

De Warenne Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135942
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	381970
Inspection dates	19–20 April 2012
Lead 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	Academy
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	674
Of which number on roll in the sixth form	74
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Mills
Headteacher	Gill Pollard
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Gardens Lane Conisbrough Doncaster DN12 3JY
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Introduction

Inspection team

Jan Bennett

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 31 lessons taught by 30 different teachers. Inspectors also visited 12 tutorial sessions and the inclusion unit. Meetings were held with three groups of students; the Chair of the Governing Body; and a representative of the sponsor and academy staff, including leaders and managers. Inspectors observed the academy's work and looked at a number of documents, including the academy's self-evaluation, the safeguarding and inclusion policies, student tracking and assessment information and minutes of governing body meetings. They analysed 57 parental and carers' questionnaires and others completed by students and staff.

Information about the school

The academy opened in September 2009 replacing its predecessor, Northcliffe School, in the existing buildings. The sixth form opened in September 2010. A new building is scheduled to open in 2013. The academy is sponsored by the School Partnership Trust (SPT). The principal was deputy headteacher at the predecessor school and the acting headteacher throughout 2008/09. The academy has specialisms in English and applied learning.

The academy is smaller than the average secondary school. Most students are of White British heritage and very few are from minority-ethnic groups or speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. While the proportion of students supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average, the proportion supported by school action is high.

The academy meets the current floor standards set by the government, which determines the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. At the monitoring visit in June 2011, the academy had made good progress towards raising standards.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- The academy provides a satisfactory education and it is improving very quickly. It is not yet good because there is not enough outstanding and good teaching and low-level disruption hinders learning in a few lessons. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Achievement was very low in the predecessor school but has increased rapidly since the academy opened. Improvements are continuing across all year groups, especially in mathematics where achievement had been slow to get better.
- Teachers use a wide variety of resources and activities to engage students. Questioning is used well in the better lessons but is not probing enough in others. Although all teachers make checks on learning throughout lessons, they do not always make the necessary changes to their plans as a result. In weaker lessons, poor behaviour is not challenged effectively. Literacy and numeracy development is not embedded sufficiently across the curriculum.
- Behaviour and attendance have improved considerably. Most students feel safe in the academy and behaviour in lessons is often good but there is low-level disruption in a few classes.
- The sixth form is in the early stages of development but is satisfactory and improving well. By working with other SPT academies, De Warenne is successfully expanding the curriculum to meet the changing needs of students. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good with effective systems in place to monitor progress, attendance and quality.
- The principal's determination, drive and no nonsense approach have been fundamental to the academy's rapid development. She is supported very well by a very talented team of senior leaders and an able middle leadership team that is taking increasing responsibility. The relentless drive to improve has been underpinned by strong performance management and effective staff development that has improved the

quality of teaching. In addition, well-managed and effective systems to develop new teachers have already proved successful and are building capacity for the future. Governors and the sponsor provide good support.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding and good teaching by:
 - enabling every teacher to make effective use of probing questions
 - ensuring that all teachers use checks made on learning in lessons to reshape activities and adjust the pace whenever necessary
 - ensuring that all teachers can deploy a wide range of behaviour management strategies to deal with low-level disruption quickly and effectively
 - encouraging teachers of all subjects to take every opportunity to develop students' literacy and numeracy skills.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

There is a very strong upward trend in students' attainment. GCSE examination results improved considerably in 2010 and again in 2011. The proportion of students gaining five or more grade A* to C passes, including English and mathematics, increased by 10 percentage points in 2011 but is still below average. Mathematics has been much slower to improve than English due to previous staffing problems but early entry results and internal tracking data indicate a very marked improvement this year. Tracking data are used very well to monitor students' progress and have proved very accurate in the past. The sixth form is new and there are few external examination results as yet but tracking data show that students are making satisfactory progress.

Most parents and carers say that their child makes good progress and this is true in many lessons. However, progress varies with the quality of teaching and is satisfactory overall. In the best lessons, students are fully engaged and active participants in their learning. They make valuable contributions to group tasks, enjoy learning and respond well to challenging questioning. Consequently, progress is good and the pace is maintained throughout the lesson. In weaker lessons, students are more passive or not sufficiently stretched and the pace of learning slows especially in the middle and towards the end of a session.

Students join the academy with significantly low prior attainment and many have very low reading ages. The literacy development programme, aimed at weaker readers, is successfully addressing this issue and giving them the necessary skills and self-esteem to tackle other subjects with confidence. The gap between the attainment of students known to be eligible for free school meals and others was narrower than average in 2010 and widened in 2011, but results and internal data indicate that the gap is closing. Disabled students and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall and there are no long-standing patterns of under-achievement. Year 11 boys out-performed the girls in 2011 but this is not an established trend and there is not a marked gender gap in other year groups.

Quality of teaching

Inspectors found that teaching is satisfactory and, although the quality is improving rapidly, there is still not enough outstanding and good teaching. Most parents and carers think that their child is taught well, which they are in the majority of, but not all, lessons. Teachers establish good working relationships in lessons and know their students well. Students play an active part in their learning in most lessons and all teachers use a wide range of resources and activities to enliven lessons. For example, the sinking of the Titanic captured students' imaginations and generated good learning that continued after the lesson finished. Students were given a named passenger to research for homework and were keen to tell the inspector next day of their passenger's fate. In the best lessons, skilled questioning is used to extend thinking, check understanding and encourage students to develop their speaking skills. Regular checks on learning are used to reshape activities or adjust the pace to match the needs of the students. Links are made to previous learning and students know what is expected of them and how to improve their work. Characteristics of the weaker lessons include: a slackening of pace; teachers talking for too long; questioning that is not sufficiently searching; and low-level disruption that is not tackled effectively. The quality of teaching is variable in the sixth form but satisfactory overall and improving quickly as teachers become more skilled, confident and familiar with the new courses.

Teaching for students with learning difficulties and disabilities is good. Learning support assistants are highly skilled and deployed well. They liaise closely with the teacher, give just the right amount of support and encourage students to be more independent. The quality of teaching on the literacy development programme is particularly high. Teachers make very effective use of opportunities to enhance students' social, moral, cultural and spiritual development.

In a business studies lesson on world trade, for example, students discussed the exploitation of workers in developing countries. The frequent use of group work in lessons also encourages students to appreciate different viewpoints and to balance arguments.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is improving in lessons and round the academy but behaviour remains the main concern of a small minority of parents. Behaviour in lessons is often good but there is a legacy of low-level disruption in a few classes, mainly in Key Stage 4. The number of exclusions is reducing well as the academy finds effective ways of intervening at an earlier stage. Temporary placements, in other academies within the partnership, provide effective respite and give students time to reconsider their behaviour. House directors operate an effective patrol system to support students and the number withdrawn from lessons has reduced significantly as a result. Movement around the academy is orderly but can be a little boisterous at times in the narrow corridors. A very large majority of students say that they feel safe at school and parents agree. Students also say that bullying is rare and that where it does occur it is low level and rarely prompted by any form of prejudice. Attendance continues to improve and is around average. The effective use of data to pinpoint issues is followed by a very well coordinated response from the support teams that ensures both attendance and behaviour continue to improve.

Leadership and management

Effective leadership and management at all levels have led to significant improvements in achievement, teaching, behaviour and attendance since the academy opened. The principal

is a very strong and dynamic leader. She has provided a challenging but realistic vision for the academy that has been communicated well to staff. Very effective communication and team working are strengths of the academy. The senior leadership team is very strong with a good blend of complementary skills. Middle leadership is developing rapidly. Leaders have introduced very sound and sensible long-term strategies that have been researched carefully. Any new initiatives are communicated well to staff and they are reviewed and adapted if necessary. The academy has not been tempted to rely on short-term solutions and 'quick fixes'. Effective performance management is supported by well-targeted professional development. Governance is good. Governors have a very good mix of experience and expertise and know the community well. Leaders and managers, including governors, have a very accurate view of the academy's strengths and areas for development and they know exactly where it is on the journey to realising the vision. The development plan is a clear, concise and well used document that is monitored regularly. The sponsor provides good support that is reducing as the capacity of the academy grows. The academy has a good capacity for sustaining improvement.

The curriculum continues to evolve in order to meet changing needs. Partnerships with local businesses, other SPT academies and community groups enhance provision and improve outcomes. Equality is promoted well and data are used very effectively to identify and address any differences in performance between groups of students. The number of racist incidents is very low and the academy is inclusive and harmonious. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is an integral part of tutorial time and the rich programme of extra-curricular activities. Teachers also utilise any development opportunities in lessons but this is not monitored or coordinated. The provision for students with learning difficulties and disabilities is very strong and is led well. Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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 April 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of De Warenne Academy, Doncaster, DN12 3JY

Thank you for welcoming us to the academy. We enjoyed meeting you, seeing you at work and hearing your views. We would like to thank those of you who filled in a questionnaire and spoke to us. We took full account of your views and those of your parents and carers and academy staff who also completed questionnaires.

The academy has improved rapidly and is satisfactory. Here is a summary of our findings which we hope will be of interest to you.

- Examination results, your work and the academy's robust tracking data all show that achievement is satisfactory and improving. Mathematics has improved particularly well this year.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall and there are many examples of good practice. You are playing a more active role in your own learning than at my visit last year.
- Attendance and behaviour have improved. Most of you behave well in lessons but there is still some low-level disruption in a few lessons.
- The sixth form is satisfactory and is improving and growing.
- Governance, leadership and management of the academy are good.

In order to improve further we have asked the academy to increase the amount of outstanding and good teaching by making sure that teachers ask probing questions, change their plans for the lesson if you are struggling or finding the work too easy, have lots of strategies to deal with poor behaviour and take every opportunity to improve your literacy and numeracy.

The principal and her team are good and know just what to do to improve the academy even further. We hope that you give them your full support and wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Jan Bennett
Her Majesty's Inspector

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