

# The Darfield Foulstone School of Creative Arts

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106648
<b>Local Authority</b>	Barnsley
<b>Inspection number</b>	382317
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7 – 8 December 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sara Morrissey HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11-16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	569
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bert Beaumont
<b>Joint Headteachers</b>	Sharon Bell Steve Ely
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 January 2010
<b>School address</b>	Nanny Marr Road Darfield Barnsley S73 9AB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01226 753223
<b>Fax number</b>	01226 751953
<b>Email address</b>	s.bell@barnsley.org

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 21 lessons and 21 teachers were seen. Short visits were also made to other lessons to pursue specific inspection trails. Meetings were held with groups of students, members of the governing body and nominated staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at leaders' analyses of progress made in tackling key priorities, current assessment information that tracks students' progress, records of lesson observations, safeguarding procedures, and responses to the school's own surveys of the views of parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The extent to which gaps in students' learning have closed since the previous inspection and whether progress is accelerating securely and strongly.
- The impact of strategies to improve teaching on students' learning and progress.
- The impact of leadership at all levels in driving improvement at the pace required to ensure that the school provides an acceptable education.

## Information about the school

This secondary school is smaller than average and numbers on roll have fallen since the time of the previous inspection. Nearly all students are of White British heritage and the proportion that speaks English as an additional language is low. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than average. The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals is also above the national average. The school is scheduled to close and amalgamate with a neighbouring school from September 2012. Since January 2011, the school has been led jointly by two headteachers, who were appointed from within the senior leadership team to lead the school until its closure.

At the time of the previous inspection, in January 2010, the school was judged to require special measures. Since that time, the school has been monitored at regular intervals by inspectors.

## Inspection judgements

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

**3**

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

**2**

### Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

School leaders have been highly effective in removing barriers to learning and promoting a culture of achievement. Consequently, the school provides a satisfactory education and is improving securely and quickly. The progress made by different groups of students has accelerated as a result of sustained improvements in teaching; gaps in learning are closing and attainment is rising at the end of Year 11 from a low baseline that reflects a period of significant underachievement in the past.

Achievement is satisfactory and improving because teachers have a good knowledge of individual students' needs. A rigorous and systematic approach to tracking students' progress ensures that teachers are able to respond quickly when potential underachievement is identified. Consequently, variations are narrowing in the progress made by different groups of students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Attainment in some subjects, including the creative arts and physical education is above average. However, while students' attainment in English and mathematics is rising, outcomes in these subjects remain significantly below the national average.

Staff have successfully raised students' aspirations about what they can achieve and motivated them to take greater responsibility for their learning. Attendance has improved and is broadly average. Punctuality has also improved significantly so that learning starts promptly at the beginning of the school day. Behaviour is satisfactory overall, and often good in lessons where students are interested in their work and keen to improve. Consequently, students make satisfactory progress and the pace of learning is accelerating. This is because teaching, that is satisfactory and improving, is tailored increasingly well to meet individual needs and fills gaps in prior knowledge and skills. However, at times, students are not all challenged sufficiently to extend their learning, especially those who are more able. In the majority of lessons, teaching proceeds briskly but opportunities are missed for students to reflect on what they have learnt or consolidate newly-acquired knowledge and skills. The quality of feedback to students is variable. Although teachers often indicate what students have achieved and identify the next level they should be working towards, the specific small steps required to secure improvement are not identified frequently enough.

The satisfactory curriculum is enhanced by some strengths, particularly in the creative arts at Key Stage 3 and vocational courses for older students. However, the

development of students' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) is not embedded fully across the curriculum and this reduces the pace of learning for some students. In addition, students' experience of different cultures and communities beyond the local area is variable. The school has particular strengths in the good quality of care, support and guidance it provides for students. Consequently, students feel safe and are supported well from the moment they are greeted at the gate by senior leaders at the start of each day. Students' contribution to the school community is developing, for example, through the student council. However, the involvement of all students in influencing decisions about the school's future development is less well developed.

The joint headteachers have worked together very effectively to drive improvement and have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses due to rigorous self-evaluation. They have empowered senior leaders to work together strategically to improve outcomes for students. For example, weaknesses in teaching have been tackled systematically and existing good practice has been embedded and shared through coaching programmes. Senior and middle leaders have responded well to the challenge provided by governors and local authority representatives to ensure that priorities are tackled rigorously. The positive impact of actions taken to improve students' future life chances demonstrates the good capacity in leadership to secure further improvement, prior to the school's closure in 2012.

Up to 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.

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

- Increase the proportion of good teaching to accelerate progress and raise attainment, especially in English and mathematics, by:
  - ensuring that all students are challenged in their learning, especially those who are more able
  - consistently providing good quality feedback for students that identifies specific next steps for improvement
  - giving more opportunities for students to reflect on what they have learnt and respond to feedback in a timely fashion.
- Develop students' basic learning skills by improving cross-curricular provision in literacy, numeracy and ICT.
- Increase opportunities for students to:
  - contribute to developments relating to their school community
  - broaden their horizons and experiences within the wider community.

A systematic approach to tackling underachievement and closing gaps in learning has secured strong improvements in students' learning and progress across the school. In 2011, the proportion of Year 11 students attaining five or more passes in GCSE examinations at grades A\* to C was above the national average. However, the proportion of students gaining five passes at A\* to C including English and mathematics remained below average, although above the minimum floor standards set by the government. Nevertheless, attainment in English and mathematics is rising throughout the school due to improvements in teaching and targeted strategies to overcome past underperformance. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well so that they are able to achieve as well as their peers.

While the quality of learning is satisfactory overall, the pace of progress is improving securely and strongly to counter past underachievement. In lessons, learning proceeds at a swift pace where teachers challenge students to extend their knowledge and skills through sequences of relevant, exciting and demanding activities. For example, in a music lesson, Year 11 students made outstanding progress in learning about the skills required for a musical performance in an ensemble. This was because teaching focused expertly on individual students' skill development and good opportunities were provided for students to reflect on their personal response to the music heard. In the majority of lessons, the pace of progress is accelerating because learning objectives are designed to secure at least good progress. Students have responded well to this additional challenge and are more eager to learn. Where learning is generally good, it is because activities are tailored well to their needs and enable students to work independently towards personalised learning goals. However, instances remain where the pace of learning is more uneven. This is because teachers provide insufficient challenge and too little opportunity for students to take responsibility for their learning. Occasionally, students do not have the necessary basic skills to tackle more imaginative tasks set by their teachers and this also limits their progress.

Students have responded well to the higher expectations communicated by staff. A culture of achievement is becoming embedded through the consistent application of agreed procedures for behaviour to support learning. Positive messages about progress are communicated regularly, for example, through 'fantastic Fridays' that enable students to celebrate success with staff and increase their motivation to learn. Students understand the importance of regular attendance and punctuality to lessons to promote learning. They feel safe in school and trust adults to resolve concerns, including any bullying, should they arise. Through the curriculum, students learn to make informed choices about leading a healthy lifestyle. The supportive community ethos that pervades the school promotes students' spiritual, moral and social development although opportunities to learn about different cultures are not as well-established. Members of the student council work on behalf of their peers to improve the school environment and raise funds for charity. However, the involvement of all students in contributing to developments within the school community and beyond is more limited. Good attention is given to transition arrangements which ensure that students are prepared well for the next steps in their education, training and employment. However, variability in students' basic skills, especially in literacy and numeracy, means that the degree to which the school prepares students for their future economic well-being is satisfactory overall.

*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>	4
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>2</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?

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and improving because of a systematic approach by leaders to tackling weaknesses in provision and a strong staff commitment to on-going professional development. For example, a recent change to planning has increased teachers' focus on securing good learning and progress in every lesson. Consequently, the proportion of teaching that is good or better is rising although some inconsistencies remain. Teachers' good subject knowledge is a common strength in teaching which enthuses students, provides good levels of challenge and extends their learning. Assessment grids, used increasingly by students as well as staff, help to identify where gaps in learning remain and enable teachers to focus sharply on a variety of activities that promote more rapid progress. For example, in a Year 10 English lesson, students assessed samples of writing, including that of their peers, identifying strengths and weaknesses successfully along with specific guidance for improvement. Where teaching is less effective, teachers talk for too long, tasks are either undemanding or not broken down sufficiently to enable all students to achieve learning goals as well as they might. Students receive regular feedback in most subjects. However, it does not always provide clear guidance about the specific next steps for improvement.

The curriculum offers a broad range of subjects that meet students' needs and interests. Enrichment is provided by a good range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport and the creative arts and trips to events such as the 'Clothes Show Live' in Birmingham. Although strengths exist in the curriculum, especially in the range of Key Stage 4 courses that include off-site provision, the improvement of

<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

students’ basic skills across all subjects is less well developed.

Students’ achievement and personal development are promoted well by good-quality care, support and guidance. Barriers to progress are dismantled because staff have a very good understanding of students’ individual needs. Actions taken are focused and are effective in securing improvement, for example, in students’ attendance. In particular, staff work together effectively, liaising well with external agencies to ensure that students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are well supported. Good transition arrangements have helped to increase the proportion of students moving on to further education, training or employment when they leave the school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The joint headteachers have worked tenaciously to overcome significant barriers to progress. They have used their complementary leadership skills effectively to increase the accountability of leaders at all levels and have established structures that encourage effective team work amongst senior and middle leaders. Consequently, they have established an accurate picture of the school’s strengths and weaknesses and increased the confidence of staff throughout the school to take actions to raise achievement and attainment. Strong leadership has ensured that teaching has remained high on the agenda for improvement. For example, the cross-curricular coaching programme, that has involved all staff this term, has enabled teachers to refine and develop their practice, resulting in further improvement.

Staff teams use well-established systems effectively to ensure that students, especially those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, are kept safe. The governing body provides good levels of support and challenge and ensures that all statutory requirements relating to safeguarding are met and reviewed regularly. Individual governors visit the school regularly and have a detailed knowledge of its work. Consequently, they are able to contribute well to monitoring and evaluating progress towards success criteria in the school improvement plan. Improvements in the quality of provision have ensured that the effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Leaders are well informed about the different groups of students in the school and take rigorous steps to tackle any discrimination should it arise. The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion is satisfactory and established links with primary feeder schools support transition well. However, opportunities to promote engagement beyond the local community are more limited. Good partnerships with external agencies support

learning well and new links are becoming established to plan future provision for students following the school’s closure and amalgamation. Parents and carers are kept informed about their children’s progress and leaders are responsive to the views expressed in surveys returned to the school. The most recent responses indicate that parents and carers surveyed have positive views about the school and that the overwhelming majority considers that their child ‘likes school’.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>2</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>2</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>2</b>
<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>

## **Views of parents and carers**

Questionnaires for parents and carers are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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 pupils' 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.**



9 December 2011

Dear Students

### **Inspection of The Darfield Foulstone School of Creative Arts, Barnsley, S73 9AB**

Thank you for the welcome you gave us during the recent inspection of your school. As many of you will know, I have visited your school on a number of occasions to check the progress that has been made since it was judged to require special measures. I am delighted to tell you that, as a result of the improvements made by leaders and staff teams, your school now provides you with a satisfactory education and no longer requires special measures. Congratulations to everyone!

You have played an important part in helping your school to improve by responding positively to the changes in teaching that enable you to focus more on making good and outstanding progress. You are making more rapid progress in your learning because teachers know more about the steps you need to take individually to accelerate your progress and plug any gaps in your knowledge and skills. The good care and guidance that you receive has led to improvements in your attendance and punctuality to school and staff ensure that those of you who experience difficulties in learning or who are feeling vulnerable are well supported.

Your school leaders have a very clear strategy to help you improve further so that the final year at Darfield Foulstone will be the best ever. Following this inspection, we have identified a number of things that will help the school to achieve its aims over the next months. These include:

- enabling you to make as much progress as possible by increasing the proportion of teaching that is good or better; making sure that feedback helps you to identify specific steps to help you improve your work and giving you time to reflect on what you have learnt and respond to your teachers' feedback
- increasing opportunities for you to improve your skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum
- providing more opportunities for you to contribute to future developments for your future education and gain more experiences beyond your local community.

You have an important role to play in helping the school to improve further by living up to your school leaders' high expectations for behaviour and effort so that you achieve as well as you can over the forthcoming months.

Yours sincerely,

Sara Morrissey  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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