

The Foulstone School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106648
Local Authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	336715
Inspection dates	20–21 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Jan Bennett 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 of pupils on the school roll	714
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Bert Beaumont
Headteacher	Mr Phillip King
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 31 lessons and held meetings with staff, students and a governor. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents relating to leadership and management, safeguarding of students, teaching, assessment and the curriculum. Inspection questionnaires were returned by 125 parents and carers, 82 students and 30 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work including the impact of the curriculum and care, guidance and support on students' personal development and achievement. It looked in detail at the following:

- the quality of learning and the progress made by students of all abilities, including those with special educational needs
- the quality and leadership of teaching and assessment
- the effectiveness of leadership and management in addressing issues from the previous inspection and demonstrating a capacity for sustained improvement.

Information about the school

Darfield Foulstone School of Creative Arts is smaller than the average secondary school and the number of students on roll is falling. The vast majority of students are from White British backgrounds. More students than average are eligible for free school meals and the school has a higher than average proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school was awarded specialist arts status in April 2009. There is a City Learning Centre on site that is managed separately from the school and serves schools across the local authority. In 2012, Darfield Foulstone will merge with a neighbouring school and move to a new building.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

The attainment of students leaving the school has been low for a number of years. There have been some improvements recently, namely an increase of nine percentage points in the proportion of students gaining five or more high grade GCSE passes, including English and mathematics. This improvement is largely due to a range of interventions, such as extra lessons and one-to-one support for selected students in Key Stage 4. Overall attainment has remained stubbornly low, however, and is not moving any closer to the national average. There has been considerable under-achievement over the last three years, in mathematics particularly, but also in English. The school's tracking data suggest that the progress of current students is improving but insufficient time has elapsed to indicate sustained improvement.

Leaders know that costly interventions are not sustainable and they must improve the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise achievement in the longer term. However they have failed to do this. The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Weaknesses in teaching, identified at the last inspection, have not been tackled effectively to raise achievement quickly enough. For example, the use of assessment information to plan lessons that enhance learning remains under-developed. Teaching is not consistently good enough to enable students to close gaps in their prior learning and achieve as well as they should. The school's evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning is not accurate and the system for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching is ineffective.

The curriculum has been strengthened in recent years and contributes well to students' personal development. The range of vocational provision has been expanded to include courses that are engaging lower-attaining boys more effectively and the new Key Stage 3 curriculum is utilising the good practice developed in creative arts to develop students' personal and thinking skills. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall with elements of good practice that enable some of the most potentially vulnerable students to thrive.

There have been improvements in the curriculum since the last inspection but leaders at all levels have failed to secure the necessary improvements in attainment and the quality of teaching. There is insufficient regular and rigorous checking to ensure that

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plans and policies are being implemented. The self-evaluation process is not robust and key judgements are too generous. The school's inaccurate view of its effectiveness combined with a failure to make the necessary improvements since the last inspection means that there is insufficient capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Close the gap between attainment at Darfield Foulstone and the national average by:
 - making sure that students of all abilities make consistently good progress
 - improving attainment and achievement in mathematics and English.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - making sure that teachers use information about students' prior achievement and potential in order to plan lessons that meet the needs of everyone in the class
 - ensuring that teachers make better use of assessment to enhance learning by developing more skilful questioning techniques and improving the quality of marking
 - introducing a co-ordinated approach to identifying common weaknesses in teaching across the school and providing appropriate training and development.
- Ensure that quality assurance is more robust and effective by:
 - introducing systematic and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the school's work especially teaching
 - ensuring that the self evaluation process is more incisive and accurate
 - making certain that there is a consistent approach from all managers to eradicating under-performance.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Students' attainment is rising but not quickly enough. Students' achievement relative to their starting points is too variable and they do not all achieve as well as they should. Students joining the school in Year 7 have prior attainment that is below average, but with some variation from year to year. By the end of Year 11, attainment is significantly below average and has been for a number of years. The proportion of students obtaining five or more high grade passes at GCSE, including English and mathematics, rose by nine percentage points largely due to the intensive support given to some students. This figure exceeded the National Challenge threshold of 30% for the first time but was still well below the national average. Although the students receiving the extra help clearly benefited, attainment overall remained significantly below average. The attainment of some students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is particularly low in comparison to similar students nationally. The number of students gaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to G fell in 2008 to significantly below

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average and did not improve in 2009. The school internal tracking data, which have proved reliable in the past, suggest an improving pattern of progress and that attainment will improve next year.

Statistics show that students have not made the progress expected of them, given their results at the end of Key Stage 2, for the last three years. In recent years, lower-ability students, in particular, have not made the progress of which they are capable and there has also been significant under-achievement in mathematics. While students make satisfactory progress in lessons generally, the standard of work in many students' books, especially in mathematics, confirms that not all students are making the progress they should over time. Inspectors found behaviour to be satisfactory despite the concerns of a few parents. Students say that they feel safe in school and that instances of bullying are dealt with effectively. The rich curriculum ensures that students know how to keep safe and are able to explore social and moral issues. They also know how to stay healthy but do not always choose healthy options. The wide range of extra-curricular activities provides ample opportunities to keep fit and contribute to the local community. Attendance is above average. Although the proportion of students obtaining high grade passes in GCSE English and mathematics is low, they are gaining qualifications in information technology, literacy and numeracy that are helping them to find employment.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2

¹ 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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The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

3

How effective is the provision?

Inspectors saw some examples of good teaching, mainly in the specialist subject areas. In these lessons, students enjoyed their learning, took a pride in their work and participated well. The lessons were well planned with a range of activities that motivated and engaged the students. Teachers generally have a secure knowledge of their subject and resources are used well to augment learning, especially information and communication technology. However, too much teaching is satisfactory. In many lessons, students are either restless and need constant reminding to keep them focused on their work or they are passive and lose interest. Teachers do not use their knowledge of students' prior attainment to plan lessons and many of the tasks do not meet the varying needs of students. Teachers questioning skills are generally under-developed. They do not make sufficient use of questioning to check understanding, challenge thinking or bring students back on task. Questions are undirected and students either shout out answers or the teacher asks the same few volunteers to answer each time. Incorrect answers are ignored and not unpicked in order to clarify understanding. Marking is very variable. In some subjects, such as mathematics, it is very sporadic and cursory but in other subjects, such as English, students are given detailed and regular feedback. The presentation of many students' books is poor, with scribbles, graffiti and torn pages going unchecked, reflecting a poor attitude to learning.

The curriculum has been enhanced over the last few years to meet students' needs more closely. Working in collaboration with other schools and providers, the school is able to offer a wide and varied curriculum in Key Stage 4 that includes vocational courses, Diplomas and Young Apprenticeships. The curriculum in Key Stage 3 has been revised and expertise in the specialist subject areas is being used effectively in its development. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities that helps to motivate students, including those at risk of becoming disaffected, and encourages them to attend.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory with some good features. The support and care for potentially the most vulnerable students is good and the school works well with other support agencies. Students receive good careers guidance and the proportion of students who do not progress into education, employment or training is falling. The number of students whose destination is unknown has risen, however. Strategies to improve attendance have been successful but the proportion of persistent absentees remains above average.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching

Taking into account:

The use of assessment to support learning

4

4

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The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders have worked hard to improve provision and there have been some successes. The curriculum has been strengthened considerably and is beginning to have a positive effect on outcomes for students but weaknesses in teaching are limiting its impact. The school has also been awarded specialist status in the last year and is already working with local primary schools and other organisations. However, senior leaders have not demonstrated capacity to drive forward improvements at a quick enough pace. They have not been able to improve the quality of teaching and this has seriously hampered attempts to raise attainment. Senior leaders' view of the quality of teaching and learning is unrealistically positive, given the outcomes for students and the standard of students' written work. There is no central analysis of findings from lesson observations in order to pinpoint common weaknesses that need to be addressed or to highlight good practice that could be shared. Similarly, the monitoring of other aspects of the school's work is not rigorous or systematic enough to bring about much needed improvements. For example, the quality of marking is poor in some subject areas but this has neither been identified nor addressed despite regular audits carried out by middle leaders. The work of middle managers is not co-ordinated sufficiently which is leading to inconsistencies between departments.

The school tries hard to engage parents and consults them regularly. Successful strategies used with parents of students targeted as part of the National Challenge initiative are being introduced more widely. The school works in partnership with other local schools on 14-19 provision and with support agencies to ensure that potentially vulnerable students are supported effectively. Other partnerships are also developing as a result of the creative arts specialist status. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory and local links are strengthening as a result of the specialism. However, national and international links that will prepare students for life in a multi-cultural society are under-developed. Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory and there is a strong safeguarding culture. The school is active in tackling discrimination and promoting equality. Leaders analyse achievement data regularly to try to ensure that no particular group of students under-performs.

Governors are very supportive of the school and have an appropriate range of expertise and knowledge. They are not afraid to challenge senior leaders but they do not always receive accurate and detailed reports on a timely basis to enable them to be fully effective. They have supported the headteacher well in addressing inadequate teaching. The number of students on roll is dropping which impacts on the budget, staffing and resources. In addition, the planned move to a new school building in 2012 means that any refurbishment to the existing buildings is limited. The budget, including funding from the National Challenge and as a result of specialist status, is being managed

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carefully. However, the failure to provide satisfactory teaching, coupled with low levels of attainment means that the school is providing inadequate value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Views of parents and carers

Inspectors received questionnaire responses from fewer than 20% of parents and carers. Just over 40% of these were entirely positive in their views of the school. Almost all said their child enjoys school and that the school keeps their child safe. A quarter of the parents who responded had concerns about communications with the school. Another concern was about poor behaviour which inspectors found to be generally satisfactory both in lessons and around the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Foulstone School 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 126 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 714 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	20	85	67	14	11	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	23	18	89	71	12	10	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	30	24	75	60	19	15	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	17	81	64	19	15	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	20	16	78	62	20	16	4	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	11	79	63	26	21	3	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	13	74	59	27	21	2	2
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)	12	10	92	73	15	12	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	12	86	68	22	17	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	12	59	47	32	25	13	10
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	7	71	56	34	27	6	5
The school is led and managed effectively	11	9	75	60	25	20	7	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	21	79	63	14	11	5	4

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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



23 January 2010

Dear Students

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

Thank you for contributing to the recent inspection of your school and making inspectors welcome. We enjoyed meeting you, seeing you at work and hearing your views. Here is a summary of our findings. We believe that the school needs to improve as a matter of urgency and have judged that it requires 'special measures'. This means that inspectors will visit regularly to check that the necessary improvements are being made. The main reason for this judgement is that you are not achieving the examination results you are capable of because the quality of teaching and learning is not good enough.

We have asked the school to make a number of improvements. These are:

- raise attainment and achievement, especially in English and mathematics, by making sure that students of all abilities make consistently good progress
- improve the quality of teaching by making better use of assessment and planning lessons that meet the needs of everyone in the class
- introduce more effective systems for checking and improving the quality of all aspects of the school's work, especially teaching.

There are strengths in the work of your school. The curriculum has been improved and is now good. Attendance is above average and the care and support given to vulnerable students is good. Inspectors also saw some examples of lively and effective teaching that helped you to learn well. We were disappointed by the state of many of your books, however, and would like to see you taking more pride in your work.

We hope that you will all give your headteacher and the staff as much help as you can to improve the school and wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Jan Bennett

Her Majesty's Inspector

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