

# The Deanes School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115340
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	326185
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Jones HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	1127
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	47
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ian Rudd
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jan Atkinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 December 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Daws Heath Road Thundersley Essex SS7 2DT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01268 773545
<b>Fax number</b>	01268 770157

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<b>Age group</b>	11–16
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors. The school was invited to nominate a senior manager to join the inspection team in all aspects of its work and the headteacher took on this responsibility.

## Description of the school

Larger than average, The Deanes School is a mixed 11 to 16 comprehensive that serves Thundersley in Essex. The pupils' social and economic backgrounds vary but are average overall. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is a quarter of the national figure and the proportion of those whose first language is not English is low. The ratio of girls to boys varies between year groups, with the number of girls being more commensurate to boys at Key Stage 3.

The proportion of pupils registered by the school as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, although the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is above the national figure. Attainment on entry has been close to the national average for some years. There are a small number of looked after children in each key stage of the school.

The on-site Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) nursery centre that provides childcare facilities for up to 47 children aged 0 to 3 for 51 weeks a year is managed by the governing body.

The school was granted specialist sports college status in 1998 and has also received the following national accreditations in the last three years since the previous inspection: Sportsmark, Partnership Mark, the Advanced Healthy Schools Award, Artsmark, the Intermediate International Award and Investors in People status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. Senior leaders judged the outcomes of the 2008 public examinations as average and the inspectors agree. GCSE results have been close to the national average for the last three years and the pupils make satisfactory progress. All the areas requiring improvement given at the last inspection have been addressed.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall; inspectors observed over 40 lessons, judging 60% to be good or better. The curriculum provided is good with significant progress made towards the delivery of the new diploma qualifications. Specialist status in physical education (PE) has played a notable part in leading the support for newly qualified teachers and leading the outstanding contribution made by the school to community cohesion.

The pupils' attitudes to learning are good and, overall, so is behaviour. However, the headteacher noted, and inspectors agree, that there are some pupils in each year group whose behaviour is challenging and this is a concern echoed by parents. Following the lack of dedicated local authority educational welfare support, attendance declined. However, as a result of the school's considerable efforts since the beginning of the new academic year, attendance has risen almost to the national average. The pupils' personal development is good and the school works well with a wide range of partners to promote pupils' well-being. Care, welfare and guidance are satisfactory with strengths in pastoral care. However, pupils' punctuality to school varies unduly. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory although the documentation that supports their education lacks clarity. The quality of marking, use of assessment to inform teaching and the nature of the academic guidance available varies between subject areas.

Governance is good. Governors' knowledge and understanding of the school are strong and their focus on budget management and safeguarding is a strength. Value for money is satisfactory. However, the reorganised senior leadership team has brought forward a strong focus on the tracking of pupils' progress, which is providing good strategic information. As a result, capacity to improve is good.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under eights day care and childminding. There is a friendly, homely, caring atmosphere where behaviour is appropriate, and the children are happy. Relationships are good; the staff support the children in their learning and engage with their play. There is a satisfactory programme of activities, which are well organised to support the children's skills in recognising letters and numerals as well as using information and communication technology (ICT) to support their learning. However, insufficient use is made of letter sounds (phonics) to ease the transition of three-year-old pupils into infant schools.

Good records are kept so that parents can see exactly what their children have accomplished on a daily basis. Key worker evaluations are available every six weeks; however, parents have requested a termly evaluation. When pupils leave the centre the children's records are passed to their parents. However, new legislation also requires the nursery to pass on this data to the new receiving school but this is not done currently.

Procedures for keeping the children safe and free from harm are clear, and careful checks are made on their welfare. The parents speak very positively about the day nursery, how their children are looked after and the range of activities provided. The new day nursery manager has ensured that the areas for development, identified at the last inspection, have been appropriately addressed.

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

- Enhance achievement at all levels by focusing on the quality of learning and by further utilising skill based courses across the curriculum.
- Eliminate inconsistencies in behaviour management and improve the engagement of the small number of pupils in each year group who display challenging behaviour.
- Improve punctuality to school by robust monitoring.
- Improve the use of assessment information at departmental and classroom level in order to make information more accessible to pupils and parents.
- Ensure that the documentation that supports pupils with identified learning needs is the practical, pupil level material that best supports their learning needs.
- Ensure that the EYFS day nursery provides individual children's records for transfer to receiving schools.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Standards and achievement are satisfactory. The proportion of pupils who obtain five higher grade GCSE results that included English and mathematics has been in line with the national average for the last three years; however, the academic value added declined steadily during that time. In the 2008, public examinations, boys performed better than the girls and the small numbers of ethnic minority pupils were more successful than their White British peers. Middle and higher ability pupils did not achieve as well as predicted. The performance of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has varied during the last three years, reaching a peak in 2007. The proportion of pupils obtaining GCSE passes in science and modern foreign languages was below average.

The outcome of the 2009 modular results currently secured in the core subjects has already reached the level achieved in recent years. GCSE results have been consistently above the national average in ICT and art for a number of years. The school was pleased with the 2008 examination successes achieved in health and social care, physics and chemistry although outcomes in media studies and in a range of design technology subjects were disappointing.

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

### **Grade: 2**

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. Most pupils are polite and courteous and enjoy their education. Their behaviour is good, as are their attitudes to learning. On the infrequent occasions when inappropriate behaviour occurs, it is generally managed effectively. However, pupils and parents comment that a small number of individuals in each year group exhibit unacceptable attitudes and behaviour. Exclusions are low and on a declining

trend. Attendance has improved since September 2008 and is now close to the national average. However, there is a lack of punctuality, and the systems are inconsistent for recording lateness and the sanctions imposed.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is good. The school uses effectively the Olympic themes of friendship, excellence and respect. Pupils understand the importance of developing healthy lifestyles and can explain how this can be attained. There is a comprehensive programme of PE and effective support for the emotional well-being of its pupils. The school makes a good contribution to pupils' future economic well-being and ensures that pupils play valuable roles within the school, local and international community. Pupils' experience of the international community is being enhanced through links with schools in China, Indonesia and Thailand.

The school and year councils are consulted over whole-school initiatives and the school council is becoming increasingly self-governing. Working with the bursar and PE staff from the specialist subject area, pupils have been elected to a task force to support the development of specialist status related activities across the school. Pupils feel safe in school and have good regard for health and safety.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teachers generally establish good rapport with pupils, conduct their lessons in an encouraging and harmonious atmosphere, and have a secure knowledge of their subjects. As a result, most pupils listen and take an interest in their learning. In lessons which are good or better pupils thrive when given the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning in active and investigative work. In the small number of outstanding lessons, stimulating resources, skilful and thought-provoking questioning, regular individual feedback, clearly explained assessment criteria and a well-chosen variety of tasks are delivered with the infectious enthusiasm of the teacher to engage and challenge all pupils. However, this good practice is not consistent across the school. In some lessons, teachers tend to direct activities too much, so that pupils become passive and over dependent. On these occasions, a lack of pace and challenge means that pupils cannot make better than satisfactory progress and the use of assessment to inform learning is inconsistent. Opportunities to enable pupils to evaluate their own work and that of their classmates are often missed, particularly when they are unaware of their targets or do not recognise precisely what they need to do to improve. Although most lessons have challenging learning objectives, the tasks set are sometimes not tailored to the learning needs of different groups. Teaching assistants are generally well-deployed to help pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Staff from the school's PE specialist department have effectively helped support the quality of teaching and learning in a number of subject areas.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of the curriculum is good: statutory requirements are met and curriculum changes are beginning to be reflected in test and examination results in, for example, the separate sciences. In Years 7 and 8, critical thinking courses in science and mathematics and a Year 7 'learning to learn' course enhance pupils' basic skills. There is an extensive programme of enrichment and extra-curricular activities, and pupil participation is particularly good. When

questioned, the pupils express their particular enjoyment of the wide variety of physical activities the school offers as a direct result of having sports specialist status.

The range of curriculum opportunities in Years 10 and 11 includes vocational and work-based learning courses designed to meet the pupils' learning needs and interests. The specialist status is having a good and effective impact on a number of subject areas and the widening range of additional opportunities available, both within and outside the school. For example, 16 pupils are currently studying for the young apprenticeship award in sport, which is delivered via the local 14 to 19 consortium. All pupils have at least two and a half hours of physical activity per week. The school has committed itself to introduce an extended Key Stage 4 curriculum across the core subjects from September 2009 and to deliver the creative and media diploma from 2010.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The school is a very caring community that has the welfare, health and safety of its pupils at its heart. Staff show a high level of commitment to supporting pupils, who in turn support and care for each other well. Staff vetting is both thorough and robust and meets current government requirements. Staff know the child protection and health and safety procedures well. The school works well with parents and with an extensive range of outside agencies. There is a firm whole-school commitment to treating and caring for every student as an individual.

The school has a clear behaviour code and many staff deal firmly with misbehaviour. However, the headteacher, pupils and their parents agree with the inspectors that there are some inconsistencies in the application of behaviour management and this results in inappropriate behaviour both in lessons and around the school. Learners at risk are identified promptly and there is an extensive range of effective support arrangements in place. Pupils say that problems are dealt with swiftly and in a very understanding way and they know who to turn to if they have a concern. However, the school recognises that some aspects of learning support currently lack an appropriate focus and individual education plans are not sufficiently refined so that the targets given are the practical, helpful tools required.

The recent introduction of a rigorous electronic system to monitor and support learners' progress has allowed the school to move forward in the process of personalising learning for pupils. An overall picture of performance is now available to pupils, staff, and parents. Some teachers use data well to track pupils' progress and senior staff use this information increasingly well at a strategic level. However, some departments and a number of individual staff do not make appropriate use of the information available. Variation in the quality and regularity of marking within and between departments means that pupils are not always given clear feedback on how they can improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Senior staff have been able to maintain standards and achievement in line with national norms. Senior staff's self-evaluation of this area was measured and accurate although some other aspects of provision were viewed more positively than the judgments given by inspectors.

The school provided a senior leadership team nominee to join the inspection team and the headteacher played a full part in the inspection process. Senior and middle managers were involved in the joint observations of lessons with inspectors. A formal evaluation of this exercise revealed that, although all participants identified the major strengths and areas for development in each lesson, the grading offered on some occasions was more positive than the judgement given by the inspectors. The current senior leadership team has improved the focus on the quality of teaching. However, insufficient priority is given to enhancing the quality of learning.

The development of heads of faculty has been a positive feature. Curriculum development continues to enhance the range of learning opportunities. Community cohesion is outstanding and the school works hard to support the local community; for example, by taking responsibility for the nursery provision and fund-raising for the local hospice. Staff from the school's specialist status PE faculty provide significant support to other schools and sports clubs within the local area. The global dimension is well served by the school's effective links with China and charitable work for schools in Namibia. Governance is good. The governing body and key staff have done well to manage the budget at a difficult time.



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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?	3
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

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

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

<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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	1
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 learners' needs?</b>	3
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?	3

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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	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

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

30 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Deanes School, Thundersley, SS7 2DT

It was a pleasure to meet so many of you when inspectors visited the school at the end of January. Many of you were keen to give us your opinion of the school and the wonderful PE opportunities provided as well as your view of the school meals! You invariably greeted us in a friendly manner as we moved around the school and were keen to show us your work in the classroom. Thank you for contributing to the inspection.

The standards you reach in your examination courses are close to the national average and this is a real achievement. Well done! However, you could do better if the marking of your books and the guidance you receive on how to improve your work was more consistent. The school now has a good range of information on the progress you are making and I have asked the headteacher to ensure better use is made of this data in the classrooms.

Inspectors found that six out of ten of the lessons we visited were good or better and I personally visited outstanding lessons in geography and PE. Inspectors have asked the school to focus on developing the fantastic learning opportunities, seen on occasions like these, in all lessons.

A few pupils in all year groups do not behave as well as the rest of you, so I have asked the school to be more consistent in how such incidents are addressed. The inspectors were aware that many of you travel some way to attend school but too many of you walked in late to school during the inspection and this is something you can improve.

Thank you again for your help during the inspection, I look forward to hearing of your future success.

Yours sincerely

David Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector