

St Dunstan's Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123867
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	314747
Inspection dates	31 October –1 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Davinder Dosanjh 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	640
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bob Wilkey
Headteacher	Pamela Iles
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2003
School address	Wells Road Glastonbury BA6 9BY
Telephone number	01458 832943
Fax number	01458 831220

Age group	11-16
Inspection dates	31 October –1 November 2007
Inspection number	314747

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: 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 three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average and draws students from a wide geographical area. The social and economic mix of students is very wide. It has been a specialist performing arts and media school since 2004. The great majority of students are White British. The percentage of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average and there are a small number of students with a formal statement of special educational need. The school shares the leisure centre with the local community.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Dunstan's is a good school. It is an inclusive community where students feel safe and enjoy school. The school has a friendly atmosphere with good supportive relationships between students and teachers. Personal development and well-being are good. Students make outstanding contributions to the school and wider community. Students take on many posts of responsibility, such as form and sport captains, prefects, and head boy and girl. The Youth Watch group have won The Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Award twice. The extent to which students adopt healthy lifestyles is outstanding and the school has achieved the Healthy Schools Standard Award. Many students take part in sporting activities and house competitions. Attendance has improved but remains satisfactory.

Students enter the school with attainment that is broadly average and make good progress by the end of Year 11. The progress made by students in 2006 placed the school inside the top 15% of schools nationally. The percentage of students gaining five or more A*- C grades at GCSE has been above average for a number of years, although there was a decline 2007. The school is working hard to drive up standards after this decline and resolve the inconsistencies of performance across different subjects at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. A more rigorous system is being developed to monitor students' progress more effectively, and intervention strategies are being put in place to deal with underachievement, however, in some cases not quickly enough.

Teaching and learning are good overall with some examples of outstanding practice, where students' learning is challenging and exciting. Teachers are enthusiastic and use a range of activities to engage students. In some lessons, the teacher's input is too long, allowing some students to be passive rather than active in their learning. The use of assessment in lessons is inconsistent. Not all managers are sufficiently critical about the quality of teaching and learning they observe. The curriculum is good and, for a small school, offers a good choice of subjects at Years 10 and 11 and a good variety of extra-curricular activities. The school provides a high level of commitment in the care of its students and hence students are provided with good care and support. Outstanding careers education and guidance prepare them well for the future and world of work. The role of the tutor has been enhanced this year with a new tutorial programme covering citizenship and personal, health and social education.

The school's specialist status in performing arts and the media has brought benefits, in particular the increasing use of information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons and the introduction of a media GCSE. There have been many successful projects, for example, the development of a drama course by Year 9 students, to deliver aspects of personal, health and social education. Performance in specialist subjects is good in drama but inconsistent in media and music. The school recognises there is more work to be undertaken to develop the specialism further.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher sets a clear direction and has had to embrace a number of difficult challenges to bring about change and resolve staffing issues. Senior managers and middle leaders ably support her. While the school has made progress since the previous inspection, some actions on behaviour are only recent. Parents are positive about the school but some raise concerns about staffing issues and behaviour in lessons. The approach to behaviour management is inconsistent across the school, and this remains a priority for school leaders.

Capacity to improve is good with the development of the curriculum self-evaluation reviews and strengthening of the senior leadership team. There have been a number of new initiatives but these have not been evaluated to ensure they have made an impact in the work of the school and in raising standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop a more rigorous system for monitoring students' progress and put in place early intervention strategies when problems arise or are foreseen.
- Develop a more consistent approach to the implementation of school procedures on areas such as behaviour management and evaluate and monitor new initiatives.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Students enter the school with attainment that is broadly average. For the last four years, the students leaving the school have shown greater progress than might be expected taking into account their starting points. The progress made by students in 2006 placed the school in the top 15% of schools nationally. At Key Stage 4, the proportion of students who regularly attain five or more GCSE grades at A*- C has been above average. In 2007, this proportion fell to below average for the first time in some years. Good results in art, health and social care, child development, design technology, French and English hide a wide variation between progress in mathematics, science, media and ICT. Current module results in mathematics and science show that students are on course to achieve much better in 2008. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and benefit from the good support they receive.

At Key Stage 3, overall standards attained in national tests were consistently above the national average until 2005 when they declined. The progress of students in this key stage has gone from good to satisfactory over the last two years. The school is aware of these issues, having strengthened the senior leadership team with a stronger focus on using monitoring and target-setting to help support whole school improvement. Results in mathematics have started to show a positive trend over time, and science, despite a dip in 2007, shows good current progress. Current strategies are starting to have an impact in all core subjects.

The use of data has not been effective in the school. Target-setting in the past has not taken due consideration of the amount of data available and the progress of the individual. Starting in 2006, and increasing in 2007, a more rigorous system is being developed aimed at aiding the monitoring of students' progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students are enthusiastic and enjoy the range of opportunities available to them. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and a key focus of whole-school assemblies. Students adopt healthy lifestyles, which is an outstanding aspect of the school's work. There is high participation in a wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities. Students eat healthily, a theme supported by the curriculum. Students adopt safe practices and are confident discussing social issues. Systems are in place to improve attendance at the school, which has improved but remains slightly below the national average. The behaviour of learners is satisfactory, because good behaviour in lessons is not consistent throughout the school. There are many

opportunities where students can contribute to the wider community and this area is outstanding. Students act as mentors, undertake charity work and Year 11 students offer sports coaching to Year 7 as an extra-curricular activity. The opportunities for students to develop workplace skills are good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. During the inspection it was never less than satisfactory, often good and occasionally outstanding. It has improved in areas such as mathematics and ICT where it had previously been a concern. Students gain the most from lessons where the activities and questioning encourage them to discuss, explain and think about what they are doing. The pace of lessons is brisk and students are clear what they should be learning. The interest of students is maintained through the lesson by the use of varied and stimulating resources. Behaviour is managed well in good lessons. Students have good opportunities to work independently, in pairs and in groups. Where lessons are satisfactory, too much time is spent by students listening to the teacher. As a result, the students are more passive and make less progress in their learning. Lesson planning and objectives are sometimes not as precise as they could be and planning does not take enough account of students' different needs. Activities do not make sufficient demands on students and there is a tendency for the behaviour of a few students to disrupt the flow of the lesson. Assessment is good in some subjects where students are clear about targets and know how to improve. However, this is not consistent across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum caters well for the needs and aspirations of most students, particularly students with learning disabilities and/or difficulties and those who are gifted and talented. In Years 10 and 11, students are offered a wide choice of courses, with good vocational opportunities tailored to local circumstances. Students are able to choose two languages and there are good opportunities to study the arts.

There are good enrichment opportunities through a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which are valued by students and contribute well to students' health and enjoyment of school. These include sporting activities and other lunchtime and after school clubs. Many visits take place, with opportunities for students to travel overseas. Gifted and talented students are able to follow a variety of enrichment courses through the extended day provision. The school does not consistently monitor attendance of students at these activities by either gender or age.

Students are well prepared for the world of work through exemplary careers provision. This includes dedicated careers lessons, work experience, enterprise days and good links with local employers. All students benefit from a revised citizenship and personal, social and health education programme, which is delivered by tutors.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has a rigorous programme of support for those students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Meetings between St Dunstan's and its feeder schools take place to ensure that the school is appropriately prepared to support young people on entry. Since September 2006, there have been staff with the specific responsibility of providing help for those young people in most need. The school makes good use of specialist support, such as the charity Inaura. Good safeguarding procedures are in place and students confirm they feel safe in the school. Students are given good guidance about future options and three quarters go on to further education. The systems for academic monitoring of individual student progress have been improving but are not fully used across the school by all staff.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides good leadership based on agreed principles to promote good quality education and care. She is well supported by other senior and middle managers. Solid foundations have been laid, with a new staffing structure and more effective teaching, which are leading to improvement. This is seen in the good achievement of students at this caring and inclusive school.

The school self-evaluation is satisfactory. The recently introduced procedures for curriculum heads to review their own subject areas are an integral element of the review process. This is at an early stage of implementation and the full impact of this process has yet to be seen. There are systems for identifying students who may need extra help but it is too soon to gauge how well these students are supported through intervention when problems arise or are foreseen. The use of target-setting by senior leaders has not been fully effective in raising standards because of lack of rigour in the target-setting process. The school is aware of this and has made changes to the process with students now having more accurate targets.

Governance is good. The governors are very supportive of the school and are clear about their role in challenging it to secure future improvement. There is an excellent understanding about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This arises from the open relationship the headteacher has with the governors, who are committed to work with her to raise achievement and standards. Financial management is good and the school provides good value for money.

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.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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	2
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	1
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	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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

2 November 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of St Dunstan's Community School, Glastonbury, BA6 9BY

I would like to thank you for the welcome you gave to my colleagues and me when we inspected your school recently. Thank you for talking with us and giving us your views. We particularly enjoyed dropping into the reading of the novel in the library, the mathematics club and the whole-school assembly.

Inspectors have judged the school to be good. It is an inclusive community where you feel safe and enjoy school. You make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community, taking on many posts of responsibility. Some of you have gained some impressive awards for your contribution, such as The Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Award won twice by the Youth Watch group. The extent to which you adopt healthy lifestyles is also outstanding. Many of you take part in sporting activities and house competitions. The school provides good care and support to help you to do well. Careers education and guidance is outstanding in helping you think about the future. You make good progress during your time at the school and GCSE results have been above the national average for some years, despite a dip in 2007. The school's specialist status in performing arts and media has provided more opportunities and activities, which you enjoy, but the school recognises it needs to do more. Attendance has improved but remains satisfactory. There are examples of good behaviour in lessons but there is a tendency for the behaviour of a few students to disrupt the flow of some lessons.

There are some things that the school can do to become better. We have asked the headteacher and senior managers to:

- develop a more rigorous system to monitor the progress you are making and take action sooner when problems arise
- develop a more consistent approach to behaviour management and monitor new initiatives that have recently been introduced into the school.

Senior managers have a clear view of how the school is doing and where they can make improvements. The managers, teachers, governors and staff are very committed to their work. We are sure you will continue to support the school and play your part in making it even better. On behalf of the inspection team, may I wish you every success in the future.

Yours faithfully

Davinder Dosanjh Her Majesty's Inspector