

The Deanery Church of England High School and Sixth Form College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106534
Local Authority	Wigan
Inspection number	336691
Inspection dates	23–24 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Christopher Keeler HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1559
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	221
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr D Mills
Headteacher	Mr S Brierley
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 38 lessons or parts of lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, and groups of pupils and students. They observed the school's work and scrutinised a range of documents, including 124 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- progress of pupils in the main school and students in the sixth form relative to their starting points and the unvalidated 2009 examination results
- action taken by the school to ensure that teaching and learning are always good or better
- the impact of specialist status (technology) on the level of student skills and the way skills are taught across the curriculum.

Information about the school

The school is a larger than average Voluntary Aided Church of England school. It has 220 students in the sixth form. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Few pupils are of minority ethnic heritage or have home languages other than English.

The proportion of students identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above average although the proportion with a statement of special educational need is lower than average.

The school has specialist status for technology and is also a Training School. It achieved the Healthy Schools Standard in 2008.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good and improving school with good capacity to improve further. Strong leadership from the head teacher has ensured that teaching and learning in the main school are good. Consequently, pupils usually make good or better progress in lessons and attain above average standards overall. Pupils' attitudes to their learning and to each other are good and they behave well in and around the school. A strong Christian ethos permeates the school and pupils are well prepared for their future working lives. Links with parents and the wider community are strong. The extent to which all subject leaders are involved actively in monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning varies, and even better use could be made of assessment so that pupils make even more rapid progress.

In the sixth form, students' attainment and achievement are satisfactory. Students would benefit from better and more frequent guidance on how to improve their work.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise sixth form achievement by improving the quality of teaching and learning and ensuring that all students receive appropriate academic guidance.
- Ensure that all subject leaders are actively involved in promoting and monitoring teaching and learning, including assessment, as a means for furthering improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Outcomes for individuals and groups are good overall. Pupils enjoy their work and make good progress in lessons. They settle down and work quickly when asked to do so. Most pupils enjoy taking responsibility for their own learning, for example by enthusiastically pursuing the learning and other development targets they have been set.

Pupils' attainment on joining the school in Year 7 is a little above average although this does vary from one year to the next. The level of pupil attainment is good as results at the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are above average. Results have risen over the least three years, particularly in relation to the proportion of pupils achieving five or more good GCSE passes, including English and mathematics. Pupils enjoy their work and make good progress in lessons. While pupils with special educational needs achieve well, some of the most able pupils could be set even more stretching targets. Overall, achievement is good.

Pupils feel safe in school. They are aware of the importance of adopting healthy

lifestyles, including the need to exercise regularly, and take good advantage of the wide variety of extra-curricular activities on offer at the end of the school day. Although some pupils believed the school could do more to help them be healthy, others spoke about the healthy options available in the canteen and knew they could request the calorific value of the food on offer. Work in food technology promotes healthy lifestyles routinely and students in the sixth form benefit from lessons on how to prepare nutritious and healthy meals on a budget. Information about sexual health and smoking cessation is available and in these areas pupils are well aware of their responsibilities to themselves and to others.

Pupils are proud of their school. They are well behaved in lessons and as they move around the school. Pupils are usually polite and courteous, and their attitudes towards learning and towards each other are good. In lessons, they settle down and work quickly when asked to do so. Most pupils enjoy taking responsibility for their own learning, for example by enthusiastically pursuing the learning and other development targets they have been set.

Pupils and students in the sixth form make a valuable contribution to the school and to the wider community. For example, they are involved in the prefect system, in making appointments to the teaching staff, and work as librarians, receptionists and as volunteers in the sixth form shop. Older pupils routinely act as 'buddies' to new pupils and as guides on parents' evenings. There is an increasingly active school council, which helps make decisions about the school community. Pupils and students are active also in raising considerable sums of money for charity and in community events such as carol singing. Attendance is above average and punctuality to school is good.

A notable feature of the school is the extent to which pupils develop effective workplace and other skills that contribute to their future economic well-being. Pupils take good advantage of the plentiful opportunities on offer to practise these, for example during work experience and Enterprise days, when working together in groups to solve problems in lessons, or when taking part in mock interviews with local employers.

The pupils' moral, spiritual and cultural development is a strong feature of the school's work and of its curriculum and extra-curricular activities. Building on the school's Anglican foundation, pupils take good advantage of opportunities to reflect on themselves and the world in which they live, including during creative work in drama and when studying topics like world nutrition and the holocaust. Pupils benefit from participation in a variety of cultural and educational events, trips and visits, for example by taking part in Black History month, and in extra-curricular activities like the school council, school band, school choir and raising money for Amnesty International. A school chaplain is available for pupils and students, and visiting speakers increasingly enrich pupils and students' experience in assemblies. An active Christian Union is run by the pupils and students. The Social Life Studies programme covers many aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and a new 'Praise and Prizes' system is proving effective in both rewarding and valuing pupils and students' work as well as their wider contribution to the school.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that teaching is generally good or better. In the best lessons visited by inspectors, enthusiastic teachers displayed good subject knowledge and used teaching aids such as interactive whiteboards very effectively. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils and harness a variety of teaching styles to make sure that pupils make rapid progress. In most lessons, pupils are well engaged and work hard. In the fewer satisfactory lessons, pupils are not encouraged to be involved actively in their learning, even where they have the necessary skills.

The use of assessment to highlight what pupils have learned already and what they need to do next, including the marking of written work, is good in some lessons but not yet a strong enough feature across all subjects. As a result, work in some lessons is not adapted as quickly as it might be to meet the needs of all pupils. Opportunities to reinforce basic literacy and numeracy skills are not always taken in lessons.

In the main school, the curriculum meets the pupils' needs and statutory requirements. It features a suitable range of relevant academic and vocational courses for children of all abilities. In Years 7 and 8, pupils benefit from lessons in learning skills. Pupils can sit

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

GCSE examinations early in religious studies and, where warranted, in music. All pupils study GCSE technology and there is an option to study Latin to GCSE. Well established partnerships with other institutions complement the curriculum. The wide range of curriculum enrichment activity provided within and without the school day is well regarded by the pupils and it makes a notable contribution to their personal development.

Support and guidance for pupils in the main school are good. Careful arrangements for the pupils' transition from primary school are built on by a strong house system and an effective pastoral support programme. A range of in-house and external services provide well targeted support for pupils, including for those who have a special educational need. Measures that are put in place to support pupils are checked for their impact on outcomes, which are positive overall. In 2009, all pupils chose to stay in education, training or enter employment after the age of 16, which reflects positively on the quality of support and guidance given to pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Strong leadership and management by the headteacher and senior staff are providing a clear direction for the school and for the sixth form. The senior team have high expectations and they enjoy the support of the staff. Some middle managers are less effective, particularly in relation to monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and in using assessment to promote even better outcomes. Governors have started to play a fuller part in this, for instance by inviting subject leaders to committee meetings and they have made progress in developing systems to hold school leaders to account. However, not all governors are fully aware of their responsibilities in relation to the promotion of community cohesion. Overall, governance is satisfactory.

Partnerships with parents, local employees and the wider community are strong and these enrich the experiences of pupils and students and help to ensure good outcomes. Contact with parents and carers is suitably frequent and teaching and other staff are readily available to listen to their concerns. Most parents and carers feel well informed about their child's progress. A fortnightly newsletter, available in hard form and by e-mail, keeps parents in touch with school life. An independent survey samples the views of parents and carers annually and meetings are held to discuss changes such as a revision of the school's Mission Statement. Partnerships with local employers and other

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outside agencies, notably the Diocese of Liverpool, are an established feature of the school and the school is well represented on, and supported by, a wide range of external bodies including the Wigan Education Business Partnership, the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce, the Wigan Business Club, and the Learning Disabilities Partnership. Specialist Technology College status has been utilised effectively to support work with partner primary schools. However, its impact has been less effective in developing technology based projects in the wider community.

Much of the school's life is infused by the principle of ensuring equality of opportunity. For example, the range of courses available to pupils recognises their different needs and aspirations; most Key Stage 4 courses are available to all pupils and where this is not the case more suitable alternatives are offered. Outcomes for groups of pupils and students are monitored closely and action is taken where necessary. For example, a gender gap identified in 2006/2007 GCSE results was narrowed in 2007/2008.

Senior members of staff have specific responsibilities for child protection and for health and safety training, and surveys show that the vast majority of pupils feel safe, including in relation to bullying and/or racist incidents. Where problems arise, they are dealt with swiftly. Suitable safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and are monitored by a designated Child Protection Officer and reviewed at regular intervals by the Governing Body. New staff appointments are subject to appropriate vetting procedures. Risk assessments are routinely undertaken for any off-site activities, and pupils are taught to adopt safe practices in lessons, workshops and in assemblies.

The school's leadership is committed to promoting community cohesion. Nevertheless, more might be done to reflect this in teaching and learning across the school.

Although they are reasonably well maintained, the school buildings do not support the delivery of a modern curriculum. Maintenance and energy costs are high and the dining and outdoor spaces available for pupils and students at break and lunch times are limited. Few large enough spaces are available, for example for assemblies and drama or music productions. Despite the failings of the accommodation, the school gives good value for money overall.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2

The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

Outcomes in the sixth form are satisfactory as most students have made the progress expected of them by the time they leave at the end of Year 13. GCE Advanced level examination pass rates are in line with the national average, although fewer students than the average achieve the higher A and B grades. Similarly, pass rates at the end of Year 12 are below average but this is at least in part due to the fact that a significant number of high achieving Year 11 students opt to pursue their post 16 studies at local colleges.

The sixth form has a positive ethos in which students thoroughly enjoy their studies. Relationships between staff and students are good. Students' personal development and well-being are good and the school offers a wide range of enrichment and other extra-curricular activities, which encourage students to participate in the wider community. For example, students work in local primary schools and organise a variety of fund raising activities. Some sixth form students act as reading buddies to younger pupils and help more generally in lessons in the rest of the school. Good opportunities for sport and recreation, and discussion and debate in the weekly tutor period, encourage students to lead a healthy life-style.

The curriculum in the sixth form is satisfactory. Although there is a wide range of GCE Advanced Level courses on offer, as well as opportunities to study for a growing number of vocational qualifications, there are fewer opportunities for less able students.

Teaching in the sixth form is satisfactory overall although some good lessons and one outstanding lesson were observed during the inspection. Where lessons were satisfactory, this was usually because they were not tailored enough to the needs of individuals, and because teaching relied more on explanation to promote learning rather than on questioning and challenging the students to think for themselves. The head of the sixth form recognises that more could be done to raise the quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form.

Care, guidance and support in the sixth form are satisfactory. Pastoral care is strong and students value the personal support they receive from both form tutors and teachers, including when applying for further or higher education courses. Attendance is good and any absence from lessons is closely monitored and followed up. Although students' progress towards achieving target grades is checked each term, the quality of the setting of the targets varies too much from one department to another and students need to be given more systematic and frequent guidance on how to improve their work.

Leadership and management are satisfactory with the capacity to improve further. The

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Head of the Sixth Form has a clear vision for its future and of what needs to be done to achieve this.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire showed high levels of satisfaction with the school. Some are concerned that the school does not help them enough to support their children's learning. The inspection team investigated their concerns but judged links with parents to be good overall.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils and students registered at The Deanery Church of England High School and Sixth Form to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 124 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1559 pupils and students registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	40	67	55	4	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	34	28	83	69	3	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	40	33	69	57	6	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	34	70	58	5	4	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	40	33	70	58	7	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	23	66	55	21	17	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	14	91	75	11	9	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	31	26	68	56	5	4	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	31	70	58	4	3	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	42	35	65	54	6	5	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	18	72	60	11	9	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	31	26	74	61	8	7	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	49	40	64	53	5	4	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



Dear pupils and students

I am writing to tell you about the findings of our inspection but, first of all, I would like to thank you for the welcome you gave us. We enjoyed visiting your lessons and talking to you about your experiences of school.

Here are some of the positive things we found out about your school and sixth form.

- This is a good and improving school.
- GCSE examination results are above average.
- You behave well inside and outside of lessons.
- Lessons are usually well taught and you make good progress in the main school.
- You feel safe and any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly.
- You are aware of the importance of living a healthy lifestyle.
- You make a good contribution to the life of the school and the wider community.
- Your parents and carers are satisfied with the school.
- The leadership of the headteacher is good.

We have asked the staff and governors to make things even better by:

- concentrating everyone's efforts on making sure that all teaching and learning is good or better
- making sure you know what you need to do to make even more progress than you do now.

I wish you all success in the future.

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