

The Foulstone School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106648
Local Authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	301374
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2007
Reporting inspector	John Young HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	875
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Bert Beaumont
Headteacher	Mr Phillip King
Date of previous school inspection	15 September 2003
School address	Nanny Marr Road Darfield Barnsley South Yorkshire S73 9AB
Telephone number	01226 753223
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Age group	11–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The Foulstone School is similar in size to most schools nationally. The vast majority of students are White British, with very few pupils coming from black and/or minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few students speak English as an additional language. Most students come from areas in which there is social and economic deprivation and the proportion of students eligible for a free school meal is above the national average. On entry students' attainment is below average, but the gap from national averages is narrowing. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is above average. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Award and Investors in People accreditation. The school has a City Learning Centre (CLC) on site and this has enabled it to develop a range of extended school services. The school is part of the national Behaviour Improvement Programme and is also in receipt of Excellence in Cities funding. In 2011 the school will, under reorganisation arrangements, merge with another school. The school admits a number of students during Year 11 who have not attended school for some time and/or have behavioural needs.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The Foulstone School provides a satisfactory standard of education and value for money for its students. The school promotes a caring ethos and great efforts are made to promote learners' achievement and well-being. The school receives students who have been either excluded from other schools or chosen to transfer and this compounds other challenges it faces in raising standards of achievement. Despite a wider range of strategies in place to improve provision what is achieved is hard won.

Standards achieved by students by the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are below the national average. However, progress achieved in relationship to students capability and starting points on entry is broadly satisfactory overall. Some students, particularly boys, do not progress as well as they should and for most progress in mathematics is inadequate. Student's personal development and well-being is satisfactory, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Most students know and choose safe practices and healthy lifestyle options, including regular exercise. They develop a range of skills, which will contribute to their future economic well-being. Standards of behaviour, although generally satisfactory, require improvement for a significant minority of students.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. There is some good practice but too much that is mediocre and does not sufficiently engage or challenge students. A hard core of students have negative attitudes to learning which affect their own and others' learning. The curriculum is satisfactory overall and has improved since the last inspection. It incorporates a number of curriculum pathways including traditional academic courses and more vocational options at Key Stage 4. The school makes satisfactory arrangements for students' care, guidance and support. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and pastoral support is suitable, with some strengths. Academic guidance and support is satisfactory overall but the use of assessment to inform students of how to improve their work is less well developed.

Overall leadership and management are satisfactory. The committed headteacher and senior team are increasingly supported by middle managers. For the most part the schools' self-evaluation is accurate and used to inform improvements. The school has effectively tackled some issues identified from the previous inspection, in particular: enhancing curricular provision, improving attendance and improving the quality of the environment. Because of the improvements secured to date, inspectors judge the school has satisfactory capacity to make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

- Improve students' achievement in mathematics across the school and especially that of lower attaining boys generally.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning and the use of assessment to accelerate student progress.
- Improve students' attitudes to learning and the consistency and quality of behaviour management systems used.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

During their time in school most students make satisfactory progress, although the standards they reach remain below national averages. The progress students make in mathematics is inadequate.

At the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 students' results in national assessments and examinations in 2006 were below and sometimes well below average, including in the key subjects of English, at Key Stage 3, and mathematics across the school. Girls outperform boys, with lower attaining boys achieving less well. This is an improvement on the previous year and represents broadly satisfactory progress for most students whose starting point on entry was significantly below average. Students made satisfactory progress through Key Stage 3 and very good progress between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, particularly in English, demonstrating the effectiveness of some intervention strategies to raise achievement.

The school met challenging performance targets last year and current data indicates students are on track to meet this year's targets. Evidence from lesson observations and examination of students' books indicate students are making satisfactory progress overall. The school has recently introduced a number of strategies including greater use of data and more rigorous target-setting which are beginning to have a positive impact on students' achievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Students' personal development and well-being and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory. Most students do as they are asked, but they are not always encouraged to think for themselves. The majority of students behave appropriately, but a minority do not and cause disruption in lessons, particularly when teaching is not strong. This has a negative impact on the learning of all and is why some students report not being happy with behaviour in the school. Students' attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. Arriving late to school is a problem for some students and punctuality to lessons is often exacerbated by congestion as students move around the school caused by narrow corridors. Students express mixed views about the school. They are positive about pastoral support and guidance they receive in some subjects, particularly practical subjects like performing arts and after school activities. However, they are concerned about the variability in the quality of teaching. Relationships are generally good. Most students feel safe, younger ones less so. They know how to keep healthy through lifestyle, diet and exercise although not all follow the advice they are given. Students are given opportunities to make a contribution to their own community in a variety of ways, such as through the school council, but involvement with the wider community is not extensive. While students gain a range of skills likely to be helpful to them in the future, their poor skills in mathematics are a barrier to success.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The school's assessment that teaching and learning are satisfactory is accurate. Typically, lessons are well structured and appropriately managed to provide students with a range of suitable

learning activities. Most staff develop positive working relationships with students and make good use of their subject expertise to help them learn.

Less successful lessons provide too little challenge, which leads to boredom and off task behaviour. Where teachers do not manage this well it quickly escalates into disruptive behaviour that interrupts the learning of others. As a result, while students often comply, they are passive learners and do not easily take responsibility for their own learning. The quality of assessment and feedback to students is variable. Marking, for example, is not consistently evaluative and rarely identifies how students can improve their work. Difficulties in recruitment for mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) have led to lessons being taught by non-specialists, which has had a negative impact on students' progress. In the more successful lessons observed, teachers matched activities to students' ability while offering challenge. Good teaching informed by regular assessment of students' progress engaged them because it was vibrant, brisk and sharply focused. The teaching encouraged discussion and demanded students work independently. Examples of the best teaching that motivated students is not always shared across subject departments.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Issues raised by the previous inspection have been largely dealt with. Students' use and appreciation of ICT are better developed as they now have access to the CLC and the general use of ICT in classrooms. Weaknesses in religious education have been dealt with. Planning in English, mathematics and science has improved, so all students have the same curricular opportunities, though documentation does, as yet, not deal with how lessons are to be planned and taught. Provision is currently inadequate in mathematics. Support for developing students' numeracy requires further improvement.

There has been significant progress in broadening the curriculum to appeal to more learners. The great majority of students in Years 10 and 11 now study at least one work related course and this is improving their preparation for securing their economic well-being. A range of external partners are providing off-site courses including qualifications from Level 1 NVQ to Young Apprenticeships courses which students enjoy. Beyond this, those pupils who struggle with traditional examinations can gain qualifications in basic skills and personal development, which prepare them well for their next steps after school.

To better meet the needs of students within creative arts a national diploma is being piloted and other enrichment opportunities made available for gifted or talented students.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory, with some good features, particularly pastoral care. Students feel they can approach staff if they have concerns and are confident appropriate help will be given. Support provided for students with specific LDD is a strength of the school. They work closely with families and external agencies. Specialist support for students with LDD in literacy is effective, but is not as strong in numeracy. Strategies for managing behaviour in classrooms are too variable but well structured and appropriate once the student is referred. Strategies to improve attendance have been effective, but punctuality continues to be a concern. Arrangements for safeguarding students are in place and while academic tracking systems are in place and used to improve provision for specific groups it does not generally inform teacher

planning. While target-setting is in place, not all teachers ensure students are sufficiently aware of them or know how to reach them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management at all levels in the school are satisfactory. Since the last inspection weaknesses in middle management have been dealt with. The headteacher and senior management team have developed a strategy for school improvement that is understood by staff and identifies what all need to do to make improvements. Staff are committed to this plan and its underlying vision. Even at this early stage improvements have occurred, for example in attendance, the Key Stage 4 curriculum and collaboration with local providers of education and training, which has broadened what is offered to students. Better identification of student needs through tracking arrangements has focused support and resulted in improvements in standards.

A number of areas for development from the last inspection have been dealt with. Senior staff recognise there is still much work to do and their understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses is informed by a variety of monitoring systems, including questionnaires and surveys of students, parents and teachers views. The leadership team's understanding of the school is good and they are taking note of what they have learnt. Most parents are supportive though some are concerned about the behaviour of a minority of students whose attitudes and behaviour are seen as unacceptable. Many students agree with this view.

The school has a caring ethos and staff work hard to ensure equality of opportunity and students' well-being are promoted. Some staff development and training has supported improvements made. Detailed performance management arrangements are established and robust monitoring and evaluation ensures staff account for their performance. However, systems are not as rigorous in ensuring how effectively policies, practice and working arrangements impact on teaching, behaviour management and assessment. As a result there is inconsistency in these areas across the school. Governors are both supportive and challenging. They fulfil their responsibilities satisfactorily and have a clear view of how the school is operating.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of The Foulstone School, Barnsley, S73 9AB

Thank you for talking to us and making us so welcome on our recent inspection visit. We saw your lessons, looked at your work and read the results of questionnaires completed by you and your parents/carers. They proved to be very helpful.

Here is a summary of our main findings, which I hope will be of interest to you.

- Your school provides you with a satisfactory quality of education and leadership and management are also satisfactory. Most students make satisfactory progress but not all achieve as well in mathematics and we noticed that girls performed better than boys.
- We were pleased with the way many of you have improved your attendance but notice that some still arrive late to school and lessons. We are also aware of your concern and that of your parents about others' behaviour, which sometimes interrupts lessons. We were pleased with how the curriculum in Key Stage 4 has changed so you have wider opportunities to do courses at college and in school that are new. We feel that many of the opportunities you have will help you later in life and help you in the world of work.
- The school makes satisfactory provision for your care, support and guidance, although academic guidance is not yet as effective as the pastoral guidance you receive. Although satisfactory overall, the quality of teaching is too variable and some of it is not good enough. This has a negative effect on your attitudes to learning and behaviour. In the best lessons we saw you found the work interesting and challenging and you made good progress. The curriculum is generally well matched to your needs and interests. You have access to a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities, which you enjoy taking part in. Provision in mathematics and information and communication technology requires improvement.

We have asked the school to improve the achievement of some groups of boys and of all of you in mathematics. In addition the school needs to improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning and make better use of assessment to help you achieve as well as you should. Some of your attitudes to learning need to improve, as does the way any poor behaviour you show is managed by staff.