

DSL V E-ACT Academy

Southbrook Estate, Hawke Road, Daventry, NN11 4LJ

Inspection dates 2–3 July 2013

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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Achievement requires improvement because the progress made by students is not consistent across all phases and subjects. There is significant variation between year groups in primary and between subjects in secondary.
- There is not enough teaching that is good. Where it requires improvement, teaching often does not meet the needs of some students and too few opportunities are provided for students to work independently.
- The quality of marking is too variable. Some teachers do not mark work regularly or give good enough guidance which means students do not know how to progress as well as they should.
- There are not enough opportunities for students to apply and practise their literacy and mathematics skills across subjects in the secondary phase.
- The sixth form requires improvement because the quality of lessons there is not monitored closely enough.

The school has the following strengths

- This is an improving school. The Principal, senior leaders and governors have made good progress in several areas. There are effective procedures in place to improve the quality of teaching which has strengthened this year. As a result, students' achievement is improving.
- The behaviour and safety of the students are good. Most try their best in lessons and want to improve their work.
- There are subjects and year groups within the school where teaching is good. For example, teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 6 is good.
- Standards in English and mathematics in Years 6 and 11 are rising.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 53 lessons, taught by 50 teachers. Some of these observations were conducted jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors observed the conduct of students around the academy and at break and lunchtimes.
- Interviews were held with the Principal, other senior leaders and middle leaders such as the special educational needs coordinators and some subject leaders. The lead inspector also interviewed two representatives of the governing body and a representative of the academy’s sponsor, E-ACT.
- The academy’s self-evaluation was scrutinised, as were records of visits and support from E-ACT.
- Formal and informal meetings were held with several groups of students. Inspectors scrutinised students’ work and academy documents, including policies and assessment information.
- The inspection took into account the views of 65 parents who completed the online Parent View survey.
- The views of the 68 staff that completed questionnaires or wrote comments about the academy were also considered.

Inspection team

Ian McNeilly, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Timothy Bristow

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Susan Jowett

Additional Inspector

Peter Lawley

Additional Inspector

Robert Steed

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Danetre and Southbrook Learning Village (DSLVL) became an all-through sponsored academy in September 2012. The school name is new; the academy was created by amalgamating three predecessor schools – a nursery and infant school, a junior school and a secondary school which includes a sixth form. The academy’s sponsor is E-ACT. It has a specialism in engineering.
- As this is the academy’s first academic year, there is currently no information on whether it meets the government’s floor standards.
- There are 1381 students on roll making it of broadly average size.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is lower than the national average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government, mainly for students known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after in public care) is higher than the national average, and particularly so in the primary phase of the academy.
- The academy has a specially resourced unit for 17 pupils in the primary phase. This provision is for pupils with significant learning difficulties, speech and language delay and social communication difficulties, including pupils on the autistic spectrum. The local authority contributes to the unit’s funding.
- A small number of students attend some lessons at Rushmere Academy, Greenacres Rural Enterprises CIC, Complementary Education, Hospital and Outreach Education and NEET Moves.
- Most students are of White British heritage and speak English as a first language.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good and students make faster progress, by:
 - ensuring that the individual needs of all students are met
 - ensuring that students’ work is marked regularly and comprehensively so that they understand what they need to do in order to make good progress.
 - increasing the amount of opportunities for students to learn independently.
- Give secondary students more opportunity to practise and apply their literacy and mathematics skills across a broader range of subjects in Key Stages 3 and 4.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The progress that students are making varies too much within different subjects and across the different key stages. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in writing and mathematics are low but rising. Progress between Year 1 and Year 5 is not as fast as it could be. In Key Stages 3 and 4, progress is good in English and is improving in mathematics.
- Progress in the secondary phase is variable across different subjects. The academy uses a system of tracking pupils' progress to identify where action should be taken. The academy's own data reflect the inconsistent picture. Students are making good progress in some areas, for example, German, French and information and communication technology (ICT) but below expected progress in others, for example, science, food technology and citizenship. Students make good progress in the specialist subject of engineering, especially in the sixth form.
- Good progress is made in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Half the children start the academy with a level of skills below that which is typical. By the time pupils enter Year 1 the standards of the majority are average or above.
- By the end of Year 2, reading standards are rising and are close to average. Even the pupils who find reading difficult use their phonics skills (recognising the sounds that letters represent) successfully to attempt to read unfamiliar words. Standards in Year 6 have risen. Assessment information shows that standards in mathematics are now average and in reading and writing the gap between national expectations and school standards is narrowing.
- This year students were entered early for examinations in mathematics. The academy has made sure that most of those students who achieved a grade C in their GCSE continue to study the subject in order to increase both their mathematical knowledge and their chances of achieving a better grade.
- Students known to be eligible for the pupil premium and Year 7 catch up funding are making accelerated progress this year. The academy is helping to increase the rate of progress through the use of effective additional activities, particularly in mathematics. There is still a gap in the school between the standards of those students in receipt of the pupil premium and those who are not, though the gap is much smaller than it is nationally. As there are no data from previous years, it is not possible to see if the gaps in school are yet closing.
- Disabled students, those supported through school action and school action plus and students supported by a statement of special educational needs are making good progress. The discrete support unit in the primary phase is effective in ensuring the pupils who use it benefit from it by making good progress. Provision is well tailored to meet young pupils' individual needs in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Students who are educated away from the school for some lessons are working well in those settings.
- The sixth form opened in 2011. Therefore, there are no A level results yet. Almost all students taking A levels are making progress towards passing their courses, though the numbers working at the highest grades of A* to B is below the national average. Students taking chemistry, biology and physics are performing particularly well.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- In the lessons that require improvement teachers do not provide work that is pitched at the correct level for some students. The Principal has encouraged his teachers to offer a high level of challenge to pupils. This is sometimes met. However, disabled students and those who have special educational needs are occasionally set too difficult a challenge. Alternatively, very capable students are not always given sufficient challenge. Several lessons had a 'one size fits all approach' when, in fact, the approach suited few of the students.
- The quality of marking varies too much. It is inconsistent across all age phases, between

different subjects and even noticeably different within the same subjects in the secondary phase. Where it requires improvement, it is done briefly and does not fairly reflect the efforts made by the students or help necessary progress. Where it is good, it is detailed and gives the students appropriate targets to help them make progress. Some good and outstanding lessons were seen. All had common features of effective planning; good relationships between teachers and students; and good subject knowledge which allowed teachers to answer students' questions well. In these lessons examination jargon was not allowed to dominate the learning.

- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2 requires improvement because the proportion of lessons that are good is not yet high enough. However, it is strengthening because of the effective training that teachers benefit from. It is particularly good in Year 6.
- Students need more opportunities to practise and apply their skills in literacy and mathematics across different subjects in the secondary phase. The English department promotes reading through 'The Big Read' scheme; where this is used, it encourages students to read more widely.
- Students are not provided with enough opportunities to work on their own. Activities are planned which are potentially engaging, interesting and set at an appropriate level. Yet opportunities are then sometimes missed as teachers do not give students enough time to carry out the task, or teachers talk the students through activities rather than allowing effective learning to take place.
- The amount of homework set and when it is given is very varied between subjects in the secondary phase. Students' journals are not used well to keep track of homework requirements.
- Some students benefit from interesting and unusual opportunities for learning, such as vehicle maintenance and animal welfare.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of most students at the school is good. Students are generally courteous, friendly and well mannered. During their lessons, students show positive attitudes to learning and respect for their teachers. Behaviour is not outstanding because some lessons do not fully engage students. This means occasionally one or two students misbehave.
- The behaviour of students during break and lunchtime is good. Students are sociable and keen to establish positive relationships, and this was also seen in lessons where students would work together to help each other. Students displayed impressive team work during two Year 7 physical education lessons where they were sincere in helping each other improve their skills.
- Students feel safe in school and are confident that they can talk about issues such as bullying to their teachers. The academy's records show that incidents of bullying are rare and that when they occur, they are dealt with effectively. This view was supported by students.
- The number of exclusions is low, particularly in the primary phase. This represents a considerable improvement in behaviour and its management over the last year.
- Although attendance is slightly below average, it is rising. The academy is taking effective steps to engage with parents, for example, by increasing the opportunities to meet with Year 7 parents and by the establishment of a community hub.

The leadership and management are good

- The leadership and management of the academy are good. As a result, this is an improving school. The Principal has communicated effectively his ambition to provide a good education for the students. He is ably supported by an effective senior leadership team and dedicated governors. Despite the challenge of amalgamating three schools into one academy, leaders have improved the attendance rate and behaviour and raised standards in English and mathematics in Years 6 and 11. The leadership and management of the academy are not outstanding because students' achievement and the quality of teaching require further improvement.
- The systems for the leadership of teaching and further training of staff are good and are

improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, though teaching needs closer monitoring in the sixth form. School leaders and governors have been robust in ensuring that the level that teachers are paid at is dependent on the quality of their teaching.

- The Principal has introduced four different 'curriculum pathways' for the academy's students, based on their different abilities. This has meant that subject choices and groups can be tailored to students' needs. There is a good choice of subjects available at GCSE level, including graphic media, applied engineering and electronics. The choice offered to students in the academy's own sixth form is currently limited to A level courses though students are also offered the chance to take other courses at the Northampton College site in Daventry.
- The academy offers its students a range of activities to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These include a 'Tudor Experience' where students study the period through art and drama and a trip to a local court where students conducted a mock trial. The academy organises trips to France and students have worked with a charity based in Africa. Lesson activities are regularly used to promote team work and social skills.
- Representatives from the E-ACT Trust visit the school regularly. They provide an informed outside view on the academy and give challenge and advice to the senior leaders. The representative interviewed understands the issues the academy has and the sponsor has the capacity to help the school improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is good. Governors effectively challenge school leaders to ensure that teaching and achievement are strengthening. Governors are aware that some teaching requires improvement and are contributing to this work through effective use of performance management information and other data about the academy's performance. Governors contribute to the academy's self-evaluation plan and they are also involved in decisions about teachers' pay progression and the use of pupil premium funding. They are aware of the picture of progress given by the school's data and understand about comparisons with other schools, though this has not yet been possible in this first year of the academy's existence.

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	138073
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	399912

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

Type of school	Academy sponsor-led
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1381
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	110
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debby Clayton
Headteacher	David Howell
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01327 313400
Fax number	01327 313419
Email address	enquiries@dslv.org.uk

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