

Droylsden Academy

Manor Road, Droylsden, Manchester, Greater Manchester, M43 6QD

Inspection dates

1–2 October 2015

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Not enough teaching is good or better. Teachers' planning for learning does not always help to meet the needs and aspirations of all students.
- More-able students are not always given work that is sufficiently challenging or engages them in productive learning.
- Not enough students make expected progress in mathematics and science.
- Disadvantaged students achieve less well than their peers in the academy and nationally.
- The progress that students with special educational needs make is not rapid enough.
- While improving, attendance rates for disadvantaged students remain behind those of their peers.
- Literacy, numeracy and oracy (the ability to express oneself fluently and grammatically in speech) skills are not sufficiently embedded across the academy's provision.

The school has the following strengths

- This is an improving academy which is well led by an executive headteacher and a headteacher, who are instilling high expectations and aspirations for students and staff.
- Senior and middle leadership has been strengthened and this has given the academy greater capacity for further and more rapid improvement.
- Students are making better progress and their attainment is improving.
- An above-average percentage of students make expected progress in English.
- Work with outstanding schools has helped the academy to plan for improvement and has had a positive impact on the academy practices.
- Students' behaviour is good. They are eager to learn and are increasingly embracing a stronger work ethos.
- The academy is a safe and caring community.
- Governance is good and strongly supports academy improvement.

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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching that requires improvement so that it is good, and increase the amount of outstanding teaching, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - develop the use of their questioning skills so that all students have opportunities to develop their reasoning, spoken language and extend their thinking
 - plan lessons using assessment information that will support and challenge all students
 - plan learning activities that engage and meet the needs of all students.

- Ensure that students make better and more rapid progress by;
 - closing the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and their peers in school and nationally
 - improving attendance rates for disadvantaged students so that the gap with their peers is closed
 - improving provision and intervention so that students with special educational needs make better progress and catch up sooner
 - providing more challenging work and learning environments so that the most-able students excel
 - rapidly increasing the percentage of students achieving expected and better-than-expected progress in mathematics and science.

- Ensure that a culture of high expectations and aspirations are embedded through the development of:
 - a reading culture for students so as to enable all of them to read and write with greater accuracy, confidence and self-assurance
 - students' speaking and presentational skills
 - careers guidance that is entwined into the aspirational culture at Key Stage 3.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- This is an improving academy. The executive headteacher has guided the academy through turbulent times and brought a sense of purpose and direction to its work through outstanding leadership. Together with a talented and incisive new headteacher they have established strong staff morale and a desire within all to improve. Students have bought into a new behavioural code and are now becoming ready and willing learners.
- Quickly, the executive headteacher and headteacher have formed a talented and committed senior leadership team that is grappling with the challenges facing the academy. Senior leaders are excellent role models for staff and students alike in promoting a culture of high expectations and greater ambition for all.
- Staff morale is good. The overwhelming majority of staff spoken to and responding to staff questionnaires expressed confidence in the academy's current leadership and its direction of travel. They voiced strong support for the academy's improvement agenda. In particular, they commented on improved student behaviour and the higher expectations set for both staff and students.
- Teaching is improving. Coaching sessions and focused programmes are refining staff approaches to teaching and learning. Newly appointed staff have further strengthened teaching and learning. Training for teachers is more focused and enhances the sharing of best practice across the academy. Senior leaders acknowledge the need to improve the quality of teaching further.
- Self-evaluation is accurate, robust and honest. Leaders use information on students' attainment and progress to inform their self-evaluation and identify clear actions that will bring improvement. New systems and processes require further embedding to ensure their sustainability. However, they are already impacting on raising standards and securing improvement.
- Middle leaders are developing quickly and have responded well to a culture that requires greater responsibility and accountability for performance. They are getting to grips with improving teaching, learning and students' outcomes within their areas of responsibility. The academy's leaders acknowledge that middle leaders need to be more actively involved in the academy's self-evaluation process.
- Performance management is razor sharp in its focus. All teachers are held to account for the achievement of their students and the quality of teaching and learning. Importantly, this is set within the context of a highly supportive, modelling and coaching culture. Governors set a very high and ambitious tone for all staff.
- Students have an increasing number of subject options within a traditional curriculum in Key Stage 4. A small number of students in Year 11 follow vocationally based subjects in cooperation with a local college of further education. The curriculum for Years 7 to 9 is improving. The academy acknowledges the challenges of developing a more active focus on literacy and numeracy early in Year 7 and in taking this forward so that key gaps in students' skills are rapidly closed.
- Careers education is largely focused on Key Stage 4 and the transition to college or employment. The academy is building a careers education from Year 7 onwards as part of the drive for greater aspirations and the development of work-related skills and aptitudes.
- The academy provides students with effective programmes to enable them to better understand citizenship and their responsibility within a democratic society. Assemblies increasingly encourage student participation.
- Leaders now have a sharper focus on using additional funding effectively and, as a result, the gap in attainment between disadvantaged students and their peers is now closing. Senior leaders acknowledge the urgency of closing this gap more rapidly. 'Catch-up' funding is now helping students in Year 7 to develop their literacy and numeracy skills effectively.
- The academy provides very good care and support for its students. Strong links with external agencies strengthen further the quality of the academy's work and its care for its students.
- Well-developed links with a secondary school, judged to be outstanding, informs senior and middle leaders of the characteristics of good and outstanding teaching. The academy is quickly developing productive links with primary schools and post-16 institutions to inform transition to and from the academy. The academy has positive relationships with the local authority.
- Parents are generally positive about the academy. There are good links with parents, who are kept well informed about the progress of their sons or daughters. They value the regular newsletters that keep

them informed of academy activities. Attendance at parents' evenings has increased. Some parents act as reading mentors.

■ **The governance of the academy:**

- Governors have learnt from the turbulence and challenges of recent years within the academy. They now form a highly experienced, well-qualified and multi-talented governing body. They have a sharp eye on student performance and are robust in their evaluation of information about the academy's improvement. They offer robust and constructive challenge to senior leaders.
- Governors have a very good oversight of the academy's finances, including how pupil premium funding is allocated. They are aware of how this additional resource contributes to improving the achievement of disadvantaged students.
- Governors frequently visit the academy to engage with leaders, middle leaders and teachers. They particularly have a good understanding of where teaching and learning and student outcomes need to improve more rapidly
- Governors monitor performance management well.
- Governors ensure that safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements.

■ The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teaching and learning are improving. However, there remains some inconsistency in the quality of teaching and learning over time. There is not enough good or better teaching.
- Where teachers' planning is good, students are enabled to gain confidence, reliance and independence in learning. They respond well to these sessions by seizing the opportunities to challenge, embed and extend their knowledge and understanding. Teacher questioning elicits deeper thinking and reasoning from students. Group work, when undertaken, is well organised and purposeful.
- Students cooperate well with each other. In these sessions students make good progress. This was exemplified in English, drama and physical education. In a very well-organised physical education lesson, trained student leaders worked with their groups to evaluate key footballing skills; the level and focus of dialogue was of high quality. Teams then dispersed to the practice pitches where these skills were demonstrated in the teams' approach and organisation; perfect symmetry of theory relayed to practice.
- In too many lessons, teachers do not plan challenging enough activities. Activities do not always match the abilities of all students. Teachers' questioning is superficial and does not develop students' thinking and reasoning skills. Some, particularly more-able students, become disengaged from learning.
- New systems to track students' assessment and progress have been introduced by senior leaders. Teachers enter assessment information which will be analysed and validated throughout the year, and identify students who require additional support. Regular meetings between senior and middle leaders, and middle leaders and teachers, support the analysis of assessment information. Work done with outstanding schools has helped to inform these systems and processes. It remains too early to judge the impact of the new arrangements.
- Marking in students' exercise books is regular. A revised marking policy that was put in place in April 2015 to improve the quality and consistency of feedback is beginning to have an impact on learning and progress. Those students spoken to said that marking was helping them to better understand the progress they had made and their next steps in learning.
- There are now more opportunities for teachers to share good practice across the academy.
- Literacy and numeracy are insufficiently developed across the curriculum. In too many lessons students are not encouraged to explore vocabulary or extend their spoken competencies. Developing and embedding a reading and oracy culture remains a major challenge for the academy.
- The academy is well equipped and resourced. Leaders have ensured that some design features of the new build that made it harder for teaching to be effective have been re-worked and changed.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Personal development and welfare

- The academy's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The academy presents a safe, calm and harmonious environment. Students are becoming more self-confident learners, particularly in those lessons where they are challenged and the learning meets their needs and inspires greater expectations and ambitions.
- Students are increasingly positive about the academy and their work and this has had a positive impact on their progress. Relationships between staff and students are very good. Students are courteous and polite to each other, other adults and visitors. Discourtesy and derogatory or aggressive language are robustly challenged. Students demonstrate respect for the views and ideas of others.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is generally good. Academy leaders acknowledge that more work is required to develop a greater range of cultural activities. Students are well prepared for the diversity of modern Britain. They are increasingly taking roles of responsibility within the academy, including prefects' duties, librarians and peer mentors for younger students. The academy has an active student council.
- Career guidance is enhanced by links to good post-16 provision and there are increasingly frequent trips to universities.
- Attendance is improving and gaps between the attendance of disadvantaged students and their peers are closing. However, these gaps still remain too large. Exclusion rates have declined significantly.
- Students wear their uniform with pride. Students demonstrate respect for the academy environment, which is tidy and well kept.
- The academy places great emphasis on the welfare of students, and pastoral and welfare systems are fine-tuned to their needs. Staff work well with external agencies and make great efforts to reduce social and economic barriers to learning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- A calm and respectful atmosphere prevails within the academy. Students have embraced the new behaviour code.
- Students spoken to said that incidents of bullying were rare in the academy but that when they occurred they were dealt with quickly. Students are well informed about bullying and discuss the different types of bullying, including cyber, racist and homophobic bullying.
- Students develop an understanding of how to keep safe through tutorials, assemblies and special focus events. They are made aware of issues regarding radicalisation and child sexual exploitation.
- Students said that they feel secure and safe within the academy.
- The small number of students who are educated in alternative provision are well cared for and feel safe.

Outcomes for pupils require improvement

- Students enter the academy at standards generally below the national average. More students are making expected progress across a wide range of subjects, and achievement gaps between different groups of students are closing. However, in key areas such as mathematics and science, these gaps remain significant and they require to be closed more rapidly.
- Current assessment information provided by the academy indicates that more students in Key Stage 4 are making expected progress. In English, the percentage of students making expected progress is above that of their peers nationally. An increasing number of students in English are making better-than-expected progress.
- An increasing number of students are making expected and better-than-expected progress in mathematics, although this is still below the national average for their peers. In the 2015 GCSE results, students achieved over a grade lower than other students nationally in mathematics.
- Disadvantaged students make slower progress than their peers although gaps are narrowing. The gap between the progress made by disadvantaged students and other students nationally is being reduced.

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- Disadvantaged students have improved their rates of progress at a faster rate than other students in mathematics and English in the academy, and the gaps are narrowing. The gaps between the progress made by disadvantaged students and other students nationally are being reduced, but remain significant. The progress made and attainment achieved for the more-able students is improving. However, they are making slower progress than the same group nationally because teachers do not always plan activities that challenge them and enable them to excel.
- The progress of disabled students or those who have special educational needs in 2014/15 was below the progress made by their peers. The academy has appointed new staff and initiated other changes to improve provision. It is too early to measure impact.
- The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, increased in 2015. The trend over the four-year period has seen an increase of 13%. In GCSE results in 2015 student progress in English, humanities and languages was strong. The rate of improvement is slower in mathematics and science.
- Reading ages are tracked and monitored. However, senior leaders are aware that a culture of purposeful reading has not yet been embedded within the academy.
- Students in the alternative provision at Tameside College are making good progress because they are engaged and challenged by the curriculum offered.
- Information, advice and guidance for students are well organised and strongly focused on raising aspirations. Good links with local colleges have ensured strong take-up of post-16 education.

School details

Unique reference number	135864
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	10001636

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

Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	831
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Ryder
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Philip Wilson
Telephone number	0161 301 7600
Website	www.droylsdenacademy.com
Email address	admin@droylsdenacademy.com
Date of previous inspection	5–6 March 2014

Information about this school

- Droylsden Academy is an average-sized secondary school. The academy sponsor is Tameside College.
- Academy staffing has undergone significant change in the last year. The Principal, a Vice principal and an Assistant principal resigned. Subsequently, another Assistant principal resigned. An executive headteacher was appointed in March 2015. The executive headteacher oversees Mossley Hollins High School and Droylsden Academy, working half the week in each establishment. A new headteacher was appointed in April 2015. He had led the academy on an interim basis since December 2014 and was previously Vice principal. Following these appointments, the senior leadership team was restructured. A deputy headteacher is currently on secondment from an academy in Oldham to offer additional capacity to the senior team.
- The academy receives support from Mossley Hollins High School, which has received two consecutive Ofsted outstanding judgements. Tameside College also works in partnership with the academy to raise standards and the aspirations of all students.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Six Year 11 students are currently educated in alternative provision at Tameside College.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in a wide range of subjects across the academy to different age groups. Several lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Visits to classes in each year group were undertaken to check students' behaviour and attitudes to teaching and learning ethos in the academy.
- Inspectors looked closely at samples of students' written work in a range of subjects and year groups. They also watched students' behaviour around the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, groups of teachers, and four groups of students. Inspectors met with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation including: self-evaluation and development plans; information relating to students' attainment and progress; information on attendance; documents and records about behaviour and safeguarding; records of checks on teaching and learning and of teachers' performance management; and the minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- Twenty parents responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and inspectors considered their views. Inspectors also reviewed the academy's own records of feedback from parents and students.
- They also took account of the responses to a questionnaire from 41 staff.

Inspection team

Patrick Geraghty, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Liz Kelly	Ofsted Inspector
John Leigh	Ofsted Inspector
Annette Patterson	Ofsted Inspector

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