

Droylsden Academy

Manor Road, Droylsden, Manchester, Greater Manchester, M43 6QD

Inspection dates 5–6 March 2014

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| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory | 3 |
| | This inspection: | Inadequate | 4 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Inadequate | 4 |
| Quality of teaching | | Inadequate | 4 |
| 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 has serious weaknesses.

- Students' attainment has fallen and rates of progress have slowed over the last three years to unacceptably low levels.
- Students supported by the pupil premium achieve less well than others and gaps in their attainment and progress widened over the last three years.
- Teaching does not ensure that all students achieve as well as they should over time.
- Teaching lacks the consistent effectiveness needed to overcome students' previous underachievement. Too much teaching requires improvement and some is inadequate. Teachers' expectations are not always high enough.
- Marking varies in its quality. Some is cursory. Opportunities to support students' spelling, punctuation and grammar are not taken.
- Students' attitudes to learning are not sufficiently good in all lessons.
- Until very recently, leaders did not ensure that students' achievement, the quality of teaching and students' behaviour were good enough.
- Middle leaders have not had a strong enough role in ensuring the success of students.
- Improvements in the academy this year have not had time to make up for the previous sharp declines in achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- The leadership of the new Principal has raised expectations and is driving improvement.
- The academy's records of students' current achievement and predictions for examination results in 2014 indicate further improvements in performance.
- The quality of teaching has started to improve.
- Attendance has risen sharply. Rates of exclusion from the academy have fallen.
- The behaviour of students around the academy is good. The academy is calm and well-ordered. Students are polite and friendly towards adults.
- Senior leaders evaluate the academy honestly and accurately. Training and support to improve teaching is well organised.
- Governors took decisive action when students' achievement started to fall. Staff and governors have confidence in senior leaders and staff morale is good.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 36 lessons taught by 36 teachers including a joint observation with a senior leader. They examined a sample of students' work and students' exercise books in lessons.
- The conduct of students was observed at the beginning, end and during the school day.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, middle leaders and teachers. They met with groups of students and talked with others in lessons and around the academy.
- Documents were examined including the academy's self-evaluation information, improvement plan, safeguarding records, governing body minutes and data relating to students' achievement, attendance and behaviour.
- Meetings were held with governors, a representative of the academy's sponsor and a representative of the local authority. A telephone conversation with the Chair of the Governing Body took place.
- Inspectors reviewed 77 responses to Parent View, which is Ofsted's on-line questionnaire for parents. Questionnaire returns from 49 members of staff were examined.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the academy's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support academy improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

Inspection team

David Selby, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Derek Barnes

Additional Inspector

Jacqueline Rothery

Additional Inspector

Judith Tolley

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized secondary academy.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- The proportion of students that the academy has identified as disabled or having special educational needs and requiring support through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is broadly average.
- Six students in Year 11 have individual programmes for their learning which include off-site alternative provision, part-time at Tameside College and at work placements organised through The Education Training Partnership.
- The Principal joined the academy in September 2013. All members of the senior leadership team were appointed, some from within the academy, at the same time or in January 2014. Several other teachers with leadership posts have joined the academy since September 2013.
- The Principal is starting to work with a National Leader of Education from Middleton Technology School and the headteacher of another local effective school.
- The academy is sponsored by Tameside College.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

The pupil premium is specific, additional funding provided to support the education of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, pupils who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years, children who have been looked after continuously for a period of 6 months and children whose parents are currently serving in the armed forces.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Eradicate inadequate teaching and increase the proportion which is good or better by ensuring that:
 - teachers' expectations are consistently high
 - teachers use the available data on students' achievement and their own assessments more effectively to plan lessons that take better account of students' starting points
 - teachers challenge different groups of learners more appropriately
 - teachers identify and use opportunities to develop students' literacy, numeracy and spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding in all subjects
 - marking is consistently good, providing clear feedback to students on how they can improve their work and checking that students respond
 - support by teaching assistants becomes fully effective through training and careful planning.

- Consolidate the very recent gains in students' achievement by:
 - speeding up the progress of all groups of students
 - closing the gaps in achievement between groups of students of different abilities, including those supported by the pupil premium.

- Further improve leadership by ensuring that:
 - the best practice already seen in the academy is shared more widely
 - the responsibility and accountability of middle leaders is further extended
 - senior leaders and governors complete the development of the academy improvement plan so that improvement proceeds at the rapid pace required
 - an external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the school's use of the pupil premium, is undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Achievement is inadequate because students' attainment has fallen and rates of progress have slowed over the last three years to unacceptably low levels.
- Improvements in the academy this year have not had time to take effect, although the academy's records of students' current achievement and predictions for examination results in 2014 indicate increases.
- Students enter the academy with attainment which is generally a little below the national average, although it was well below average for students who were in Year 11 in 2013. Students leave with standards that are generally well below the national average. Up to 2013, attainment declined in English and remained well below the national average in mathematics.
- The progress made by students measured by their performance in their best eight GCSE subjects and in each of English, mathematics, science, languages and humanities was well below the national average in 2013 and has declined over the previous three years. The progress of lower- and middle-attaining pupils fell rapidly to below average in 2013 and that of higher-attaining pupils remained well below average.
- In 2013, the proportion of students making and exceeding the nationally expected rates of progress in English and mathematics were well below those seen in other schools.
- Students supported by the pupil premium achieve less well than others and gaps in attainment and progress widened over the last three years. The slow rates of progress for these pupils resulted in results in English and mathematics GCSEs approximately one and a half grades below others in 2013.
- The academy's predictions indicate that Year 11 achievement is likely to match the national average in 2014. The current progress of Year 11 students is exceeding that of students in 2013.
- The achievement of groups of students with different starting points varies. The academy's data indicate that middle-ability students are doing less well than others.
- Variability in the quality of students' work and of their progress over time was seen in students' books. Inspectors saw evidence of more recent, accelerated progress linked to better teaching in lessons and in students' written work.
- The progress of Year 11 students undertaking off-site alternative provision has increased. Their learning is now better meeting their needs.
- In 2013, students were entered for their GCSE examination in mathematics early in Year 11. This did not secure increased achievement for students, including the most able. A different entry policy is now being followed.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching is inadequate because it does not ensure that all students achieve as well as they should over time. Teaching lacks the consistency and effectiveness needed to overcome students' previous underachievement.
- Good teaching was seen by inspectors and a small amount was outstanding. However, too much teaching required improvement or was inadequate. There is too much variability between subjects and between teachers of the same subject.
- The quality of teaching is improving, but this is at an early stage. Senior leaders recognise the importance of speeding up this improvement in order to ensure that all students learn equally well. Senior leaders' initial priority in this school year was to ensure that students' behaviour was good enough to allow students to feel secure. They identified that, unless this happened, teaching would remain ineffective. Improvements in behaviour are now well established and the academy is prioritising improvement in teaching.
- Leaders ensure that the teaching of all newly-appointed teachers is at least good. This was

evident in the lessons observed by inspectors. Where teachers have good aspects to their practice, this is starting to be shared through training or coaching support to others.

- The academy has introduced a new system which allows leaders and teachers to analyse data on students' achievement and use this in their planning. This is already being used as part of the monitoring process to find out how effective teaching is. However, it is not yet being used by all teachers.
- Where teaching is most effective, students respond fully to high expectations and work hard. This leads to rapid learning. Inspectors saw highly effective Year 9 drama teaching where detailed planning and the excellent subject knowledge of the teacher meant that all groups of students were guided and encouraged to develop high quality performance pieces. Similarly, in a Year 11 performing arts lesson, the teacher's detailed understanding of students' learning enabled her to support them as they refined examination performances.
- In some lessons activities do not interest or challenge students. Students lack engagement and their attitudes to learning are poor.
- Marking is inconsistent. Some teachers provide full and detailed feedback to students. However, this sometimes has little impact on students' learning as they do not respond to comments. Some marking is cursory, with work accepted despite it being poorly presented. Opportunities to encourage good spelling, punctuation and grammar are not taken by all teachers. Training on this has been provided very recently.
- While students communicate well and there are good opportunities for them to develop speaking and listening further, teachers of all subjects do not sufficiently identify how and when they can develop students' wider literacy and numeracy skills.
- The recent appointment of the special educational needs co-ordinator has led to improvements in the teaching of students with identified special educational needs. They are being helped to learn more quickly and their achievement is increasing. Support for students is provided by teaching assistants; this varies too much in its effectiveness.
- A small minority of parents felt that students do not receive appropriate homework. The academy website has recently been updated to provide information about homework expectations to ensure that students and parents are better informed.
- The academy is well-equipped to support learning. However, some design features of the building make it harder for teaching to be effective. Despite students' generally responsible behaviour, noise from different activities in the open-plan areas can make it hard for students to hear what is happening in their own class. Leaders are aware of this issue and have plans to ensure that it reduces further.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of students requires improvement because their attitudes to learning are not always good enough. In lessons where teaching is less effective, students often lose interest and do not concentrate on the tasks required. When teachers' expectations are not high enough, work in students' books is sometimes poorly presented or unfinished.
- The behaviour of students around the academy is generally good. Social areas become busy but remain calm and well-ordered. Staff on duty talk with students informally. This contributes well to the good ethos within the academy.
- Students have very positive attitudes towards the academy. Standards of uniform are high. Almost no litter is left in any area of the building. Students are polite and friendly towards adults. Their manners are good. Students respect the learning of others and are aware of the needs of other classes in adjacent, open-plan areas.
- While there are very positive aspects to current students' behaviour, these contrast sharply to students' perceptions of behaviour in the previous year. Students who talked to inspectors said that behaviour then was 'horrendous' and that the academy was 'chaotic'. They further described the very rapid impact the new Principal had on improving behaviour from the start of this year. They are clear about the very high expectations for their conduct and respond well.

- Relationships between students are positive. They respect each other. Students know that disrespectful language is unacceptable, although those spoken with said that students sometimes make homophobic comments. None were heard by inspectors.
- Students say that bullying is now very rare and any incidents are dealt with effectively by the academy. The academy has introduced a confidential, on-line system to allow students to report any concerns. All such reports are rigorously followed up.
- Detailed records and clear policies allow staff, including the new heads of year, to respond to any problems. Staff know the students well.
- Attendance has risen sharply and is now above the national average for all groups of students. Punctuality to the academy and to lessons is good. Rates of exclusion from the academy have fallen. Appropriate provision for students who face particular challenges is used well.
- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good. No incidents that indicate students may be unsafe were seen in lessons or around the academy. Effective risk assessments relating to the building and activities involving students are in place. The academy ensures that students know about ways they can keep themselves safe, for example, when using electronic communication or when using PE equipment.
- Students say they feel safe in the academy. Arrangements for ensuring the safety of students attending placements out of the academy are thorough.
- Systems and procedures for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The leadership and management require improvement because, until very recently, leaders and governors did not ensure that students' achievement, the quality of teaching and students' behaviour were good enough. The new leadership has not yet had time to prove itself fully.
- The new Principal and senior leadership team have made a promising start. They are providing systematic and co-ordinated leadership. This has led to marked improvements in students' behaviour, attendance and punctuality. Teaching has started to improve. There are clear indications that learning is faster and GCSE results in 2014 will be higher.
- The Principal and his work are highly valued by students. They see that he has been the catalyst for the changes that were needed to improve the academy. He sets high expectations which are widely shared and understood by students and staff.
- High professional standards are demonstrated by staff. Despite the recent rapid changes, staff morale is good and they support leaders in their work. Teachers willingly participate in voluntary additional training to help them improve.
- Senior leaders' monitoring of the work of teachers is thorough and regular. It is used to identify aspects which can be improved. All teachers are engaged in training to help them develop their practice. Leaders have started to ensure that the best practice is used as a model for all and teachers are supported to learn about effective approaches in other schools.
- The Principal has established strong links between performance and teachers' pay. The performance management system has been revised to ensure that teachers' targets link to academy and individual priorities. Robust action has been taken if weaker performance has not improved following developmental support.
- Middle leadership has been strengthened by new appointments, although it requires further development to ensure that improvement in teaching becomes deeply embedded.
- Senior leaders' evaluation of the academy is honest and accurate. Key improvement priorities are identified and acted upon. The academy improvement plan is at an early stage of its development. It does not yet provide the framework needed to allow leaders and governors to check that all improvements continue to be sufficiently rapid.
- The curriculum meets students' needs. It supports the development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of their learning in principle, but opportunities to develop these further are not always taken by all teachers. The academy has recently providing training for staff in this

area.

- The Principal has encouraged communication and partnership working with the local authority. Local authority officers have responded supportively. A local authority consultant is providing effective support in improving English. The local authority was less active in its work with the academy in the recent past and was slow to respond to the previous falling achievement of students and other concerns.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors took decisive action to hold senior leaders to account when students' achievement started to decline, although this did not immediately lead to the rapid increases needed.
 - They have a clear view of their strategic role and have confidence in senior leaders' ability to ensure that day-to-day management of the academy is effective. They are well-informed about the school and use this information to provide support and challenge to the principal. Improvements to the academy's system to track students' achievement means that governors are now better informed about how effective teaching is. The balance of governors' skills and experience is matched well to the needs of the academy. They have recently undertaken training on their role. This was led by a local authority officer.
 - The governing body monitors the use of funding carefully. However, over time, this has not ensured that the standard of education provided has been high enough.
 - Governors understand the use of additional funding, including the pupil premium and that provided to help lower-attaining Year 7 students catch up. They have supported effective steps to ensure that these funds are used well, for example, in the appointment of a primary-trained teacher to help Year 7 students. The students involved are making rapid progress.
 - In the past, governors have been involved in ensuring that teachers' performance is linked to their pay. This work was completed by the principal this year.
 - Governors provide a strong link with the local community and have a keen sense of their responsibility for the education of young people from Tameside. The sponsor is strongly represented on the governing body and also provides a part-time member of staff to act as a continuing link with the academy.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 135864 |
| Local authority | Tameside |
| Inspection number | 430998 |

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

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| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Non-maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 11–16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 987 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Peter Ryder |
| Principal | Karl Mackey |
| Date of previous school inspection | 25 April 2012 |
| Telephone number | 0161 3017600 |
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