

St Dunstan's School

Wells Road, Glastonbury, Somerset BA6 9BY

Inspection dates 10–11 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Requires improvement 3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement 3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement 3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement 3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement 3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Despite improvements in teaching, students' progress over time is not good enough because they have not caught up on past underachievement.
- Occasionally, work is not demanding enough for all students.
- Marking does not always clearly tell students how well they are doing and how they can improve.
- There is low-level disruption in a small minority of lessons which interrupts learning and results in slow progress for some students.
- Students' work is often untidy and careless, so that it is not fully clear if they understand what they are supposed to be learning.
- New subject leaders have not made sure school policies in assessment, marking and managing students' behaviour are fully implemented by all teachers.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, and other leaders, with governing body support, have taken decisive action to improve the quality of teaching. As a result, students' progress is improving, especially in English, mathematics and science.
- Students feel safe and say rare bullying incidents are dealt with well by adults and other students. The school is seen as warm and welcoming by students and their parents.
- Students' achievement in French is good.
- The way in which teachers and other staff support students with their personal and social development is good. There are many opportunities for students to take on responsibilities. International links are used well.
- The governing body, headteacher and senior leaders make a strong team. Together they have steered the school through a difficult period.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 32 lessons. Two of these were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other leaders, members of the governing body and students. The lead inspector also spoke to the school's improvement partner who works with the headteacher to plan school improvement.
- Inspectors examined students' work and documentation about their progress. Inspectors also looked at documents relating to how the school keeps students safe, school development planning and the school's checks on how well it is doing.
- Account was taken of 19 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and to 30 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Paul Williams, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Helen Blanchard	Additional Inspector
Kaye Palmer-Greene	Additional Inspector
Edward Wheatley	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Dunstan's School is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Almost all students are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is above average. The proportion of students supported through school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, for service children and for children known to be eligible for free school meals, is in line with that found nationally.
- The school's GCSE results in 2012 did not meet the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- A small number of students are taught vocational subjects at Bridgwater College.
- St Dunstan's School became an academy in August 2011. The predecessor school, St Dunstan's Community School, was judged to be satisfactory at its previous inspection in October 2010.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to be at least good by:
 - making sure work is always demanding enough, so that all students learn well
 - using questioning to make sure all students take part in lessons
 - making sure that students know how well they are doing and what is expected of them
 - marking students' work in a way which clearly tells them how to make their work better
 - encouraging all students to take pride in the presentation of their written work.
- Raise the attainment of students so that GCSE results in 2013 exceed the government's floor standard by:
 - ensuring that all students behave consistently well in all lessons, so that they focus on learning all of the time
 - making sure that leaders, especially those responsible for subjects, check that policies for behaviour, marking and assessment are used consistently by all staff to help improve students' learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- GCSE results in 2012 were well below average because there were significant changes in staff and several students experienced particular personal problems which affected the overall results. The school has worked successfully to ensure staffing, especially in mathematics and science, is settled, and to improve teaching. The standards now being reached by students are close to average and their progress is improving rapidly, although they have not yet caught up fully on past underachievement. The rise in standards is confirmed by lesson observations, scrutiny of work, tracking data provided by the school and the recent much improved results in modular examinations in mathematics.
- Progress in lessons is often good. Students express their ideas and understanding well in both writing and speech. They develop writing skills well in most subjects. However, too frequently the impact of what they write is spoiled by extreme carelessness and a failure to take pride in the quality of work they produce.
- Numeracy skills are secure, and a recent focus on students developing calculation skills and explaining how they calculate is having a positive impact on improving standards in mathematics.
- While progress needs to improve overall, the attainment gap between different groups of students has narrowed significantly. The most able students make expected progress. Students who are in receipt of the pupil premium perform less well than other students in the school, but the gap is smaller than it was last year. These students are now tracked carefully to monitor their progress. This tracking information shows that the attainment gap (for average point score) between these students and similar students nationally has also narrowed.
- Students with special educational needs make satisfactory and improving progress. This is because staff provide accurate support and give students opportunities to work alone and with other students to develop confidence in their own abilities to do well.
- Success in examination courses is well supported by starting some GCSE courses in Year 9, ensuring students develop a good foundation in the subjects they learn. The school does not enter students early for GCSE examinations.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Over time, the proportion of teaching which is good or better is not consistently high enough in all subjects to enable students to make up lost ground from earlier years.
- Most teachers base their planning on accurate assessment information and, in the best lessons, use this well to plan learning activities which engage and challenge students. For example, in one Year 11 French lesson, students were engrossed in an activity about popular television programmes which was pitched at the right level. However, not all teachers set work that is at the right level of difficulty for all the students in their classes. In less effective lessons, the work for some students is either too hard or too easy and this slows progress.
- In most lessons, the learning is suitably paced, with lots of opportunities for students to discuss together and develop their own ideas before expressing themselves in writing. However, teachers do not consistently insist that students take enough pride in their written work and this leads to disorganised and poorly presented books.
- Where teaching is good, students develop good attitudes to learning, are ambitious and work hard. In these instances, students' concentration levels are high and sustained throughout the lesson. Where teaching requires improvement, learning activities are not suitable for every student's needs and consequently their interest wanes.
- Questioning is used well by teachers in many lessons. In one outstanding Year 9 physical education lesson, the teacher expertly drew out ideas from the students about how to guard in netball, deepening the understanding of the whole class. However, there is not enough use of

such effective questioning by teachers to make sure that all students are drawn into class discussions, and not just a few in each class.

- In many lessons, teachers use small group work well. This encourages students to talk to each other and to strengthen their understanding and knowledge. For example, in one Year 11 religious education lesson, students considered the effect of media influences on lifestyle. They brought out their own ideas articulately in small group discussions. This lesson helped students develop respect for each other's ideas and opinions and made a valuable contribution to their moral, social and cultural development.
- Most teachers mark students' work regularly and provide students with clear ideas about how they can improve their learning. This is not always the case, and some marking is not sharply enough focused on how to improve. New marking guidelines to make sure all students receive feedback about their work in a similar format in all subjects are not used in all lessons, so some students do not know how well they are doing, what their targets are or how to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Occasionally students talk when they should be working or when the teacher is talking to the class. This sometimes means that other students do not learn as well as they could in these lessons. However, most are keen to learn.
- Students told the inspectors that behaviour has improved over the last year, and that they did not like it when other students distracted them. However, teachers' management of students whose attention wanders from learning is not consistently in line with the school's policies. Nevertheless, the number of fixed-term exclusions has steadily reduced in recent years.
- Around school, students behave well. They are polite, courteous and considerate towards each other. For example, student receptionists are confident and helpful in the way they speak to visitors. Others speak clearly and confidently in assemblies, and help other students when they are worried about anything.
- Students say they are taught how to judge risks, including those relating to internet use, drugs and alcohol. They are confident that other students and staff will help them if they have any concerns.
- Most parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) agreed that their children are well looked after and kept safe at school. The school's own evaluation of parents' views supports this opinion.
- The school has worked effectively to improve attendance and to make sure students come to school on time. While the attendance figures have improved, they are still below average, mainly because of the persistent absence of a small number of students.
- Good pastoral care and supportive relationships create a welcoming atmosphere in the school. All students, no matter what their background, are encouraged to be involved in school life.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because achievement, teaching and behaviour and safety are not judged as good.
- The headteacher takes effective action to drive forward improvements in the school. She has dealt well with rapid changes in staffing, and reorganised staff responsibilities well in the light of falling numbers of students. All staff support the efforts to raise standards.
- Action has been taken to improve weak teaching in some key subjects and now very little

teaching is inadequate.

- Senior leaders accurately evaluate the quality of teaching and provide good professional coaching and support for staff. Teachers' targets to help them improve their teaching are linked closely to students' performance and the school's targets for improvement.
 - New subject leaders have not made sure school policies in assessment, marking and managing students' behaviour are fully implemented by all teachers.
 - Students' progress is checked regularly, and any reduction in the pace of academic progress is quickly dealt with through support for individual students.
 - The school has improved its marking and behaviour policies. However, while many teachers have introduced these policies to students, some have not done so fully. For example, some students are unsure of their targets, how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve. Some other students still do not pay attention in lessons as well as they should.
 - The range of subjects taught has been reduced to make sure students spend enough time in the subjects they follow to do well. Rising standards are already evident in English and mathematics, and are spreading to other subjects.
 - The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. An international link with a school in Yueyang in Huan province, China is a good example of this as it enables students to learn about life in a different culture. There are many opportunities for students to be involved in activities at lunchtime and after school, for example the creative writing club and the extra art club. Prefects are now being asked to take a prominent role in running these clubs for other students.
 - Generally, parents are pleased with the school. A small proportion feel the school could do more to respond to concerns that are raised. However, a recent in-depth survey by the school indicates that the large majority of parents are happy with the school and would recommend it to other parents.
 - The arrangements for ensuring the safeguarding and safety of staff and students meet statutory requirements. The school takes reasonable steps to ensure that all students who attend off-site courses are safe and checks on their progress. They achieve and attend well.
 - Links have been retained with the local authority since the school took on academy status and these are effective in maintaining good communication with other local schools. The school is represented at senior leadership level on a 'teaching and learning' group and a group which looks at development of the curriculum.
 - Differences in performance between different groups of students have narrowed, and continue to narrow. Leaders are determined that all students achieve equally well, and they do not tolerate any form of discrimination. Despite some inconsistencies, standards and progress are improving. Changes in the curriculum and the increasing proportion of good teaching are leading to improved learning by students, and the school is well placed to improve further.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is committed to helping the school improve. It knows about the quality of teaching and makes sure teachers are given targets to help them improve their work and pay is linked to their performance. It makes sure its members are trained and up to date with performance information and how this compares to other schools, so that it can support the school effectively and ask searching questions about its work. The governing body makes sure procedures for the safe appointment of staff are applied and that statutory safeguarding requirements are met. It monitors school expenditure and, for example, checks the impact of the spending of pupil premium funds on speeding up students' progress.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137202
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	406660

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	456
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sheila Martin
Headteacher	Jo Stevenson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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