

Danum Academy

Armthorpe Road, Doncaster, DN2 5QD

Inspection dates 25–26 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Achievement is inadequate in Years 7 to 11 because progress is slow for too many students. Attainment is below average and not improving quickly.
- Students make slow progress in English in Key Stage 3. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are weak.
- Students' progress in mathematics is particularly weak, and many students underachieve in science.
- Standards in both GCSE mathematics and GCSE science are low and fell in 2013.
- Students known to be eligible for free school meals, and most students with special educational needs, underachieve in mathematics and English. More-able students underachieve in mathematics.
- Too often, teachers give students work which is not hard enough.
- Not all teachers take sufficient account of what students can already do, and do not check on their learning well enough in lessons.
- Too often students do not take an interest in lessons. Some rely on adult support too much and have not learned to take a lead in their learning.
- Attendance is low and not improving quickly, particularly for students known to be eligible for free school meals and for many with special educational needs. This contributes directly to their limited progress.
- Senior and subject leaders and governors have not secured improvements in achievement and the quality of teaching.
- School judgements about teaching have not been accurate enough and teachers have not been held sufficiently to account for students' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has quickly understood the school's priorities. She has drive and ambition and has gained the confidence of the staff.
- The sixth form is good. Teaching here is good and students achieve well, particularly in mathematics.
- Effective leadership in English has led to improved GCSE results.
- Students achieve well in some Key Stage 4 examinations because they are taught well.
- Students' conduct around the school is often good.
- The school works well with some students who need particular help and emotional support, using partnerships with specialist agencies.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made 49 visits to lessons. Three of the observations were completed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors analysed students' workbooks across a range of subjects.
- Discussions were held with staff, students and governors. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the learning partnership that provides the academy with support, and met with the adviser from the Centre for British Teachers (CfBT) Schools Trust.
- Documents looked at included the self-evaluation summary, an outline improvement plan, information on students' progress, records of students' behaviour and attendance, governing body minutes and documents relating to safeguarding and child protection.
- Parents' views were taken into account through the 40 responses to Parent View (the Ofsted online survey), and through the academy's most recent survey of parents' views, from autumn 2012. The views of staff were received and analysed through the 56 staff questionnaires returned.

Inspection team

Gillian Salter-Smith, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Patrick Walsh	Additional Inspector
Jean Whalley	Additional Inspector
Richard Masterton	Additional Inspector
Jean Samuel	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with 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.

Information about this school

- Danum Academy converted to become an academy in October 2011. It was last inspected shortly after its conversion. It is supported by the Centre for British Teachers (CfBT) Schools Trust.
- The academy is much larger than an average-sized secondary school and is based on two sites.
- An above-average proportion of students are known to be eligible for support through pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding given to schools for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those children in the care of the local authority and children from other groups.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. An average proportion of students are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- A greater number of students join the academy after the start of Year 7 than in most schools.
- Alternative courses are provided for a small proportion of students at Engage, YMCA, Construction Careers Limited, Doncaster Rovers, Oracle, Doncaster College, Step Up and Learning Central.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' progress and attainment.
- A new headteacher took up her post in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching in Years 7 to 11 is at least good by making certain that all teaching staff:
 - have high expectations of students and set demanding work
 - take accurate account of students' prior knowledge and understanding when planning lessons
 - carry out frequent checks on how well students are learning in a lesson and make changes when students need more support or need to be stretched and challenged further
 - provide sufficient opportunities for students to take a lead in their own learning
 - set homework that is relevant and demanding and follows an overall plan that is shared with students and parents, especially in Key Stage 3.
- Raise achievement rapidly, so that all students make at least expected progress, particularly in mathematics, science, and Key Stage 3 English, by:
 - making sure staff in all subjects pay close attention to improving students' numeracy, oral communication, reading and writing, especially punctuation, spelling and grammar
 - ensuring staff quickly identify all students who are not making enough progress in their work, and target them for support in lessons
 - making more effective use of additional adult support in lessons.

- Reduce absence and the number of fixed-period exclusions to at least national rates by:
 - increasing students’ awareness of the importance of good attendance for good achievement
 - finding effective ways to work in partnership with parents to improve their children’s attendance, behaviour and achievement
 - analysing information on students’ behaviour and attendance more rigorously to identify patterns in the barriers that students might face and work out ways to overcome them.

- Improve the effectiveness of senior and subject leaders in driving improvement by:
 - ensuring judgements on, and evaluation, of teaching are accurate
 - managing the performance of staff with greater rigour and holding them to account, rewarding effective teaching and supporting weaker teaching
 - making sure every student is set targets that are sufficiently challenging.

- Ensure that the governing body is fully effective in driving improvement by making certain that governors:
 - have accurate information on students’ achievement and the quality of teaching
 - hold senior leaders rigorously to account for making rapid improvements to teaching and students’ achievement
 - monitor the use of pupil premium funding and fully challenge leaders on how effectively funding is being used to ensure that these pupils make at least expected progress.

An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the academy’s use of pupil premium funding, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Ofsted will make recommendations on governance to the authority responsible for the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Achievement is inadequate in Years 7 to 11 because too many students do not make the progress they should from their individual starting points. Overall, attainment is low and not rising quickly enough.
- Students known to be eligible for free school meals, and those with special educational needs, supported at school action and by school action plus, underachieve in mathematics and in English.
- In 2012, students known to be eligible for free school meals were around one third of a GCSE grade behind other students in English. In mathematics, they were around half a grade behind.
- Pupil premium funding has primarily been used to provide additional teaching and non-teaching staff focused on extra support for these students. Overall, this use has not been effective enough in helping students to increase their rates of progress. In 2013, the progress made by students known to be eligible for free school meals in English improved and the gap between them and other students narrowed. However, in mathematics, their progress deteriorated and the gap widened.
- Similarly, the funding provided to specifically support low attaining students in Year 7 has not been effective enough in accelerating their progress in mathematics. Progress in English has improved, as have the behaviour and attitudes to learning of some students who followed a specific course of learning designed to meet their learning and behavioural needs.
- Students joining the school after the start of Year 7 make similar progress to other students.
- Progress in mathematics in the main school, and in Key Stage 3 English, is too slow. Many students do not reach the targets set for them. More-able students underachieve, particularly in mathematics.
- Attainment is low in GCSE science courses and is not improving quickly enough. Progress in science, especially in Key Stage 3, is inadequate.
- Students have poor literacy and numeracy skills. Many students do not communicate confidently. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of too low a standard. The school gives effective support to some weak readers but students are not encouraged to read widely enough.
- In 2013, students achieved well in GCSE examinations in physical education, German, art and design, leisure and tourism, business and geography, statistics and engineering and in BTEC science.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good. Students make good progress from their starting points. Achievement varies between subjects and is particularly strong in A-level mathematics.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- The impact of teaching is inadequate over time because too many students do not make the progress expected of them in key subjects.

- The expectations of too many teachers and teaching assistants about students' learning and progress are often too low. Work in lessons is undemanding on too many occasions so students do not increase their depth of understanding. This is the case for students of different prior attainment and circumstances, including more-able and lower-attaining students.
- Too often teachers' planning does not take account of information on students' progress or what they have already learned. The pace of learning slows when work that has already been learned is covered again or tasks are mundane and not matched to students' needs.
- Teachers' checks on how well students are learning in lessons are not frequent enough. They make few adjustments to the learning, so some students continue to struggle to understand throughout the lesson, others sit back and are not stretched.
- Not all teachers and managers use assessment information to identify those students who have fallen behind or those students who may need additional support, particularly those known to be eligible for free school meals, disabled students and those who have special educational needs, including the more-able. As a result, these students do not all get the support they need.
- Additional adults such as teaching assistants are not used effectively enough in classrooms to provide support for targeted students. Some students rely on the support too much and do not take responsibility for learning for themselves.
- Students are not encouraged to take a lead in their own learning. They do not have enough opportunities to discuss ideas with each other, work things out for themselves or work in groups to tackle problems. Students say they find learning dull when there is too much writing and copying. They say they learn more when they have the chance to talk through their work with others and work together on problems.
- Basic skills in communication, reading and writing, particularly spelling, punctuation and grammar, are not planned and taught well enough across different subjects, so many students' skills are weak.
- Homework is not provided regularly in Key Stage 3. There is no overall plan that sets out the academy's expectations of homework. Students say the work is not always relevant and is not demanding.
- Some good teaching, and occasionally outstanding teaching, was observed during the inspection. Students enjoyed these lessons and learning moved on at a good pace because the teachers expected students to think for themselves and tackle demanding work. Teachers questioned students astutely to check on their learning. Teachers used their secure subject knowledge to deepen students' understanding. In these lessons, books showed teachers' marking gives clear guidance on how to improve and students improve their work as a result.
- Relationships between students and staff are usually positive and supportive so, in most classrooms, students are settled, calm and ready to learn.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Many lessons include good intellectual challenge. Sixth form students develop their ideas and understanding through teachers' challenging questions, discussion and debate.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate

- The behaviour and safety of students is inadequate because rates of students' attendance are consistently low and not improving quickly. Absences of students known to be eligible for free school meals and many disabled students and those who have special educational needs are particularly high and not reducing enough. Pupil premium funding has not been effective in improving students' attendance significantly.
- Some students are not aware of the importance of good attendance and the link to good achievement. Academy staff are not yet working in close enough partnership with parents to support improvements in their children's attendance, behaviour and achievement.
- Behaviour around the school is often good. Occasionally crowded corridors lead to jostling in the lower school.
- The number of students excluded from the academy has reduced but remains above the national average. Reasons for exclusion include involvement in fights, threatening behaviour and absconding.
- Incidents of bullying are not widespread. Students are prepared well to deal with different types of bullying. Incidents that do occur are usually resolved to the satisfaction of students and parents, but occasionally they are not.
- The school collects a great deal of information about students' behaviour and attendance. It is not analysed rigorously enough to be able to identify patterns and barriers and plan improvements.
- Students do not often take responsibility for their own learning in lessons. They are often passive recipients of facts. They seldom wrestle with ideas and work through problems for themselves. However behaviour in most lessons is calm and settled because relationships between staff and students are supportive.
- Students say they feel safe in school. They understand how to keep themselves safe under many different circumstances, including when using computers and mobile phones.
- The academy works successfully with some of the most vulnerable students, helping them to settle down and make progress. In some individual cases, the academy has made extensive use of local specialists to ensure students receive the right support.
- Sixth form students work hard and are determined to succeed. They respect and appreciate the support the academy provides.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leadership and management of the academy are judged inadequate because senior and subject leaders, and governors, have not improved teaching and students' achievement quickly enough and attainment remains low.
- Self-evaluation is not fully accurate and does not take account of the effect teaching has on students' achievement over time.

- Checks on the quality of teaching have been inaccurate so staff performance has not always been managed appropriately. Weaker teaching has not always been recognised or supported. Training for staff has not resulted in consistent improvements in teaching and students' achievement.
- The recent clear focus on improving teaching across the school has the support of staff and leaders but it is too soon to see any notable impact on students' progress.
- The academy should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.
- Checks on students' progress are frequent. The information is used by senior and subject leaders to identify which students need extra support, but significant improvement in achievement has not been achieved.
- Senior and subject leaders have not worked with sufficient rigour and urgency on improving learning and teaching and holding all staff to account for students' progress. The targets set for students to aim for in their academic achievement are often not challenging enough.
- The support provided by the CfBT Schools Trust has not been successful in providing the help and challenge leaders need to improve achievement quickly. The partnership has provided some useful support to subjects; for example, in improving the curriculum in Key Stage 3 science.
- Leaders of English have successfully improved achievement at GCSE by identifying those students who are making slow progress and by providing a great deal of additional support in Years 10 and 11. Progress of students in English, who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those who are disabled and those who have special educational needs remains a concern, as does the inconsistent progress made by students generally in Key Stage 3.
- The curriculum is continually being reviewed to improve students' achievement and life chances. For example, a small group of Year 7 students benefited from a specific and separate course that helped improve their behaviour and achievement. Policies for entering students for GCSE examinations early, including mathematics, are not affecting their potential to achieve their best.
- The sixth form curriculum provides good opportunities to progress from Key Stage 4 and to move on successfully to higher education. A rich range of A level subjects and a balance of vocational subjects is offered. Students appreciate the good quality guidance they receive on their moves to the next stage of education. Leadership of the sixth form is good.
- Courses provided away from the school site are appropriately checked to ensure they comply with health and safety requirements. Regular checking ensures that students are attending regularly, making enough progress and getting the most out of the courses. They serve to help this small number of students to maintain interest in their future education and training. The number of students who do not take up further education and training at age 16 is below the national rate.
- The school provides a broad range of extra-curricular opportunities. They are enjoyed by many students and promote their personal development and their spiritual, moral and social development.
- Safeguarding arrangements securely meet current government requirements.
- The new headteacher recognises what needs to be done. She has the confidence of staff and

leaders. High expectations, a clear focus on the right priorities and a calm sense of urgency are beginning to drive through improvements. It is too early, however, for initiatives to have had significant impact on improving students' progress and achievement.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have not been effective in holding senior leaders to account for the performance of the academy. Significant improvements in students' achievement and the quality of teaching have not been secured. Governors have not had an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and what data shows about its impact on students' achievement over time. Performance management arrangements have been accepted without sufficient scrutiny, and governors have not established a link between pay and performance. The use of pupil premium funding has not been questioned closely enough in terms of how it is being used to improve the progress being made by this group of students.

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	137524
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	424666

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
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	1611
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	426
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eleanor Hammill
Headteacher	Rebecca Staples
Date of previous school inspection	19 October 2011
Telephone number	01302 831385
Fax number	01302 300109
Email address	danum@danum.doncaster.sch.uk

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