



# Deansfield High School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 104387  
**LEA** Wolverhampton  
**Inspection number** 286927  
**Inspection dates** 28 June 2006 to 28 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Rob Hubbleday 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>	Deans Road
<b>School category</b>	Foundation		Wolverhampton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19		West Midlands WV1 2BH
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 556400
<b>Number on roll</b>	750	<b>Fax number</b>	01902 556401
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Councillor Keith Inston
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12 March 2001	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Steve Hawke

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 19	28 June 2006 - 28 June 2006	286927

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI). Before the inspection, they analysed the school's self-evaluation, its previous inspection report and a range of assessment data. Initial discussions took place by phone. During the inspection, other documents provided by the school were studied and meetings were held with senior staff, subject leaders and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed a small sample of lessons, including several when they were accompanied by a member of the senior leadership team to compare notes. Ninety questionnaires returned by parents were considered.

## Description of the school

Deansfield High serves an urban area near to the city centre, where there are significant levels of disadvantage. Around 30% of the pupils are eligible for free school meals and over a third of the pupils are identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities. A third of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and 11% speak English as an additional language. Attainment at the beginning of Year 7 is very low. The school has a unit for pupils with hearing impairment and opened a sixth form in 2003.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Deansfield is a good school which knows what it does well and is rightly proud of its successes. At the same time it is not afraid to point out what needs to be better. As a result, it faces the future with well-placed confidence. It has come a long way since its last inspection and exam results at 16 have risen markedly in the last two years. The proportion of pupils gaining five passes at grade C or above is now broadly similar to the national figure. The pupils make good progress because of dedicated teaching, an innovative curriculum and an extensive network of monitoring and support. No groups of pupils underachieve.

Standards in art and design stand out strongly and the school is gaining a growing recognition for its work in this area. Standards in literacy and numeracy are improving, but remain low and stubbornly difficult to lift closer to national levels. The school is working effectively in partnership with local schools in an Excellence in Cities action zone to tackle weaknesses in basic skills. It is also developing its own provision for pupils with learning difficulties.

The pupils make good progress in their personal development but the school faces continuing challenges. Most pupils behave well and are keen to benefit from what the school has to offer. They move around the school calmly and contribute sensibly in lessons. They are understandably irritated by the immature behaviour of a few but report that the school deals effectively with any incidents. Its job is made harder by a relatively high level of movement into the school by pupils from other schools. Deansfield has not permanently excluded any pupil in the last three years. Attendance has risen but remains below 90%, despite the school's concerted efforts over several years. Not all parents understand the importance of supporting the school's drive to reduce unnecessary absence.

The school seeks the pupils' view, for example, through a questionnaire it circulated last year and through discussions between tutors and their classes. The system of rewards for good behaviour was amended as a result. However, some pupils feel that there are only limited opportunities to make a positive contribution to the school's life. Older pupils expressed some disenchantment with the impact of the school council. On the other hand, the school's longstanding link with 'Creative Partnerships', a project funded largely by the Arts Council to raise aspirations through fostering creativity, provides remarkable opportunities for pupils to initiate and take responsibility for worthwhile activities. Pupils spoke with pride of their involvement in events such as organising fashion shows and entertainment evenings and working with housing developers and designers. The school has achieved national and international recognition for this work which, in the words of the co-ordinator, 'injects a bit of excitement and even magic into the curriculum.'

There are real strengths in the quality of teaching. Lessons are purposeful and effective because of the consistency of routines for starting and finishing sessions, the good management of behaviour and the clarity of planning. The school has tackled difficulties in recruiting teachers by investing heavily in training its own teachers. A high proportion

of the staff joined the school through the Graduate Teacher Programme and several began their association with the school through posts as learning assistants or mentors. One pupil commented to inspectors that 'the teachers are young and lively,' which perhaps helps to explain the enthusiasm and 'can-do' attitude of the staff.

Nevertheless, the school is far from complacent about the impact of its teaching. Its excellent departmental reviews of the quality of provision have revealed that often the pupils make only satisfactory progress, despite lessons containing many of the elements of good teaching. It is now turning its attention to the quality of learning. Some of the lessons seen by the inspectors confirmed the school's analysis. For example, there was little emphasis on drawing out the pupils' thoughts as opposed to their factual knowledge or of encouraging them to question ideas and discuss opinions to deepen understanding.

To understand how it is that the pupils still manage to make good progress over time, it is necessary to look at the curriculum and the support for individuals and groups. At both key stages, the school uses up-to-date assessment data to great effect to spot which pupils need extra help to meet challenging targets. Staff go the extra mile in running after-school catch-up classes and revision groups. Well-qualified learning mentors work effectively with individuals to support the teachers' efforts. At Key Stage 4, the curriculum allows each pupil to study a vocational course, which often enables them to excel in an area of interest and to gain several passes at GCSE. A policy of entering pupils for some GCSE exams in Year 10 has also helped to improve results. There is a strong commitment to work-related learning and the timetable allows pupils to study at the local college and with other providers.

The headteacher's dynamic and pragmatic approach has enabled the school to build securely on the foundations laid by his predecessor. He has given strong direction about priorities, such as raising standards and fostering the school's distinctive qualities. He has trodden a carefully judged line between implementing increasingly rigorous methods of evaluating the school's work while encouraging independence, confidence and creativity among the staff. The result is a cohesive and happy team of teachers and other adults who are keen to serve the school. The senior team's knowledge of the school is very good and there are excellent lines of accountability through to subject leaders. Self-evaluation is of high quality and has enabled the school to plan with precision. Funding has been marshalled well to improve accommodation, staffing and resources. Governance is effective and the school gives good value for money.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 3**

The sixth form has grown in size and about 40% of pupils in the current Year 11 have decided to join it next year. There are effective consortium arrangements with two local secondary schools so that pupils can access a broad range of courses. Pupils in Year 12 were clear that they had chosen to stay on because they knew the school 'would look after them,' and they are pleased with how things have worked out. The school speaks of many gaining in maturity but is very aware that several pupils in the past chose to do more traditional academic courses than was advisable, given their

attainment in Year 11. The result is that achievement and standards are only broadly satisfactory overall.

## **Achievement and standards**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Contextual value added data are overwhelmingly positive at both key stages. Achievement from Key Stage 2 to 3 and Key Stage 2 to 4 has been significantly above average since at least 2003. There are no core subjects or groups of pupils where progress is less than satisfactory, and pupils with learning difficulties make good progress. Achievement is equally good for both boys and girls but the small number of higher-ability pupils do not make as much progress as middle- and lower-attaining pupils.

Although the proportion of pupils achieving five A\* to C grades including English and maths has increased each year, it is less than half the headline figure of 52%, which has risen spectacularly from 22% in 2003. Despite this improvement, standards overall remain very low, with only art and design standing out as a highly successful subject.

In the sixth form, the points scores and value-added indicators are generally below average but there has been improvement on all measures between 2004 and 2005 and performance on the vocational A levels is above average.

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

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The pupils are motivated by the rewards systems and behaviour is generally good. However, some pupils, especially in Year 7, have frustrated others with their immaturity. There was no evidence of this misbehaviour during the inspection but a few parents expressed concerns over specific incidents. Pupils say that bullying, racism and name calling are not a problem. Should they occur, they are confident that action is taken by the school straight away. The school is particularly rigorous in following up poor attendance but the figure remains below average at 89.1%. The school does a great deal to help pupils who do not want to come to school and has a degree of success. The youngest pupils say that they really enjoy coming to school but there is not the same enthusiasm shown by the older ones. In lessons they certainly get on with their work and pay attention but the teaching does not always engage their interest avidly.

Pupils display a sense of responsibility around the school. They have a keen sense of justice, are friendly, supportive of others and their self-esteem is growing. They have the opportunity to contribute to the school community through the school council and prefect system. These, though, do not have a high enough profile because pupils are not fully aware of them or how they work.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The inspection confirmed that the senior leadership team has an accurate view of the quality of teaching. There is very little that is inadequate and much that is good in the way that structures and routines are implemented consistently. Lessons proceed smoothly but in many instances there is a narrow focus on imparting knowledge and not enough emphasis on developing the skills for more independent styles of learning. The teaching provides pupils with a secure environment for learning but does not ensure that they are challenged sufficiently to gain a depth of understanding.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 3**

The curriculum is broadly based and has been extended to embrace several imaginative vocational pathways. All students follow at least one vocational course at Key Stage 4. There are plans to provide more in-house vocational work next year. The school is reviewing its policy on early entry to GCSE in Year 10 as it tends to limit the proportion of high passes which pupils are likely to gain. There are plans to widen even further the options available to sixth formers.

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

#### **Grade: 1**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 2**

The school provides a highly encouraging environment in which pupils feel secure. There is a strong focus on individual pupils and on meeting their needs through a wealth of support systems. Learning mentors play an immensely valuable role. Guidance to sixth formers has improved considerably as the school has become more experienced with this age range.

## **Leadership and management**

#### **Grade: 1**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 3**

The school keeps provision under review and is constantly seeking improvement. Self-evaluation is rigorous and based on a range of information drawn from observations of lessons, assessment data, listening to parents and pupils and paying heed to national agendas. Consequently, the planning for further development is well focused. The school has strong links with a wide range of partners and manages these complex arrangements well. A strong track record of improving standards and achievement

through developing the curriculum and focusing on the needs of individuals confirms it has strong capacity to continue improving.



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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	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
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	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	2

<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	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

<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**

Many of you will remember that your school was inspected for one day during the last week of June. Mrs Pitt and I met some of you formally in meetings because we wanted to find out what school life looked like from your point of view. We also spoke to many more of you around the school and in lessons. Thank you for your politeness and for the help you gave us in gathering information. Our report has just been published and so I am writing to you with a summary of what we said, with a particular focus on areas which bear directly on you.

If I had to sum up the report in one sentence it would be: Deansfield is a good school because its pupils are doing better each year and it offers a breadth of opportunity and support for everyone to succeed. I hope you are as proud of the school as your teachers are. The chances you have to study a whole range of vocational subjects are better than in most schools. The quality of work that has come from the school's link with Creative Partnerships is truly amazing and a very special feature of life at Deansfield. Your teachers, the mentors and other adults take a deep interest in your success and work hard to ensure it. Exam passes are going up at a fast rate and are getting your school noticed.

The headteacher has put many plans into practice to give you a good education but he is keen to do more. In our report and our discussions with him and other staff we have agreed that the school knows exactly what needs to be done to build on the success which has been achieved so far. Some of the teaching needs to get you to do more thinking for yourself rather than teachers giving you the answers too readily. Pupils in the sixth form need to be given even clearer guidance about the type and level of courses they should start. The school council and prefect system need to play a more important part in the school's life.

There are things which some of the pupils need to do too. I have said that you go to a good school but a few of you don't behave as well as most of the other pupils would like you to. It wastes everybody's time and you let yourself and the school down. Secondly, too many of you take time off from school, which really makes it hard for you to learn effectively. Thankfully, the great majority of you know how important school is and are keen to do well by co-operating with the teachers.

Keep up the good work and make the most of what is on offer.