

Serco Inspections  
Colmore Plaza  
20 Colmore Circus Queensway  
Birmingham  
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 618 8524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Direct T 0121 679 9163  
Direct email: lewis.mackie1@serco.com



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Rebecca Staples  
Headteacher  
Danum Academy  
Armthorpe Road  
Doncaster  
DN2 5QD

Dear Ms Staples

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Danum Academy**

Following my visit with Additional Inspectors Kevin Harrison, Charlotte Evers and Joan McPhail to your academy 8–9 May 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions taken since the academy's previous monitoring inspection. Thank you also for allowing Heather Mullaney to shadow the inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place on 25 September 2013. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time: the academy is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

Having considered all the evidence I strongly recommend the academy does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Doncaster.

Yours sincerely  
Tanya Harber Stuart  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in September 2013

- 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.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 8–9 May 2014**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the academy's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, members of staff with responsibility for subjects and four groups of students. The inspectors also met with members of the school improvement board, teachers with no leadership responsibilities, learning support assistants and the data manager. 45 lesson observations were completed, 12 of which were done jointly with members of the senior leadership team. A work scrutiny of Year 9 and Year 11, English, mathematics and science was undertaken by the inspectors.

### **Context**

Since January 2014, the last monitoring inspection, a head of vocational education has started at the school, as has a person in charge of horticulture. The data manager took up post in February 2014. The principal attendance officer and three key workers started working at the school in January 2014. Four members of teaching staff are leaving at the end of this term. There are a number of members of staff on maternity leave.

### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

The proportion of students which is expected to achieve five A\* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics is expected to rise this year. The data the school has about students' achievement is much more reliable. As a result, the school has been able to intervene quickly when students have not achieved. Good quality intervention sessions in English and mathematics are picking up areas which the students have struggled with in the past and ensuring they have a better chance of achieving their potential. The students in Year 11 appreciate the intervention sessions. The gaps between students who are supported by the pupil premium, and those who are not is narrowing but it is still wide.

Between Years 7 and 11, all groups of students are making better progress in English. This is because of better day-to-day teaching in English, especially in Key Stage 3, and marking which ensures the students know exactly what aspect of English they need to improve. In English lessons there is a strong focus on improving students' basic literacy skills and teachers intervene quickly if students are not making the expected progress.

There has also been a whole-school focus on improving students' writing skills by developing the students' ability to speak about their work before they write about it. In addition there is a programme of developing reading in Year 7, including much paired reading with sixth form students, members of staff and members of the community. There is also a programme of work for all year groups in tutor time to

develop literacy. As a result of these programmes, the majority of Year 7 students have improved their reading ages. The work to develop the students' numeracy skills is less well developed.

In science and mathematics, the proportion of students who make expected progress, and better than expected progress, is not as high as in English. This is because day-to-day teaching in science and mathematics is weaker and students make less progress than they make in English lessons. In particular some staff have low expectations of what students can achieve in lessons and often do not intervene when students are struggling to complete the work, or have finished the work early, as a result students make poor progress. Marking in mathematics, is improving but it is still weak. Teachers do not make sure students respond to the marking or develop their understanding of the concepts they have not comprehended. Marking in science is very variable.

There has been much training, recently, for teachers and learning support assistants (LSAs) about how LSAs can support the planning of lessons, the work done in lessons and enable the students to make better progress. There are examples of good practice, for example, in English the LSAs and the teachers work well together to plan and then deliver the lessons to ensure students are supported well. In other lessons the LSAs are not integrated into the learning and they lack a focus. As a result, the students make less progress than they would do if the LSAs were able to support the students more effectively.

### **The quality of teaching**

Students are making more progress in more lessons. However, there are a considerable number of lessons where teachers' expectations of what the students can do are too low, and activities are mundane and do not challenge the students. Too often, teachers carry on with lessons as planned even when the activities do not support the students or allow them to be challenged. In English, and in some humanities lessons, teachers are setting challenging work and students are rising to these challenges, enabling them to make better progress. However, the good quality whole-school data are not being used effectively by all staff to ensure the work set in lessons is challenging enough and enables the students to make good progress. Teachers are providing more opportunities for students to take a lead in their own learning. However, in too many lessons teachers plan tasks to keep the students busy rather than enabling them to make progress. These tasks do not enable the students to understand what they are doing or why they are doing it. For example, in one mathematics lesson the students were given the mark scheme to mark their own papers and see what they had done wrong, but some students just copied down the answers and did not understand how they would answer the question the next time.

More homework is being set. The new planners are enabling students to write down what they need to do and are starting to encourage a dialogue between parents and

the school. However, the amount of homework set depends on the subjects the students are doing, with some subjects setting more homework than others.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The number of fixed-term exclusions has fallen significantly. The school is working with other agencies to improve students' behaviour and this, in addition to training for all staff on behaviour management and strategies to de-escalate situations, has improved the skills of staff. As a result, the number of 'warnings' being given is falling on a week-by-week basis. The proportion of students who attend school more regularly has improved. Fewer students are persistently absent. The work done by the key workers and 'Commando Joe' with families and students is really supporting students to come to school more.

Many of the students are keen to learn. However, they still engage in some low-level disruptive behaviour when teaching is poor and students are not challenged. Around the school the atmosphere is calm, students are polite, respectful to visitors and welcoming. The students are happy to talk about their work and the new badges, which can be gained for making progress and for good behaviour, are having a positive impact. On the whole the students respect their books and the equipment. However, when teaching is poor, books tend to be scruffy and dog-eared.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

Senior leaders have received training about how to judge the quality of teaching and the impact it has on the progress students make, both on a day-to-day basis and over time. Lesson observations are completed regularly and, as a result, bespoke packages of support are in place for some teachers to enable them to improve their teaching and to enable their students to make better progress. Middle leaders are benefiting from training to enable them to challenge members of staff more. Senior leaders are accurate in their judgements about the progress the students make and clear about how teaching has an impact on this progress.

The external review of governance, recommended in the section 5 report, has taken place. The governing body has been replaced by the school improvement board, which is much smaller. The headteacher keeps the school improvement board informed about students' achievement and the quality of teaching in regular and comprehensive reports. These highlight the progress made by, and attainment of, different groups, including those students supported by the pupil premium. There is an action plan for the spending of the pupil premium money which has been shared with the school improvement board. This plan, although comprehensive, does not have specific targets which can be used to measure its success. Members of the school improvement board are challenging senior leaders more, but the minutes of meetings do not always show this challenge and the responses given.

## **External support**

A consultant has worked with senior and middle leaders to develop the school's approach to improving teaching and the amount of progress the students make. As a result, senior leaders are now confident about judging the amount of progress students make in lessons and over time. The consultant has also worked with teaching and non-teaching staff to look at effective teaching and learning. There is now a baseline in terms of teachers and senior leaders knowing the strengths and weaknesses of staff and the amount of progress being made by students in lessons. There has also been much external support for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This is provided by Trust. Some of this support has had an impact. For example, in English day-to-day teaching is better and students are making better progress. However, the impact of other external consultants has been limited.