

# Dinnington Comprehensive Specialising In Science and Engineering

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106958
<b>Local Authority</b>	Rotherham
<b>Inspection number</b>	336778
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Young HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1416
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	221
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs M Carroll
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Paul Blackwell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 March 2007
<b>School address</b>	Doe Quarry Lane Dinnington Sheffield S25 2NZ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors, one of whom was present for the first day only. The inspectors visited 36 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, the school improvement partner and groups of students. They observed the school's work, investigated the impact of the schools' specialist status on school improvement and looked at a wide range of documentation including improvement plans and self-evaluation. Inspectors looked at school policies and procedures for the main school and the sixth form, relating to curriculum, safeguarding students, teaching and learning, student attainment and achievement, and the effectiveness of care, guidance and support. Inspectors also analysed the 246 responses to parental questionnaires, 34 staff questionnaires and 179 student questionnaires.

student achievement and attainment, including those with special needs and/or disabilities and those whose prior attainment was lower than average

the extent to which statutory requirements are met

the quality of teaching and its impact on student learning and progress

the effectiveness of attendance and behaviour management strategies

the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures

the effectiveness of leadership and management throughout the school.

## Information about the school

The school is larger than most secondary schools nationally. The vast majority of students are White British and live locally. The remaining 2% of students originate from a range of minority ethnic heritages. Very few students speak English as an additional language. Most students come from backgrounds that are neither advantaged nor deprived and the proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is similar to the national average. The number of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also similar to the national average.

The school gained specialist science and engineering status in 2004. It provides a range of extended services such as community use of its facilities and study support and is part of the National Challenge.

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

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

Overall the school provides a satisfactory quality of education and satisfactory value for money although some hard to shift issues are slowing the pace of improvement. At the last inspection it was judged to require improvement in the key areas of: student attainment and achievement, behaviour management, teaching and learning and the accuracy of self evaluation. In the intervening period substantial changes have been made to school systems, policies and procedures, and to the learning culture and environment. The positive impact of these changes has been marked in some areas, not least in the significantly improved student attainment in 2009. However, the previously identified issues were so deep-rooted that a number of them, although improved, remain concerns. The school knows that it cannot become complacent because of its recent success. Importantly, the robust school tracking system and inspection findings indicate that the trend of improving attainment and achievement is being sustained.

2009 is a breakthrough year for the school after several years in which students' attainment was significantly below national standards. Attainment and achievement has risen over the past three years and performance in the specialist subject of science exceeds the national average. Because of these improvements students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress overall and standards are in line with national averages. In 2009 the school exceeded its challenging targets, although students with lower prior attainment did less well and further work is required in this area.

The quality of teaching, although satisfactory overall, is inconsistent and there is not enough good teaching to lift students' learning beyond satisfactory. There is some good practice, but equally too much teaching was found to be inadequate. This is impacting negatively on students' learning, enjoyment and motivation.

Students' behaviour is satisfactory overall. Most of them enjoy school and say they feel safe. However, there is a 'hard core' minority of students who let themselves and the school down. They choose not to respect school rules and their behaviour is a cause for concern not just for parents, but also for other students and staff. By contrast, some students are active members of the school council, while others take on positions of responsibility such as volunteering and leadership for school and local community initiatives. However, students do not display an obvious sense of pride in the school or commitment to raising the schools profile within the community. This was reflected in the often shabby way in which school uniform was worn. Attendance, although broadly average requires improvement, especially in relation to the number of students who are persistently absent. The development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory although limited by their lack of appreciation of the cultural

diversity in Britain and by the minority who refuse to support a harmonious school community.

Recent modifications to the curriculum are helping to ensure that fewer students will be left without suitable qualifications and skills. This is particularly the case for the more vulnerable such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with low prior attainment. The collaborative work of the care and welfare teams is helping to ensure that more vulnerable students feel secure and make the progress they are capable of. The academic guidance and support students receive as they move through the school has led to the low number of former students not in employment, education or training. However, there remain concerns about the levels of persistent absence and exclusions, although both are falling.

There are some encouraging signs that the school has emerged from the legacy of underachievement that has blighted it previously. The school's senior management have effectively embedding a sense of ambition and aspiration among the majority of staff and students. This has resulted in improved performance in student outcomes and led to some success in tackling previously identified issues. The school knows its main weaknesses but self-evaluation is overly optimistic in other areas. Its specialist status is contributing well to raising standards and improving the quality of the learning environment and resources. The school has satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement evidenced by its more recent track record and current performance indicators. Most parents are happy with the school but a minority are disappointed in the school's management of unacceptable behaviour, how much it takes account of their suggestions and concerns and how much it helps them to aid their child's learning. Whilst the school meets these duties satisfactorily overall, inspectors found some evidence to support these concerns.

## **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise all students' attainment, learning and achievement, including those in the sixth form by:
  - increasing the impact of teaching on learning by eliminating unsatisfactory and inconsistent teaching and ensuring all staff routinely plan and deliver lessons that are tailored to the individual needs of students, taking account of available student data
  - giving all students, irrespective of prior attainment, opportunities to take courses and qualifications that support their future economic well-being
  - improving the impact of behaviour management to end poor behaviour
  - improving students' attendance and reducing persistent absence
- further improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - refining monitoring and evaluation procedures so that they gain a precise understanding of the relative effectiveness of actions taken and all aspects of the school's work and use the information to drive further improvement

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- making certain all staff, students and parents understand the vital part they have to play in improving the school
- increasing the impact of the strategies introduced to improve the climate for learning, improve student motivation and attitudes to learning
- Address parents' concerns regarding how effectively the school; manages unacceptable student behaviour, helps parents to support their child's learning and takes account of parents concerns and suggestions.
- About 40% of 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**

Most students do as they are asked and want to learn. They are particularly responsive and enthusiastic when teachers use learning strategies and activities that really engage them and require them to think critically or work independently with support. Most students are capable of working independently and contributing effectively during team work. However, the chances they receive to demonstrate these skills vary considerably, which affects their confidence to do so. Most students' behaviour is acceptable but the behaviour of a hard core minority is a concern, as they fail to respond to current behaviour management approaches.

Students' overall attainment and achievement by the end of Year 11 has historically been significantly below average, despite average prior attainment. However, measures introduced to raise standards have had a positive impact. In 2009, the percentage of students gaining 5 A\*-C at GCSE, including English and mathematics rose substantially and exceeded the national average. Some subjects however do not add value, such as art and design. Over the past three years standards and students' achievement have risen. Both are now broadly satisfactory. Inspection evidence confirms that this improvement is being sustained and that all groups of students throughout the school are making satisfactory progress. The school has improved its use of data to monitor and effectively support the attainment and progress of various groups of students. This is having an impact and the gap between the historically poorer achieving and more vulnerable students, and everyone else, is closing.

Most students feel safe and that the school takes appropriate steps to safeguard them. All the expected procedures and practices are in place. Health and safety, risk assessment and training measures are sound. Students' adoption of healthy lifestyles is satisfactory. They regularly take part in physical education and sport and have gained a sound awareness of factors that can affect their social, emotional and physical well-being. Some students are active in the school and local community life. They involve themselves in leadership schemes and activities organised as part of the schools' specialist status, school council, school music, drama and sport clubs. In addition, they undertake charity work and work with pupils from partner primary and special schools. Students develop some appropriate work-related learning skills such as business and

enterprise experience. They are acquiring sound literacy and numeracy capabilities which will assist them in their future careers. However, the persistent absence of some students is a concern, despite broadly average attendance levels overall. Students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. They are starting to broaden their social and cultural awareness and gain an understanding of a range of moral and spiritual issues and dilemmas. They have a less well developed notion that they live in a multi-cultural society.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective is the provision?

There is considerable variation in the quality of teaching with examples of good, satisfactory and inadequate teaching observed during the inspection. Most teachers know what they want students to learn, communicate this at the start of lessons and use activities that help them to gain the required knowledge and understanding. Structured peer and self-assessment gives students a good sense of how well they are doing. However, where teaching lacks challenge, has little obvious purpose or direction, then students' learning and progress is poor. School targets are challenging and systems

<sup>1</sup> 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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to monitor students' progress are robust. Students know their targets and school processes for identifying and intervening when they fall behind or require greater challenge are much improved. However, all staff do not use the data effectively to guide their planning or teaching.

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory and all requirements are met. The school has adapted provision and increased choice so that it better meet the needs and interests of more students. For example, a range of practically based options and lower level courses have been introduced alongside traditionally academic subjects. The school is also conscious of the need to ensure in future that all groups of students have the chance to take nationally recognised qualifications and courses irrespective of their prior attainment. The curriculum is enriched by a satisfactory range of additional curricular and extra-curricular activities. Many of these are inspired by the school's specialist status and long standing affinity with sport. There also various visits and visitors to school.

The effectiveness of student care, guidance and support is satisfactory overall. Good steps are taken to ensure a smooth transition from partner primary schools to help students feel secure when they join the school. The nurture groups in Year 7 are particularly effective. Vulnerable students are also well cared for. The welfare team ensure that all students receive appropriate pastoral support and guidance. They often work well with a range of external agencies to achieve this. Academic guidance is effective and has supported the improved student outcomes. Students receive sound careers advice. This enables the vast majority to make informed choices as they move through the school and to enter employment, further education or training when they leave school. Many students' behaviour, attendance and attainment have all improved as a consequence of better provision, including some of the most challenging and hardest to reach, though there still work to do in this area.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Leaders and managers have successfully instilled a sense of direction, ambition and urgency to the schools' improvement drive. This has created a shared vision and momentum which has culminated in a substantial increase in student academic outcomes in 2009. There has been some success in addressing the key issues from the previous inspection. This accomplishment has been strongly supported by the local authority and national challenge advisor. Staff say they are rigorously held to account



for the quality of their work and recognise the part they must play in moving the school further forward. There are various systems in place to assess, monitor and evaluate aspects of the school's work but these are in need of further refinement to sharpen their effectiveness. Although leadership and management of teaching and learning is satisfactory, it lacks coherence. For example, an up to date overview of the quality of provision is currently not present right across the school. The impact of governance is satisfactory. Statutory requirements are met and governors discharge their duties suitably. They maintain a high profile in the school.

The school's engagement with parents is satisfactory and includes regular contact about their child's progress, celebration events and guidance to support their child's learning. Despite this, a minority of parents are unhappy about several aspects of the school's work. The effectiveness of the schools' partnership working is satisfactory. There is a well established network of outside agencies which the school works with to enrich students' experience. These include student welfare, local business and partner schools. The effectiveness with which the school promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination is also satisfactory. The school has collected a range of participation and performance data on all groups of students to target support and improve provision. This has led to the closing of the gap in social and academic outcomes, particularly for more vulnerable students. It has also resulted in an enhanced curriculum, more focused and effective support groups and mentoring projects. There are few racist incidents and the school actively promotes respect for all students. The school's promotion of community cohesion is also satisfactory, which is reflected in student's satisfactory social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. The school feels it is at the heart of the community. Most students understand that they are part of a school and local community but their sense of belonging to a wider global community is less secure. The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures is satisfactory and available resources are deployed suitably to achieve satisfactory value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

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

<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Sixth form

The effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory, which contrasts with the good judgement gained at the previous inspection. The academic entry requirements have become less stringent in the intervening period as the school strives to be more inclusive and offer suitable post-16 opportunities to students previously denied a place. However, this has coincided with a decline in standards and student progress as the staff come to terms with meeting the needs of different types of students and the demands of a broader range of qualification routes. Nevertheless, students make broadly satisfactory progress during their time in Years 12 and 13, although too few students gain the highest grades. There is also some underachievement in some subject areas. Despite this slippage, a high proportion of students continue to move into employment, higher education or training. Retention rates are also high. Attendance is satisfactory but systems for tracking attendance levels are not robust. Students take responsibility for their own learning and are ambitious. They have sensible attitudes to their own and others' well-being. They make a satisfactory contribution to the school and wider community but could, and want to, do more.

Teaching is having a satisfactory impact on students' learning and progress. Learning is most effective when staff use their excellent subject knowledge to enliven their teaching, give student's responsibility and encourage them to think critically. Less successful aspects include a lack of student engagement, slow pace and poor planning. Assessment and tracking varies in quality between departments. The curriculum is satisfactory but has broadened to better accommodate the needs and interests of a wider range of students, through for example vocational courses. This provision is enhanced by a number of additional activities for which there is a good take-up, including Japanese, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and various creative and sporting activities. Counselling and support for more vulnerable students is good. However, some students did not choose the most appropriate course to meet their career goals because they received poor advice.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. New leaders have begun to introduce a raft of new strategies and systems designed to arrest the decline in students' achievement and attainment, but these are too new to have had an impact yet. These include more personalised pastoral and academic guidance and more rigorous monitoring of all aspects of sixth form provision. They are also trying to involve parents more in their child's learning.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>3</b>
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**

86% of parents say they are happy with their child's experience at the school. 87% believe the school is well led and managed and 82% agree that the school prepares their children well for the future. However, 23% of parents do not feel the school manage unacceptable behaviour effectively and 18% do not think the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns, while 20% disagree that the school helps them to support their child's learning. The inspectors found some evidence to support these concerns but that overall the school met these duties satisfactorily.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dinnington Comprehensive Specialising In Science and Engineering 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 246 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1408 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	64	26	157	64	10	4	4	2
The school keeps my child safe	56	23	161	65	14	6	4	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	74	30	132	54	24	10	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	79	32	134	54	19	8	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	48	20	157	64	21	9	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	17	136	55	45	18	3	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	40	16	132	54	44	18	8	3
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)	49	20	144	59	20	8	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	51	21	151	61	25	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	51	21	122	50	42	17	12	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	15	133	54	39	16	5	2
The school is led and managed effectively	59	24	147	60	15	6	6	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	65	26	141	57	20	8	2	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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



13 November 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Dinnington Comprehensive School, Sheffield S25 2NZ

Thank you for your cooperation when we inspected your school. We learned a lot from observing your lessons, talking with some of you and reading the responses to the pupil, staff and parent questionnaires. Our meetings with staff and our analysis of school documents also helped us to reach our conclusions.

We decided that overall the school provides you with a satisfactory education. Overall, you make average progress and reach standards in line with national averages. In some subjects like English and mathematics your performance has improved significantly. This is great because more of you than ever before are gaining 5A\*-C at GCSE including mathematics and English. We think the school's specialist science and engineering status also helps to raise standards because it has increased the quality of learning equipment and resources available to you. The quality of teaching and the use of assessment to support your learning is generally satisfactory, but there is too much inconsistency and unsatisfactory teaching. Most of you feel safe and enjoy coming to school, but a few of you are worried about the poor behaviour of a few of your classmates. We believe your behaviour is satisfactory overall but agree that a small minority of students' behaviour is a not good enough. Your attendance is satisfactory overall but too many of you miss school regularly. This affects your chances of doing well.

The quality of your curriculum is improving but is currently satisfactory. It has been adapted to include a wider range of courses that better suit your needs and interests. It also allows more of you to take nationally recognised qualifications for the first time. Staff are caring and give you satisfactory support and guidance. You are developing a range of suitable work-related learning skills, which will help you in the future. The school's leadership has enjoyed some success in tackling key weaknesses and improving the quality of education they provide for you.

In order for your school to be more effective staff need to help you all to reach higher standards, learn more effectively and improve your achievement. Secondly, the effectiveness of school leadership and management must improve and the school should address parents' concerns, including the management of some students' poor behaviour. You need to play your part by attending regularly, behaving well and working hard.

11–12 November 2009

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Yours faithfully

John Young

Her Majesty's Inspector



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