

Inspection of a good school: Don Valley Academy

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

Inspection dates:

2 and 3 July 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The principal of this school is Richard Brooke. This school is part of Delta Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Paul Tarn, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Steve Hodsman.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils achieve well at this school. The rich and broad curriculum prepares them effectively for life beyond school. Success is celebrated. The inspection coincided with a very well-attended awards evening to celebrate pupils' effort and hard work. School and trust leaders have an unwavering ambition for pupils and the local community. They are successful in unlocking the potential in pupils.

Behaviour in the school is calm and purposeful. Pupils are friendly and welcoming. Pupils are safe and feel safe here. Lessons proceed with pace and purpose. The majority of pupils behave above and beyond the expectations of the school behaviour policy. On the occasions when some pupils fail to meet this standard, they are supported to reflect and improve.

Pupils benefit from a carefully planned programme of wider experiences. This is called 'the life of a student'. Enrichment opportunities range from a pantomime trip to alpaca walking and escape rooms. The careers education programme particularly stands out. The school plans this programme with care to ensure pupils get the right experience and advice at exactly the right time. Every opportunity is taken, whenever any visitors are in school, to showcase different jobs and careers. Mock interviews, money management and university visits all contribute to pupils' understanding of their future potential.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The ambitious curriculum ensures pupils can study a wide range of subjects. At key stage 3 pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum. Many pupils at key stage 4 study a modern foreign language and triple science, along with a wide range of other options, such as engineering. The depth and breadth of the curriculum is just one reason why pupils are well prepared for future education, training and employment. The high achievement of pupils extends to those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils succeed, regardless of their background or starting point. This is particularly true in English and mathematics, however, this achievement extends to many other subjects at key stage 4.

The school has an exceptionally consistent approach to teaching. Pupils learn effectively because of careful teacher explanation followed by opportunities to practise and apply their knowledge. Teachers routinely check that pupils understand. Pupils value the consistency in lessons. They know that this is how they learn and remember. The clear way that subjects are taught particularly benefits those pupils with SEND.

A number of pupils join the school with weak reading skills. The school has a highly effective system for identifying exactly what support pupils need to improve their reading. Additional reading sessions are matched carefully to the needs of the pupils. This reading intervention is highly effective. Pupils improve their reading quickly. They are then able to make more progress in other subjects. The wider love of reading is promoted across the school. Pupils enjoy choosing books from the 'reading routes' programme. This programme encourages pupils to read across a range of genres. Pupils take advantage of the well-stocked library.

Behaviour in the academy is characterised by pupils' good manners and good conduct. There are good relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils behave well and work hard in lessons. Some pupils contravene the school's behaviour policy. This sometimes results in suspensions. Suspensions have been higher than the national average. Suspensions have considerably reduced during this academic year. This is a trend that leaders are determined to continue.

Pupils have a strong understanding of how to stay safe and be healthy. The school teaches this very effectively. Pupils are knowledgeable about a wide range of important topics. For example, online safety, healthy eating, drugs awareness and body image.

Trust and school leaders have a strong, shared understanding of the vision and values of the school. They ensure this vision is enacted. The trust provides important strategic support for staff training at all levels. The trust provides a framework for strong policies and routines. Staff are proud to work at the academy. They feel well supported to do so, especially in regard to managing their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Suspensions from school are falling rapidly as a result of leaders' actions to improve standards of behaviour. Continuing this work is important, as historically the number of suspensions has been higher than the national average. Leaders should continue to reduce the number of suspensions, while maintaining overall standards of behaviour, so that all pupils benefit fully from the school's curriculum.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in April 2019.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years,

looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	137472
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10323026
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1096
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Steve Hodsman
Principal	Richard Brooke
Website	http://www.donvalleyacademy.org.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	2 and 3 April 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses three registered providers of alternative education, and four unregistered providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgment about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and a range of middle leaders and staff. The lead inspector met with representatives of the trust and trustees.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science, modern foreign languages and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors; reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors studied a range of documents. These included pupil attendance information, safeguarding records and support plans for pupils with SEND.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils. The views of parents and carers were considered through the Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Carl Sugden, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Lisa Allen

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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