

Danum Academy

Armthorpe Road, Doncaster DN2 5QD

Inspection dates

12–13 April 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

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| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Requires improvement |
| 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 | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Inadequate |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent. As a result, pupils are not making good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Outcomes in English and mathematics in the GCSE examinations in 2015 were much lower than the national average. Although attainment and progress in English and mathematics are improving, they still lag behind outcomes in other subjects in the school at key stage 4.
- Teachers do not always plan learning which is sufficiently challenging for the most-able pupils. Consequently, progress of the most-able pupils is not rapid enough.
- Middle leadership is not consistently strong. The roles of those teachers who receive allowances to support heads of subject are not always well defined. As a result, they have less impact on school improvement.
- Attendance, particularly of the disadvantaged pupils, is below the national average.
- There is low-level disruption in a small minority of lessons.
- Although pupils' literacy skills are well developed in the integrated learning curriculum taught to Year 7, this good practice is not embedded across the school. Work to develop numeracy across the curriculum is at an early stage.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher provides visionary leadership. Her high expectations are well understood by staff and pupils.
- The school improvement board challenges and supports the school well.
- The senior leadership team lead school improvement effectively.
- Outcomes in the sixth form are good.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving strongly.
- The school has highly sophisticated assessment and data management systems. As a result, all staff know how well their pupils are achieving.
- Personal development and welfare are strong. Pupils are well cared for and feel safe.

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?

- Further improve teaching, learning and assessment so all groups of pupils, regardless of prior attainment, make at least good progress by:
 - ensuring the most-able pupils are always challenged appropriately
 - continuing to share the good practice in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment which exists in the school
 - embedding the teaching of literacy across the curriculum using the good practice developed in the integrated learning curriculum
 - implementing agreed methods for teaching mathematics across the curriculum.
- Improve attendance.
- Ensure all learners in the sixth form have the opportunity to undertake meaningful work experience.
- Further improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring all middle leaders have the skills to bring about improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupil outcomes
 - developing the roles of those teachers who have responsibility payments to support heads of subject more effectively in driving improvement.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher has led the school with determination, courage and resilience through a difficult period in its history. She has provided the unwavering drive for school improvement. As a result of her highly effective leadership, the school has improved significantly since the last section 5 inspection.
- Together with the headteacher, the senior leaders work well together as a team. The senior leadership team's high expectations of staff and pupils leave no room for complacency. Everyone understands the drive for better outcomes. Consequently, teaching, learning and assessment, leadership and pupils' outcomes have improved. However, the improvements were not rapid enough to ensure better outcomes in English, mathematics and science in the GCSE examinations in 2015.
- Senior leaders hold middle leaders to account effectively for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' outcomes in their subject areas.
- As a result of effective training and support, middle leadership has improved. Many middle leaders provide rigorous leadership which is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. However, the impact of this tier of leadership is inconsistent. Some middle leaders are at an earlier stage in their development. The line management procedures for teachers with responsibility allowances are being developed in mathematics by a senior leader. However, this is not consistent across subject areas. Consequently, not all teachers with responsibility allowances are having an effective impact on school improvement.
- Performance management objectives demonstrate the high expectations of senior leaders that pupils will make good progress and teachers will improve their practice. The impact can be seen in the improvements across the school. Pay rewards are only made to those teachers who demonstrate this positive impact. As a result of poor outcomes for pupils at key stage 4 in 2015, a number of teachers eligible for pay increases did not receive them.
- The leadership of teaching, learning and assessment is effective. As a result of timely personalised training and support, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved, although there is still some inconsistency. Additional support packages are provided to teachers whose practice needs to improve. Teachers speak highly of the support they have received. The training programme is flexible. Training needs are identified through lesson observations. The impact of training was seen during the inspection, for example in the improvements in questioning.
- The curriculum is well designed. At key stage 4, the majority of pupils are studying courses which lead to the English Baccalaureate qualification. Other key stage 4 and key stage 5 pupils undertake high-quality aspirational vocational courses in horticulture and hairdressing. These prepare the pupils very well for possible careers. Both these courses and the use of alternative provision at another site increase the engagement of pupils and enhance the progression opportunities for young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Pupils at key stage 3 and key stage 4 have the opportunity to study two languages.
- The integrated learning curriculum in Year 7 covers learning in geography, history, religious education, and personal, social and health education. Pupils of all abilities are highly engaged in their learning in these lessons, demonstrating a real thirst for learning. The programme provides an imaginative vehicle for developing pupils' literacy skills. Particular strengths are the quality of the writing done by pupils and their speaking and listening skills. The most-able pupils study the integrated learning curriculum together in the 'excellence academy'. These pupils are making rapid progress and already talking about when they go to university.
- The integrated learning curriculum has a positive impact on pupils' understanding of British values and social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. For example, pupils are learning about 'what it means to be British', and are thoughtfully comparing world religions through discussion and extended pieces of writing. Across the school, there are many opportunities to explore British values, including visits, visitors to the school, extra-curricular activities and links to the local community.
- Recently, effective support for English, mathematics and science has been provided by subject specialists from the CfBT Schools Trust (CST). In addition, middle leaders have attended meetings with other subject leaders from CST academies and shared resources. As a result, middle leadership is improving, assessment is more secure and outcomes are improving. Since October 2015, the trust adviser has provided effective support for senior leaders which has increased the impact of the leadership team. The director of education for CST is working closely with representatives of Outwood Grange Academies Trust (OGAT) to ensure a smooth transition to the new sponsor.

■ The governance of the school

- Members of the school improvement board bring a wealth of experience to the governance of the school. They hold senior leaders rigorously to account as a result of their challenging questioning and their visits to the school to check on school improvement. Members of the board monitor performance management arrangements closely.
 - Key members of CST are members of the board. The trust adviser and the vice-chair of the board use their educational experience to monitor school improvement, for example through audits of teaching and learning and of the sixth form. As a result, the trust and the board understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school well.
 - The board monitors the spending of pupil premium funding carefully. As a result, the gaps between the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and their peers are closing across the school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school demonstrates a passion for keeping pupils safe. A full-time designated lead for safeguarding is employed in the school and works in school holidays to ensure pupils are well looked after. Training in child protection, including about radicalisation and extremism, is comprehensive and regular which means staff are alert to issues. The high number of referrals to the designated safeguarding lead are well documented. Those referrals passed to social services are made in a timely manner and the safeguarding lead challenges the local authority robustly if she feels the needs of a pupil are not being met. Leaders ensure that recruitment procedures are robust.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved. Consequently, pupils' rates of progress are accelerating. However, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is still too variable.
- The school has developed a system of collaborative planning. As a result, teachers are using data about pupils' progress more effectively to plan learning activities. The work of other adults in the classroom is planned for and communicated to them. This more careful planning and the work of other adults are having a positive impact on pupils' progress. However, in some lessons, planning for the needs of pupils of different abilities is less effective and this results in slower progress, particularly for the most able.
- Attitudes to learning have improved. In the majority of lessons observed during the inspection, pupils were engaged in their learning and interested in the planned activities. The questions teachers ask demand that pupils think and give detailed answers. This adds to the engagement of pupils. For example, in a Year 9 English lesson, subject-specific vocabulary and deep understanding of a poem were reinforced through effective questioning. However, when the activities and questioning are less challenging, pupils are less engaged and attitudes to learning can slip. In a small minority of lessons this results in low-level disruption.
- Leaders have reshaped the times of the school day. Longer lessons provide time for pupils to respond to teachers' feedback in 'make a difference' time. There is good evidence in pupils' books that pupils have reviewed their learning and noted how they can make a difference and improve the work. This develops understanding and skills. Although marking and feedback are regularly provided by teachers in line with the school policy, the quality of specific feedback is variable and pupils do not always respond to the feedback. As a result, the quality and impact of marking and feedback in line with the school policy is not consistently effective.
- A new assessment policy, and assessments which are rigorously checked by senior leaders, helps teachers to identify accurately pupils who need extra help. Pupils know how well they are progressing across the curriculum. The impact is seen in the improving progress across the school.
- The development of literacy skills is most effective in the integrated learning curriculum in Year 7, although marking across the school frequently reinforces good spelling. The introduction of GCSE-style questions in all years means pupils are acquiring the skills for answering demanding questions. The mathematics and science departments are working together to develop a policy for mathematics methodology across the curriculum. The development of good literacy and numeracy skills is not embedded across all subjects in all years.
- Homework is set regularly in line with the school policy. Pupils practise questions to enhance their knowledge, understanding and skills and undertake research. This is contributing steadily to improved outcomes for pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's supportive pastoral system promotes all aspects of pupils' welfare. Pupils say they feel safe and are able to talk about strategies to keep safe, for example when using social media.
- Pupils understand the forms which bullying may take, including homophobic and racist bullying. The small amount of bullying is dealt with well. A key strength of the school's inclusive ethos is the security of all young people in the school. Pupils say it is safe to be yourself. Parents responding to the school's own surveys are very positive about the safety of their children and the vast majority say that their child is happy at school. All the staff responding to the staff questionnaire say that pupils are safe.
- Careers education and guidance is effective. The school's careers adviser attends parents' meetings and pupils are taught about employability skills, financial management and higher education. As a result, very few pupils leave the school without employment or further education places.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Behaviour has improved as a result of the new behaviour policy. In the large majority of lessons, pupils behave well and show good attitudes to learning. When pupils are less engaged, their attitudes to learning are less positive, resulting in low-level disruption.
- Conduct around the school and at break and lunchtimes is generally orderly. Good relationships are evident between pupils and between pupils and staff. However, the use of inappropriate language as a part of general conversation can be heard on the corridor.
- A wide range of strategies are in place to monitor attendance. Links with parents have improved. Pupils with good attendance are rewarded. Despite this, attendance, particularly of the disadvantaged pupils, has not improved and is below the national average.
- The alternative provision offers a secure environment in which the personal development, behaviour and welfare of young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable are improving.

Outcomes for pupils require improvement

- In 2015, the proportion of pupils who gained five good grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, improved, although it was still below the national average. Attainment and progress in English and mathematics were well below the national average. The gaps between the attainment of boys and girls and the disadvantaged and their peers were wider than the gaps seen nationally. Outcomes were below the national average in science, history, physical education, sociology and ICT. However, better progress was seen in German, graphic design, photography, art, and travel and tourism.
- Senior leaders have taken rigorous action to address the weaknesses evident in the 2015 results. The school has a sophisticated and detailed data system. The school has made a smooth transition to assessment without levels and the new measures of progress. Staff have been effectively trained and understand the systems well. All assessments across the school now mimic GCSE assessments. Aspirational targets are set. The regular assessments continuously build on what pupils have learned over time. Careful checking of assessments means leaders have confidence that teachers' predictions are accurate. A considerable amount of work has focused on improving the teaching and assessments in English so pupils are suitably focused on the GCSE examination.
- As a result of this rigorous action, outcomes are improving across the school. The school's own achievement information shows that a greater proportion of the current Year 11 pupils are on track to gain five good grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics. Gaps between boys and girls are closing in the current Year 11. Outcomes are rising in all year groups. However, attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science still lag behind other subjects as a result of underperformance in pupils' past learning. In most year groups, gaps between boys and girls and the disadvantaged and their peers are closing. Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are making steady progress in relation to their starting points.
- The progress made by the most-able pupils in English and mathematics in 2015 was well below the national average. The current progress data for the most able shows a mixed picture. For example, the

most able are making good progress in Year 9, but not in Year 8. This is the result of the variable challenge for the most-able pupils in lessons.

16 to 19 study programmes are good

- Leaders and managers have high expectations for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and learners' outcomes. Teaching and learning are monitored carefully and bespoke packages of training are improving the practice of teachers. Subjects with the most successful teaching and learning have shared good practice with other colleagues. As a result, the quality of teaching in the sixth form is good.
- Progress of learners is tracked rigorously using the same sophisticated systems as the rest of the school. Those learners who are underachieving are quickly identified and their parents are involved. Consequently, attainment and progress are good overall. A strength is the progress of the most able, particularly those who study mathematics and further mathematics. These learners are making outstanding progress.
- The large majority of learners in the sixth form stay to complete their courses. The small number of learners who leave their courses early are carefully tracked to make sure they have employment, apprenticeships or other educational opportunities.
- The curriculum in the sixth form provides opportunities for a wide range of learners. For example, learners who have skills and knowledge of art, often without qualifications in other subjects, are given a second chance to gain qualifications in the sixth form. These learners are supported extremely well through their courses and, combined with impartial careers guidance, leave the sixth form to take up appropriate employment, university places or training.
- The hairdressing courses, which allow learners to achieve nationally recognised industry-based qualifications in hairdressing, inspire the learners to do well. The on-site Aspire Salon provides not only a working environment for them to learn their skills, but a safe place for them to develop their self-esteem and vital employment skills.
- The catch-up programme for learners who need to gain a grade C in English and mathematics is effective. The proportion of learners gaining a grade C after retaking English GCSE in November 2015 was in line with the national average and in mathematics was above the national average.
- The school offers a diverse range of work-experience placements. For example, learners in the present sixth form have participated in placements with midwives, general practitioners, primary schools, secondary schools, sports organisers and building a school abroad. However, not all learners participate in formal work experience because of the lack of high-quality placements in the area.
- Through the very well-thought-through tutorial and assembly programmes, combined with opportunities to take on ambassador roles and support younger pupils, all learners are learning the vital employment skills needed for life when they leave the school. As a result, all learners leave the sixth form to go to employment, education or training.
- Learners say that they are happy in the school and everyone feels safe to be themselves. Work to keep learners safe is well developed and includes assemblies on safe driving, alcohol and drugs. Careful attention is paid to the mental health of learners. Attendance and behaviour are good. Consequently personal development, behaviour and welfare are good in the sixth form.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 137524 |
| Local authority | Doncaster |
| Inspection number | 10001581 |

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

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| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 11–18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1,300 |
| Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes | 383 |
| Appropriate authority | The school improvement board |
| Chair | Tim Culpin |
| Headteacher | Rebecca Staples |
| Website | www.danum.org |
| Email address | danum@danum.doncaster.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 25–26 September 2013 |

Information about this school

- Danum Academy is sponsored by the CfBT Schools Trust. From September 2016, Danum Academy will join Outwood Grange Academies Trust.
- The school is much larger than an average-sized secondary school and is based on two sites.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium, is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is slightly above the national average.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at a learning centre based at the Keepmoat football stadium.
- The school has an additional resource centre on site for the deaf and hearing impaired which is currently used by a very small number of pupils.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standard, which sets out minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a large number of part lessons, many of which were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also made shorter visits to lessons and tutor time and attended assemblies. An inspector visited the alternative provision at the Keepmoat stadium.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders, and a group of staff. Discussions were also held with the members of the school improvement board, three representatives of CST and a representative of OGAT.
- Inspectors spoke formally to pupils in meetings and informally at break and lunchtime.
- The inspection team looked at documents provided by the school, including the school's self-evaluation and its improvement plans; safeguarding documents and those relating to attendance and behaviour; pupils' progress data; records of monitoring the quality of teaching; minutes of the school improvement board; letters from parents.
- Nine responses to the staff questionnaire and 44 responses to the Ofsted online parents' questionnaire, Parent View, were considered.

Inspection team

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|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Helen Lane, lead inspector | Senior Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Tanya Stuart | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Steven Beverley | Ofsted Inspector |
| Fiona Dixon | Ofsted Inspector |
| Patricia Head | Ofsted Inspector |

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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