

Don Valley Academy and Performing Arts College

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

Inspection dates

5–6 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires Improvement	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires Improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Sixth form provision		Requires Improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and students

This is an academy that requires special measures.

- There has been a decline in the quality of teaching, students' achievement and the leadership of the academy. Leaders and governors have failed to arrest the deterioration in provision.
- Too few students make enough progress in English, mathematics and several other subjects.
- The most able students are not challenged enough to make the progress of which they are capable.
- The quality of teaching throughout the academy is inconsistent. There is not enough good teaching.
- Teachers' expectations of what students can achieve is too low. Students are not challenged to reach the grades of which they are capable.
- Students become disinterested in learning and a very few disrupt others in class when lessons fail to capture their interest or their attitudes are not challenged.
- Governors have insufficient understanding of the progress made by students and so are not well placed to challenge the leaders of the academy.
- Leaders do not ensure that students are taught how to understand the fundamentals of British values.
- Middle leaders do not monitor their departments with sufficient rigour or hold staff to account effectively.
- The sixth-form requires improvement because some students do not make as much progress as they should.

The academy has the following strengths

- Attendance has improved because of more rigorous checking by leaders. There is regular discussion with families to help all students attend every day.
- The vast majority of students are polite and move around the site sensibly with sixth-form students setting a positive example.
- The newly appointed Principal is making clear her expectations in order to make improvements rapidly and these are being adopted and embraced by senior leaders.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 44 part lessons, several of which were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also visited intervention groups and heard a number of younger students read. They also observed registration periods, an assembly and observed the behaviour and conduct of students in and around the academy.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, senior and middle leaders and staff. Further meetings were held with the Chair, and another member, of the Education Advisory Board (EAB). The EAB has responsibility for governance of the academy at the local level. A meeting was also held with the Regional Director from School Partnership Trust Academies.
- Inspectors spoke informally to students in lessons and at various times during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke with groups of students formally on the first day of the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of data and information relating to attendance, exclusion, behaviour, safety, quality assurance checks on the quality of teaching, the achievement and progress of students in all year groups and minutes of Education Advisory Board meetings. Inspectors reviewed some case studies of students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.
- Forty one responses to Ofsted’s online inspection survey ‘Parent View’, responses to the academy’s own parent survey and 48 responses to the Ofsted staff survey were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Marianne Young, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Jane Acklam	Additional Inspector
Bimla Kumari	Additional Inspector
Tony Price	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 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

- Don Valley Academy is an average sized secondary school.
- Virtually all students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is below average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with an education, health and care plan is average.
- The academy is sponsored by School Partnership Trust Academies (SPTA).
- Fifteen students attend alternative provision on a part-time basis. The academy uses a number of alternative providers who are part of the sponsor's group of academies. They are Rossington All Saints Academy, Serlby Park Academy, St Wilfred's Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and Gateway PRU, the latter is run by the local authority.
- In 2013 the academy met the government's floor standards, which set out minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The Principal took up her appointment on 1 September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching to be at least good or better throughout the academy so that students' progress accelerates not only in English and mathematics but also in all other subjects, by ensuring that:
 - teachers use the information about students' capabilities to plan well-targeted activities that meet their individual needs and sets them appropriate challenges, especially the most able
 - students' independence and self-reliance are developed so that they do not wait for teachers to provide help and advice
 - marking is done regularly, is of good quality, clearly understood by students and acted upon appropriately
 - teachers do not accept poorly presented and unfinished work
 - any inappropriate attitudes shown by students during and between lessons are challenged systematically and regularly
 - teaching assistants' skills are used effectively in lessons.
- Raise attainment in all subjects, including in the sixth form, ensuring that students of all different abilities make rapid and sustained progress.
- Embed securely the new systems and policies recently implemented so that leaders and managers at all levels take responsibility for bringing about improvements by:
 - making sure the monitoring of teaching is done regularly and evaluated appropriately so suitable support and challenge can be provided
 - using the findings of the academy's monitoring to set clear targets to be achieved so that initiatives can be checked to measure their impact on student progress
 - ensuring that students in all year groups understand the fundamentals of British values
 - holding middle leaders to account for the progress students make in their subjects and ensure that in

turn middle leaders hold their staff to account

- monitoring carefully students' attendance in the sixth-form.

- Ensure that governors access available training so that they are better able to use information about students to hold leaders and teachers to account for the standards in their areas of responsibility.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the academy's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Since the previous inspection there has been a decline in the quality of teaching, students' achievement and the leadership of the academy. Leaders and governors are all aware of students' underachievement but have failed to arrest the deterioration in provision. As a result, the academy's capacity to improve is inadequate.
- Although leaders have started to diagnose the weaknesses in provision, use of this information is at a very early stage and it is too recent to have made a difference. Nevertheless, inspectors identified some potential positive signs, for example, plans are in place to monitor the quality of teaching and link this to individual training needs, rigorous appraisal of teachers and their salary progression.
- The recently appointed Principal has started to put a number of systems into place which are designed to bring coherence and effectiveness to the leadership of the academy. Senior leaders have clearly defined roles and the Principal has made her expectations clear so that provision improves rapidly.
- Academy records indicate that monitoring of the effectiveness of the work of the academy lacked rigour and self-evaluation was unrealistic. Middle leaders did not have sufficient direction and they were not taking ownership of their subject areas. They recognise, already, that there must be a clear focus on the progress students make and they must hold staff in their department to account regularly.
- A large proportion of pupil premium and other funding is spent on teaching costs. Leaders were not able to identify to inspectors whether this is appropriate and the difference it is making to students. Some funding is used to support younger students' ability in literacy, especially their reading skills. Some money is used to help fund trips and out-of-school visits so that all students can take part. This demonstrates leaders' commitment to inclusion; however because of students' underachievement, leaders are failing to promote equality of opportunity effectively.
- The curriculum offered to students includes a range of subjects. At present geography is not offered to students in Year 7. This is due to staffing issues. The personal, social, health and education (PSHE) programme is delivered through different subjects, tutor time and assemblies and designed to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Provision in this area is not monitored closely to ensure that time is not wasted. Inspectors saw, and students confirm, a very mixed approach to tutor time. As a result, students do not study the importance of tolerance and the threats posed by extremism to individuals and British values in any or coherent detail and this limits their understanding of cultural issues.
- Leaders provide effective career support for students; however they are over-ambitious for them at times when suggesting that students should follow academic courses in the sixth-form.
- Students who are vulnerable and/or have particular needs are known well. Leaders develop positive links with parents and involve other agencies so that students can, wherever possible, stay in the academy. Robust checks are made to ensure that those students who attend off-site provision are turning up regularly, behave properly and are safe.
- Inspectors strongly recommend that the academy should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.
- The current requirements for safeguarding are met.
- The sponsor recognises the difficulties faced by the academy and provided some support for English and mathematics. Despite some initial improvements, they were unable to arrest the drop in students' achievement in 2014. Since the appointment of the Principal, at her request, the sponsor is continuing to provide external staff for the English and mathematics departments.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - For some time governors have accepted information presented to them and have not challenged leaders sufficiently. Governors are aware of their key responsibilities regarding safeguarding and how teachers' performance management is operated. However, governors are less well-informed about students' progress and the quality of teaching than they would wish to be. Governors recognise their weaknesses and are engaging in training provided by the sponsor so that they understand how pupil premium funding is used, for example. Governors are planning to visit the academy regularly and are linked to subject areas so that they can gather first hand evidence and not rely solely on others.
 - Deficiencies in the academy website were pointed out to the Chair, these included policies and out of date information regarding students' results.

The behaviour and safety of pupils require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement because attitudes to learning in lessons from students in all year groups are not good enough. Most arrive punctually and have the correct equipment ready to learn. At times students remain compliant or become disinterested when activities do not challenge them. On a few occasions, a very small number of students disrupt their own learning, and that of the rest of the class, by calling out answers, talking over the teacher or another student or engaging in off-task conversations.
- Inspectors saw some poorly-presented work in students' books. Where this happens, too often students are not challenged effectively to do better. There are examples of staff having clear, unambiguous expectations of student behaviour and, as a result, students show respect for them and each other. Students told inspectors that they receive mixed messages and there is inconsistency when different members of staff deal with behaviour issues. This view was supported by many of the staff who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire.
- Around the academy students are largely sensible and the 'pinch points' in some buildings are patrolled regularly. Inspectors saw a few incidents of inappropriate behaviour and conduct during the inspection but these were dealt with effectively. Academy records confirm this is the case.
- The behaviour logging system is used by all staff and is analysed carefully by leaders to identify patterns and to devise the correct strategies. Academy records show a 25 percentage point fall in reported behavioural incidents last year with many offences being from only a few students. Nevertheless, leaders recognise that there is still more work to do in this area.
- Students do show respect for the environment despite its often shabby condition. Lunchtime and social spaces are well used with students behaving appropriately and being polite to adults. Students respond sensibly to instructions. Staff who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire expressed concerns about student behaviour. However inspectors saw, and students confirmed, that not all staff apply the behaviour policy consistently which gives students mixed messages about how to behave.
- Leaders' strategies to improve attendance have been successful. Attendance is now above the national average and there have been similar improvements in the attendance of students educated off-site. The levels of persistent absence are still above that seen nationally but are improving, for all students, including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure requires improvement.
- Leaders are aware that not enough emphasis is given to making sure that students understand the dangers of radicalisation and extremism especially because the academy is largely mono-cultural.
- Students report that bullying of all kinds, including racist or homophobic bullying is rare. This is supported by academy records. When it does occur it is dealt with effectively. Students told inspectors what they must do to stay safe when using the internet and other electronic devices.
- Leaders work hard to monitor and work with those students and their families, including those attending off-site provision and who may be at risk, to ensure they receive an education appropriate to their needs.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Overtime, in a range of subjects, the impact of teaching on students' learning is inadequate and has resulted in students of different abilities making inadequate progress. Too many lessons fail to promote effective progress. This is because teachers do not take sufficient account of the abilities of individual students in the class when planning lessons. Too often students were all given the same worksheets or tasks to complete regardless of their potential. This is particularly noticeable for the most able students.
- Too many teachers do not challenge students or have high enough expectations of what they can achieve. Teachers accept students' initial answers which may be 'yes' or 'no'. Students are not encouraged to develop their response and explain their thinking.
- Students' books are usually marked but the quality of this marking varies from cursory ticks and basic remarks to more detailed teacher responses which tell the student how to improve. However, even when marking is of better quality, student response is often not checked by the teacher. As a result, students do not learn how to improve and make better progress.
- Over time not enough attention has been given to teaching literacy and mathematics in all subjects. Opportunities are missed to develop these important subjects because teachers' approach has been inconsistent and consequently students underachieve.

- Students told inspectors that they often had to wait for others to finish before teachers moved onto the next part of the lesson. Students also felt that the work set for them was not sufficiently challenging, being often too easy. Inspectors confirm that this is sometimes the case.
- Teaching assistants are not always effectively deployed by teachers in lessons. Teaching assistants do not work in partnership with the teacher and spend much of their time telling lower-ability students in particular what to do or how to finish their work. This approach limits the amount of progress made by these students.
- Where students are challenged appropriately, their interest and involvement in a lesson is evident. The teacher adapts the lesson to meet individual needs regularly, as a result progress is rapid and students' skills and knowledge are developed well.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Since the previous inspection the proportion of students of all abilities and different starting points gaining five A* to C grades including English and mathematics has declined to well below the national average.
- Attainment in a range of subjects is low especially at A* to A grade. There is no trend of improvement in the attainment of disadvantaged students and compared to non-disadvantaged students nationally it remains low. In English, in 2014, their attainment in this important subject declined. Overall there are significant gaps between different groups of students in different subjects.
- The progress made by students supported by pupil premium funding is inadequate. The gaps between the progress made by students funded by the pupil premium and other students narrowed slightly in 2014 because fewer students, not supported by pupil premium funding, reached the higher grades than previously.
- The most able students, including those that are supported by pupil premium funding, make inadequate progress because they are not given work that challenges them appropriately.
- In 2014, the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students remained wide. Disadvantaged students attained a grade below their peers in English and a grade and a half below in mathematics compared to non-disadvantaged students in the academy and others nationally. Leaders did not present clear evidence that this situation would improve this year.
- Underperformance is still evident, given the students' starting points, which are broadly average. In 2014, underperformance was a key feature in many subjects and during the inspection this was still widely evident. The 2014 un-validated figures suggest that just over half the cohort in Year 11 made the expected progress in English with fewer than half of the cohort making expected progress in mathematics.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make inadequate progress. Too often teaching does not meet their needs and so they underachieve. The interventions provided last year were not targeted at the appropriate students because predictions in many subjects were inaccurate.
- Students attending off-site provision achieve mixed results. Monitoring and evaluation of their performance is very recent and it is too early to identify trends.
- Early entry at GCSE level was used in 2014 for a small number of vulnerable students who mainly achieved in line with expectations.

The sixth form provision

requires improvement

- Over time, students who take vocational courses do better than those studying academic subjects. Standards of attainment for most students are broadly in line with national rates and there is no discernible difference between the performance of disadvantaged students compared to those who are not disadvantaged. Nevertheless the underachievement evident in Years 7 to 11 means that some sixth-form students are not adequately prepared for study because they have not done as well as they should.
- Leaders monitor teaching regularly and are getting a clear idea where teachers need additional help when teaching in the sixth-form.
- The most effective learning happens when teachers know their students well and use information about what they can already do to plan activities that will challenge them and enable them to reach the grades of which they are capable. In a drama lesson, a teacher demonstrated very strong subject knowledge and challenged all students to improve their work and not to be satisfied with an average performance. As a result, students aimed high and had confidence to assess each others' work successfully.
- The curriculum has been changed recently and Level 1 and Level 2 courses are no longer offered which has led to a reduction in student numbers in the sixth-form. Students are able to re-take English and

mathematics at GCSE level if they have not been successful in Year 11; mostly students achieve the required grades. In order to meet student needs effectively, they are still able to combine vocational and academic courses as this is seen to be most appropriate for Don Valley students so that they can access further education or employment when they leave.

- Around two thirds of Year 11 students entered Year 12 in 2014. There are considerably fewer students in Year 13 compared with Year 12 because many students choose to spend only one year in the sixth-form. Some students are accepted onto academic courses without their prior ability being good enough. There have been some changes this year but it is too early to judge if this is still the case and if this situation will continue.
- Sixth-form students are respectful to visitors and teachers. Students understand the need to set an example for younger students and look forward to the opportunities that are developing for them to link more with the rest of the academy and to contribute to making changes.
- In line with students in the rest of the academy, sixth-form students have little awareness of the term British values. This, together with other terms, such as extremism and radicalisation are ones that they read about in newspapers, but they do not discuss or develop their understanding of these terms in class.
- Students appreciate the effective careers guidance they receive and the opportunities they have to take part in various career fairs. They welcome the range of opportunities being provided for them which they feel is broader than, as one student said, 'just the usual university route'. Consequently they know what qualifications they will need for the next stage of learning or employment. Leaders keep a record for student destinations and the vast majority secured their preferred placement in 2014.
- Attendance for students in the sixth-form although improved compared to this time last year, is still giving leaders cause for concern as not enough students attend as regularly as they should. Leaders are more pro-active in ensuring better attendance but they recognise there is room for improvement.

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	442288

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	985
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Beer
Principal	Karen Squire
Date of previous school inspection	13 December 2012
Telephone number	01302 781528
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