



# Danesfield Church of England School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 123895  
**LEA** Somerset  
**Inspection number** 281590  
**Inspection dates** 7 June 2006 to 8 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Valerie Pearson HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed secondary	<b>School address</b>	North Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Williton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9 to 13		Taunton, Somerset TA4 4SW
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01984 632581
<b>Number on roll</b>	500	<b>Fax number</b>	01984 633085
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	30 October 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Ian Bradbury

<b>Age group</b> 9 to 13	<b>Inspection dates</b> 7 June 2006 - 8 June 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 281590
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## **Introduction**

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

## **Description of the school**

Danesfield Church of England School serves a community which is economically and socially mixed with many learners coming from areas of rural deprivation. The number of pupils with learning disabilities and difficulties is above the national average, although the number of pupils with statements of special educational need is below the national average. It is recognised, however, that the school's low figure for the number of pupils with statements is a reflection of the way in which the local authority (LA) issues statements. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The school is part of a LA review of first, middle and high schools exploring whether this system of school organisation will be retained within the area.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Danesfield School is a good school. This judgement supports the school's view of itself. It welcomes pupils from a variety of backgrounds and abilities. Its philosophy, firmly rooted in its Christian foundation, is to provide high quality care and support for pupils and a positive environment in which they can thrive. As a result, pupils' personal development is outstanding. The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteachers, provides strong and determined leadership. Pupils enter the school with standards that are below average. During their time in the school, they make good progress overall and attain standards that are at least in line with and, for some, above those normally expected by the end of Year 8. Progress is stronger in Key Stage 3 than in Key Stage 2. Inspectors agree that continuing to improve pupils' progress and standards in English in Key Stage 2 is a key priority for the school. Decisive action has already been taken, including carefully targeted support for individual pupils and appropriate revisions to the curriculum. The school is also rightly focusing on the use of assessment to ensure all pupils have appropriately challenging work. The school has a thorough understanding of the progress pupils are making but recognises that implementing planned systems for coordinating the monitoring of each pupil's progress across all subjects is an important priority. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who are vulnerable make very good progress because of excellent provision. The school has made good progress since the last inspection, particularly in improving the identification of the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and improving provision for information and communication technology (ICT), personal, social and health education (PSHE) and pupils' spiritual development. The school provides good value for money. The school knows what it needs and wants to do to improve and its capacity to do so is good.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Further improve progress and standards in English at Key Stage 2.
- Implement the planned systems for coordinating the monitoring of each pupil's progress across all subjects.
- Ensure that information on how well pupils are doing is consistently used to challenge them rigorously in lessons.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

From their below average standards when they join the school in Year 5, the pupils make good progress. By the end of Year 8, they reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are at least in line with, and for some above, those normally expected. As pupils move through the school, the rate at which they make progress improves. It is particularly good in Years 7 and 8 as a result of teaching that gives pupils consistently effective challenge. During Key Stage 2, pupils' overall progress is satisfactory and improving. Progress in science is particularly strong. This is as a direct result of action taken over recent years to improve teaching and learning so that

standards are now average. In mathematics, standards in 2005 were below the national average. The impact of effective action taken, however, is reflected in improvements in pupils' progress in the subject. The school's thorough monitoring processes demonstrate improvements in the standards currently being attained. Standards in English in Key Stage 2 were low in 2005. Pupils' progress and standards in this subject is rightly a key priority and the school has carefully analysed data to identify ways to secure improvement. Decisive action taken includes targeted interventions to address pupils' weaker literacy skills, revisions to the curriculum in Years 5 and 6 to strengthen literacy provision, and the appointment of additional specialist English teachers. The school's data shows that Year 6 pupils are well placed to meet challenging targets in English. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and pupils who are vulnerable, make very good progress throughout the school as a result of the excellent care and provision.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They enjoy school and participate enthusiastically in the very wide range of opportunities open to them. Attitudes are excellent and attendance above average. Most pupils behave in an exemplary way, with only occasional lapses by a small number which are effectively dealt with by staff. Pupils feel safe and are very confident that there is always someone, including teachers, the chaplain and other specially trained pupils, close at hand to turn to should a problem arise. High levels of trust are characteristic of the excellent relationships in the school. Pupils report that incidents of bullying are minimal and dealt with swiftly. Pupils are increasingly choosing healthy lifestyles. The extensive range of physical activities and healthier choices on offer for lunch effectively contributes to pupils' understanding of healthy living. Pupils adopt safe practices. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Strong cultural links with schools in India and Canada and events such as 'Offer the Hand of Friendship' week significantly support their development. Many pupils make active contributions to the school and the wider community. Pupils enjoy expressing their views, which are heard through the school council and surveys, though younger pupils are less involved. The school recognises the need to extend across the year groups the very good practice in some subjects; this involves pupils in reviews about what best helps them to learn. The very good citizenship and personal and social education courses mean that pupils are well prepared for their future adult lives and economic well-being. In these courses and elsewhere, they develop skills such as debating and working in teams.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is good. In the best lessons, activities are well planned, pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to achieve and their progress is carefully reviewed.

Teachers' subject knowledge is secure. This reflects the school's action to improve pupils' learning through increasing the proportion of lessons taught by subject specialists. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, the teacher's good subject knowledge was used well to address pupils' misconceptions in mental subtraction. To ensure that work is sufficiently challenging for pupils, the school correctly identifies as a priority the need to use assessment well in all lessons. Work already undertaken has led to more effective questioning of pupils to check and extend their understanding. The school is also increasingly successfully involving pupils in assessing their own learning. Marking is generally constructive and provides some helpful guidance for pupils on what to do next to improve. Where teaching is less than good, however, lessons lack pace and rigour and the learning activities are not well matched to the needs of pupils, particularly for younger pupils. The school is taking appropriate steps to address the issue that homework does not always provide the right level of challenge for pupils.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good with outstanding features. It is particularly well tailored to meet the needs of pupils who are vulnerable or have learning difficulties and disabilities. Initiatives such as 'Focus' and the 'New Curriculum' have proved successful in helping these pupils to make very good progress. Whilst good, provision for gifted and talented pupils is not yet as comprehensive. Since the last inspection, there have been significant improvements in PSHE and a very good citizenship programme has been introduced. Greatly improved ICT provision has led to rising standards throughout the school. The school provides an excellent range of clubs, visits and other out of school activities and the level of pupil participation is high. These undoubtedly enrich both pupils' learning and their personal development. The curriculum is kept under constant review. For example, as part of the strategy to raise standards in English, it has been amended to improve opportunities to teach literacy more effectively across all subjects.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides good care, guidance and support to pupils, with some aspects being outstanding. Pupils are secure in the knowledge that their wellbeing is central. There are excellent procedures for identifying individual pupils' needs and the 'key worker' effectively helps those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Systems for safeguarding pupils' health and safety are well established. The school has a detailed analysis of pupils' performance and subject leaders monitor closely pupils' progress in individual subjects. This information is used effectively to set challenging targets for individual pupils. Pupils know their targets and what they need to do to achieve them. There are very good systems for monitoring the progress of those with learning difficulties and disabilities. However, for other pupils, responsibilities for coordinating the monitoring of pupils' progress across all subjects, and sharing the findings with

pupils, lacks clarity. The school recognises this and has planned a new system from September 2006.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides strong and determined leadership and sets a clear vision and direction for the school. There is a steadfast drive to raise standards combined with a strong commitment to providing a caring and supportive environment in which pupils can flourish. To pursue these aims, the senior leadership team works purposefully together, well supported by the other staff. The leaders' and managers' understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement is accurate. It is based on a good range of evidence including the perspectives of pupils, parents and carers. The school recognises that it could now extend the contributions from pupils, particularly regarding what helps them most with their learning. Inspectors agree with the priorities that the leadership has set for the school to address. Systematic training and support has resulted in some very good subject leadership. Successful heads of departments, for example, in mathematics and humanities, carefully monitor the quality of teaching and closely track pupils' progress. The school now needs to clarify responsibilities within the pastoral team to ensure that the monitoring of individual pupils' progress across subjects is as effectively secured. The governing body has a good understanding of its role and responsibilities. Governors know the school well and provide appropriate challenge and support to leaders and managers. Resources are well managed and the school provides good value for money. The school has demonstrated its capacity to improve, for example, by raising pupils' standards in Key Stage 3 and science, securing strong subject leadership and improving accommodation and resources. Not all of the recent initiatives have had time to show gains and make a difference. Nevertheless, the school's achievements indicate that it is very well placed to improve further.

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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>	2	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	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	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

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

<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	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

8 June 2006 Dear Pupils Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to me and my colleagues during our recent visit. We enjoyed meeting you and listening to your views about your work and the school. It is our view that your school is good and it is clear that you all help to make it a good school. You enjoy your work and behave very well. You particularly like the very wide choice of clubs and activities the school offers. Large numbers of you enthusiastically join in. All the adults who work with you give you excellent care and support and you told us that you feel safe in school. You told us that there is always someone close at hand who you can turn to if you have a problem. This might be a teacher, the chaplain or older pupils trained to help others. Your headteacher and all those who teach you want the very best for you. They help you make good progress in your lessons so that when you leave in Year 8 you are doing well in your subjects. Your teachers know how well you are doing and they are working on making sure that this information helps you always to have work that is right for you. They are determined to help you, particularly in Years 5 and 6, to improve in English and have already taken some good steps to make sure this happens. You enjoy it when you can discuss topics and share your views. In some subjects, you help teachers by sharing with them what best helps you learn. The school wants to involve more of you in this, and particularly those of you in Years 5 and 6. Your school is determined to keep on improving. The teachers know what they want to do and the top priority for them is doing the very best for all of you. Yours sincerely  
Valerie Pearson Lead Inspector Alexandra House 33 Kingsway London WC2B 6SE T 0207 421 6800 F 0207 421 6707 [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)