

# Denton Community College

Taylor Lane, Denton, Manchester M34 3NG

<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 October 2015
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher, staff and governors share a commitment to ensure that the school provides the best possible learning and welfare for its students.
- The school has a positive ethos and expectations of students and staff are high.
- Leaders have ensured that school has improved and are determined that this will continue.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's overall effectiveness and the quality of teaching. They use this knowledge to plan effective training and other development activity for staff.
- Standards have improved since the last inspection. Current information about students' progress suggests that the rate of improvement is increasing.
- Good teaching means that students learn well and make good progress.
- Students behave well in lessons and around the school. They look after the school buildings and facilities.
- Students' attendance has increased over time.
- Students are given opportunities to take on responsibility and to share their views on the school.
- Students are safe in school. The arrangements for ensuring that students are properly safeguarded are robust and effective.
- Governance has improved. Governors' committees allow them to keep close checks on the key aspects of the school. The governing body provides strong support and robust challenge to leaders.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A minority of teaching and assessment does not help students to make rapid enough progress. Students, particularly in Key Stage 3, are not always clear about the recently introduced assessment system and what this tells them about their learning.
- The school's information about how well students are doing is not used consistently well to check that all groups of students, and especially the most able, are doing as well as possible.
- While staff ensure that students share in and benefit from the school's ethos and values, too few students have the confidence needed to take the lead in this without staff support.

## Full report

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

- Improve teaching, particularly in Key Stage 3, by ensuring that assessment of students' work is more consistently rigorous, so that a higher proportion of students are challenged sufficiently and make rapid progress.
- Use all available information about the progress of groups of students, and particularly of the most able, to provide a greater level of challenge and further increase students' aspirations and outcomes.
- Provide more opportunities for students to become more confident in independently applying the school's values and ethos to their approaches in school, and so help them develop deep foundations to their learning and behaviour.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, other senior leaders and governors have established a positive ethos in the school. They are determined that students should do as well as they can and set correspondingly high expectations of staff and students. They focus on raising aspirations and challenge everyone to do the best they can, and do not use the social and economic challenges in some parts of the school's wider community as an excuse for poor attitudes or effort.
- Many aspects of the school have improved since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching, students' achievement and the effectiveness of governance. Leaders know that the school can improve still further and have demonstrated their ability to bring this about by their previous successes. Staff who completed the inspection survey recognise this improvement and support senior leaders' actions.
- Leaders use an effective system to check on teachers' strengths and weaknesses. Teachers' roles are closely matched to their strengths and, where additional training would help a teacher to develop, this is put in place. If such actions do not bring about necessary improvements, further action is taken.
- The capacity of the senior leadership team has increased with the appointment of two assistant headteachers in addition to the deputy headteachers. This allows all members of the team to focus more explicitly on their particular responsibilities.
- Senior leaders have ensured that subject and other middle leaders are held accountable for the work of their teams. Subject leaders undertake thorough checks on teaching and learning. They discuss the findings from the regular assessments of students' achievement with teachers so that teaching can be adjusted to ensure that all students stay on track with their learning.
- The subjects taught are kept under review to make sure these provide appropriately high levels of challenge to students. The time allocated to English and mathematics has been increased so that students can learn these subjects in sufficient depth. More students are now expected to take subjects which allow for further academic study after they leave the school. However, the school also ensures that suitable vocational courses are available for students who would most benefit from these. The school offers a range of extra-curricular activities including a well-planned programme of additional learning opportunities for students in Year 11. However, students said they would welcome more after-school clubs and visits to places of interest.
- Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development includes learning which emphasises respect for all and valuing others. Despite the economic challenges faced by some of their families, students have been generous in supporting refugee families whose children have joined the school. Students from different backgrounds mix harmoniously in the school. These aspects demonstrate how leaders have been successful in promoting positive values such as tolerance and respect for others.
- Leaders ensure that students have a voice in the running of the school. For example, the school council recommended changes to lunchtime arrangements and these have been put in place to positive effect. In addition, information from surveys of students is used as part of the school's improvement approach as leaders systematically draw on the student voice to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning.
- The majority of parents who shared their opinions in Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were positive about the school and would recommend it to others. This is a popular school and student numbers are growing, with Year 7 oversubscribed for the first time in 2015.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governance has improved since the previous inspection. A new Chair of the Governing Body has been appointed. He shares the vision and determination of the headteacher for the school to serve its students as well as possible and for it to continue to improve.
  - The governing body's committees have been reorganised to better reflect the school's work. The chairs of these committees have relevant skills and experience to allow them to fulfil their roles.
  - Governors ask for and are provided with detailed information about the school and its performance. They use this information to ask probing questions and so challenge senior and middle leaders.
  - Governors are confident in their approach to securing the financial stability of the school. The agreements relating to the school's payments for the use of its buildings are based on the overall size of the school. In the recent past, the school has not been full and this has led to financial challenges. The governing body manages this situation well and has medium-term plans to ensure that this financial pressure is resolved. Governors are aware of the impact of their use of the additional pupil

premium funding for disadvantaged students and of the Year 7 catch-up funding. Gaps between the achievement of these students and others are closing.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The systems in place to protect students are robust and, where needed, include parents and outside partners such as the local authority or the police. Leaders are aware of the potential risks of extremism and radicalisation which some students may face, for example, through contact with people with far-right views. They take suitable steps to reduce such risks. These range from work with individual students and their families to using opportunities in history lessons to learn about the how extreme views have been harmful in the past. Students are safe and well supported in the school.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment** is good

- Teaching in the school helps students learn well. The approaches taken to assessing students' work over time and in lessons are effective. Much teaching leads to students making at least good progress.
- Teaching is improving. The school's own monitoring, which matches inspection findings, shows that a greater proportion of teaching is now highly effective. The training and other development offered to teachers means that the school is well placed to improve teaching further. New members of staff are well supported and contribute to the improving quality of teaching.
- Teachers of all subjects use a wide range of approaches appropriate to the ages and abilities of their classes. Inspectors saw highly effective use of questioning led by the teacher to draw out and build up students' knowledge and understanding; in other lessons, students were given initial guidance and then trusted to work autonomously. In situations like these, students are required to think hard, discuss and apply their knowledge and skills.
- Teaching in English helps students to learn very well. A teacher's high expectations and carefully constructed feedback enabled students in Year 11 to respond at length and so equipped them well for the challenges they may face in examinations. Reading is systematically encouraged across the school.
- Approaches to teaching in mathematics are less well established, as the school has recently introduced a new teaching programme in conjunction with a partner school. This has led to some inconsistency, particularly in the way students' work is marked. Leaders are evaluating the new approach and intend to make adjustments to ensure that it fits the particular requirements of the school.
- Students enjoy the learning opportunities which teachers create in many subjects. For example, students in Year 9 cooperated well and persevered to develop their skills, concepts and vocabulary in a dance lesson. Similarly, students in Year 11 made rapid progress in their knowledge of theory and practical skills in a highly effective physical education (PE) lesson. In this lesson, mobile phones were used well to provide clear information and videos that helped students learn.
- The school has clear routines for setting homework. Where these are used consistently well, homework makes a good contribution to overall learning.
- Students' books show that the school's marking and feedback system is generally effective. Inspectors saw good examples of clear feedback from teachers which challenged students to respond to advice and deepen their understanding, although this is not yet universal.
- The school has well-planned systems to assess regularly how well students are doing. These are particularly effective for students in Key Stage 4 where the assessments are closely linked to examination targets. The system in Key Stage 3 is at an early stage of its development, in line with recent national changes. However, the rigour of its implementation varies between subjects and some students are not clear about what it tells them. This means that some students are not sufficiently challenged to do their best.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare** is good

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote students' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school places a high value on each individual student and ensures that systems are put in place to look after them and their learning properly. Students are well cared for by all members of staff, including their heads of year. The specialist members of staff know the students, and increasingly their families,

well. This allows the school to respond to any difficulties and to meet students' needs.

- Leaders have established good partnerships with other agencies to ensure that other services are available for students should they need them. Students learning off site in alternative provision are well cared for and behave well.
- The students who talked with inspectors said that the school teaches them about safety and keeps them safe. For example, the school provides clear guidance and detailed advice about how students can keep themselves safe online. This is particularly important as the school encourages students to use of their own mobile phones where this enhances the quality of their learning. Such use of mobile phones is controlled well and students are fully aware of the consequences if they should misuse their phone or use it when it is not appropriate. Almost all parents who responded to the survey confirm that they feel the school keeps their children safe.
- Students are taught about tolerance and respect and this can be seen in the way that almost all students behave towards each other and their teachers.
- The school site is secure and well supervised.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is good.
- Students conduct themselves well in lessons and when moving around the site. While social times are well ordered, a small number of younger boys can sometimes be less respectful of each other and become too physical. Students see this as 'messaging about' with their friends but, when it happens, the students involved do not reflect the school's ethos and values as well as other students.
- Students do not disturb others' learning during the split lunchtimes when some are on their break while others are in lessons.
- Students respond well to their teachers' high expectations of their behaviour and their attitude to learning in lessons. Teachers have effective strategies to encourage good behaviour and, if needed, are well supported by leaders in ensuring that students behave well. Students' attitudes to their learning are good.
- Students show resilience and work well with their teachers and others as they learn. This is well supported by their teachers. Students are sometimes less confident to seize opportunities for themselves.
- Students are friendly and open to visitors. They are proud of their school.
- The students spoken to by inspectors said that bullying is rare and, should any incidents happen, these are dealt with rapidly by staff.
- Students attend school regularly and are punctual to school and to lessons. Overall absence and persistent absence are both falling. This is supported by careful monitoring of attendance and early follow up, should any problems arise. The strategies which successfully encourage good attendance include setting up contracts that commit students to attend well where needed, effective support and making sure that the subjects available meet students' needs and interests.
- Exclusions from school have fallen. Alternative approaches which better meet students' needs and help them to succeed are used. These include work in the school's intervention centre, seclusion room or calm room, and longer-term options including off-site alternative provision.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

**are good**

- The good teaching helps students to learn and achieve well. Standards have risen since the last inspection.
- Students join the school with attainment which is typically well below the national average. They make good progress which enables them to reach standards which are closer to and, in some subjects, above those seen nationally. Rates of progress have increased over time.
- Inspectors saw students making good progress in lessons. The school's own tracking indicates that current students are expected to make faster progress than those previously in the school. This reflects the improvement in teaching and, for students who joined the school from the start of their Year 7, the stability of not experiencing the disruption caused by the amalgamation of the schools' predecessor schools.
- Provisional results for examinations taken in 2015 indicate that the proportion of students who made expected progress in English and mathematics has increased and matches the levels seen nationally in 2014. This improvement is also reflected in the proportion of students who exceeded their targets in

mathematics in 2015. This was not the case in English, but inspection evidence shows that more students are currently on track to exceed their targets in this subject.

- In 2015, gaps between the progress of disadvantaged students and other students, nationally and in the school, generally narrowed in English and mathematics. The exception to this continuing trend was for the relatively small number of disadvantaged students with higher attainment on joining the school.
- While the attainment of disabled students and those who have special educational needs was lower than others in 2015, these students are well supported and are currently making progress that matches that of their peers.
- Gaps between the achievement of boys and girls are closing.
- Leaders and teachers track the achievement of students carefully and use this information well to check that individual students are doing as well as they should. However, they do not draw out as much information as possible to help them understand the achievement of different groups of students. In particular, leaders have not given sufficient attention to tracking and evaluating the achievement of the most-able students.
- The arrangements to support students through off-site alternative provision make a positive contribution to the wider outcomes for those students. Leaders regularly check students' attendance, welfare and learning while they are learning off-site in this provision.
- The school ensure that students are well prepared for the next steps in their education. Careers education includes students in Years 8 to 11. Students are given early contact with universities and potential employers to raise their aspirations and give them ideas for the future. Links with local colleges are effective. Where students need extra help to ensure that they have the basic skills they need in English or mathematics to help them in the future, this is provided systematically throughout Key Stage 3. The additional funding to help students catch up in Year 7 is used well and is effective.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135122
<b>Local authority</b>	Tameside
<b>Inspection number</b>	10002198

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<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>	1107
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Professor Mel West
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nicholas Condliffe
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 336 2219
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.dentoncommunitycollege.org.uk">www.dentoncommunitycollege.org.uk</a>
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<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15–16 October 2013

## Information about this school

- This is a broadly average-sized secondary school.
- There are more girls than boys.
- The proportion of students eligible for support by the pupil premium (additional funding for disadvantaged students) is well above the national average.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is below the national average. Most students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan, is below average.
- The school works with four partners to offer alternative provision for a small number of students in Years 10 and 11. These are City in the Community, NSPP Vocational Education and Training, Tameside College and Works4U.
- The school is part of the A+ Trust. This is a group of local secondary schools, a sixth form college and a special school which work together to provide mutual support and challenge.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment in lessons. They also observed tutor times.
- The behaviour of students was observed throughout the school day.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, other senior leaders, middle leaders, a group of teachers and other members of staff, and four groups of students. They also had informal conversations with a large number of students. An inspector met with the Chair of the Governing Body and with a group of three other governors.
- Inspectors took account of 42 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents. Responses to a questionnaire returned by 32 members of staff were also considered.
- School policies and other documentation provided by the school were examined. Records including those relating to safeguarding, attendance and behaviour were also reviewed.
- The school's information on students' progress and attainment was scrutinised.
- Inspectors examined students' exercise books.

## Inspection team

David Selby, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Neil Fazackerley	Her Majesty's Inspector
Susan Lomas	Ofsted inspector
Ahmed Marikar	Ofsted inspector

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