

David Young Community Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131898
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	332768
Inspection dates	25–26 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Thomas Grieveson HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	960
Sixth form	103
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Keith Madeley
Headteacher	Ms Ros McMullen
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Bishops Way Seacroft Leeds LS14 6NU
Telephone number	08456 340007
Fax number	-

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

The academy serves the Seacroft area of East Leeds. It opened in September 2006 following the closure of Braim Wood Boys School and Agnes Stewart Church of England High School. Just over one third of the student population are girls, although this number is increasing. The highest proportion of girls are in Years 7, 8, 9 and in the sixth form. The proportion of students who are entitled to free school meals is well above the national average and reflects the social and economic circumstances of its catchment. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds account for just under one fifth of the academy population; about 10% of students speak English as an additional language. A greater than average percentage of students have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The academy is sponsored by the Church of England. It has a specialism in design and the built environment.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

David Young Community Academy provides its students with a good and improving education. It benefits from outstanding leadership and offers an excellent level of pastoral care.

Much has been accomplished since the academy opened in 2006. Students' achievement is now good and standards in 2008 showed a marked improvement. The proportion of students gaining five or more good GCSE grades is above the national average at 70%, with very good results attained in all vocational subjects. Nonetheless, further improvement is required particularly in English and mathematics at Key Stages 3 and 4 as standards in these subjects remain below average. Students' targets are challenging and ambitious and have proved effective in raising standards. Tracking procedures accurately identify underachievement. Interventions to support individuals and groups of learners are swift, carefully targeted, and lead to improvement.

The academy has invested considerably in staff training, coaching and support with beneficial effects on the quality of teaching and learning. Most is now good with teachers demonstrating first-rate subject knowledge and utilising a range of teaching strategies to take account of students' preferred learning styles. Through the careful analysis of performance information, the majority of teachers demonstrate an insightful understanding of students' progress and learning needs. This leads, in most cases, to well planned lessons which effectively support improvements in students' learning. Efforts to develop students' independent learning skills have been largely effective but remain under-developed in a few, mainly younger classes. This is linked to inadequate teaching observed in some Year 7 and 8 lessons taught by inexperienced or non-specialist staff who struggled to manage challenging behaviour.

The curriculum has been developed thoughtfully to meet the identified needs of all students, not least to raise their aspirations, deepen their engagement and enjoyment of learning, and compensate for low attainment prior to joining the academy. This is clear in the detailed attention being paid, for example, to the use of topical issues in the humanities to give students a context to improve their literacy skills by analysing information, formulating and discussing arguments, and presenting them to the class. The academy's specialism in design and the built environment makes a strong contribution to the curriculum overall and to the improvement in standards.

Students benefit from the good care, guidance and support they receive. Pastoral support is excellent and given high priority by the academy's senior leaders. The work of the 'Support for Learning' department is highly effective. This ensures there is close alignment with external services and parents to ensure that students' emotional and educational needs are identified early and addressed through carefully managed support. Attendance overall has improved and is now average although a core of older persistent non-attending students continues to adversely affect attendance rates.

Outstanding leadership has maintained a relentless focus on improving standards coupled to an equally determined drive to confront a culture and legacy of low expectations. Decision-making has seamlessly and successfully aligned these ambitions with actions to raise standards and improve the quality of provision.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 3

Provision in the sixth form is satisfactory and continuing to develop well. Students value the advice and guidance they receive. They speak positively about the academy's learning ethos, high expectations and recent improvements in the quality of academic support. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with good relationships between staff and students evident in both year groups. Students are developing their role in assessing their own progress. The large majority of students demonstrate mature attitudes to learning and are keen to succeed. The Year 13 cohort in 2008 was very small. Although A-level examination pass rates were below average, students' attainment in a range of Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) vocational subjects indicates that achievement overall is satisfactory. The academy offers a range of level 3 vocational and A level courses. There are no courses available, however, for those students who do not attain five or more good GCSE grades in Year 11. Students access a variety of enrichment opportunities, which they both appreciate and enjoy. The academy fully recognises the need to improve retention rates in both year groups. Senior leaders are presently reviewing the tracking of students' progress and the monitoring of teaching and learning to raise overall standards in both Year 12 and 13. The relatively new leadership team in the sixth form is satisfactory and developing well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards at each key stage and in the sixth form.
- Bring all teaching up to the level of the best, particularly in Years 7 and 8, by ensuring that all staff are effective in managing behaviour.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Students enter the academy with well below average standards; their literacy skills are particularly weak. The majority make good progress between Years 7 and 11. The academy's GCSE examination results in 2008 represented a marked improvement across a number of performance measures, most notably, the proportion of students gaining five or more good grades at GCSE and the very good results in all vocational subjects, where attainment is now above the national figure. However, despite the marked improvement in the percentage of students obtaining five or more good GCSE results including English and mathematics, results here remain below average at 32%. At Key Stage 3, unvalidated national test results showed improved attainment in English and mathematics. Results in science declined and standards in all core subjects were exceptionally low. Nonetheless, inspection evidence and the academy's internal performance information demonstrates that Year 9 students are making better progress and together with their peers in Year 10 the majority are on track to meet their Key Stage 4 targets. Overall, the academy sets challenging targets. Senior leaders have implemented strategies to support improvements in specific curriculum areas and with targeted groups of students. These are contributing well to raising standards and this is particularly evident in the improved attainment levels of Year 11 students in English. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are effectively supported throughout the academy and achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Students talk with pride about their membership of the academy and its strengthening reputation in the local community. The majority enjoy their work and display positive attitudes to learning. Attendance rates have improved considerably since 2006 for the majority of students. They are now broadly average, although the attendance of some older students remains below national levels despite recent improvement and the significant investment by academy staff to target persistent poor attenders. Students' behaviour is mostly good in lessons and around the site. In a small minority of lessons, where teaching and behaviour management was inadequate, this resulted in poor behaviour with students making limited progress in their work. Exclusions for serious misconduct have reduced considerably because the large majority of students have responded well to the academy's carefully planned behaviour improvement procedures. Students say that bullying incidents have reduced with few now evident. Where it does occur, matters are dealt with promptly and effectively. Students say they feel very safe in the academy. Students have a good understanding of the importance of a balanced diet and exercise. Almost all take advantage of the free healthy breakfast and a very high proportion take a prepared meal at lunchtime.

The majority of students demonstrate a commitment to the academy's aim of developing an harmonious community where everyone is valued and differences are respected. They develop a keen awareness of life in other countries and have a good knowledge of other faiths and the ethnic diversity of British society. In assemblies, they can take advantage of opportunities for prayer and reflection to think about such matters as relationships, personal goals and challenges. Students' views are represented through 'Academy Council'. This is a relatively large student body and reflects the diversity of the student population. Members exhibit good skills in representing students' views and in decision making through their regular meetings with academy staff. Student representatives participate in an 'Academy Court', which sits to determine the most appropriate support and sanctions for students with behavioural difficulties. This contribution has a strong influence on helping these students to overcome their problems. Students in general develop a strong sense of personal responsibility through constantly being challenged to reflect on the choices they make in relation to their work and behaviour.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Most teaching is good. Relationships between staff and students are mainly very good. Throughout the academy teachers plan lessons and courses which are closely matched to students' abilities and performance. Precise tracking of students' progress enables staff to identify potential underachievement with corrective action taken to improve matters. Good use of setting in English and mathematics lessons ensures that less able students receive close attention from their teachers in small classes. Expectations in most lessons are high, reflecting closely the academy's key aim of raising students' aspirations. This is notable in various subjects including in the academy's specialism of design and the built environment where practical activity and strong staff expertise enthuses and motivates students to achieve well. The health and safety of pupils is given high priority, although some concerns were noted by inspectors in the way equipment was used in a science lesson and in the lack of direct supervision of

cooking areas in the catering classroom. A strong collegial spirit exists among staff at all levels. Teaching has benefited from a highly productive effort to develop courses and teaching materials cooperatively. Very good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT), by students in their learning and by teachers in lesson delivery. Strategies to help students work independently and take responsibility for their learning have been mainly successful, although remain under-developed in some younger classes where a high level of teacher control is needed to ensure good behaviour. This is partly linked to inadequacies in teaching especially among some less experienced and non-specialist staff.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum for students is good and improving. The academy has been outward-looking in designing the curriculum for older students. It has made excellent use of its contacts in industry, commerce, and further and higher education to develop a wide range of popular vocational courses and experiences. This provision has benefited considerably from the academy's drive to use its freedom to innovate. It has played well to its strengths, running successful courses within its specialism of design and the built environment in, for example, art and design, business studies, catering, construction and product design. It is well placed to realise its intention to extend its specialist expertise to the performing arts, which are already popular and well staffed. The curriculum for basic skills is strongest where planning and staff training have focused on effective ways of helping students to think clearly, and also where they are able to learn through a variety of practical activities. Planning for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is effective and largely carried out within the subject faculties. This gives students full access to the curriculum. Curricular breadth and balance are good. It is strengthened by themed weeks (during the inspection the theme was 'Africa') in which an issue is covered in depth. Students also benefit from the extensive range of experiences offered in the extra-curricular 'Session3', which runs on three afternoons per week. Staff readily acknowledge that more needs to be done to encourage reluctant students to attend these voluntary sessions. Planning to introduce vocational diploma courses has been thorough and the academy is poised to begin teaching them in the next academic year. Staff are rightly aware of the need to evaluate the proposals to shorten some courses, in both Key Stages 3 and 4, and ensure that depth of learning does not suffer. The curriculum makes a strong contribution to students' personal development and their preparedness for work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support offered to students is good overall. The pastoral support they receive is excellent. The academy gives considerable emphasis to this aspect of its work. The 'Support for Learning' department works closely with external services and parents to ensure that students' needs are identified early with appropriate support provided. This is seen particularly in the way sanctions are applied to the minority of students who present challenging behaviour being combined with the support required to overcome these difficulties. This approach has contributed strongly to improving attendance rates. The pastoral support for vulnerable students and those with a learning difficulty and/or disability is excellent. This enables them to be fully involved in lessons and make good progress. As two students commented, 'If it wasn't for the academy, we would have been excluded from school.' Both are now aspiring to go to university. Safeguarding procedures meet current requirements with

staff well briefed through induction and training. Students' academic guidance is good. Assessment information is used effectively to plan additional support. It is also used to set targets for students, which, in most cases, are at an appropriate level of challenge. Most students understand their targets because staff meet regularly with them and their parents to consider progress and identify where further effort is required. Good advice is offered to enable students to make informed choices about their future education and career pathways.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management of the academy are outstanding. Governors and senior staff demonstrate a secure commitment to high achievement and continuous school improvement. There is a relentless focus on improving provision and raising standards, a determination to confront the culture of low expectations and a drive to build students' confidence, self-esteem and their capacity to learn. In many aspects of the academy's work the successful impact of the leadership's actions are evident. These have been central to the establishment of a cohesive academy community, good student achievement and the higher standards now evident in examination performance. Middle leaders are knowledgeable about their responsibilities and carry out their remits effectively and with due diligence. Accountability procedures are strong. There is a clear line of sight between the roles and responsibilities of all staff, at all levels, with individual targets anchored to improvements in teaching and learning, attaining higher standards and maximising students' achievement. Academy self-evaluation is accurate, offering a clear summary of where actions have been successful and where further progress is required. Improvement targets are matched to carefully considered actions. Remaining weaknesses are well known. On-going work is proving to be successful particularly in tackling long-standing weaknesses in students' core academic and learning skills.

The academy's contribution to community cohesion is exemplary. Staff have been successful in bringing together two diverse school communities, investing substantial time and effort in creating a student body who are proud of their association with the academy. The manner in which the academy has sought to understand the needs of the student population and the community it serves is noteworthy and has earned the trust and respect of both. This has engendered a deep knowledge of students' needs and a substantial awareness of the challenges faced by the community. This has resulted in effective engagement between the academy and its partners in a wide range of community activities with ambitions to go further. This work involves students directly in, for example, local regeneration efforts and through offering guidance to students in other schools that are seeking to achieve academy status.

The contribution of the governing body is exemplary. It provides a successful balance of leadership, challenge and support to the academy's leadership. Governors' knowledge of the academy is well informed and this provides them with a secure foundation from which to make informed judgements. Collectively, the academy's leadership demonstrate excellent capacity to improve further.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2	

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

On behalf of the inspection team, thank you for sharing your views of the academy with us and being so frank in your assessment of its performance and the manner in which it meets your needs. Our particular thanks go to Academy Council, members of the principal's luncheon club and those groups of students who spoke with us.

We consider the academy is doing a good job and is improving all the time. Sixth form performance is satisfactory. The academy excels in the pastoral support students are offered and it benefits from excellent leadership by the senior team and governors.

While there is much yet to accomplish, the academy has been successful in a range of areas. Since opening in September 2006, standards have risen well and the proportion of students gaining five or more good GCSE grades is now above the national figure with very good results achieved in vocational subjects. However, greater progress is still needed in the number of students gaining expected levels in English and mathematics at both Key Stages 3 and 4 and sixth form standards need to rise.

Teaching and learning are mainly good in the main academy and satisfactory overall in the sixth form. However, the management of behaviour in some lessons and particularly in Years 7 and 8 needs to improve. The curriculum you receive is good and meets your needs well. You receive good advice and guidance about how to improve your work and this is contributing effectively to the good progress being made by the majority of students. While attendance has improved for most students, some older students in particular do not attend regularly and this hinders the progress of which they are capable.

Academy staff and partner organisations, have achieved excellent results in building trust with the community. Much is now being accomplished in this area. A relatively small number of parents made their views known to the inspection team. Of these, a small minority expressed concerns about the behaviour of some students. We have considered these views and our evaluation reflects the poor behaviour of a small minority of students, particularly in Years 7 and 8. We do consider, however, that behaviour is well managed. Nonetheless, as you will note, in the second area for improvement, we have asked the academy's senior leaders to tackle and improve the unacceptable behaviour we have identified.

You can all support the leadership and staff to improve the academy further; many of you have shared your ideas with us about what could be done. We wish you well and offer our best wishes for success in the future.