

Don Valley Academy and Performing Arts College

Jossey Lane, Scawthorpe, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN5 9DD

Inspection dates

13–14 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching is not consistently good enough to result in students' good progress throughout the academy. Too many lessons are not planned carefully enough to match students' needs and aspirations. Too many teachers do not check sufficiently students' learning.
- Although achievement is improving, high-attaining students, and those with disabilities and special educational needs, are not making enough progress. Standards in English, mathematics and science are still below average.
- While the vast majority of students attend and behave well, some do not have a positive attitude to learning.
- Although recent changes to senior and middle leadership have been necessary, they have hindered improvements in some areas of the academy's work. The academy's evaluation of its work is largely accurate, albeit a little overgenerous.

The school has the following strengths

- There is a welcoming atmosphere in the academy. Students are friendly and polite.
- Standards are rising, particularly in English and mathematics. Students known to be entitled to free school meals make expected progress.
- Sixth form students attain average standards overall. They achieve well in vocational subjects. Good teaching and support ensure that many make good progress and are well prepared for their future lives.
- Students feel safe in the academy, and parents are very supportive of the academy's work.
- Attendance has improved and is now average.
- There is a good range of activities that enrich students' experience, especially in dance, drama, music and sport.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 50 lessons, of which two were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team made a number of other short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students, governors and academy staff including senior and middle managers.
- Inspectors took account of the 44 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection.
- They observed the academy’s work and looked at a number of documents, including the academy’s own data on current students’ progress, planning and monitoring documentation, minutes of governors’ meetings, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents pertaining to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Andrew Swallow, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sheila Kaye	Additional Inspector
Mary Lanovy-Taylor	Additional Inspector
Bernard Robinson	Additional Inspector
Jane Holmes	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This academy is larger than the average sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, largely those known to be eligible for free school meals, is well above average.
- The proportion of students supported at the level known as school action is below the proportion seen nationally and slightly below for those at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The academy meets the current floor standard which sets the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The academy is part of the School Partnership Trust, a multi-academy sponsor.
- A very small proportion of students in Years 10 and 11 presently follow some vocational courses at the Myplace young people's centre in Doncaster.
- The academy is a specialist performing arts college and has achieved the Healthy Schools status, Investors in People status, Artsmark, Sportmark and Careers Mark.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the attitudes of all students to their learning by ensuring teaching is at least consistently good, and generates:
 - curiosity, interest and excitement
 - challenging activities and high expectations
 - regular opportunities for students to think, reflect on and discuss their learning
 - work that matches individual students' aptitudes, especially the highest attainers and those with disabilities and special educational needs, so that they learn well and make good progress
 - frequent checking of all students' understanding so that they work at a good pace and know what to do next
 - effective use of teaching assistants and other adults in supporting young people in their learning
 - regular marking that points out why students are doing well, and advice about the next steps in their learning.
- Raise achievement, especially in English, mathematics and science, so that students of all abilities are making progress at least in line with similar students nationally by the summer of 2014.
- Improve the long-term effectiveness of leaders and managers by ensuring that:
 - all subject leaders make regular and detailed checks on how well students are learning, and vigorously act on their findings
 - all leaders appraise the extent to which the further training and professional development of teachers is improving teaching
 - senior leaders accurately evaluate the sustained impact of all improvements made.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The attainment of students on entry to the academy is slightly below that in most schools. While many students make progress that is increasingly in line with students elsewhere in the country, a very significant minority do much less well than might be expected. As a consequence, the overall rates of progress which students make are lower than in most schools. At the end of Year 11 attainment is below average in English, mathematics and science.
- Changes in staffing over time, and recently in subject leadership, have restricted students' achievement in English and mathematics. The assignment of students to the different science courses has also not met sufficiently all students' aptitudes. These shortcomings have now been addressed.
- Across the academy, not all high-attaining students make expected progress because they are not consistently challenged to reason and work things out for themselves and to develop their ideas in depth. Not all students with disabilities and special educational needs have their requirements diagnosed accurately and met with effectively deployed support and well planned activities. The very small proportion of students following vocational courses at Myplace achieve appropriately.
- A high number of parents who responded to Parent View believe that their children enjoy school and are now achieving well. Inspectors found this to be so in over half of lessons seen. For example, in a Year 11 drama lesson students concentrated very well to enhance their understanding of the qualities of a hero and were captivated by the teacher's interpretation of the beliefs of the Pakistani student, Malala Yousafzai. Similarly, Year 8 students collaborated eagerly to share prior knowledge of Roman settlers in Britain to deepen each other's understanding of their impact on modern society.
- The school has also been successful in improving the attainment of students known to be entitled to free school meals, so that it is closer to that of other students. Well conceived use of the pupil premium has successfully enhanced one-to-one teaching opportunities, provided additional teaching time for smaller groups and funded additional resources to help parents support their children's learning at home.
- Sixth form students are increasingly well catered for and attain overall average standards at A level, and above average vocational outcomes, in many subjects. They develop good research skills, working collaboratively in many lessons. A high proportion, consequently, continue successfully into higher education, training or employment.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of the teaching is improving, and almost two thirds of lessons seen by inspectors were deemed to have good or better teaching. Teaching in the sixth form is generally good. Some inadequate teaching remains across Years 7 to 11 and, as a result, teaching is not yet consistently strong enough to ensure all students make good or better progress.
- In lessons where students make most progress teaching is stimulating. Teachers plan interesting activities that are meaningful and engage students. For example, Year 13 students persevered very well to make a comparison between an investigation report and a professional publication in an applied science lesson; in English Year 9 students enjoyed sharing ideas about how the author created dramatic tension in an extract from a novel they read together.
- In such lessons high expectations and a high level of challenge motivate students to work hard. The school's best teachers encourage students to think and deepen their understanding for themselves. They check students' learning continuously through careful observation and listening, and probing questions, as and when necessary. Some marking, notably in English, provides detailed feedback to students about their progress and specific advice about how to

improve their work.

- Where teaching is less effective, it does not provide enough stimulus or challenge. Students lose interest because too little is expected of them and they are not given activities that stretch and excite them. In many of the less effective lessons teaching and pace in learning are aimed at the middle-ability students. Not enough allowance is made to extend the work of high-attaining students or to support those who need additional help.
- Some teachers talk too much and spend too long explaining tasks and describing examination requirements. They ask simple questions that do not require much thought to answer. Teachers and teaching assistants take too few opportunities to listen to students, observe or question them at length or to empower them to drive their own learning forward.
- The quality of marking across the academy is variable; in some cases it is too infrequent and does not provide detailed feedback on how to improve.
- The academy efficiently identifies students whose reading is poor and intervention is effective in bringing basic skills up to an acceptable level. While the promotion of general reading across the academy is developing, there is scope for more widespread teaching of advanced reading skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- Students' behaviour is respectful and calm around the academy. Staff manage very well students' behaviour in social situations and unstructured time.
- Parents indicate how much students enjoy academy life and how safe they feel. Students describe some incidents of bullying but are clear that they are not frequent and are well dealt with by staff. Attendance in recent years has risen considerably and is now average.
- In the majority of lessons most students show positive attitudes to their learning. Low-level disruption and restlessness arise where teaching requires improvement.
- Students are fully aware of unsafe situations and show confidence in dealing with them should they occur. They are especially assured in talking about cyber- and homophobic bullying. In their roles as academy councillors, and through discussions during morning registrations, they take active steps to ensure that it does not happen in the academy.
- Students say they are confident that they can get support if they have any concerns. Sixth form students are especially active in supporting younger students, especially in developing key reading skills. Pastoral staff secure very effectively the well-being of students whose circumstances may render them vulnerable and ensure that they are fully integrated and involved in daily affairs.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- The principal is ambitious on the part of all students. Supported by the governing body, she has been instrumental in seeking a collaborative working arrangement with the School Partnership Trust, which began in September 2011. The Trust provides an excellent range of support to underpin the academy's work. This includes bespoke training to improve teaching and learning, and advice and challenge for leaders and managers, at all levels. Arrangements to ensure an accurate picture of the progress of all groups of students are particularly efficient. As a consequence, there have been successes recently in raising the attainment of different groups of students, including those known to be entitled to free school meals.
- Senior and middle leaders share the principal's passion for Don Valley to be the 'best'. Nonetheless, a significant number of recent changes in key leaders' and managers' roles have hindered progress in driving forward academy improvement. These changes have contributed to inconsistencies in the rigour that leaders and managers show in checking how well students are doing and behaving, and in acting on their findings. The good range of training and professional development opportunities across the academy, and the robust systems for the management of

teachers' work, have not yet resulted in enough consistently good teaching.

- The academy's evaluation of its work is largely accurate, although a little overgenerous. While major improvement actions are concerted and carefully planned, not all senior leaders are precise and realistic when judging sustained impact.
- Documentation shows that all of the staff have 'performance targets' that they are expected to achieve each year. These are closely matched to teaching and students' progress. The principal does not allow any teachers to move up the salary scale until there has been convincing evidence over the year that the targets have been met, including consistently good teaching. She acts promptly to tackle any underperformance.
- The range of courses and opportunities that the academy provides is appropriately matched, for the most part, to students' needs. There is a wide range of academic courses, enriched by the school's performing arts specialisms. Extensive sporting, musical and performing opportunities, and a wealth of extra-curricular activities, make strong contributions to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The daily tutor programme, and personal, social and health education lessons, raise students' self-esteem and successfully promote their personal qualities. They support very effectively the academy's successful drive to promote equality of opportunity and to tackle immediately any discrimination that may arise.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Chair of the Governing Body is very experienced and is knowledgeable about the academy's performance. Records of meetings show that the governing body fulfils statutory requirements and is able to provide the academy with a sound level of challenge and support. Governors ask searching questions and provide careful scrutiny of documentation. They are given accurate information about the quality of teaching and its links to salary progression, and are regular visitors to lessons. Governors have a sound understanding of the impact of the way that the academy targets its pupil premium funding. They take up training opportunities and ensure that safeguarding meets requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137472
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	402760

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,238
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pauline Hutchinson
Principal	Hanora D'Rozario
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01302 781528
Fax number	01302 786252
Email address	info@donvalleyacademy.org.uk

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