

# Dane Court Grammar School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118932
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	291290
<b>Inspection date</b>	6 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Robert Ellis HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Grammar (selective)
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	776
6th form	341
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Virginia Austin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Luxmoore
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 March 2002
<b>School address</b>	Broadstairs Road Broadstairs CT10 2RT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01843 864941
<b>Fax number</b>	01843 602742

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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Dane Court is a selective grammar school with a sixth form that is part of the Thanet Sixth Form Consortium. The school has specialist status for languages. It draws most of its students from a large number of primary schools from across the Isle of Thanet, which is an area of social and economic deprivation, and most students are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of students entitled to free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of students speaking English as an additional language is below average, as is the proportion of students who have learning difficulties or disabilities. The school has been designated by the local authority as a special educational needs resource base for two students who have visual impairment.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding education for its students. It has improved significantly over the last few years and now has outstanding provision in most areas.

Students join the school in Year 7 with standards that are above the national average but lower than those seen in many selective schools. Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 are high and students' achievement is outstanding. Results in GCSE examinations in 2006 were also high, but slightly below the average for selective schools. Standards are rising and, given their starting points, the students' achievement overall is outstanding.

Personal development and well-being are outstanding because the school has a very inclusive ethos and students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is outstanding. Students enjoy learning and feel that they are safe and well cared for because care, guidance and support are outstanding. They say that they enjoy lessons and have good relationships with their teachers and other students. Most students have positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour is outstanding. The number of students excluded from the school is very low because it has very good procedures for supporting students at risk of exclusion. Attendance is well above the national average for secondary schools.

The curriculum is good. It allows most students to choose courses that meet their needs and interests and is enriched by a broad range of activities which are designed to develop skills, confidence and self-esteem. The school's specialist language status has had a notable impact in this respect. However, access to vocational options is limited. Teaching is generally of a high quality and many lessons are outstanding. However, senior leaders recognise that a small proportion of teaching does not yet meet the school's exacting standards. Students, including those in the sixth form, say that they receive outstanding guidance and support which enables them to achieve very well and prepare for the next stages in their education.

Almost all parents are supportive. The majority feel well informed about their children's progress, and value the educational opportunities which the school provides. Parents particularly value the care and support that their children receive when they join the school.

The school is exceptionally well led and managed. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. The senior leadership team has a clear vision for the future of the school and high expectations of what can be achieved. Senior leaders monitor the work of the school extremely well and have an accurate picture of its strengths and areas for development. The school makes good use of the restricted accommodation available but the poor quality of many classrooms limits the type of activities that can be undertaken in lessons.

## Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

### Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding quality of education for its sixth-form students. Standards achieved by students at the end of their sixth-form courses are similar to those achieved in other selective schools, and most students achieve challenging targets. Most take advantage of what is offered and become mature and confident young adults. Teaching in the sixth form is generally of a high standard and in almost all subjects, students are enabled to make outstanding progress.

Most Year 11 students remain at the school to continue their education. The curriculum meets the needs and interests of all students and the range of courses is broad and is enhanced by the school's participation in the local sixth-form consortium. However, only a relatively small number of students take advantage of courses offered at the other schools in the consortium.

There are good opportunities for students to take responsibility and to contribute to the life of the school, particularly through the house system and as prefects. Sixth-form students are generally good role models and many are involved in activities to support younger students. Advice, guidance and support are outstanding and sixth-form students speak very positively about their experiences and appreciate the additional time and effort that their teachers give to enable their learning and development. Leadership and management of the sixth form are outstanding.

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

- improve the accommodation to provide a good environment for learning
- provide students with a greater choice of vocational options.

## **Achievement and standards**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

The attainment of students when they enter the school at the beginning of Year 7 is not as high as is seen in many selective schools. Students achieve extremely well in Key Stage 3. In 2006, results were significantly above the national average, and improving, and these students made outstanding progress in relation to their starting points.

GCSE results are also significantly above average and improving, and almost all students achieved the equivalent of 5 A\* - C grades in 2006, with 97% achieving 5 A\* - C including mathematics and English. Analysis of the school's data demonstrates that most students achieve challenging targets.

There are no significant differences in the achievement of different groups of students, including those who have learning difficulties or disabilities, visually impaired students and those who do not speak English as a first language.

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

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. In class, their mature and thoughtful attitudes to learning enable them to make excellent progress. Their sensible and considerate behaviour around the buildings and the site make the school a safe and civilised place to be. Students enjoy coming to school very much indeed, and this is reflected in their high attendance rates.

Students have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They value the many opportunities they have to take part in physical education and appreciate the healthy foods available at break and lunchtime. Students feel secure and confident at school. They have excellent relationships with staff and are happy to turn to them if they have problems. 'Pretty much any teacher is willing to listen to you', said one. Students have a sense of commitment to the school community, and those who have special responsibilities, such as school councillors

and house prefects, take their roles seriously and carry them out with enthusiasm. Thanks to the very high standards they reach in literacy and numeracy and their excellent social skills and opportunities to learn about the world of work, including opportunities for international work experience in the sixth form, students are very well prepared for moving on to the next stage in their lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Teaching and learning are excellent overall across the school, and this enables students of all ages to make outstanding progress. Typically, lessons are very carefully planned to meet students' learning needs, with the emphasis on pace and challenge, so that students are inspired and motivated to learn as well as they can. Teachers focus very successfully on developing students' independence, while at the same time encouraging their teamworking skills, so that their confidence and maturity grow in leaps and bounds. Resources are well chosen to interest and stimulate students, and particularly good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT). Teachers have consistently high expectations for behaviour, which means students feel well supported and able to learn. In the few lessons where teaching and learning are less than good, the pace of work is not always well planned to match the range of ability within the group, and management of activities is sometimes ineffective.

Most teachers make good use of assessment to plan their lessons and organise their groups so that students are given work at the right level to help them achieve as well as they can. Students are grateful for the feedback they receive on their work and understand what they need to do to improve.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The school's curriculum is good. All subjects are well covered and students get an excellent grounding in literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum so they are very well prepared for their future. Students have good opportunities to choose their subjects from a wide range of academic options for GCSE and A level. However, the school recognises that their access to vocational courses is limited. Enrichment of the curriculum, through clubs, events, trips and visiting speakers, is outstanding. Thanks to the school's language college status, for example, students enjoy the chance to travel abroad and take part in exchange visits regularly. During the inspection, a Bavarian band was performing at the school as part of the international programme of cultural and linguistic activities. Students are very enthusiastic about the range of sporting, musical, and other activities which they are able to try out, and the take-up for these activities is very high.

The school's specialist language college status is having a positive impact on achievement by encouraging an increased use of ICT as a teaching and tracking tool and for developing students' independence. It is also raising the profile of the school in the local community through the outreach work to develop modern foreign language teaching, which the school does with eleven local primary schools.

## Care, guidance and support

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Adults at all levels are committed to promoting health and safety and encouraging students' enjoyment and achievement. Arrangements for safeguarding students are rigorous and effective. Students are set challenging targets and their progress towards those targets is closely monitored. However, the monitoring systems are still being developed and refined and are not yet used to full effect in all departments. Students who are at risk of underachievement and those who need additional support are identified, and intervention programmes put in place to address their needs. Students say that they feel very well supported and that they know who they can go to if they need help or support. The school has developed good partnerships with parents and other agencies to ensure that students are extremely well cared for and enabled to make outstanding progress.

## Leadership and management

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Leadership and management are outstanding. The senior leadership team has made good progress in developing a positive ethos, raising achievement and improving provision. The headteacher and his senior team have a clear vision for the school's future. Those responsible for leading and managing the school at all levels have a detailed and accurate knowledge of its strengths and areas for development. All aspects of the school's work are closely monitored and thorough analysis of the information gathered is used to target actions to remedy any weaknesses that are identified. The positive impact of the actions already taken to bring about sustained improvement demonstrates an excellent capacity for further improvement.

The nature of the buildings and the layout of the site provide challenges to collaborative activities between subjects. The school makes good use of its limited accommodation and has planned to refurbish some buildings and demolish and redevelop others.

The governing body is well informed and has an accurate view of the school's achievements. Governors provide good support for the school and monitor its progress carefully.

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## 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>
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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	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
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	1	

### The quality of provision

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

<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>	1	1
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	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
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	

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

7 June 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Dane Court Grammar School, Broadstairs, CT10 2RT

Thank you for making us feel so welcome, and a special thank-you to those of you who spoke to us about your school, particularly the sixth form students who gave up some of their revision time to talk to me.

After having considered all the evidence, we judged your school to be outstanding.

We were impressed by your friendliness and how well you look after the school and each other. You told us that you enjoy being at school and feel safe and well looked after. You are well represented by your school council and have a say in what happens in your school. We were pleased to see that you understand the need to adopt healthy lifestyles and have very positive attitudes to learning.

The people who have responsibility for making decisions about your school know it really well and have a clear understanding of what it does best and what needs to improve.

There are many areas of the school's work that are already outstanding but there are two things we think could be better.

Your school needs to develop the curriculum so that there are more vocational options for you to choose from and it needs to move forward with the planned developments to the site, so that you have better spaces to learn in. You can help by continuing to support the school and playing your part in its continuing improvement.

Thank you again for helping us with our work and making our visit to Dane Court so enjoyable.

Robert Ellis Her Majesty's Inspector