

# De Lacy Academy

Middle Lane , Knottingley, Wakefield, WF11 0BZ

**Inspection dates** 11–12 February 2015

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Over time, students have not made good progress in science and French. In mathematics, students make the progress expected of them, but too few do better than this.
- Expectations of what students can do are not consistently high and the work set for students is not always challenging enough to help them make good progress.
- The most-able students do not make good progress across a range of subjects. As a result, too few of them attain the highest GCSE grades by the end of Year 11.
- The quality of marking is inconsistent across and within subjects. Too often, guidance given to students is not clearly related to improving subject skills and understanding.
- Planning for students' spiritual and cultural development and measuring the impact of the academy's work in these areas require improvement.
- Students do not have enough opportunities to write at length across a range of subjects in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- Subject leaders have not been rigorous enough in checking on the quality of guidance for improvement given to students when work has been marked. Consequently, the progress made by students is inconsistent across and within subjects.
- Over time, leaders, managers and governors have not ensured that students' achievement and the quality of teaching are consistently good across the academy.

### The school has the following strengths

- The principal has the full support of staff in his drive for improvement. Staff morale in the academy is high. As a result, teaching and achievement are improving.
- There are clear improvements in students' attainment and progress, especially in English. The numbers of students attaining five or more GCSE grades at A\* to C, including English and mathematics are rising.
- Sixth form students are achieving well because of good teaching and good leadership.
- Students have positive attitudes to learning and are polite and courteous around the academy.
- Students say they enjoy their work and that they are safe in the academy. Staff and parents agree with this.
- Additional government funding to support disadvantaged students is used well and gaps in attainment between these students and others are closing.
- The principal and other leaders have the full confidence of parents. Parents are highly positive about the work of the academy.
- Leaders and governors are ambitious for students and have a clear understanding of the academy's strengths and how to tackle its weaknesses. As a result, the academy is improving.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of teaching and learning in parts of lessons. Two observations were undertaken jointly with the leaders of the academy.
- Inspectors spoke with two groups of students about their learning in lessons and their safety in the academy.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors. A meeting was held with a representative of the academy’s sponsor. Meetings were held with academy staff, including middle and senior leaders.
- Inspectors also looked at the academy’s review of its own performance, its development plan, academy policies and the minutes of governing body meetings. Inspectors also considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors looked at students’ work in lessons and also analysed samples of students’ work in exercise books and files.
- Inspectors analysed the 102 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- There were 60 questionnaires completed by staff, which were also considered by inspectors.

## Inspection team

James McGrath, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter McKay

Additional Inspector

Isobel Short

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- Almost all students are White British. There are very few students whose first language is believed not to be English.
- The proportion of disabled students or those with special educational needs is below average.
- The academy uses one alternative provider, The UCAN Centre, for the very few students who attend for part of the week.
- The academy meets 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.
- Provision for post-sixteen students was introduced in September 2013.
- The academy sponsor is a charitable organisation, The School Partnership Trust Academies (SPTA).
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to the leadership, with newly appointed vice-principals and new appointments in subject leadership.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good in all subjects, especially in science, French and mathematics, in order to ensure good progress for all students by making sure that:
  - clear subject guidance is given when marking students' work, so they know what to do to improve
  - students respond in greater detail to the guidance given to them to deepen their knowledge and understanding
  - expectations of students, especially the most able, are high and work set challenges them to make good progress
  - questioning is consistently skilful, draws out what students understand and increases the knowledge of all students
  - there are more opportunities for students to write at length in a range of subjects in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- Improve the impact of leaders and managers by ensuring that:
  - the quality of teaching and students' achievement are consistently good across the academy
  - subject leaders rigorously check the quality of guidance given to students during marking and also the quality of students' response to ensure good progress for all
  - planning for students' spiritual and cultural development and measuring the impact of the academy's work in these areas are rigorous.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management have not ensured that all groups of students achieve as well as they should and that the quality of teaching is consistently good across the academy.
- The principal has ensured that there is a clear sense of purpose and commitment to improvement shared by staff and by the governing body. Actions taken since the previous inspection have clearly improved behaviour and safety to good. Improvements are occurring in student achievement and the quality of teaching, although variability is still evident across the academy.
- Leadership has ensured that robust systems are in place to check all aspects of the academy's performance, including the behaviour and safety of those students in alternative provision. Staff's use of agreed policies are consistent across the academy. However, subject leaders are not meticulously checking the quality of guidance offered to students when work is marked and this leads to inconsistent progress for students.
- Systems to check the performance of teachers are rigorous and link closely to students' achievement. The systems have been used to challenge leaders and teachers to do better and also to support their professional development. As a result, aspects of teaching and leadership have improved since the previous inspection.
- Actions, supported by additional government funding, have improved achievement, behaviour and attendance for disadvantaged students. Gaps in attainment for these students in comparison to non-disadvantaged students are closing, both in the academy and nationally. This is a good example of the academy's commitment to equality of opportunity for all.
- The academy has worked hard and innovatively to engage with parents. Improvements in communication and parental access to the academy are reflected in their overwhelmingly positive views of the academy.
- The curriculum offers a range of subjects and additional support to meet the needs of students, although there are too few opportunities for students, particularly in Years 7, 8 and 9 to write at length and thus develop their literacy skills fully. There are good opportunities for students to develop their understanding of British values as well as their social and cultural understanding. These opportunities contribute effectively to fostering good relationships and tackling discrimination.
- However, the academy does not plan effectively for the development of students' spiritual and cultural understanding, nor does it check the impact of its work in these areas. As a result, students' spiritual development and cultural understanding are less well developed than their moral and social understanding.
- The academy has requested appropriate support from its sponsor and this partnership is assisting the academy to improve the quality of teaching and students' achievement. The academy's good work in developing the new sixth form provision is supported by the sponsor. The sponsor also supports careers education and guidance throughout the academy, with almost all students continuing on to further education, employment or training.
- **The governance of the academy:**
  - Governors have a clear understanding of the academy's strategic development. They have high aspirations for the students and have supported the development of a new sixth form to meet the needs of the community.
  - Governors compare the academy's performance both locally and nationally with accuracy and offer challenge and support to ensure that the academy is improving. They understand fully the links between teachers' performance and pay and ensure that teachers receive financial reward only if their students reach their progress and attainment targets.
  - Governors have appointed new leaders to the academy since the previous inspection to support the principal's drive for improvement.
  - Governors know how well the additional government funding to support disadvantaged students is used and are fully aware of its impact on the performance of these students.
  - Governors ensure that the academy's arrangements for safeguarding and child protection meet statutory requirements and check that relevant systems are effective.

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

- The behaviour of students is good.
- Students are keen to learn, follow the instructions of their teachers and enjoy sharing ideas to support their learning. The sixth form students make a good contribution to the work of the academy as they provide support for younger students in some lessons.
- Students are polite and courteous and welcoming to visitors. They hold doors open for adults and are happy to tell visitors about the academy.
- The academy is a calm and welcoming place in which students manage their behaviour well, both inside and outside the classroom. Students know what is expected of them and they respond well to adults. A system of support from student leaders has been established to help any student who might have any concerns. Students appreciate this and they know they are well cared for by the academy.
- A scrutiny of students' books throughout the academy shows that they take a pride in their work. However, they do not readily provide detailed responses to the advice their teachers give them to improve their work and this slows their progress.
- Vigilant staff, who act swiftly if students are absent, are ensuring that attendance is improving and it is now average. There have been no exclusions from the academy since the start of this academic year; this confirms that behaviour has improved since the previous inspection.

**Safety**

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students are clear about what constitutes bullying. They know it is not tolerated and say that on the rare occasions it occurs, it is dealt with exceptionally well by the academy staff.
- The academy ensures that students are aware of how to keep themselves safe. There are opportunities in assemblies, form time and lessons to learn about safety. Students have a good understanding of Internet safety.
- The academy uses off-site provision for a very small number of students for part of the week. There are well-developed links with the provider of these courses to ensure that students are safe.
- Child protection procedures are thorough, with governors and staff being well trained and vigilant. Governors regularly check on the work of the academy in this aspect to ensure that students are safe.
- Students say they feel safe at the academy, they are known well and are well cared for. Parents and staff share the same positive views about students' safety.

**The quality of teaching requires improvement**

- While the quality of teaching is improving, it is still variable in Key Stages 3 and 4 and is not consistently good. Over time, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching have prevented students achieving well enough by the end of Year 11.
- A scrutiny by inspectors of students' work in books showed that the quality of marking is inconsistent and this leads to variable progress across and within subjects. Leadership has provided a clear structure for marking to which all teachers adhere and marking is regular. However, the quality of guidance given to students is not focused well enough on helping students to understand how they can develop their subject knowledge and skills to make good progress. High quality marking for subject development was seen in Year 8 history books, where all students were making good or better progress.
- Expectations of the depth of response students should give to marking is variable. Too often students are not expected to give detailed responses that deepen their learning. This slows progress, particularly for the most-able students and limits their ability to reach the highest GCSE grades by the end of Year 11.
- When work set is challenging, students of all abilities 'rise to the occasion.' For example, in a Year 7 music session where students were composing, analysing their work against clear criteria and being challenged to use a range of skills to improve their work, they cooperated exceptionally well and made good progress. However, work set for students, particularly the most able, is not consistently challenging enough to help them make good progress across all their subjects. In some subjects, for example, students spend too long on tasks that are too easy for them and this inhibits good progress being made.
- Inspectors saw examples of skilful questioning across a range of subjects, including English, history, science and mathematics, with students being keen to provide extended answers which deepened the understanding of other students. However, the quality of questioning is not consistent across the academy

and there are occasions when it is not used skilfully to check on the learning of all students. This can result in progress slowing for some students.

- The development of accurate spelling, the use of subject vocabulary to communicate effectively and reading are focused on well by the academy to enhance students' literacy skills. There are good opportunities in English to develop students' writing skills, but too few opportunities to write at length in other subjects, especially across Years 7, 8 and 9. Mathematical skills are used appropriately in related subjects.
- Good relationships and the way praise is used to encourage and motivate students are strong features in lessons. As a result, students do what they are asked to do by teachers and other adults.
- Teaching assistants are well respected by students for the good work they do both inside and outside the classroom.
- The quality of teaching is improving and is evident in the improving outcomes for students at the end of Year 11. In Key Stages 3 and 4, there is some good and outstanding teaching that is helping students to make strong progress and in the sixth form, the quality of teaching is good.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, students, especially the most able, have not made enough progress in science and French. In mathematics, students make the progress expected of them but too few, again particularly the most able, do better than this.
- The most-able students are not challenged well enough to reach high standards of attainment. Therefore, not enough students reach the highest GCSE grades by the end of Year 11 across a wide range of subjects. In history, due to strong teaching and improved leadership, students reach the highest grades at GCSE in similar numbers to those of other schools.
- From starting points that are generally below average, the proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE grades at A\*-C, including English and mathematics, has improved and is average. Progress in English improved strongly to good in 2014 and overall attainment in English was average. While too few students reached the highest GCSE grades in mathematics, the proportion attaining grade C was above average.
- Students attain well in physical education, health and social care, hospitality and tourism and additional science. However, students have not made enough progress in French, science, mathematics, some technology subjects, drama, media and geography, as teaching has been inconsistent and not good enough over time.
- Information provided by the academy, supported by inspection evidence, shows that there should be further improvements in the proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE grades at A\*-C, including English and mathematics, in 2015. The academy indicates that because subject leadership and the quality of teaching are improving, students are set to make better progress than previously.
- A scrutiny of work by inspectors showed that students were making the progress expected of them, with some doing better. It showed that when students are challenged by the work set for them and when marking provides clear guidance for improvement, they make good progress. However, this is variable across and within subjects and leads to achievement that, although improving, is not good overall.
- Due to good use of the pupil premium funding, the progress made by disadvantaged students has improved and attainment gaps are closing. Disadvantaged students, at the end of Year 11 in 2014, were less than half a GCSE grade behind non-disadvantaged students in the academy in English and half a grade behind non-disadvantaged students nationally. In mathematics, they were two thirds of a GCSE grade behind non-disadvantaged students in the academy and a grade behind non-disadvantaged students nationally.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are making similar progress to others in the academy. This has improved because of better leadership and well-planned additional support.
- There are very few students who study at the alternative provision. Comparisons between those students and others in the academy and nationally are, therefore, not statistically valid.
- The academy does not use early entry to GCSE.
- Year 7 catch-up funding (government funding for those entering secondary school with below average standards in English and mathematics) is helping to improve students' literacy and mathematical skills well.
- The academy is promoting reading well. Additional time is provided for students to read for pleasure. In lessons, reading materials are well matched to students' abilities.

**The sixth form provision****is good**

- The academy has established good teaching in the sixth form. Thorough preparation for the introduction of this new and small sixth form by teachers and senior leaders, coupled with good support from the sponsor, have ensured that teaching and learning are good. As a result, students are making good progress.
- From standards that are below average on entry to the sixth form, the progress students are making in their courses is in line with national averages. Those students who enter the sixth form without GCSE grade C in English or mathematics make good progress. There have been rapid improvements in the success rates for these students over the past year.
- There are too few disabled students and those with special educational needs to make valid statistical comparisons with others in the sixth form. Disadvantaged students make similar progress to non-disadvantaged students.
- Teachers are assisting students to develop good study skills so they can take a lead in their own learning. Students are learning to assess the quality of their work to improve it. This was seen best in a drama session in Year 13, where students used clear assessment criteria exceptionally well, adjusted their performance and made excellent progress.
- The principal has ensured that leadership of the sixth form is good. He has arranged support from the sponsor to work closely with the head of sixth form who takes a strong lead in checking on the quality of teaching and learning. The curriculum meet students' needs and provides good opportunities for work experience. Strong links to business and industry ensure that all students have work experience that is linked closely to their study programmes.
- At this early stage in the development of the sixth form, students make a good contribution to the life of the academy by supporting younger students with work in class. Behaviour is good and students act as positive role models. They exhibit positive and mature attitudes and show great respect towards each other, to other students and to adults. Good information, advice and guidance is supporting the students well in considering applications to universities, colleges and employment.
- The academy is dedicated to raising aspirations for students and the local community. Since the introduction of the sixth form, the number of students entering employment or training at the end of Year 11 has improved considerably and there are no students who leave in Year 12 who are not in employment or training.



## What inspection judgements mean

Academy		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding academy 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 academy 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	An academy that requires improvement is not yet a good academy, but it is not inadequate. This academy will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>An academy that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This academy will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>An academy that requires special measures is one where the academy is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the academy's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the academy. This academy will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138006
<b>Local authority</b>	Wakefield
<b>Inspection number</b>	453484

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

<b>Type of academy</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the academy roll</b>	545
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	48
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Roger Dawson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gareth Mason
<b>Date of previous academy inspection</b>	19 March 2013
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