



# Dene Magna School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 115773  
**LEA** Gloucestershire  
**Inspection number** 279678  
**Inspection dates** 15 March 2006 to 15 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Tom Winskill HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to inspect any school in England. The inspection is to be treated as a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive	<b>School address</b>	Abenhall Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Mitcheldean
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16		Gloucestershire GL17 0DU
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01594 542370
<b>Number on roll</b>	739	<b>Fax number</b>	01594 544862
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Reverend Robert Sturman
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22 January 2001	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Robert Broadbridge

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Dene Magna is a smaller than average comprehensive school which has had technology status since 1999 and is also a Leading Edge school. It serves a rural area in the Forest of Dean near the village of Mitcheldean. The attainment of the students on entry is broadly average. The proportion of students requiring free school meals is low. Few students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and none have English as an additional language. The number of students with a statement of special educational need is about average. The headteacher took up his post in January 2006 having previously been a deputy headteacher at the school.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

'It is a brilliant school with brilliant staff. They look at each child as an individual and work towards that individual achieving their full potential at whatever level they may be. No-one falls by the wayside'.

Inspectors agree with this very accurate assessment written by a parent, responding to the questionnaire sent out by the school for the inspection. But what are students' views? An inspector asked a group of students if they would rather stay at home to do as they pleased or come to Dene Magna. There was a pause. 'Come to school', said one, 'Definitely', another chimed in, 'It's just enjoyable, there's always something to look forward to', said another and so it went on.

Another parent wrote that 'the school always seems to be trying new things and introducing new ideas in order to keep improving'. She is right. The school is not resting on its laurels and is keen to improve even further its overall standards at GCSE and increase the numbers of students achieving the highest grades in all subjects. With the unique ethos created by the staff and students of this school and their collective understanding of learning, it is well placed to improve still further.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 1

The outstanding achievement and standards at Dene Magna are illustrated very well by the exceptional progress the students make in mathematics. In this subject for example, the A\*-C and the A\*-A pass rates at GCSE are both significantly above the national average. This represents remarkable progress for students whose attainment on entry to the school was broadly average. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities also make excellent progress. Senior staff rightly put the superb achievement down to the way the school focuses on the individual needs of learners, allowing them to make excellent progress and achieve challenging targets. One student put it another way: 'the staff are completely focused on your success'.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

When you were at school could you imagine being asked, as a student, to comment on the quality of teaching you were receiving and expect to improve as a result; or being asked to help the headteacher to select a new teacher for the school? These are just some of the responsibilities students at Dene Magna take on.

Student involvement in decision making is exemplary and these examples are just some of the ways in which they make an outstanding contribution to the community in which they work. They are being very well prepared to be active citizens of the future. Behaviour is excellent and students feel safe and welcome at school. In trying to describe the working atmosphere, one student considered that there was 'good mutual

respect' between staff and students and that there was 'no discrimination'. A younger student described how she had been made welcome by students and teachers alike on joining the school. Students certainly live up to the senior staff's accurate judgement that students show care, courtesy and commitment.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

The outstanding teaching and learning enables the students to make excellent progress. Teachers, with the help of students, work closely to strive to improve their practice. They work with students, encouraging them to think for themselves and use a variety of activities which 'engages your brain better' according to one perceptive student. The senior staff view that the learning is individualised throughout the school is endorsed by the students. One student stated that 'learning is personalised to you' and explained how in some mathematics lessons students discuss with the teacher how they will be taught.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

They are able to take advantage of an impressive and growing range of activities, both within lessons and beyond the school day.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

Students with learning difficulties and disabilities are very well supported, reflecting the schools inclusive approach. One parent, for example, commented: 'The staff have been extremely supportive and helpful with regard to our child's special needs. Problems are dealt with quickly and very sensitively'.

## **Leadership and management**

#### **Grade: 1**

There is a unity of purpose about the school and a clear strategic direction shared by all staff. At the heart of this school's success is the continuous professional development of all staff for the benefit of all students. Excellent monitoring and evaluation procedures ensure that leaders and governors have a very clear picture of the schools' strengths and weaknesses. Improvement planning is thorough, perhaps even over detailed but the direction of travel is clear to all. The recently appointed headteacher is keen to build on the school's many strengths and maintain the momentum of rapid and sustained improvement.

The school has the overwhelming confidence of parents and carers, one stating that 'I cannot fault the school. It is well run with a strong emphasis on meeting children's individual needs'. The school makes excellent and sometimes imaginative and innovative use of its accommodation although it recognises the need to improve the quality of the learning resource centre. Given a revenue budget which is typical for a school of this size, the superb quality of education provided means that value for money is outstanding.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

Following our visit to inspect your school we would like to tell you our findings. We enjoyed our time at Dene Magna, particularly visiting your lessons and discussing the school with you. You helped make us feel welcome.

Dene Magna is an excellent school, one of the best in the country. Students do very well in tests and examinations especially in mathematics. You work very well with your teachers who try successfully to help every one of you do your best. You take your learning very seriously. Your teachers work hard to make sure they know the best ways of teaching you and helping you to learn for yourselves. We are impressed that some of you are able to work with your teacher to help you improve.

We were impressed by the way some of you are able to help the school make decisions about the way it is run. Your behaviour is first class and you enjoy being at school where you feel welcome and safe. The school is very well run by Mr Broadbridge and his senior staff. They make sure that the school is always trying to improve. For example they want to make sure even more of you achieve higher grades at GCSE in future.

You are rightly proud of your school. I wish you continued and further success and enjoyment in future.