

Deyes High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104948
Local Authority	Sefton
Inspection number	308714
Inspection dates	13–14 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Eric Craven 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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1441
6th form	271
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Graham
Headteacher	Mr Peter Reed
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2004
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Age group	11–18
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

This is a large and oversubscribed school with a clearly defined catchment area around the vicinity of Lydiate and Maghull. The percentage of students eligible for free school meals is low at 4%. A very small number of students are from a minority ethnic background and virtually no students speak English as an additional language. There are seven students looked after by the local authority. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about half the average found in secondary schools nationally. Around 65% of the students continue their education in the school's sixth form. The school became a specialist school for science and mathematics in September 2006 and it has achieved a number of nationally recognised awards including Investors in People and Artsmark Gold.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Deyes High is a good school. It has some outstanding features and most students achieve well. Achievement and attainment are good overall. Students make particularly strong progress in Key Stage 4 and achieve well in external examinations. At Key Stage 3 results have been more variable over time but recent improvements in science have significantly bolstered the rate of progress for many students. Specialist school status is beginning to make an impact, especially on the school's work with its associated primary schools and on improvements to the learning environment. The school appreciates there is more work to do to ensure this makes a significant difference to outcomes for students.

The quality of teaching and learning is generally good and contributes to students' enjoyment. Lessons are well planned and move students on in their learning. However, not all lessons share these features, particularly in relation to meeting the needs of the lower attaining students.

The school has worked hard to develop its outstanding curricular provision which successfully meets the students' needs. Its innovative work in work-related learning has received national recognition and most students benefit from the impressive range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities. The students enjoy school and are well behaved because they are valued and respected. This is at the centre of the school's character and is backed up by the majority of parents. A typical comment is, 'My children look forward to going to school.' Although a few parents have concerns about the behaviour of small numbers of students, inspection evidence found behaviour to be good overall. Occasionally a small number of students do not respond to the school's expectations for behaviour but the school is working hard to improve its responses to these students.

Students are well cared for and supported. Arrangements to safeguard them are appropriate and the students' needs are at the forefront of the school's actions. The roles and responsibilities of senior leaders are distinct and clear. Good communication between leaders gives them a good understanding of the school as a whole. Staff share an appreciation of the vision for the future and the steps needed to reach the school's goals because they are integral to the processes of school development. Communication is good and they are consulted effectively. The processes of self-evaluation are good and put the school in a gainful position when determining its priorities. Staff, students' and parents' views are used by the school when checking on its progress. However, the annual parental questionnaire which the school planned to administer in 2006/07 was not implemented. Very good use is made of the strong links the school has with other schools at staff and governor level in sharing good practice, training and collaboration on joint initiatives. The school has good mechanisms to identify underperformance from students and staff and suitable arrangements are put in place to rectify these. A climate of openness means staff are receptive to the guidance and support offered. The school sets suitably challenging whole-school targets which are determined following careful analysis of the rich array of data the school gathers.

The school's capacity to improve is good. It has dealt effectively with the areas for improvement from its previous inspection. The newly established leadership team has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is working well together. The school improvement plan identifies the right priorities and is reviewed and evaluated by senior leaders. However, the omission of regular monitoring and evaluation milestones embedded within the plan and

a scarcity of measurable success criteria focused on outcomes for students across the plan are drawbacks.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Students who left in 2007 made good progress compared to their starting points on entry to the sixth form. This progress was much better than students made in 2006. In both years the progress varied significantly from subject to subject. Achievement is consistently good in computing, the humanities and in performing arts, whilst students achieve much less well in biology, chemistry, media studies and law, where student numbers are smaller. Students' exemplary behaviour and positive attitudes to work make a strong contribution to their learning. Relationships are good and this, along with the students' strong community spirit, are key strengths of the sixth form. Their enjoyment of school and their seriousness about their education are reflected in good levels of attendance. They work above and beyond the norm in their support of younger students in the school and in their extensive charity work. Most of the teaching and learning is good, but the variability in its quality is one significant reason for the difference in standards. In some lessons students are allowed to be passive too often. Inspectors agree with the school that curricular provision in the sixth form is good. There is a good range of academic courses. The school has very productive collaborative arrangements with neighbouring educational institutions, an aim of which is to increase the currently small number of more vocational or practical courses on offer. The range of enrichment activities helps to promote the students' growing maturity and sense of responsibility. Students are well supported and well guided by their tutors so that the proportion of students who complete their courses is high. Academic monitoring is also a strength. The quality of the new leadership and management is good. Along with effective management skills, has now been added good strategic thinking. However, its full impact upon progress and standards and upon the quality of learning across the board has yet to be felt.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure work is matched closely to the needs of students and particularly lower attainers.
- Provide feedback to all students so that they are clear about how well they are doing and the next steps they need to take to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students enter the school with broadly average attainment and this is gradually improving year on year. Standards in science are generally high when students enter the school although the school reports their knowledge and understanding is rather narrow. Students make generally good progress in Key Stage 3 and attain standards in Year 9 that are significantly above national averages. Higher attaining students do particularly well. Progress in science has been slower than in other subjects in recent years but this has begun to be addressed through the successful bid for specialist science and mathematics status. The 2007 unvalidated test results for science reveal significant improvement. Girls attain more highly than boys in mathematics and English at this key stage but boys do better in science.

Progress at Key Stage 4 is strong. The 2006 GCSE results for students achieving five A* to C grades is significantly above national averages and has shown good rates of improvement over the last three years. The proportion of students achieving these results with English and mathematics is particularly noteworthy and is 11% above the national average. The unvalidated 2007 results show further strong improvement in the proportion achieving five A* to C with English and mathematics included. In foundation subjects students achieve particularly well in information and communication technology, dance, design technology and history.

Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good overall progress. The work of teaching assistants significantly enhances learning when it is available. Disaffected students make very strong progress through 'The Station' resource base but do not always make sustained progress when they return to their normal settings. At times, some lower attaining students do not always make sufficient progress in lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The good personal development and well-being of the students is in part why their progress is good. They feel safe and know who to turn to if they are troubled. Form periods encourage students to reflect and are a positive start to the day. The students take an active role in their community and learn to be tolerant and sensitive to the needs of others. They develop a strong belief in themselves that prepares them for the future. The students are responsible citizens and are particularly active in the school council. Nonetheless, the students' understanding of Britain as a diverse society is limited. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Food is well presented and nutritious and students enjoy eating in an attractive, pleasant dining room. Given the popularity of the new service, the dining room is busy, but it is well organised and the students can eat their lunch comfortably. They are developing their understanding of healthy living well. A wide range of physical activity is enjoyed by the students. Attendance is good because of the concentrated actions of the school and the students' enjoyment of school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. The most effective teaching uses a range of activities to capture students' attention and promote enjoyment. For example, some teachers interchangeably use paired and group work to enable all students to actively think for themselves. In these lessons students behave very well and are highly focused. Good questioning is used to check and to develop progress in students' learning. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they enjoy positive relationships with students. Where less successful teaching and learning occurs, students lack motivation and standards of behaviour and the quality of their attention varies. This is because of too much teacher input, the pace of the lesson is too slow and the point of the lesson is not always clear in students' minds. Planning is good overall, and often identifies the different ability levels or needs of students. However, this is not consistent practice and it is not always evident in lessons how the range of students' needs and abilities

are met through the classroom activities, especially for those identified as lower attainers. The school knows where the least and most effective teaching is as it monitors lessons well. There are also good and developing systems in place to spread good practice throughout the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

There is a varied and innovative curriculum which is responsive to local needs and which meets the needs of all students. Key Stage 3 students are offered lessons in thinking skills, which improve their effectiveness as learners. Lower attaining students starting at the school have some lessons delivered in a base room, which allows them to settle into the secondary environment and to become more effective learners. Students in Key Stage 4 are offered a wide range of academic courses and some vocational pathways have been developed. A helpful enrichment course, which is built around the development of basic and work related skills, is offered to lower attainers in Key Stage 4. Work-related learning is a particular strength with all students benefiting from a number of innovative activities such as the construction of an 'eco-garden'. This develops enterprise skills and teaches about care of the environment. There is a comprehensive citizenship and personal, social and health education programme, which delivers aspects of education for health and safety. Levels of participation in the excellent enrichment programme are carefully monitored and are very high. The school has one of the highest numbers of students involved in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme of all schools nationally.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those looked after by the local authority are quickly identified and supported through well deployed teaching assistants, individual support and liaison with parents. In a caring and safe environment most students meet increasingly challenging targets. Students are welcomed into the school and settle down quickly. They are well prepared for their future whether it is in the sixth form, college or work. Supervision is good and staff are vigilant to the health and safety needs of the students. Many, but not all, students are aware of their targets. There is some good quality marking, but this is inconsistent. Some students are not aware of how they are doing in their work or precisely what to do in order to improve it.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

New members of the senior leadership team have been carefully selected and have quickly gelled to form a cohesive team. The school runs in an orderly fashion and systems and routines are well understood by staff and students. Regular line management meetings between senior staff and middle managers keep evaluation and review at the forefront of the school's thinking. This process is well married to formal department reviews undertaken by the headteacher and

is suitably informed by the useful data the school gathers and analyses on the progress students make. Middle managers have good relationships with their staff and support and guide them effectively. Lessons are monitored regularly and the outcomes of this contribute to the development of staff. However, the lack of a definitive measure of the quality of teaching does not put the school in the best position when judging how the quality of teaching is improving. Governors are well informed and there is a helpful spread of relevant expertise across the governing body. They have a good understanding of their role and are operating effectively as critical friends of the school.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
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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?	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

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?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	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

Thank you for your warm welcome to your school. We very much enjoyed talking to you about your work and in gathering your views about the school.

We judge Deyes High to be a good school overall with some aspects of its work to be outstanding. The senior leaders have a good appreciation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and good communication between all staff helps the school to run smoothly and efficiently. Examination results and data held by the school show us that you progress well and achieve good standards by end of Year 11. Standards are also good in the sixth form. Teaching is good, particularly when a range of activities is used to promote your interest and when you do not remain too passive. Like some of your parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire we sent them we recognise that a small number of students can be disruptive in lessons. However, we feel that behaviour is good overall and that the school is making inroads into dealing with this unhelpful behaviour. Your attendance is good and is above that found in secondary schools nationally. This is fundamental if you are to achieve well, so well done to you. Your appreciation of healthy living is good and you make a super contribution to the school and the wider community and this was particularly notable in the sixth form. Staff are very good at supporting and caring for you. They respect you, look after you well and are vigilant with regard to safeguarding matters. The curriculum, especially in Key Stages 3 and 4, is excellent. The range of extra-curricular events is very impressive, not least your Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. We can see some positive changes as a result of the school's specialist science and mathematics status. These are evident particularly in links with primary schools and in improvements to the school environment and resources. Senior staff recognise there is more to do to ensure the specialist status has a positive impact on your achievements.

There are lots of good things to celebrate at your school but there are a couple of things in particular we have asked the staff to address to improve the school further. Firstly, we think that work set could be matched more closely to the needs of students, especially those of you who need the most help. Secondly, although lots of you know how well you are doing and what precisely are the next steps you need to take to improve further, this is not the case for all of you and so we have asked the school to make this consistent.

It was a real pleasure to spend time in your school this week. I, and the rest of the inspection team, wish each of you well for the future.