

# The Dearne Advanced Learning Centre

Goldthorpe Road, Goldthorpe, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, S63 9EW

**Inspection dates** 3–4 December 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- A significant minority of students still make less than expected progress during their time at the school. Consequently, in the last two years, students have not attained the GCSE results of which they were capable.
- This is because the school has not always acted swiftly enough to ensure that students at risk of not doing as well as they should reach their targets.
- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is not yet ensuring that all students achieve well.
- Work given to students does not always take into account what they already know and can do. In particular, work provided for the most able students does not always stretch them sufficiently.
- A few students take insufficient care with their work.
- The examples of good teaching are not shared widely enough to ensure that the strengths in teaching are adopted more widely.
- Occasionally, the feedback given to students and the marking of their work lack clarity and detail. Students do not always use the advice they are given to improve their work and checks are not always made to ensure they have responded to teachers' advice.
- Not all staff follow and use the school's homework policy.

### The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders and governors have acted with determination to secure improvement in the school's effectiveness since the previous inspection.
- Their checks on the school's work and on the quality of teaching are accurate and have been used well to improve teaching.
- Middle and subject leaders are now making a good contribution to improving teaching and to increasing the rate of students' progress. This is raising standards in the subjects and for different groups of students.
- Students behave consistently well in lessons because they are keen to learn. Almost all take a pride in their school and in their work. Behaviour around the school is calm and considerate.
- The school ensures that students are safe. Students say that they feel safe in school.
- Students' attendance has improved considerably and is now at the national average. Students and their parents increasingly recognise the importance of good attendance for future success.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 39 lessons. They observed other activities for shorter periods of time. Sixteen lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors looked at work in students' books.
- The inspectors met with groups of staff and with three groups of students. They spoke to other students informally at different times of the school day.
- They also met three representatives of the governing body and two representatives of the local authority.
- The inspectors took into account the 21 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also looked at the school's own records of consultation with parents and students.
- The inspectors observed the school's work. They looked at information about students' progress, documents relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding, the school's checks on the quality of teaching, its analysis of how well it is doing and its plans for further improvement.

## Inspection team

Liz Godman, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Osama Abdul Rahim	Additional Inspector
Peter McKay	Additional Inspector
Pamela Hemphill	Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.*

### Information about this school

- The school is of a similar size to most secondary schools.
- In 2014, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- The proportion of students who are disadvantaged is higher than in other schools. These are students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority who are supported by pupil premium funding.
- Almost all students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is above that found in most other schools.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision for students away from the school's site. Instead it has two provisions within the school: The Bridge and Ethos and Engagement. These are used to minimise the use of exclusion.
- The school is expected to become an academy sponsored by Navigate Academies Trust. The date for this is currently not known.
- The school is currently receiving support from George Spencer Academy, a National Support School in Nottingham.
- There have been significant changes in staff since the previous inspection.
- When the school was inspected in June 2013, it was judged to have serious weaknesses.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and increase the rate of students' progress by:
  - using the extensive information the school collects about students' current and past attainment and progress to ensure that students at risk of not doing as well as they should, catch up quickly in order to reach their targets
  - ensuring that the most able students are stretched and challenged in all subjects and lessons
  - making sure that all students take the greatest possible care with the presentation of their work.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
  - making sure that the accurate and detailed assessments kept by the school of what students already know and can do are used to plan work which enables students to make progress and to move on to the next stage in their knowledge and understanding
  - ensuring that the feedback students are given and the marking of their work are clear and consistent and enable them to use teachers' advice to improve the quality and detail of their work
  - making checks to ensure that students have responded appropriately to the advice they have been given
  - developing greater consistency in the setting and completion of homework in line with the school's homework policy
  - using the examples of effective teaching more widely to provide a model for others to follow in developing their classroom practice.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The strong and energetic leadership of the Principal has ensured sustained improvement in the school's effectiveness since the previous inspection.
- Senior leaders and governors have high expectations, which are increasingly shared and understood by staff and students. Values such as ambition, respect and kindness are publicised and promoted throughout the school. This has helped to improve students' behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- Checks made by senior leaders and governors are honest and thorough and are acted upon swiftly. This has secured improvements in achievement to date, although this requires further improvement.
- Staff performance is managed well. There is a full programme of training, which is matched to the needs of the staff and is securing good improvement in the quality of teaching.
- The local authority provides good support in strengthening governance and developing the quality of teaching. This includes support from the National Support School. The local authority has also made regular and thorough checks to ensure that the school's view of its performance is accurate.
- The effectiveness of middle leaders has improved considerably since the previous inspection and is now good. Subject leaders have a growing role in evaluating and developing the quality of teaching and this in turn is raising students' achievement. There are examples of effective teaching in most subjects but these are not always shared widely enough to ensure more rapid improvement in teaching and achievement.
- In addition, not all staff follow the procedures and policies agreed by senior and middle leaders. Examples of this relate to marking and students' responses to this and to homework.
- Leaders' actions are improving students' skills in reading and writing, with a short literacy activity at the start of every lesson. This is developing students' understanding of grammar and punctuation. Those who find reading and writing difficult benefit from additional help, which is improving their work. Provision made in The Bridge or in Ethos and Engagement is also transforming the attitudes and achievement of students whose circumstances might put them at risk.
- Senior leaders, governors and staff have a good knowledge of the attainment and progress of disadvantaged students. This information is used to provide additional help, including work with parents, transition from primary schools and extra literacy work. This is narrowing the gaps in attainment and progress between these students and others. Pupil premium funding is, therefore, used effectively.
- The school's range of subjects provides students with different courses which meet their academic, personal and work-related needs. Helpful careers advice and guidance helps them prepare for the future so that almost all go on to further education, training and employment. Links with Sheffield Hallam University are helping students, particularly the most able, and their parents to see that going to university is achievable.
- The school promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. A good programme of personal and social education and opportunities for students to undertake different responsibilities, as members of the school council, prefects and anti-bullying ambassadors, for example, help them to prepare for life in modern Britain. Some disabled students and those with special educational needs hold such posts. This is an example of the school's work in promoting equality, challenging discrimination and fostering good relations. Some older students say they have challenged the occasional discriminatory language used by some younger students.
- However, the school's work on promoting equality of opportunity is not yet as good as it could be, because the achievement of some students still requires improvement.
- The school works well with parents and an increasing number come into school to discuss their children's progress and to attend a range of after-school events, such as cookery or community cinema events. This is building families' understanding of the school's work and expectations.
- The arrangements for safeguarding students are thorough and meet current requirements. Staff receive regular and up-to-date training that helps to ensure the school's arrangements are effective.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Members of the governing body have considerable expertise in secondary education and understand data in relation to the performance of the school. They use these very well to support improvements in teaching and achievement. They visit the school regularly and contribute to accurate checks on teaching, making sure that only good teaching is rewarded. Governing body meetings include presentations by middle leaders who are held to account in relation to their responsibilities. Governors ensure that the school's finances are used well and that additional resources, such as the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding are used to improve students' achievement.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is good. Most students are eager to learn and concentrate well in lessons. This is starting to improve the rate of their progress. They come to lessons prepared to learn and with the right equipment. Checks made by tutors at the start of the day help to ensure this.
- Students respond swiftly to requests from staff and incidents of unacceptable behaviour are rare.
- Improvements in behaviour since the previous inspection are the result of clear and high expectations, made known to all staff and students. Unacceptable behaviour is not tolerated. Older students take their roles as prefects very seriously and convey to other students what is expected.
- Behaviour at lunchtimes is good. Students move around the school calmly and with consideration for others. They wear their uniforms with pride and take good care of the school's buildings and grounds.
- Almost all show pride in their work, but a small minority take insufficient care in their books by crossing things out or not taking care with corrections.
- The Bridge and Ethos and Engagement are improving the behaviour and attitudes of students with particular behavioural needs. The school's links with other agencies, for example the police, and its good communication with parents are also helping to improve students' behaviour.
- Students' attendance has improved since the previous inspection and in 2013/14 was in line with the national average. This is being maintained this school year. Students are punctual to lessons and recognise increasingly the importance of good attendance and punctuality for achievement and adult life.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students say that there has been some bullying in the past, but that it is now rare. They understand the different forms of bullying and who to go to for help should they need it. They appreciate the benefits of student anti-bullying ambassadors and say they feel more confident in talking initially to another student.
- Students have a strong understanding of cyber-bullying and of the risks of using social networking sites. This is covered in personal, social and health education lessons which provide a good opportunity for students to discuss the risks and for the students with more detailed knowledge to share it with others.
- The school's arrangements to keep students safe are managed well to ensure they are effective. Students who spoke with inspectors said that they feel very safe. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire agree.

**The quality of teaching requires improvement**

- Teaching requires improvement because, although it is better than at the previous inspection, it is not yet ensuring students' consistently good progress in all subjects and classes.
- Subject leaders are now making a good contribution to improving teaching and often model effective teaching in their subject areas. Examples of good teaching are shared within and between the faculties through weekly training and seminars, but this has not ensured that all staff consistently follow the examples set.
- The school makes regular and accurate checks on how well students are doing and on the progress they are making. Some staff take close account of the information available on what students already know and can do when they plan and provide work for their classes. However, this is not consistent, so that sometimes the work given to students is too hard for some and too easy for others.
- In particular, work provided for the most able students does not always challenge them sufficiently, so that they complete it quickly. Occasionally, this is with little attention to detail, so does not stretch the students to show what they are capable of or to develop their skills further.
- Similarly, there are many examples of considerable care being taken to give students feedback on what they have done well and what requires further improvement. Sometimes staff go into great detail when marking work, but this is not always so. A few teachers do not follow the school's agreed marking code.
- Despite the efforts of many teachers, students do not always use the advice they receive to improve their work or to complete corrections. Often this is because checks are not made to ensure they have done so.
- The school has a published homework policy designed to make expectations clear and to develop good study habits from Year 7 onwards. This also aims to ensure that students receive a balanced amount of

homework each day. However, not all staff follow and use the school's homework policy consistently.

- The short literacy sessions at the start of every lesson are generally taught well and are helping to reinforce students' skills, particularly in grammar and punctuation. This gives an example of the effective teaching to develop students' reading and writing skills and of the focus on literacy skills in the different subjects.
- The teaching of mathematics is increasingly effective. This is raising students' achievement in the subject.
- The teaching of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is improving in line with that for other students. Additional work in reading and writing and support from teaching assistants in some lessons is also assisting the progress of these students.
- Improvements in teaching are also starting to increase the achievement of disadvantaged students and to close the gaps in attainment between these students and others. Although staff identify disadvantaged students in their plans, the work provided does not always challenge them to do as well as they should. This applies in particular to those who are both disadvantaged and most able.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because the proportions of students who make expected or better progress and the attainment of students are lower than seen nationally.
- A majority of students currently in Years 8 to 11 joined the school with below-average skills in English and mathematics and therefore have ground to make up if they are to do as well as they should.
- However, a significant minority of older students have made less-than-expected progress overall during their time at the school. Consequently, in 2014 the proportion of students at the end of Year 11 who gained five GCSEs at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, remained below the government's current floor standard. However, these results showed improvement when compared to those of the previous year and to national results.
- The school's predicted results for 2015 indicate that attainment at GCSE will improve markedly and will be broadly in line with national averages. These predictions have been carefully checked by the school and by the local authority to ensure they are accurate. This picture of improving attainment and progress was also confirmed during the inspection by the scrutiny of work in student's books.
- No students are entered for GCSE examinations before the end of Year 11. This gives them good opportunities to build and consolidate their skills before taking the examinations.
- The school also offers a variety of work-related qualifications which enable students of all abilities to demonstrate their achievements.
- Regular and accurate checks are made on students' current attainment and progress. However, the information collected from this is not always used swiftly enough to identify students at risk of not meeting their targets or to ensure they receive the help they need to catch up quickly.
- In contrast to previous years, the attainment of the current Year 7 on entry was broadly average overall in English and mathematics. These students have made a good start to their secondary education. Those who find reading and writing difficult and who did not reach the expected levels at the end of Year 6 receive effective help through the school's good use of the Year 7 catch-up funding.
- Many of the most able students do not achieve as well as they should. The numbers of students gaining the highest grades of A\* and A at GCSE have been low over a number of years. Similarly, the progress of the most able students in lessons is sometimes limited because the work they are given does not always ensure they are stretched and challenged to think for themselves and to produce their best work. However, the achievement of these students is improving as a result of the school's focus on this group.
- In 2013 the gap in attainment between disadvantaged students and non-disadvantaged students was the equivalent of one GCSE grade in both English and mathematics compared to other students in the school and two grades compared to others nationally. The performance of disadvantaged students at GCSE improved in 2014 and information kept by the school shows further rapid improvement in the attainment and progress of the disadvantaged students currently in the school.
- The overall rates of progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs require improvement as they do for all students. However, the reading and writing skills of the younger of these students are improving as a result of the school's support. For the older students, their progress is improving along with their attitudes to learning because of the school's increasingly effective support.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	106656
<b>Local authority</b>	Barnsley
<b>Inspection number</b>	447707

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	965
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Wendy Eyre
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christine Robinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 June 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01709 892211
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