

De Warenne Academy

Gardens Lane, Conisbrough, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN12 3JY

Inspection dates 5–6 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Students' achievement requires improvement. From low starting points, their attainment in English and mathematics remains well below average because rates of progress have not improved quickly enough over a sustained period of time.
- Improvement is required in students' behaviour as their attitudes and application to work are not consistently good enough across all subjects and year groups.
- The sixth form requires improvement. The relatively small number of students following academic courses at A- and AS- level do not always reach their potential.
- The proportion of good and outstanding teaching is not yet high enough. Teachers do not always ensure that students are challenged to think and solve problems for themselves in order to increase their rate of learning.

The school has the following strengths

- The academy provides a safe, calm and well organised environment. Staff and students were pleased to have moved into the new building earlier this year. This has contributed to the sense of pride and raised aspirations that are at the heart of the academy's community.
- Students' achievement in vocational courses in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form is good.
- Good leadership and management, including governance, have successfully overcome challenges and are rigorously driving continuous improvement across the academy. As a result, there is an improving trend in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. Students are also growing in confidence and capability and their rates of progress are rising.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons, of which three were seen jointly with members of the academy's leadership team. The majority of the observations were longer than 50 minutes and included scrutiny of students' work in a range of subjects.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, teachers and other staff, and members of the governing body. The views of a large number of students were gathered in several meetings with inspectors and by talking about their work in lessons.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) but inspectors took account of the academy's own recent survey of parents' views. They also took account of the 67 responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff.
- Inspectors observed the academy's work and looked at a wide range of policies and other documentation including safeguarding policies, self-evaluation and development plans, records relating to behaviour and attendance and the academy's own data on current students' attainment and progress.

Inspection team

Marguerite Murphy, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Bimla Kumari	Additional Inspector
Michael Blaylock	Additional Inspector
John Cornally	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- De Warenne Academy is smaller than the average secondary school. It is sponsored by the Schools Partnership Trust Academies (SPTA). The academy moved into its current, new buildings at the end of February 2013.
- The academy opened its sixth form in 2010 and in 2011 joined with three other SPT academies in the area to offer a range of post-16 courses in a collaborative provision, known as Doncaster SPTA Post-16 Academy.
- The academy has specialisms in English and applied learning.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds. A well above average proportion of students is known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, children from service families, and children known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above average. The proportions supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are below average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- A very small number of students attend the off-site alternative provision SPTA Learning Centre, based at Rossington All Saints Academy and providing places for students across the partnership.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the proportion of good and outstanding teaching and behaviour in order to accelerate students' rates of progress, including for the most-able, and raise their attainment particularly in English and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that teachers in all subjects and year groups, including in the sixth form, have equally high expectations of students' work and their learning behaviours and understand the need to increase the proportion of students that make and exceed expected progress in lessons and over time
 - increasing the opportunities provided for teachers to learn from the best practice that already exists within and beyond the academy itself, with a particular focus on ensuring students think for themselves and solve problems
 - building on the improvements already made in students' behaviour and attitudes to learning to ensure that these are more consistently good across all subjects and teaching groups.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Many students enter Year 7 from low starting points and a well below average proportion of students leave the academy having attained five GCSE grades at A* to C with both English and mathematics included. Variability in students' learning and progress in English and mathematics has contributed to the difficulty in securing an upward trend in this key measure of attainment. Few of the most-able students achieve the highest grades A* and A in GCSE or A-level subjects.
- Since the academy opened, achievement has risen although not at a consistent rate, and a dip in 2012 saw results that went below the government's floor standards. It appeared that poor progress had been made by boys who were also of low prior ability and supported at school action. The academy's evidence shows that those results were affected by a small group of boys that underachieved despite the significant opportunities, support and interventions provided for them.
- As reported at the previous inspection, there is no established trend of unequal performance between different groups of students, whatever their ability, whether boys or girls. Variations are more typically related to specific issues affecting individual students, and the academy makes great efforts to help remove barriers to students' learning. In 2013, for example, differences in the achievement of students who are or are not eligible for the pupil premium funding were narrowed to the equivalent of less than half a GCSE grade in English and mathematics.
- The academy has an early entry policy for some GCSE examinations, for example mathematics, that is reviewed regularly and used appropriately in the students' best interests so that it does not limit their potential.
- The most-able students generally make the progress expected of them, as do those students who are disabled or have special educational needs. The academy recognises that this is not yet good enough because more students need to make better than expected progress if they are to achieve standards that are comparable with national averages.
- When taking account of GCSE-equivalent qualifications, a well above average proportion of students achieve grades A* to C in five subjects. In the sixth form, achievement is good in a number of vocational courses such as in performing arts, sport and health and social care.
- As the academy's sixth-form provision evolves, more students are taking courses that better meet their needs and for which they are more suited. As a result of this, the achievement of sixth-form students is rising and their progress in lessons now is typically good, both in academic and vocational subjects. There is more work to do to ensure that this is further developed and sustained over time and across the full range of courses.
- Achievement is rising because students are making good progress in the majority of lessons now, and there are very few occasions when their learning is interrupted by the off-task behaviour or low-level disruption of a small minority.
- The few students attending off-site alternative provision make appropriate progress in individual learning programmes that meet their needs. This provision is quality-assured by SPTA staff and students' attendance and progress are reported back to the academy on a weekly basis.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not yet consistently good over time. Teaching is good in the majority of lessons now, with an increasing proportion that is typically outstanding. The academy recognises that more work needs to be done to secure and sustain further improvement and it is to the credit of the whole staff that everyone is committed to achieving that goal.
- In lessons that require improvement, students are less willing to work hard to achieve their learning targets, preferring instead to expect significant help from teaching and support staff. When teachers accept this and do not maintain high expectations of students' work and

behaviour, progress is slower. This contributes to some variability in the quality of teaching in English and mathematics, for example.

- Teachers have worked hard to improve their use of information from assessments of students' work to build on their prior learning, making regular checks during lessons to reshape learning activities.
- In some lessons, students make more rapid progress because they are fully engaged in the subject and the well planned learning tasks that stretch all ability groups, including the most-able. They show respect for the teacher and one another and are motivated to get on with their learning, achieving more without requiring constant supervision.
- Similarly, in some lessons, teachers' use of questioning is good. Where this is particularly successful, the teacher asks targeted questions of individual students, keeping them on their toes and thinking about the subject matter. This enabled Year 9 students in a media lesson to make good progress in applying Propp's theory to their analysis of characters in comic book illustrations.
- Not all students have enough opportunities to think and solve problems for themselves. This affects the rate at which some students can demonstrate their understanding.
- Students made excellent progress in a Year 12 applied science lesson in the sixth form. They used information technology research skills and applied their knowledge of assessment criteria in order to meet a coursework deadline. This was due to the teacher's effective planning, prompting students to develop their own organisational skills.
- Teaching in the sixth form is effective in helping students to develop their personal, social and employability skills whatever their course choices. As staff are gaining more experience in delivering A and AS-level courses, teaching is improving. It is most often good or outstanding in vocational courses.
- The academy's caring and welcoming ethos is reflected in the positive relationships between students and with staff, who know the students well as individuals. This contributes to the typically friendly and purposeful working atmosphere in lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Although students' behaviour and attitudes to learning have improved significantly over the last few years, they are not yet consistently good across the academy and consequently require improvement.
- There are clear, systematic routines and processes in place to support the academy's behaviour policies. These are having a positive impact but have not been embedded for long enough to ensure that most students are responding fully to the academy's drive to raise their aspirations and self-motivation.
- Exclusions have been significantly reduced and most parents who responded to the academy's recent survey believe that behaviour is good. The vast majority of staff who completed questionnaires during the inspection also considers students' behaviour to be good.
- Attendance and punctuality are not as good as they could be for a minority of students, despite the fact that the academy has in place rigorous monitoring procedures and support for students to improve this. Good attendance is promoted, recognised and rewarded and is showing positive signs of improvement.
- Staff presence and supervision around the academy at break times and lesson changeovers help to maintain the calm and orderly atmosphere and encourage students to get to their lessons promptly. However, some students still have a relaxed attitude to this and would lack a sense of urgency about timeliness if they were left to their own devices.
- The lunch break is a relatively short time for all students to access the dining facilities, and some students' behaviour can be a little boisterous at that time. However, there is typically a calm atmosphere around the academy and the building and grounds are kept as litter-free as possible. Classrooms are tidy and well organised and students adhere to the high expectations regarding wearing their uniforms.

- Students feel safe and say that incidences of poor behaviour or any type of bullying are uncommon and dealt with promptly. They are aware of how to keep themselves safe and of how to get help and support from the academy's well being team should they need it.
- Students' behaviour and attitudes to their studies in the sixth form are good. Students speak positively of the support they receive from teachers, both in lessons and outside the classroom. They appreciate the common room and the academy's new building, both of which they feel have a positive impact on the development of their study skills.

The leadership and management are good

- The principal is a strong and resilient leader at the helm of a team of staff and governors who show passion and commitment to the academy, its students and community. She is well supported by a skilled senior leadership team and effective middle leaders, all of whom are clear about their roles and responsibilities and of how they are held to account. Consequently, the impact of the work of leaders at all levels is having a positive impact on raising students' achievement.
- The 67 responses to the staff inspection questionnaire were extremely positive, with almost unanimous agreement that they are proud to be members of staff at the academy and that it is well led and managed. Only a small number disagreed that behaviour is good or that it is consistently well managed.
- The leadership of teaching is good as it continues to strengthen with clarification of the roles of key staff with shared responsibilities for this. There is an accurate view of the overall quality of teaching and where professional development is needed. The impact of this is helping to ensure that the proportion of consistently good and better teaching is rising across subjects and year groups. There are increasing examples of outstanding elements of teaching and learning that can now be more widely shared as examples of best practice.
- The academy uses the pupil premium funding well to ensure that those students who are eligible for free school meals are given equal opportunities to access a range of curriculum and enrichment activities, alongside additional support where required to help them achieve their potential. Similarly, the national 'catch-up' funding is used appropriately to help the high proportion of students who enter with below-average attainment in English and mathematics. The academy is aware of the need to further improve all students' development of literacy skills across subjects, as too many students' attainment in reading and writing remains well below average.
- Leadership of the sixth form is good. The collaborative partnership arrangements are quite complex in nature but are working effectively as they evolve over time in response to students' changing needs. All four academies offer A-level English and mathematics, for example, and a particular strength at De Warenne is the provision of well-performing vocational qualifications.
- Key aspects of the academy's effective provision in relation to behaviour management, the inclusion of all groups of learners and the tracking of students' progress have been developed alongside the partnership of local SPT academies. This is a good example of the formal and informal outreach work that has a positive impact on outcomes for students across and beyond the local community.
- The academy's development planning is concise and well focused on the key priorities to drive improvement in students' achievement. The SPT sponsorship includes clear strategies to gradually reduce the significant support provided initially to a 'lighter touch' over time, now that the academy's good capacity to improve is established.
- The curriculum is kept under review to ensure that it meets students' needs. There is a diverse range of activities that promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the impact of these is monitored across departments and subjects. The academy's specialisms are reflected in the curriculum on offer and in action plans for the improvement of students' achievements in English.
- There are good communication links with parents and external agencies for the benefit of those

students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs. This aspect of the academy's work is also well led and reflects its commitment to ensuring that equal opportunities for all students are high on its agenda.

■ All safeguarding policies and procedures meet requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

– Governors speak with pride about the academy, its new building and its capacity to have a 'transformational impact' on the local community in general and students' aspirations and opportunities in particular. All governors have allocated members of staff with whom they have established links in relation to key aspects of the academy's work. In this way, the governing body has developed a thorough knowledge of the academy's performance across a wide range of activities, and of where further improvement is needed. Governors are therefore more able to hold leaders rigorously to account for the academy's performance by challenging through questioning information that is provided. The outcomes of leaders' observations of teaching are a regular feature of discussions with governors. Consequently, governors have a good awareness of strengths and areas for improvement, as well as the requirements for the performance management of staff. Financial management, including the use and impact of the pupil premium funding, is monitored regularly to a strict regime to ensure proper procedures, accountability and value for money.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	135942
Local authority	Not applicable
Inspection number	429972

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	684
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	74
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Mills
Principal	Gill Pollard
Date of previous school inspection	19 April 2012
Telephone number	01709 864001
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