

# DSL V E-ACT Academy

Southbrook Estate, Hawke Road, Daventry, NN11 4LJ

**Inspection dates** 17–18 June 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3
Sixth form provision		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Too many pupils make slow progress in reading, writing or mathematics across some year groups in the primary phase and in many subjects in the secondary phase.
- There are wide gaps between the achievement of different groups of pupils.
- Pupils who find reading difficult are not making enough progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and the most-able pupils do not make enough progress.
- Gaps in achievement are not closing quickly enough between disadvantaged pupils and others.
- Teaching requires improvement because it is often not pitched at the right level for pupils' different skills. Work is not always checked in lessons.
- Pupils sometimes do not know how to improve their work because marking is not always helpful.
- The sixth form requires improvement because teaching does not always help the most-able students to reach their potential.
- Early years provision requires improvement because boys do not achieve as well as girls and the gap is widening. Activities in Reception are not always well matched to the skills of children who have spent less time in the nursery than others.
- Pupils do not always have good attitudes to learning, particularly when teaching is weak.
- Leaders do not identify in enough detail how teaching needs to improve for different groups of pupils. They do not check pupils' achievement in reading robustly enough.
- Leaders do not provide teachers with enough information and training about how best to meet the learning needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Some secondary subject leaders are not as well trained as others to improve teaching.
- The governing body does not hold leaders to account as well as it should because it does not have a detailed enough understanding of pupils' achievement data across all the phases of the academy.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders are improving teaching this year, including in English and mathematics. As a result, aspects of pupils' achievement are beginning to improve, particularly in the primary phase. This shows that leaders have the capacity to improve the academy.
- Pupils feel safe at the academy and the academy's work in this area is good.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters represent) is good in the primary phase and early years.
- Students in Year 12 made good progress last year.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 43 lessons, 13 of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. The inspection team made several short visits to other lessons to check on the progress and behaviour of different groups of pupils. Inspectors also looked at a wide range of work in pupils' books and listened to some pupils reading in Year 2 and Year 7.
- Meetings were held with four groups of pupils from Year 1 to Year 12. Other meetings were held with members of the governing body and with senior leaders and staff, including those responsible for leading subjects. The lead inspector met with two representatives from the sponsor. In addition, the lead inspector spoke to one parent on the telephone and took account of several letters that were sent to the inspection team by parents.
- Inspectors analysed the 98 responses to Ofsted's online parental questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors observed the work of the academy and looked at a number of documents, including those relating to the monitoring of teaching and the targets set for teachers to improve their work. They also looked at records relating to attendance, behaviour, bullying and safeguarding, the academy's development plan and data on pupils' progress.
- Inspectors were unable to observe any Year 11 or Year 13 lessons as students had completed their courses. The whole of Year 6 were taking part in an educational trip and so inspectors were also unable to observe any Year 6 lessons.

## Inspection team

Richard Sutton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Peter Monk	Additional Inspector
Stephen Long	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Needham	Additional Inspector
Carol Worthington	Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with the Education Act 2005, 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

- Danetre and Southbrook Learning Village (DSLV) has been an all-through academy since September 2012. It is sponsored by E-ACT.
- The academy is larger than most secondary schools.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils of minority ethnic heritage is below average.
- Almost one in 10 pupils speaks English as an additional language, which is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The pupil premium, which is additional funding given to schools for looked-after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals, provides support for almost one in three pupils. This is an above-average proportion.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- A very small number of pupils attend Green Acres FE College for part of each week to study vocational courses.
- Different children attend the nursery on a full- and part-time basis. Children attend Reception on a full-time basis.
- The Principal left the academy in November 2014. Since then the Vice Principal has been the acting Principal. During the inspection the acting Principal was absent from the academy and the academy was under the leadership of a senior member of staff from the sponsor who joined the academy in February of this year. The primary phase is led by an acting Vice Principal and the sponsor has appointed a consultant to provide support this year. A new academy Principal and a primary Principal have been appointed for September 2015.

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

- Improve teaching and rapidly raise achievement for all groups of pupils in Key Stages 1 to 4 by:
  - making sure that work is always accurately matched to pupils' skills and abilities, particularly disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and the most-able pupils
  - regularly checking pupils' work in lessons so that they can improve it and are moved on to harder work as soon as they are ready, particularly for disadvantaged pupils
  - ensuring that marking and feedback is effective in helping pupils improve their work, and teachers check that pupils have acted upon the advice they are given
  - making sure that pupils' reading ability is accurately assessed so that pupils are reading books which are at the right level.
- Raise attainment in the sixth form by ensuring that all teachers plan activities which are appropriately challenging for all students, particularly the most-able students.
- Raise achievement in early years by making sure that:
  - the gap between boys and girls narrows by planning activities which help boys to improve their communication and language skills
  - activities in the Reception classes are always pitched at the right level for children who have attended the nursery for different lengths of time.
- Increase the impact that leaders and managers, including governors, have on improving teaching and achievement throughout the academy by:
  - checking the differences in achievement between all groups of pupils in more detail so that any

- weaknesses in teaching for particular groups can be tackled quickly
- making sure that all subject leaders in the secondary phase are skilled in improving teaching and achievement
  - rigorously checking the impact of the additional pupil premium funding so that any differences in the achievement of these pupils and others close rapidly
  - improving how pupils' achievement in reading is monitored so that pupils know how to improve
  - making sure that all teachers receive detailed information about the particular needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and that they are appropriately trained to teach these pupils
  - ensuring that governors fully understand the information that they receive so that they can effectively hold leaders fully to account for the work of the academy.

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

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- Teaching and achievement improved little in the year which followed the previous inspection in 2013; Year 11 pupils underachieved in many subjects, and pupils in Year 6 did not achieve well enough in mathematics or make sufficient progress in reading in 2014 assessments. Since the start of this academic year, leaders have begun to have greater impact on improving the academy. The rate of improvement has been faster in the primary phase than in the secondary phase, which means that not all pupils have equal opportunities to achieve and be successful.
- Although there is further to go, the leadership of teaching is improving. Teachers benefit from a range of opportunities to share their skills with each other through regular training activities and through training which involves observing each other teaching. As a result, leaders are beginning to raise many staff members' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving as well as making their expectations for good behaviour clear. Leaders also tackle staff under performance robustly. Consequently, although inconsistent, leaders are beginning to create an academy culture where good teaching and behaviour are expected.
- Leaders check on the quality of teaching and on pupils' achievement. However, these checks are not as detailed as they need to be. In particular, leaders do not check closely enough any differences in the achievement of the different groups of pupils. This means that teaching for particular groups of pupils is not always as good as it should be.
- The work that subject leaders do to improve teaching and learning is not consistently good. Some subject leaders, including the English and mathematics leaders in the primary phase, have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility because they are skilled at checking teaching and achievement. However, other subject leaders, especially in the secondary phase, have not received sufficient training to do this effectively.
- The impact of the academy's additional funds, such as the pupil premium, is beginning to show some signs of improvement for eligible pupils, though there is variability. Overall, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils is too low and some gaps between their attainment and that of others in the academy and others nationally are not closing quickly enough.
- While leaders have made important improvements to the teaching of reading this year, particularly in the primary phase, they do not check pupils' achievement in sufficient detail in this subject. As a result, pupils who find reading difficult are not catching up quickly enough and are sometimes provided with reading books that are too hard or too easy.
- The leadership of support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is beginning to improve, particularly in the primary phase, and some pupils are starting to catch up. However, leaders have not made sure that staff are well enough informed and trained about the particular needs of pupils and how best these needs can be met.
- The curriculum is adequately matched to pupils' skills, abilities and interests, though the full benefits of the curriculum are not always realised because it is not always taught well enough. Students in Key Stage 4 have a good range of courses to study which are both academic and vocational. In the primary phase, there is an appropriately strong focus on reading, writing and mathematics and older primary pupils benefit from attending an all-through academy as they have lessons with specialist music and design teachers, for example.
- The curriculum has a good impact on the personal development of pupils and it also helps develop their understanding of safety matters. Pupils in all year groups have an adequate understanding of British values, which are taught across the whole curriculum and during enrichment days. The study of topics such as British law contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepares pupils for life in modern Britain.

- Leaders check the progress, behaviour and attendance of the small number of pupils who study at the local college. They regularly check the progress that students are making through college reports and they check attendance each morning when students attend.
- Pupils benefit from appropriate careers information and guidance, which is taught from Year 7. Pupils have opportunities, for example, to explore their future career options as well as research GCSE, A-level and higher education courses.
- The additional funding to support primary sport has been used well to provide pupils with a wide range of different sports as well as an increased number of after-school sports clubs which many pupils enjoy. Staff have benefited from training from sports coaches and this is helping to raise attainment in physical education. Leaders robustly monitor this funding.
- Leaders have ensured that the majority of pupils and staff show a good level of respect for each other. Relationships across the academy are positive and there is no hint of discrimination anywhere in the academy.
- Checks on the suitability of staff to work with children are comprehensive and effective.
- The senior member of staff appointed by the sponsor to lead the academy has had a good impact on improving teaching in a short period of time. She has implemented improvements to a wide range of procedures which mean that all staff are appropriately held to account and supported in their work. Her leadership is also resulting in other senior leaders having a greater impact on teaching. Improvements in the primary phase are resulting in an increasing proportion of pupils catching up. Consequently, leaders are demonstrating that they have the capacity to improve the academy.
- The sponsor did not make sure that essential improvements were made during the first year after the previous inspection. However, this year it has provided a very good level of challenge and support to the academy, particularly with respect to supporting leadership. The 'raising achievement board' ensures that governors and leaders are robustly held to account for pupils' achievement and this is an important reason why teaching is beginning to improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body had little influence on improving the academy during the first year after the previous inspection. However, it is increasingly becoming more effective and the governing body has an accurate understanding of the academy's weaknesses. In particular, it is aware that too many pupils are underachieving.
  - The governing body's ability to hold leaders to account is not as good as it should be because too few governors have a sufficiently detailed understanding of pupils' achievement data in all phases, including the sixth form and early years.
  - Governors know about the impact of the additional pupil premium and primary sport funds and they monitor these adequately. However, the governing body does not monitor the additional Year 7 'catch-up' funding.
  - Governors are appropriately involved in making decisions about whether teachers should receive pay rises, dependent on pupils making good progress. The governing body also has appropriate procedures for tackling staff underperformance, which are aligned to procedures stipulated by the sponsor.
  - The governing body ensures that the academy fulfils statutory responsibilities regarding safeguarding: appropriate checks are made on visitors to the academy, and all staff have been checked as required and are trained to keep pupils safe and free from harm.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Some pupils do not behave as well as they should in some subjects and with particular teachers, including teachers who are temporary. Sometimes learning is slowed because a small minority of pupils occasionally disrupt lessons. Many staff and parents who responded to

the questionnaires agree that behaviour is not always good.

- Some pupils do not always show good attitudes to learning, particularly when teaching is not as good as it should be. In a few lessons, pupils lose concentration because work is not challenging enough and, as a result, they make slower progress.
- Students in Key Stage 4 who attend the local college behave well because they enjoy their courses and are keen to succeed.
- Most pupils are polite and well mannered. Pupils arrive to school and lessons on time, and they show a good level of respect towards each other. Pupils behave sensibly at social times. The college system promotes good relationships across all ages in the secondary phase.
- Exclusion rates have improved this year and serious incidents of poor behaviour are rare.
- Attendance has improved this year. Most pupils attend school regularly.

### Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have a good understanding of safety matters, including how to keep safe when working online. At an age-appropriate level, pupils understand the risks associated with drugs and alcohol and they are aware of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.
- Pupils are taught about bullying and they are well equipped with strategies to manage bullying should it occur. They understand the different forms that bullying can take, including homophobic and cyber-bullying. Pupils agree that bullying is rare but, when it does happen, staff deal with matters quickly and effectively. As a result, pupils feel safe at the academy.
- Leaders make sure that pupils who attend the local college are safe. For example, they check attendance each morning that pupils attend college.
- Leaders have ensured that specific requirements for safeguarding that are required in early years' settings are met fully.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not as good as it needs to be to help pupils make up lost ground. However, teaching is improving, though this is having more impact on pupils' achievement in the primary phase than in the secondary phase.
- Teachers do not always set work which is at the right level for some pupils because they do not use assessment information as well as they could. Work is not always challenging enough for pupils of all abilities. As a result, pupils do not regularly have opportunities to demonstrate higher-level skills and knowledge, appropriate to their age, and show that they are making more rapid progress.
- Teachers do not always check pupils' work as regularly as it needs to be during lessons. Pupils are not regularly moved on to harder work as soon as they are ready and, as a result, progress is sometimes too slow. This is particularly important for some disadvantaged pupils who are not making the same progress as their peers.
- The quality of teachers' marking and feedback is improving and inspectors noted some strong examples of how teachers effectively mark work and guide pupils well on how to improve. However, this is not consistent and, as a result, some pupils do not know how to improve their work.
- As is the case for many other pupils, teaching for the most-able pupils is too often not challenging enough. Sometimes these pupils are not required to work as quickly as they are capable of, and they are not always required to think deeply.

- Teaching for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is too often not well matched to the particular learning needs of individual pupils. The support which some of these pupils receive from teaching assistants is stronger in the primary phase than it is in the secondary phase because teaching assistants have a better understanding of pupils' individual needs.
- The teaching of English and mathematics is improving. Pupils are developing these essential skills better than they have in the past and teachers have gained from external support so that their marking and assessment is accurate.
- The teaching of reading has begun to improve this year. Teachers in the primary phase have gained from training which has helped them to plan activities that help pupils to both improve their skills and enjoy reading. The teaching of phonics is good because the academy has purchased new teaching materials which teachers have been well trained to use. Leaders have recently introduced a commercial reading programme in the secondary phase but it is too early to see the impact of this.
- The teaching of writing, particularly in the primary phase, is often good but not consistently so. Pupils are writing in greater length than previously and their work is increasingly accurate.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving, though this is too variable because staff have not benefited from the same levels of training that they have had for reading and writing.
- Teachers are benefiting from improved training and development this year. There are many opportunities for staff to share their skills with each other. Training and support, as well as improved systems which hold staff appropriately to account for teaching and achievement, are significant reasons why teaching is improving.

### The achievement of pupils

### is inadequate

- For the past two years many Year 11 students have significantly underachieved. In 2014, students made slow progress across many subjects including mathematics, history, geography and modern foreign languages. The proportion of students who achieved five good GCSE passes at grades A\* to C was well below average. The proportion of students who made both the progress that is expected as well as better progress was below average in English and well below average in mathematics.
- In 2014, achievement in Year 6 declined from the previous year in reading and mathematics. Too many Year 6 pupils made slow progress in reading and pupils were, on average, just over a year behind others nationally. In mathematics, pupils were two terms behind others nationally. However, achievement in writing was good and, on average, was close to others nationally.
- Attainment in Year 2 last year was broadly in line with national averages for writing and mathematics but it fell significantly below average in reading. The proportion of pupils who met the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening was below average in 2014.
- Achievement in Key Stage 3 varies across subjects, including English and mathematics. Students in some classes and subjects are making slow progress because teaching, although improving, is not strong enough.
- There are some wide gaps across the academy between the achievement of different groups of pupils. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make slow progress because their learning needs are not accurately met by teachers. Leaders have failed to ensure that staff are adequately supported to teach these pupils.
- The most-able pupils are underachieving because teaching is not as well matched to the needs of many of these pupils as it should be. In 2014, too few students achieved the highest grades at GCSE and the proportion attaining higher levels at the end of Year 6 in reading, mathematics and the grammar, spelling and punctuation test was below average. In writing, the proportion of pupils who attained the higher levels was close to average. In Year 2, the proportion of pupils who attained the higher level was below average in reading and writing and average in mathematics.

- The academy spends the pupil premium funding in various ways, including additional staff who offer one-to-one or small-group academic and personal support when it is needed. In 2014, disadvantaged students in Year 11 attained results that were, on average, one grade lower in English and just over one grade lower in mathematics compared with other students in the academy. Compared with other students nationally, students achieved just over one grade lower in English and over two grades lower in mathematics. Those disadvantaged pupils who completed Year 6 in 2014 attained levels that were almost two years behind others in the academy in mathematics, almost a year behind in writing and over a year behind in reading. Compared with other pupils nationally, pupils were almost two years behind in mathematics, just over a year behind in writing and almost a year behind in reading. On every indicator except Year 11 English, these gaps widened from 2013.
- There are signs that, because of better teaching, differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others are beginning to narrow this year. However, disadvantaged pupils are not achieving well and their attainment, overall, is too low because many are not catching up quickly enough.
- The additional Year 7 'catch-up' funding, which supports students who join Key Stage 3 below the expected level in English and mathematics, is used to provide small-group teaching and one-to-one support when necessary. Students catch up better in mathematics than they do in reading.
- The progress that the small number of students make while studying at the local college is good. Students enjoy their courses and are well motivated. As a result, they are keen to succeed and do well.
- In the secondary phase, students do not take examinations early. This means that they have the full amount of time to study their courses.
- As a result of improvements to the teaching of phonics, pupils are making much better progress than last year. Provisional results this year indicate that an above-average proportion of pupils reached the expected standard.
- Students' achievement is on track to improve in Year 11 and Year 6 this year. Teachers have benefited from having their marking of tests externally checked and leaders have confidence in the predictions that they are making. A wide range of additional support has been given to these two groups of pupils to help them succeed. It was not possible to see Year 11 work in order to validate these predictions but inspectors looked at a range of Year 6 mathematics and writing books and noted that there was evidence that since January of this year standards have improved, particularly in writing.

### **The early years provision**

### **requires improvement**

- Children typically begin Nursery or Reception with skills and abilities which are below those usually found. Many children make good progress but proportionally fewer boys make good progress compared to girls. Girls significantly outperform boys, particularly in the language and communication part of the curriculum and the academy's own data indicate that these gaps are widening. As a result, achievement requires improvement.
- Although an above average proportion of children achieved a good level of development in 2014 and were well prepared to begin Year 1, it was below average for boys in their language and communication.
- A further reason why achievement requires improvement is because those children who spend less time at the academy's nursery do not always make as much progress as others because activities are not always accurately pitched at the right level in the Reception classes.
- Leadership and management in the early years require improvement because not all children enjoy the same opportunities to succeed as others, particularly boys and those who have attended the nursery for less time than other children.

- Teaching requires improvement because teachers and adults do not always take every opportunity to help children develop their language and communication skills, particularly boys. In addition, activities are not always accurately matched to the different skills and abilities of children who join Reception having spent different periods of time in Nursery.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Children are very well supported and staff demonstrate good behaviour and positive relationships. Children take turns and are developing a good understanding of how to behave and show respect for others. Children are happy, feel safe and relationships are positive.

### The sixth form provision

### requires improvement

- Teaching in the sixth form requires improvement because it is not always well matched to the needs of students. While many teachers have a good understanding of the subjects that they teach as well as the examination specifications, not all plan lessons that are challenging enough for all students, particularly the most-able.
- Achievement requires improvement because the most-able students do not always reach their potential. For the past two years, too few students have attained the highest grades in both Year 12 and Year 13. Compared to students nationally, Year 12 students in 2014 did not attain high enough grades and attainment was well below average, though many students made good progress. In Year 13 in 2014, students made the progress that was expected, overall. Attainment at grades A\* to E was above average but attainment at grades A\* to B was well below average, as it was the previous year. As a result, attainment was not as high as it needed to be to help students secure good university places, employment or training.
- Leadership and management in the sixth form require improvement because leaders have not secured consistently good teaching. Leaders are improving the way that they check the quality of teaching but this has only begun to happen relatively recently. As a result, there is too much variability in the quality of teaching and students' attainment is not always as good as it could be.
- The very small numbers of students who enter the sixth form without a good pass grade in GCSE English or mathematics successfully achieve a good pass.
- The behaviour of sixth form students is good. Many have good attitudes to learning and are committed to succeed. As a result, many work hard and try their best.
- Students understand safety matters and they have a good understanding of risks associated with a range of situations. As with the whole academy, work to keep students safe is good in the sixth form.

## 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>	138073
<b>Local authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	434134

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

<b>Type of school</b>	All-through
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1305
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	86
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tony Cotton (acting)
<b>Principal</b>	Angela Lakey (acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 July 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01327 313400
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