attendance and achievement amongst certain groups. Care for pupils is a strength of the school at all levels, and exclusions from school have reduced significantly this year. However, the perceived focus on those pupils who are likely to achieve five good grades at GCSE has left some others feeling neglected.

The sixth form is well led. The relationship between sixth form students and their staff leaders is very good. Staff have a clear commitment to students' academic and personal progress which is reflected in the sixth form provision and in students' achievements.

Governors discharge their duties judiciously. They are supportive of the leadership but are also willing and able to challenge when necessary. Statutory policies and procedures are all in place and financial management is sound. Resources are deployed and used effectively; value for money is good in the sixth form and satisfactory in the main school.

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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	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

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

Thank you for contributing to the recent inspection of your school. We visited lessons, and talked to a number of you. We also read the results of surveys and questionnaires completed by you and your parents/carers; they proved very helpful.

Here is a summary of our main findings which I hope will be of interest to you.

- The school provides you with a satisfactory education in Years 7 to 11 and a good education in the sixth form. Leadership and management are good in all areas.
- The teaching you receive is satisfactory in Years 7 to 11 and good in the sixth form, but staff must ensure all lessons are consistently challenging and appropriate.
- The curriculum is good and designed to meet your needs. It includes many extra-curricular opportunities, which many of you are involved in.
- The school's procedures for ensuring your personal safety, development and well-being are good overall. You enjoy coming to school, and feel any concerns you have are dealt with. Most of you behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. Your attendance is satisfactory overall, although some of you have poor attendance records and you need to attend more regularly. In Years 7 to 11 you make satisfactory progress, while in the sixth form your progress is good. However, certain groups of pupils do not make the expected progress and are underachieving. We feel that certain initiatives developed as a result of your specialist status are helping to improve the school.

These are the areas for improvement we have asked your school to address.

- Ensure all groups of pupils make the necessary progress to reach their potential.
- Improve attendance, particularly amongst those of you in Years 10 and 11.
- Eliminate the inconsistencies that exist in the quality of teaching and learning.

We urge you to do all you can to help your school continue to improve.