

Danetre School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122065
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	314210
Inspection date	11 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Champak Chauhan HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1040
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Nicholson
Headteacher	David Howell
Date of previous school inspection	10 January 2005
School address	Hawke Road Southbrook Estate Daventry NN11 4LJ
Telephone number	01327 313400
Fax number	01327 313416

Age group	11-16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the quality of teaching and learning, the achievement of particular groups of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the impact of the school's systems of tracking students' progress. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, discussions with the headteacher, students and staff, and a governor. A wide range of documentation was scrutinised. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its selfevaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

Danetre School is slightly larger than other secondary schools nationally and students enter at age 11 with attainment that is average. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups, including those with English as an additional language, is well below national averages. The number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly higher than that found nationally. Fewer students than average are eligible for free school meals. The school achieved specialist status in engineering in 2005. The current headteacher took up post in September 2007. After reorganisation of the 14 to 19 provision in Daventry, the school has been redesignated as an 11–18 school from September 2008 and will operate as a partner in the Daventry Learning Partnership. The school will teach engineering and provide pastoral support to sixth form students.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of Danetre School is good. Over the last few years, the school's results in national tests and public examinations have steadily improved. The proportion of students gaining at least five grades A* to C in the GCSE examinations has increased from 46% in 2005 to 60% in 2007, with the latter figure being in line with the national average. Specialist targets in mathematics and science were achieved in 2006 and 2007. The proportion of students gaining at least five grades A* to G in 2007 is well above the national average but those attaining at least five grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, is well below this average. Results in the 2007 Key Stage 3 national tests in English were above average for the expected Level 5+ while those in mathematics and science were marginally below. Current internal school data and past performance show that the students' achievement is good, particularly from ages 14 to 16. As a result, the school has markedly revised upwards its 2008 targets in the Key Stage 3 tests and in the GCSE examinations. All groups of students, including those who are vulnerable, make good progress.

The better achievement and higher standards are the result of good teaching and learning. Staff work hard and prepare lessons well. The teaching is characterised by good classroom management and organisation. Students respond well to the teachers' friendly but firm manner and relationships are good. Friendly banter with good humour between the staff and students is the norm. Teachers use their good, open-ended questioning skills to extend the students' knowledge and understanding. Students, in turn, are keen to ask and answer questions. They have good attitudes to their learning and sustain their concentration on the activities set. Lessons are briskly paced, with the use of explicit timescales for particular activities. Staff use their skills in information and communication technology (ICT) well to enrich the students' learning experiences. Where there are relative weaknesses to the teaching, staff do not always use the available data on students' prior attainment to better meet the needs of higher and lower attainers.

The positive picture above is partly the result of a broad and relevant curriculum that meets the students' needs well. The school's specialism in engineering is having a marked impact on raising standards and on the range of opportunities available to the students. The provision for ICT has been significantly improved and the students value this. Close links have been fostered with primary schools to ensure better transition at age 11. An annual summer school for Year 6 pupils, for example, links work in mathematics, science and engineering in an exciting and stimulating manner for the pupils about to join the school. The needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are met well through courses that are matched to their needs, while higher attaining students can accelerate their learning by taking examinations early in some subjects or by taking more qualifications. Work-based learning is strong and the Daventry Learning Partnership, which includes other institutions, allows students to follow more vocational pathways if they so desire. Strong links exist with local engineering companies who send undergraduates to Danetre to work on creative engineering projects in the school. The students' learning is enriched by a high level of participation in extra-curricular activities, including trips and visits. Students participate in a good range of activities at lunchtimes and after school, for example the waterfowl club, business, digital media and sporting activities. In addition, there are visits to the partner school in Sweden, residential experiences for all Year 7 students and a trip to a theme park.

The good provision outlined above is supported by strong care, guidance and support for the students. The school rightly prides itself on its outstanding provision in inclusion. It was the first school in Northamptonshire to achieve the Inclusion Quality Mark. Leadership in this area is highly effective because the school has a determined focus on meeting the needs of each child. Students with additional needs are cared for extremely well. Where necessary, the school links well with other agencies to ensure that the support provided is effective. Arrangements for students welfare and safety are robust. Form tutors and heads of house keep students and their parents/carers well informed about progress. The school has improved its systems for gathering data on students' progress. The systems are thorough, underachievers are quickly identified and appropriate action taken. However, the data on different groups of students are not yet sufficiently well analysed and used across the various year groups. The school is beginning to address this issue.

The students' personal development and well-being are good. Students enjoy coming to the school and feel proud to be part of it. They say it is a safe and caring place to be. Attendance has improved and is now average, although the school continues to work hard to improve the attendance of a few. There is little evidence of bullying and students report that it is swiftly dealt with when it occurs. Behaviour is good, reflecting the good ethos of the school. Students are polite and relationships are positive. A healthy lifestyle is encouraged and students praise the facilities and opportunities offered by the school to promote this. They particularly like the inter-house competitions and participate enthusiastically in a wide range of sporting activities. The school achieved the Healthy Schools Award recently. The school council is playing an increasingly active role in making decisions and there have been several improvements because of their actions, for example in the organisation of facilities in the dining hall and the provision of water fountains.

Students are well prepared for their future economic well-being through relevant business and enterprise activities. Lessons offer many opportunities for teamwork and the students participate willingly in a variety of activities, for instance the successful 'Community Engineering Day' and 'Learning Challenge Day'. Students know how to stay safe and are aware of the dangers of alcohol, smoking and the misuse of drugs. They enjoy the experiences provided for their personal, social and health education. An overwhelming majority of parents/carers are supportive of the school. As one parent said, 'Both my children have excelled by being at Danetre. The teachers are fantastic with the students, and the office staff are friendly and helpful.' However, some did not think that the school takes sufficient account of their views or those of their children. Inspectors found that the school is working hard towards improving its communication with the students and parents.

The sustained drive by the senior leaders to improve the school is having a profoundly beneficial effect. The headteacher provides calm, strong and determined leadership and, in a relatively short time, he has developed a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the school. He has taken decisive action in implementing strategies across the school to improve provision for the students. A strong focus of this action has been to enhance the quality of teaching and the curriculum. He has extended the senior leadership team and early signs are that this is working well. Senior leaders have a much broader overview of provision, there is much better communication within the team and they are better informed about the strengths and weaknesses in the school. There is stronger accountability at all levels, including middle leaders who have greater responsibility for securing improvements in their areas of responsibility. There is a comprehensive cycle for checking on, and improving, the quality of teaching and learning and staff from the local authority help with this. Governance is good. The governing body has

a good understanding of standards and the quality of education provided. Governors support the school and challenge its performance when necessary. The school has a good capacity to improve even further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards to ensure more students gain at least five GCSE grades A* to C, including English and mathematics.
- Ensure teachers use the available data on students' prior attainment to offer greater challenge to the higher and lower attainers.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	2

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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, 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
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

- 12 June 2008 Dear Students Inspection of Danetre School, Daventry, NN11 4LJ Thank you for welcoming us to your school recently and thank you for finding the time to speak to us. I would like to state below what we thought of Danetre School. What the school does well
- You are offered a good quality of education. The school has improved considerably over the last few years and your results for at least five grades A* to C in the GCSE examinations are in line with the national average. The results for at least five grades A* to G are much better than other secondary schools nationally.
- The staff work hard; they teach you well and this enables you to make good progress in lessons. Your progress is tracked well throughout the year and, as a result, the school has revised its test and examination targets upwards for 2008; I hope all of you achieve the targets set for you.
- The quality of the curriculum is good. You are offered a broad and appropriate range of courses. The school's specialism in engineering enables many of you to enrich your learning experiences.
- You are looked after well, resulting in your good personal development and well-being. You enjoy coming to school and your attendance is in line with the national average.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, senior and middle leaders are constantly trying to make things even better for you. What the school needs to do to improve I have asked the school to:
 - raise standards and further improve results in the GCSE examinations, including English and mathematics
 - ensure teachers make better use of the information on your progress when planning their lessons to meet your different learning needs. I would like to wish all of you the best for the future. Yours sincerely Mr C Chauhan Her Majesty's Inspector

12 June 2008

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- The staff work hard; they teach you well and this enables you to make good progress in lessons. Your progress is tracked well throughout the year and, as a result, the school has revised its test and examination targets upwards for 2008; I hope all of you achieve the targets set for you.
- The quality of the curriculum is good. You are offered a broad and appropriate range of courses. The school's specialism in engineering enables many of you to enrich your learning experiences.
- You are looked after well, resulting in your good personal development and well-being. You enjoy coming to school and your attendance is in line with the national average.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, senior and middle leaders are constantly trying to make things even better for you.

What the school needs to do to improve

I have asked the school to:

- raise standards and further improve results in the GCSE examinations, including English and mathematics
- ensure teachers make better use of the information on your progress when planning their lessons to meet your different learning needs.

I would like to wish all of you the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr C Chauhan
Her Majesty's Inspector