

# Don Valley School and Performing Arts College

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106786
<b>Local Authority</b>	Doncaster
<b>Inspection number</b>	287610
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Bob Roberts HMI

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1462
6th form	225
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs P Hutchinson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr R Johnson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 October 2002
<b>School address</b>	Jossey Lane Scawthorpe Doncaster South Yorkshire DN5 9DD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01302 781528
<b>Fax number</b>	01302 786252

---

<b>Age group</b>	11–18
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 March 2007
<b>Inspection number</b>	287610

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Don Valley is a larger than average urban comprehensive school. It is above average in size. It serves an area of significant social disadvantage. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school has been improving in recent years and is broadly in line with national expectations. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is average as is the proportion who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Over 93% of the pupils are from White British backgrounds and there are very few whose first language is not English. The school was designated as a specialist performing arts college in September 2005.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Don Valley School and Performing Arts College is providing a satisfactory standard of education. Some aspects of its work are good and its designated status as a specialist performing arts college is beginning to have a beneficial impact. There have been a number of improvements since the last inspection: the quality of special educational needs provision has improved considerably, and is now a strength of the school; attendance has risen to a satisfactory level; and the attainment levels of students in Year 11 have improved. Much of this is a consequence of the effective leadership and management of the school. There is confidence in the leadership of the school and good staff morale, although monitoring and evaluation processes need to become more rigorous and the use made of data is inconsistent.

Academic achievement is satisfactory. Standards have, in recent years, been low in comparison to national levels, but they are improving. In 2006 the school had its best ever GCSE results and these students made satisfactory progress. Students have been making slow progress in their first three years at the school, but much faster progress in Years 10 and 11. This is because the curriculum in those years is good. It meets students' needs and captures their interests to a much higher degree. The school needs to review its provision in Years 7 to 9. Teaching is satisfactory overall and some of it is good. When considering the quality of its teaching, the school takes too optimistic a view of its quality and effectiveness and does not focus sufficiently on what students have learned. There is good care and support for students, particularly those who are more vulnerable. Systems to give students targets are in place, but do not yet engage them sufficiently to make the progress they should in Years 7 to 9.

Students' personal development is satisfactory. Attendance has risen recently and is satisfactory. Most students behave well in classrooms and around the school, but there is a significant minority in each year group whose behaviour is challenging for the school. Students have responded well to the efforts to persuade them towards healthier lives. Most feel safe at school and say that the school deals effectively with any bullying. Large numbers of them make a good contribution towards the school and the community, whether through the school council and its initiatives, or by taking part in the wide range of activities that exist for them. These opportunities are particularly strong in sport and in the arts, and this provision is developing further as a consequence of the school's performing arts status.

Over 350 parents responded to the questionnaire which was used as part of this inspection. A substantial majority, approximately 85%, expressed support for the school. Some concerns were expressed about behaviour, but parents see the extra-curricular activities and the support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as strengths of the school. Inspectors agree with these views. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

## Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

### Grade: 3

The effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form is satisfactory. The school operates an open entry policy to the sixth form and the standards of attainment on entry are lower than is usual. The school works effectively with its local partners to provide a wide range of courses which meets students' needs well. This aspect of the curriculum provision is good. Students are pleased with the choices they make and enjoy their time in the sixth form. The proportion of students who complete the courses on which they embark is good. Standards at the end of courses,

while remaining below average, nevertheless represent satisfactory achievement. Satisfactory teaching linked to regular formal assessments and good academic guidance leads to students making satisfactory progress. Teachers know their subjects well and provide clear exposition and explanations. Students comment particularly on the good relationships they have with their teachers, and personal tutors provide good care and guidance. An increasing number of students successfully seek places in higher education. Personal development is satisfactory but relies too heavily on students' take-up of opportunities. Students have a good understanding of issues concerning healthy lifestyles relevant to their age developed through the personal social and health education (PSHE) programme, although the content of this course depends upon what each tutor chooses from the resources available. The curriculum meets statutory requirements for the provision of religious education in accordance with the local Agreed Syllabus. Leadership and management are satisfactory. While improvements have been made since the previous report, leadership in the sixth form has not identified sufficiently clearly what it wants to achieve and how it is going to do so.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the rate of progress at Key Stage 3, especially in core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- Develop the Key Stage 3 curriculum to meet the needs of all learners more closely.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by developing more rigorous monitoring systems that focus more clearly on what pupils learn.
- Increase the rigour of monitoring of all aspects of the work of the school so that weaknesses and inconsistencies in practice can be identified early and remedial action taken.
- Ensure that the legal requirements with respect to monitoring racial equality and reporting to governors are met.

## **Achievement and standards**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The overall achievement of students is satisfactory. They enter the school with attainment levels that are very much in line with national expectations. By the end of Year 11, when they take their GCSEs, their standards of attainment are broadly average and so their overall progress has been satisfactory. The trend in the school's examination results is upwards, at a faster rate than the national trend. By some indicators, the school achieved its highest ever GCSE results in 2006. For example, the percentage of students achieving five or more good passes rose to 45%, a figure which is below the national average but which nevertheless marks a significant improvement from the school's last inspection in 2002. Other indicators, such as the percentage of students who achieve at least one GCSE pass, and the percentage that achieve at least five GCSE passes, were in line with national averages. However, the rate at which students make progress at the school varies considerably. In Years 7 to 9, the progress made has been poor. Results in the national tests taken at age 14 in 2005 and 2006 showed that standards were well below average. This was the case in all the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The school has been aware of this problem and has tried various strategies to resolve this issue. Inspectors were satisfied that the situation has improved and that students are currently making satisfactory progress. In Years 10 and 11, students have been making much better progress in recent years, and this continues to be the case. Progress in English is much better than that in

mathematics. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress overall.

In the sixth form, the progress students make is satisfactory. Students enter the sixth form with below average attainment levels at GCSE. Their achievements, as indicated by the average points scores for each candidate and for each examination entry, are below national averages but represent satisfactory progress from their starting points.

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

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral social and cultural development, is satisfactory. Attendance has improved and is now satisfactory. Healthier meals have been introduced and a large number of students choose to eat from the canteen at lunchtime. The school offers a wealth of extra-curricular activities and trips, which students value highly. As one said 'You can do loads here - it keeps me out of trouble!' All pupils have the opportunity to take free music lessons. Over 120 students do so, and one product is the successful school band. Students say that they usually feel safe at school and if there is a problem they have a trusted adult who will deal with the problem effectively. Students' behaviour is generally satisfactory. They are considerate and attentive to safety; for example, walking sensibly in crowded corridors. However some students and a small minority of parents who returned questionnaires expressed concerns about behaviour and bullying. The school supports students who have more challenging individual needs. Permanent exclusions have been reduced and alternative curriculum arrangements are made to re-engage students in their learning. The school is working hard to reduce the number of temporary exclusions, which is at present high. Older students benefit from a wide range of opportunities to experience the world of work and are prepared satisfactorily for their future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The quality of teaching is satisfactory, both in the sixth form and the school as a whole. The school's own view that the quality of teaching is good is not one that inspectors support, although some of the teaching seen was good. There is insufficient effective and creative teaching in the core subjects in Years 7 to 9. There is too much emphasis on teaching and the completion of tasks, rather than on matching the work to pupils' needs, engaging their interest and enthusiasm, and checking what they have learnt. Some lessons are tense as the teacher is determined to control behaviour at the expense of learning. On occasions, students are not challenged enough to think for themselves. However, on other occasions, calm, positive teaching allows lively, stimulating activities to take place and learning flourishes. In Years 10 and 11 more active learning takes place. The best teaching tends to be in the specialist performing arts areas. Information and communication technology resources are well-used. Marking is satisfactory but vague in guiding students in what they need to do to get to the next level. Some teachers use a range of assessment techniques but they tend to lack rigour and effectiveness. There is good provision and support for all vulnerable students. Support for

students with learning difficulties and those with social and emotional needs is good, especially in the nurture groups and learning support centre.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The curriculum meets all statutory requirements. Option choices in Years 10 and 11, especially the vocational courses such as catering and health and social care, enable students to follow their interests and make good progress. Specialist status has provided extensive enrichment opportunities which benefit the school and the local community. Work with primary schools in the performance arts has been imaginative and has benefited students of all ages. Excellent facilities and opportunities have been developed; for example, the media suite and free music lessons. A visible strength is the engagement of boys in digital media and the spoken English festival to develop oral skills. Students are taught to stay healthy and safe, through a comprehensive PSHE programme as well as through other curriculum areas. The range of extra-curricular activities available to students is impressive. However, in Years 7 to 9 the curriculum does not sufficiently interest and motivate learners to make the progress of which they are capable.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The school provides satisfactory care, guidance and support for its students. Child protection procedures are in place and arrangements for health and safety are robust. Effective induction procedures with feeder primary schools ensure students settle quickly. The support that vulnerable students and those most at risk receive within the school is good. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported with close and effective work with external agencies and as a result, they make similar progress to other students. The learning support centre, a small unit within the school, provides very effective support for those students who are at risk of exclusion. As one said, 'They help you get out of trouble and move you on.' Help for those students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is easily accessible for those who need it, something valued both by students and parents. Older students receive effective careers advice and guidance to support them in their choices for the future. Students are set targets in subject areas and reference is made to them by teachers, but students are not sufficiently engaged in assessing how well they are doing. The school is developing its range of assessment techniques to support students, but the use of these across the school is inconsistent and not fully effective.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The open style of the headteacher's leadership inspires confidence among his staff. It is responsible for good morale and a culture in which teachers ask for and are given support through advice, training and resources. The leadership has been effective in improving the way

the school is resourced, particularly through the achievement of specialist school status as a performing arts college. This aspect of the school is well managed with a clear focus on raising standards in subjects across the school. Monitoring is realistic and identifies strategies for improvement. Already, links with primary schools are very good and music and drama in the curriculum are greatly enriched. It is too early to evaluate the impact of specialist status on students' achievement.

Evaluation of other aspects of the school is not as effective. Although the leadership team monitors the work of the school, systems are not sufficiently evaluative. As a result, the leadership has too rosy a view of a number of the school's aspects such as the quality of teaching and the support and guidance given to students. Planning for the future is not sufficiently clear about what success will look like. There are inconsistencies in the way data is used and in the way in which the work of middle managers are monitored. The governing body is a good friend to the school, but does not challenge the school sufficiently about decisions or plans. Financial planning is sound and the plan to reduce the budget deficit has been agreed with the local authority. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school meets legal requirements regarding child protection, but does not comply with respect to racial equality and reporting to governors. There is no evidence that the school is monitoring the effectiveness of its racial equality action plan.



**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Annex A

## 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>
--	-----------------------	--------------

### 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>	3	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### 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>	3	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3	2

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

As you know, your school was recently inspected and this letter is to tell you about the results of the inspection. First of all, however, I would like to thank you all, on behalf of the inspection team, for your friendliness and cooperation during our visit.

The inspection found many things that the school can be pleased about. Standards at the school are improving and the school is providing a better education than at the time of its last inspection. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is more varied, and the help provided to pupils who need it is of much better quality. Your levels of attendance are now satisfactory. One important improvement has been becoming a specialist performing arts college. This has had real benefits for you as pupils. The arts opportunities and the range of other extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport, are a real strength of the school. A good number of pupils stay into the sixth form. They are very happy there and make satisfactory progress, with more and more going on to further and higher education. All the staff deserve a great deal of credit for these improvements. A large number of parents responded to the questionnaire which we used as part of the inspection. A big majority of them have a good opinion of the school. Most of you are happy to come to school.

We do think, however, that there are certain things that need to be improved. Pupils need to make faster progress in Years 7 to 9. The curriculum in these earlier years needs to catch pupils' interests and enthusiasm better. The teaching also needs to improve by ensuring that the work you get matches your needs and by helping you learn more effectively. The school as a whole needs to review what it does more effectively and to make sure that it complies with the legal requirements for monitoring racial equality and reporting to governors.

You are at a school that is providing you with an effective education. We are sure that the school will continue to improve, but your contribution is vital. We wish you all well for the future.