

Don Valley School and Performing Arts College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106786
Local Authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	336743
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Bernard Campbell HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
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	1340
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	223
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs P Hutchinson
Headteacher	Mrs Hanora D'Rozario
Date of previous school inspection	21 March 2007
School address	Jossey Lane Scawthorpe Doncaster DN5 9DD
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors spent the majority of their time in classes, observed 41 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of students and a National Challenge Adviser. They observed the school's work, and looked at school improvement plans, monitoring records and safeguarding documentation. They also took account of questionnaires from 80 parents and carers, and 150 students.

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

- attainment, learning and progress in English and mathematics
- the quality of teaching and the use of assessment
- what senior leaders have done to secure improved outcomes in English and mathematics.

Information about the school

Don Valley School is a Performing Arts College. In 2009, it became a foundation trust school supported by a charitable foundation which includes NHS Doncaster, Cambridge University and Pilot Theatre York. It is a larger than average size school with fewer than average minority ethnic students. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is above average. Approximately a quarter of students are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is below average. A new headteacher took up post in September 2007. The school has the Healthy Schools award, Investors in People status, the silver Artsmark, Sports Mark and Careers Mark.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Attainment overall has risen significantly since the last inspection and is now broadly average. Students are gaining a greater range and number of vocational and academic qualifications. Many students gain basic skills qualifications in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). However, attainment in English, mathematics and science remain below average.

Year 11 students make good progress overall, especially the girls. This represents a significant acceleration in progress since the last inspection. However, students have consistently underachieved in English and mathematics at both key stages. This is due to the lack of specialist teaching in mathematics at Key Stage 3 and unstable staffing in English and mathematics, due to sickness and maternity leave, which has affected the continuity and quality of teaching. Effective steps have been taken to improve staffing in these subjects, and progress in mathematics is now satisfactory, but staffing difficulties continue to limit students' progress in both subjects.

Although the majority of teaching is good, too much is satisfactory. In satisfactory teaching, tasks are not matched to the range of needs in the class, resulting in slow pace and limited challenge. Students have too little time to work independently or to learn through solving problems. Although some good examples were seen of teachers using assessment data to inform planning, these examples were not widespread. Students have a good understanding of their current attainment and future targets but many are unsure of what they need to do to improve.

At Key Stage 4, the curriculum offers a wide variety of academic and vocational provision which contributes well to students' achievement and economic well-being. The majority of pupils have chosen a specialist performing arts course and results show they achieve well in this area. Care, guidance and support are good and have resulted in improved behaviour and attendance. Attendance has improved for the first time in recent years and although still low, is now close to the national average. Persistent absence has been reduced significantly and is now average.

The headteacher provides positive and energetic leadership with a strong vision for improvement and a clear focus on priorities. Ambitions are articulated well and expectations have been raised. Morale is good. The leadership and management have been effective in improving overall attainment and progress and the quality of the curriculum, but there are continuing weaknesses in achievement in English and mathematics. Self-evaluation is honest and accurate and has led to effective action in some important areas, for example, in improving the sixth form. However, in other areas, analysis has not been sufficiently incisive and strategic planning has not led to

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early and decisive action. As a result, the school has not secured satisfactory progress in English and mathematics across all year groups and the overall quality of teaching and assessment remain satisfactory. The school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment and progress in English and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that all students make at least satisfactory progress
 - increasing the proportion of good teaching
 - ensuring that all mathematics lessons are taught by specialists
 - improving the recruitment and deployment of staff to ensure the continuity of teaching and learning.
- Improve the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good by ensuring that:
 - all teachers use assessment effectively to plan learning that meets students' needs and interests
 - students have increased opportunities to work independently.
- Use assessment more rigorously so that:
 - underachievement is identified early and action taken promptly
 - students understand what they do well and how to improve.
- Improve attendance from low to average.
- Sharpen the analysis of the school's performance in order to:
 - target actions more precisely and strategically
 - bring about sustained and secure improvement
 - demonstrate good progress in the key areas of improvement within one year.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

The proportion gaining five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics has fluctuated, falling in 2008 and improving significantly in 2009.

This was due to an improvement in the progress made by Year 11 students in mathematics. In 2009, students of all abilities made the expected progress in gaining five GCSEs A* to C, including English and mathematics. In 2010, results from GCSE early entry in mathematics show that this has been sustained and the school is on track to make a further small improvement. Early entry results in English are not as good as the previous year due to unavoidable staff absence which has affected progress. The school has provided additional staff and support for students, which is sustaining the progress of the affected students. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities

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make similar progress as their peers. A recent initiative in Year 7 to teach the lowest ability students as a group has resulted in improved progress.

Students are cooperative and keen to learn. They extend their thinking and understanding when challenged and are motivated by precise tasks with a clear purpose. They enjoy opportunities to work creatively and get involved in practical activity. However, in some lessons there are insufficient opportunities to work independently. Some more-able pupils are not sufficiently challenged to extend their learning and some lower ability students do not make good progress when tasks are not matched to their needs or understanding.

Students have a good understanding of safe practices and of how to keep themselves and others safe. Parents and carers feel that their children are safe in school. Students are confident that issues they raise will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Students' behaviour around school is orderly and considerate. Behaviour has improved and exclusions have been reduced significantly. Students are keen to learn and cooperate. On occasions, students are 'off task' and fiddle with pencils or chat, if the lesson is uninspiring, or teachers are holding forth too long.

The take-up of school meals is above average. Students value the opportunities to learn about health dangers especially from the outside professionals who come in to school to run sessions. They enjoy the sports and arts activities after school. The school is planning to increase the amount of time for physical education so that all students increase their physical activity.

Students play a positive and constructive role through the school council in discussing and implementing changes. Students acted quickly to help the people of Haiti and raised a large sum of money. Many students are involved in music, dance and drama and enjoy performing to the school and in the wider community. Overall, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Students enjoy working in teams and solving problems, but these opportunities are not extensive enough. Aspirations are rising and more students are staying on in the sixth form.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3

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

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The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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 Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

In good and occasionally outstanding lessons, teachers have high expectations of students. They use a range of teaching and learning styles and incorporate opportunities to develop key thinking and learning skills. They use a variety of approaches to question students and they build in opportunities for reflection and evaluation. Resources and the use of new technologies are used effectively to engage students. In satisfactory and occasionally inadequate lessons, strategies for questioning allow too many students to remain passive in their learning. Teachers also miss opportunities to reinforce and support literacy and numeracy skills.

Teachers are improving the use of data and assessment but practice remains inconsistent. In the better lessons, teachers explain the link between the learning activities and the assessment criteria and students are involved in both peer and self-assessment. In weaker teaching, marking is sparse and focused on effort and presentation. Too little marking regularly identifies what has been done well and the next steps for improvement. Teaching assistants often provide valuable support in delivering key points and assisting students who have challenging behaviour; at other times their deployment lacks focus.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of students. At Key Stage 3, innovative provision has begun to develop students' independent learning skills. These include the Opening Minds programme and the special days focused on a theme. Further evaluation of these initiatives is needed in order to assess their impact on learning. The creation of a class for students with low levels of literacy in Year 7 is beginning to have a positive impact on increasing their reading ages. The planning of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is underdeveloped. Students participate well in a broad range of enrichment activities in sports and arts. In addition, school trips enhance learning and enrich the curriculum.

Improved systems of behaviour management and rewards have resulted in reduced exclusions. The school works diligently with a range of agencies to support vulnerable students. For example, this has led to a significant reduction in persistent absence. The good arrangements for visits with primary schools ensure a smooth transition to

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secondary school. Good information and individual guidance, supported by Connexions and partners in business and higher education, help students make informed choices about work and further education post-16.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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?

Leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have appropriate plans and priorities for further improvement. Expectations of staff and students have been raised and staff are increasingly accountable for the progress of students, though less so at Key Stage 3. The use and analysis of data is being used effectively to track the progress of students and to support any who are underachieving at Key Stage 4. However, the monitoring of progress at Key Stage 3 and the detailed analysis of behaviour and attendance patterns is not sufficiently rigorous. The senior leaders know the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning, but the monitoring of teaching has not been sufficiently systematic and comprehensive to provide a clear evaluation of the progress in improving the quality of teaching.

The governors are well informed about the strengths and weaknesses of the school and regularly and systematically check the progress on the key areas of improvement. They have played an influential role in moving to foundation trust status and in working on the plans for a new school building. There is a good level of involvement by governors and they keep in touch with the views of parents and carers. Effective action has been taken to restructure the school staffing in order to reduce the large deficit. Further steps to eradicate the deficit are planned.

Safeguarding records are well-kept. Procedures for child protection are well known, and staff training and awareness are good. The school has effective ways to hear about students' concerns and parents have a high level of confidence in the children's safety. There is a regular exchange of information with parents and carers, providing updates on how well their children are achieving and sharing any concerns. The school has plans to improve access to information on line and to increase the engagement of parents and carers in discussion about school developments.

Partnerships have a positive impact on the personal and academic development of students. The specialist school community arts out-reach work makes a significant contribution to local schools, families and senior citizens in the community. The work with theatre companies contributes strongly to the school's success in the performing

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arts. The impact of the specialism has been very positive in raising students' awareness of community cohesion through dance and drama. The school provides a good range of opportunities to raise the global awareness of the students through days on cultural and international themes and a link with a school in China. The school has contributed well to the local community, for example, through extending the use of their swimming pool and sporting facilities for public use. The work of the school's diversity group has broadened students' understanding of differences in its own school community and beyond. The school has made good use of members of the community to work with students breaking down stereotypes and broadening their understanding of equal opportunities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

The sixth form is satisfactory and improving. Results for A2 and AS examinations in 2009 were broadly average. A growing number of students follow vocational courses in the sixth form, and their results in 2009 showed substantial improvement, with almost half gaining distinctions. Most students successfully complete the courses they undertake. As a result, more than two thirds of Year 13 students were able to progress into higher education or access their career ambitions.

The school provides for a wide range of students by offering a good range of academic A-level courses, together with an increasing variety of vocational courses at a range of levels. The school works hard to match students' needs and aspirations to suitable courses. A growing number are now pursuing combinations of academic and vocational courses. Entry requirements are flexible. As a result, some enter the sixth form with

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relatively modest GCSE results. Those taking vocational courses generally make good progress. Overall, given their varied starting points, students' achievement in the sixth form is satisfactory.

The sixth form is well led and managed. Expectations of both students and staff are high. The curriculum is developing well. Teaching and learning are consistently satisfactory, often good, and on occasion outstanding. Students enjoy being in the sixth form. Their attitudes are positive, and they are developing a growing confidence in their ability to succeed. Their progress is regularly checked, and good support is provided to keep them on track. They willingly take responsibility, for example, by taking part in the active sixth form council, or by helping in lessons with younger students. They value the good advice they receive, particularly regarding their entry into higher education. They feel strongly that the sixth form is an integral part of the school, and they rightly believe that their views matter.

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	2

Views of parents and carers

The responses of most parents and carers to the inspection questionnaire were highly positive. Most parents and carers are happy with their child's experience at the school. Most say that the school is led and managed effectively and that the school deals well with any unacceptable behaviour. There were a few written comments about the positive impact of the headteacher. There were too few written comments to highlight any other views. The inspectors agree with the views expressed by parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Don Valley School and Performing Arts College 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 80 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1340 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	31	42	53	7	9	3	4
The school keeps my child safe	28	35	48	60	2	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	48	60	22	28	7	9	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	29	46	58	6	8	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	22	28	43	54	6	8	2	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	26	41	51	10	13	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	24	45	56	11	14	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)	27	34	40	50	7	9	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	33	43	54	5	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	36	35	44	6	8	5	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	31	36	45	11	14	4	5
The school is led and managed effectively	37	46	35	44	2	3	3	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	32	40	36	45	4	5	3	4

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.



19 March 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Don Valley School and Performing Arts College, Doncaster, DN5 9DD

Thank you for being so welcoming when we came to inspect your school. We enjoyed meeting you very much indeed. We judged that yours is a satisfactory school. These were the things we liked most about your school.

- The progress you make has improved and you are gaining more vocational and academic qualifications.
- You enjoy your learning, especially in practical activities, and when you know how to succeed.
- We were impressed by how many of you take part in sports and arts activities.
- Students with difficulties get good support from staff.
- Your attendance has improved. Behaviour has improved too.

To help the school to improve further, we have said that senior leaders should:

- raise attainment in English and mathematics by making sure that you all make at least satisfactory progress
- increase the proportion of good teaching, especially in English and mathematics
- use assessment more effectively so that if you are not making enough progress it is identified early and action taken
- make sure you further improve your attendance.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Bernard Campbell

Her Majesty's Inspector

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