

Don Valley Academy and Performing Arts College

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

Inspection dates 30 November –1 December 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Although pupils' achievement is improving rapidly, some pupils do not make enough progress from their starting points, especially in mathematics and science. Middle leaders are not equally skilled in checking pupils' progress and improving teaching.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable, particularly in key stage
 Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils and they set work that is not sufficiently challenging.
- The school's new behaviour policy is not used consistently by all teachers. A significant minority of pupils do not follow the school's high expectations of behaviour. Consequently, too many pupils are regularly removed from lessons and fixed-term exclusions are well above average.
- The sixth form requires improvement because learners on academic programmes do not make enough progress, especially the most
- Attendance is below average and is not improving.

The school has the following strengths

- Leadership is good because the principal and her senior team have rigorously addressed weak teaching and led the school very effectively through a period of rapid change. In the last year, leaders have been well supported by the trust. Current pupils in the school are now making much better progress.
- Personal development and welfare are good. Leaders and teachers have established a culture of respect. Pupils are safe and encouraged to achieve their best.
- The quality of teaching is steadily improving because leaders communicate high expectations to teachers and pupils, and they regularly check pupils' progress. Well-planned training is improving teachers' skills.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making better progress in a range of subjects due to effective spending of pupil premium funding.
- Pupils make good progress in work-related subjects and in the performing arts, including in the sixth form.



Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve all pupils' progress further, especially in mathematics and science, by ensuring that:
 - all middle leaders are equally effective in addressing the remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching
 - teachers use assessment information effectively so that the most able pupils are given more challenging work, especially in key stage 3
 - pupils who need to catch up are given more support.
- Improve pupils' behaviour and attendance by:
 - insisting that the school's behaviour policy is followed consistently so that all pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are less at risk of exclusion
 - reducing the proportion of pupils who are regularly removed from learning activities
 - reducing the number of pupils who are regularly absent from school, including disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve the achievement of learners taking academic qualifications in the sixth form by:
 - using the successful systems applied in the rest of the school to track learners' progress closely
 - making sure that teachers set work that is suitably challenging, especially for the most able learners.



Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal, with the support of her leadership team, has transformed the school since it was placed in special measures two years ago.
- Leaders have introduced a robust system for tracking pupils' progress and provided additional intervention for pupils who are not meeting their targets. They have increased pupils' attainment and improved pupils' progress, especially in English, the performing arts and in work-related courses. Progress has also improved in other subject areas but at a slower rate.
- Leaders share an ambition to improve the school further and make sure that all pupils make the progress expected of them. They set aspirational targets for pupils and communicate high expectations to both staff and pupils.
- Senior leaders have rightly tackled the weakest teaching so that it is improving quickly. Their approach to recruiting and training effective teachers and leaders is well planned. They check on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment rigorously and manage the performance of teachers to improve teaching systematically.
- In the past year, the Delta Academies Trust has provided an increased level of support. Directors of learning, employed by the trust, have worked alongside subject leaders to further develop their leadership skills. More recently, they have supported teachers in implementing a new behaviour policy and this is having a positive effect on the school's climate for learning.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use regular reviews of teaching, behaviour and achievement to inform a systematic approach to school improvement planning. Leaders are fully aware that there is more work to do to ensure that all pupils make good progress across all subjects, especially in mathematics and science.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education was identified as a weakness at the last inspection. It is now a strength because leaders have developed a well-planned programme of assemblies, tutorials and taught lessons to help pupils reflect on their wider role in modern British society. Pupils cover a wide range of topics in religious education such as humanism, different faiths and moral issues such as animal rights. They show a good understanding of diversity and democracy. Pupils said that they enjoy the weekly 'Newsround' activity in tutorials during which they debate topical issues; they demonstrated detailed recall of recent events such as the Paris bombings and the United States election.
- Promoting pupils' personal development and welfare is a priority for the school and leaders have been successful in establishing an understanding of the importance of respect for others within and beyond the school community. Most pupils respond well to teachers' encouragement to support the local community and local charities. Pupils work very well together when asked to collaborate with each other in lessons and are well prepared for life outside the school.



- Leaders use the pupil premium effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. For example, extra revision sessions and literacy support have led to increased attainment and improved progress for this group of pupils, across a range of subjects including English and mathematics. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils remains below average and is not showing signs of improvement.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of most pupils. There is a wide range of subjects on offer and most pupils engage well in their option subjects from Year 9. Currently, the most able scientists are not fully challenged by the science curriculum and not enough pupils achieve the highest grades they need to take them on to the next stage in their education. Leaders have recognised this and have made provision for current Year 9 pupils to take three separate science subjects.
- The taught curriculum is well supported by a wide range of extra-curricular activities and visits. Leaders carefully track which pupils attend these activities and encourage all pupils to explore their interests and become involved. Levels of participation are high in some activities, including extra revision classes for Year 11 pupils.
- Pupils across all year groups follow a planned programme of careers guidance. Displays around the school show that the school is committed to promoting equal opportunities and widening pupils' horizons. Local businesses and further education providers are invited into school to enable pupils to explore different programmes and careers. Impartial guidance is provided by the trust and, together with the increased focus on target-setting, careers guidance is beginning to raise pupils' aspirations.
- Leaders use the catch-up premium with some success to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in Year 7. Reading recovery programmes and small-group support in literacy and numeracy help pupils to develop some of their basic skills when they transfer to secondary school. However, lower attaining pupils continue to make less progress than their peers across a range of subjects at key stage 4, so leaders need to do more to strengthen the literacy and numeracy skills that pupils need to achieve well in their examinations.
- The school has a well-planned approach to promoting pupils' reading. Teachers in English work closely with the librarian to encourage pupils to enjoy reading in school. Pupils' reading records suggest that the school is less successful in encouraging reading at home.
- Subject leaders share the principal's vision to improve teaching, learning and assessment and they show a high level of commitment to the pupils they teach. Some subject leaders are relatively inexperienced and need further support from senior leaders so that they can lead their teams effectively. Their confidence in monitoring the quality of teaching is developing well and they are very aware of their responsibility to drive up standards in their subject areas. They said that they value the range of training provided and welcome the support already provided by senior leaders and the trust.
- Pupils at risk of permanent exclusion study off site, either full time or part time. Leaders track their progress, behaviour and attendance very closely so that they can intervene with individual pupils where needed.



■ The school's own surveys show that parents and carers are generally very positive about the school, although some do not agree that the school responds well to their concerns when these are raised with school staff.

Governance of the school

- Since a review of governance was carried out after the last inspection, the education advisory board has been reconstituted and members have acted decisively on the identified areas for improvement. Board representatives have a range of expertise which they use to challenge leaders effectively. For example, they have been tenacious in checking that the finances of the school are well managed and in ensuring that leaders maintained their focus on raising standards during the recent move into new school buildings.
- The committee structure has also been reorganised to enable board representatives to hold leaders stringently to account for pupils' progress. They have a thorough understanding of the actions being taken to tackle inconsistencies in teaching and pupils' progress, particularly in Year 11. Minutes of meetings show that they challenge leaders to explain the information presented to them and to understand any differences in the behaviour, attendance or progress between groups of pupils. They are less well informed about the progress of younger year groups because leaders have prioritised improvement at key stage 4.
- Board representatives are rightly proud of the way in which the pupil premium funding is used to increase the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils. They know which interventions have worked most effectively and why. They are aware that greater focus is needed on improving the attendance of this group of pupils.
- Board representatives share the principal's awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and her ambition to improve further. They recognise the efforts of leaders to bring about change in teaching and pupils' behaviour.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The senior leader with responsibility for safeguarding manages an effective team of progress leaders and support staff who are committed to securing pupils' safety and well-being. The reporting system is well used by staff to report any safeguarding concerns. Staff are alert to potential signs of neglect or abuse because they receive regular and relevant training on child protection.
- Where concerns are identified, these are dealt with promptly, and record-keeping shows that referrals to other agencies are followed up in a robust manner. Staff with responsibility for safeguarding work well with local agencies so they are aware of the potential risks that might affect pupils in the local community.



Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Despite recent improvements, teaching, learning and assessment are not securing consistently strong progress across all year groups. There is still too much variability between and within subjects.
- Across a range of subjects, some pupils do not benefit from having work that is challenging enough, particularly the most able pupils. Teaching is most variable in mathematics and science. In these subjects, teachers do not always set work that is well matched to pupils' skills and abilities. For example, in Year 7 mathematics, teachers are beginning to develop pupils' skills in problem solving and reasoning, but the work is not demanding enough for the most able pupils, and teachers are not effectively supporting the pupils who find the work difficult. In Year 9 science, pupils are not given enough activities that develop their ability to research and investigate independently so they are overly reliant on their teachers to provide the subject information they need. Across year groups, activities in science do not provide the variety and challenge needed to stretch and motivate the most able learners.
- Some teachers' expectations of lower attaining pupils are also too low, especially in key stage 3. Across the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, off-task behaviour by small numbers of pupils slows down the pace of learning and limits the progress pupils make. For example, when pupils move from one task to another, time is lost while they start work again. In Year 8 English, weak literacy levels and low levels of challenge result in some unfinished work in books.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are much better at key stage 4. In most subjects, learning activities are well planned and resourced to build on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding. Teachers use the school's assessment policy well to motivate most pupils to achieve their targets. Effective questioning is used to engage pupils in discussion and to challenge them to explain their reasoning in detail. When teachers' expectations are high, pupils make good progress over time. The current Year 11 pupils respond well to the increased rigour of formal assessments because teachers analyse the results of these carefully and pupils know what to revise for their examinations.
- Effective teaching in vocational subjects and the performing arts motivates pupils to achieve challenging targets. Teachers plan effectively and encourage high levels of participation. Pupils readily take on leadership roles and work very effectively together. They understand precisely what they need to do for their examinations in these subjects.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive effective support. Teaching assistants benefit from training to track and assess pupils' progress in lessons.



- Lower attaining pupils enjoy reading and most use their phonics knowledge well to read unfamiliar words. Those who are still struggling to read fluently continue to receive support. Reading records show that, in school, pupils read a range of books appropriate to their ability. The most able pupils read confidently and with expression, showing that they have a good understanding of the plot and characters in the books they are reading.
- Pupils who regularly attend their alternative off-site provision benefit from high-quality teaching and achieve appropriate qualifications. However, some pupils do not attend often enough to benefit from this effective teaching.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils wear their uniform smartly and are proud of their school. They are enjoying their new learning environment and treat the new building with respect. Most pupils show pride in their work, which is well presented in their books.
- Pupils understand the school's focus on respect. They describe the school's ethos as one in which they are expected to support one another, listen well and allow others to learn. Teachers reinforce these expectations during tutorials, assemblies and social times, and most pupils respond well.
- Most pupils contribute very positively in group and class activities. In many lessons, pupils are keen to contribute in discussions and they can explain their ideas confidently. They are willing to help each other and to seek support from their peers as well as from their teachers. Teachers said that this approach is building pupils' resilience.
- Pupils are increasingly aware of how to be a successful learner, especially at key stage 4, because teachers provide pupils with clear targets and encourage them to reflect on their learning and make improvements.
- Pupils reported that they feel safe and know whom to go to if they have any concerns. They said that bullying is rare and that staff deal effectively with any concerns. They said that they rarely hear any derogatory language and they have taken part in discussions about the effects of different kinds of bullying.
- Pupils also described how they receive a wide range of information in assemblies, lessons and 'drop-down days' about how to keep themselves safe, in school, online and in the wider community. They said that they are confident that adults will listen to them and provide support if they need it.
- Pupils who attend off-site provision are well looked after. Clear procedures are used to check pupils' attendance, behaviour and safety. Thorough records are kept and timely communication with school leaders means that any concerns can be addressed promptly.



Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- When staff follow the school's behaviour policy, most pupils respond positively. However, the systems are not used consistently with some groups. Pupils' learning and progress are affected when teachers do not challenge off-task behaviour effectively.
- In some lessons, when the work is too easy and activities do not engage pupils, low-level disruption prevents pupils from making good progress. This is more common in English, mathematics and science at key stage 3. In contrast, Year 7 pupils have settled in well, and most pupils in Year 11 are well behaved, try their best and prepare well for their final examinations.
- Pupils who were interviewed during the inspection said that behaviour has improved. They said that the behaviour policy is still new and that some pupils are taking time to respond positively to the school's expectations.
- Staff who were interviewed also said that the new policy is improving behaviour, but only 62% of the teachers who completed Ofsted's survey said that behaviour is good. There has been a sharp increase in the number of pupils being regularly removed to the 'consequences room' or to work in other classrooms under staff supervision. The number of pupils being excluded from school is well above the national average.
- Staff and pupils reported that the rewards system is being reviewed by the school council and, in the meantime, rewards are applied inconsistently across and within subjects.
- Nevertheless, higher expectations of behaviour have led to improved behaviour around the school. Pupils conduct themselves well around the school site. The changeover of lessons is orderly and pupils are well supervised during social times. Most respond quickly to instruction and they speak politely to visitors and other adults.
- Attendance is below average and does not show signs of improving, despite the school's work with individual pupils. The proportion of pupils who regularly miss school is reducing slightly but it is still high, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- Punctuality has improved and pupils arrive at lessons promptly, ready to learn.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

■ In recent years, pupils have left the school at the end of Year 11 with levels of attainment that were much lower than average. In 2016, the school's analysis shows that there was a marked improvement in the proportion of pupils who attained the basic measure of grade C or above in GCSE English and mathematics. Owing to recent improvements in teaching, pupils' progress in 2016 was also closer to the national average. However, on average, pupils achieved examination results half a grade lower than expected in English, mathematics and the English Baccalaureate, given their starting points. Therefore, outcomes still require further improvement.



- The school's performance information for 2016 shows that pupils' progress, although improving, was variable across subject areas. Pupils' progress improved faster in English than in mathematics, and progress in science was well below average. Girls made more progress than boys across a range of subjects. Pupils made better progress in work-related qualifications.
- Historically, disadvantaged pupils in the school have made less progress than other pupils nationally and their attainment in English and mathematics has been low. In 2016, a much higher proportion attained the basic measure of grade C or above in GCSE English and mathematics and they made better progress in English. The most able disadvantaged pupils achieved almost a grade lower than expected, given their starting points. Leaders rightly recognise that there is more work to do but their carefully planned use of the pupil premium funding is making sure that differences are diminishing between the progress of disadvantaged pupils in the school and that of other pupils nationally, across a wide range of subjects.
- In 2016, the progress of the most able pupils was below average. The school's current performance information suggests that the most able pupils in the current Years 10 and 11 will make much better progress. However, some teachers do not plan challenging enough activities to stretch this group of pupils so that they can achieve the highest grades possible.
- The small number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities made similar progress to other pupils nationally in 2016. Pupils requiring help are identified early so that additional support can be provided.
- A more rigorous approach to assessment is driving up standards. The school's information on current pupils shows that those in key stage 3 and key stage 4 are making better progress towards their targets than in previous years. Observations of pupils in lessons, some carried out jointly with senior leaders, confirmed that this is the case in many subjects, but the proportion of pupils making good progress in mathematics and science is still too low at key stage 4.
- Some pupils join the school with low skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders use the catch-up funding to improve pupils' basic skills and they do make some gains in Year 7. However, pupils in key stage 4 with low starting points continue to make slow progress.
- In 2016, a small number of pupils attended alternative, off-site provision full time. They did not achieve appropriate qualifications because leaders were not successful in remotivating pupils who were at risk of permanent exclusion. Leaders are checking current off-site provision more closely and pupils who attend well are on track to achieve qualifications.
- Increased levels of attainment in Year 11 mean that pupils are better prepared for their next steps and the majority take up appropriate further education and training. Pupils are well supported by a programme of careers education and guidance.



16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Leadership in the sixth form requires improvement because learners on A-level programmes do not always make enough progress. Leaders are beginning to use the school's systems for checking the quality of teaching and assessment more rigorously in the sixth form but this has not yet made enough difference to the progress of current learners.
- Achievement requires improvement because learners' progress across a range of academic subjects has been below the national average for the last three years. Current tracking by leaders shows that, in some subjects such as English, psychology and sociology, learners' progress at AS level is not improving significantly. The proportion of learners gaining A or A* at A level has increased but is still below average.
- Some teaching in the sixth form is very effective and where it is, learners benefit from positive relationships with teachers who have high expectations of them. Learners have a thorough understanding of the requirements of the examination, which they use to develop their work to a high standard, and teachers use skilful questioning to stretch learners' thinking. However, this is not the case across all subjects and too often, learners are not challenged enough.
- Learners' achievement in work-related subjects is consistently well above average. This is because teachers have good subject knowledge and they support learners to achieve well on appropriate courses. Teachers check how well learners are progressing and provide effective feedback that helps learners to achieve the highest grades.
- Those who have not achieved at least a grade C in English and mathematics by the end of key stage 4 are helped to do so and the majority are successful in improving their grades. This is due to effective teaching and support.
- The proportion of learners who leave the sixth form during their programme of study has reduced significantly. This is due to the advice, guidance and support they now receive before choosing to study in the sixth form and the increased support they receive when they begin their courses in the sixth form.
- Learners in the sixth form receive good careers advice and take part in a range of tutorial activities to prepare them for life beyond education and training. Those who choose to apply to go to university are well supported in their applications and all are successful in securing a place. All learners who choose to follow work-related routes go on to appropriate further education, work or apprenticeships. Learners said that they value the opportunity to carry out work experience as part of their programme of study.
- Learners benefit from good provision to develop broader skills, including the opportunity to take part in work experience. The school meets the requirements of the 16 to 19 programme.



- Learners in the sixth form know how to keep themselves safe online and they feel safe and secure in school. They said that they feel well supported by the teachers and tutors. They are attentive in lessons and contribute well in learning activities when given the opportunity to work with each other.
- Attendance in the sixth form is above average. This is because leaders check that learners are attending lessons and tutorials regularly, and most learners enjoy their chosen subjects.



School details

Unique reference number 137472

Local authority Doncaster

Inspection number 10019688

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

Mixed

154

Type of school Secondary comprehensive

School category Academy sponsor-led

Age range of pupils 11 to 18

Gender of pupils Mixed

Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study

programmes

Number of pupils on the school roll 968

Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study

programmes

Appropriate authority Academy trust

Chair Stephen Beer

Principal Karen Squires

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Date of previous inspection 5–6 November 2014

Information about this school

- Don Valley Academy and Performing Arts College is an average-sized school with a sixth form.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.



- 14 pupils attend alternative provision off site full time. A small number of pupils attend alternative provision for part of the week. The providers are St Wilfred's and TOPS (The Off-site Provision Service) in Doncaster.
- The school is part of the Delta Academies Trust, formerly known as the Schools Partnership Trust Academies. A new chief executive officer was appointed to the trust in February 2016.
- In 2015, the school did not meet the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.



Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 37 lessons across all key stages and subjects. Some were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. In addition to a scrutiny of books in lesson observations, three inspectors undertook a scrutiny of books with subject leaders. Inspectors also undertook learning walks with senior leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and to evaluate the way in which the school promotes personal development and welfare.
- Meetings were held with the principal, senior and middle leaders, the head of the sixth form, and the chair and vice-chair of the education advisory board. Inspectors also met with a group of teachers and with pupils from all year groups, including learners in the sixth form.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, the school's quality assurance, monitoring and assessment records, minutes of board meetings and case studies of vulnerable pupils receiving additional support. Inspectors scrutinised safeguarding procedures and related policies.
- Inspectors considered the school's surveys of parents' views and 64 responses to Ofsted's survey that were received from staff.

Inspection team

Lynn Kenworthy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
David Pridding	Ofsted Inspector
Robert Pritchard	Ofsted Inspector
Sean McClafferty	Ofsted Inspector



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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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