

Dixons Unity Academy - Inner West Report - November 2019

Information about the academy

Dixons Unity has 734 students in year 7-11 and is smaller than the average secondary school. 382 students are male (52%) and 352 are female (48%). In September, we welcomed 163 students in to the academy. 93 students left this July which means that the school roll has increased by 70 students from 2018 - 2019.

- The academy was re-brokered to the Dixons Multi-Academy Trust on 1 October 2018.
- The academy was built to house over 1200 students and had a falling / variable roll as of September 2018.
- The academy is a PFI building which is managed by Interserve and Leeds City Council
- The school has a range of cultures and ethnicities, although White British students make up 62% of the overall cohort.
- 219 (32%) students have English as an additional Language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students is very high (59.40%).
- The proportion of students with a known medical condition is 19.35%.
- There are 2 children classed as looked after / in care.
- 18.12% of students have SEND needs.
- 16.08% of students have SEND status.
- There are currently 46 teaching staff employed at the academy.
- 6 members of staff are in their first two years of teaching.
- The academy day begins at 8.00 and finishes at 14.50. There are 5 one-hour lessons a day with a 30-minute tutorial, a thirty minute lunch and a twenty minute morning break every day.
- 16 students currently attend Alternative Provision or MNTS

Summer 2019 Results (2018 Figures in brackets)

- Progress 8 -0.53 (0.66)
- Basics 4+: 38% (33%)
- Basics 5+ 19% (13%)
- Attainment 8: 33.11 (32.4)
- Non-disadvantaged students P8: 0.0
- Girls bucked the National trend and have performed half a grade worse than boys on average
- SEND students performed half a grade worse than peers on average
- Disadvantaged students performed -0.85 worse than peers on average
- HA: -0.75
- MA: -0.85
- LA: -0.03
- It is worth remembering that, at the time of the results, the academy had only been part of the Dixons Trust for just 7 months.

CLA / Vulnerable Groups

- Dixons Unity Academy focuses on Quality-First teaching and creating a learning environment which allows students of all backgrounds, needs and cultures to succeed.
- We focus on delivering high quality learning for all and aim to be an inclusive and welcoming environment for all students.
- All students are given access to the Wellbeing Hub, with Mindmate-trained staff as well as having access to the Learning Support Rooms via a LS Pass that they can use at their own discretion. The LS room is a

staffed resource and space for students to take time out, get help with learning or speak to a member of staff to receive support or advice.

- Our high number of SEND and Disadvantaged students and numbers of in-year admissions (169 in the academic year 2018-19) mean that every teacher at DUA must account for a wide range of needs in every single lesson.
- Centrally planned and developed curriculum, LTPs and SOW provide a basis for teachers to develop individual classroom resources to meet the needs of their students.
- Data Day (x 3 every year) gives staff an opportunity to review Cycle assessment performance and plan interventions to meet the needs of their students. Question Level Analysis and all available data is used to identify gaps in students learning that can be plugged through a variety of in-class interventions, ranging from Masterclasses to bespoke 'Learn Nows', one-to-one teaching and additional resources.
- We employ a full time Wellbeing Officer and Child Protection Manager to ensure that students' education is supplemented by expert internal support.
- We have invested in Pastoral support to ensure that the cuts made by the previous academy Trust do not continue to have a negative effect the welfare and personal development of our students. We employ a SSPO and have increased the level of staffing in attendance, SEND (including a new SENDCo) and Child Protection / Wellbeing.
- We have opened our own Internal Alternative Provision (The Hub) to provide an additional layer of support for students who were in a cycle of poor behaviour choices leading to increased instances of Isolation and Exclusion. This has had a significant impact on these students and as a result of this intervention, we are now starting to see them begin to reintegrate gradually back in to Mainstream education.
- We work with the Cluster to ensure that Families receive early help and access to the services they need. We are currently reviewing this with the TSL Amanda Hargreaves and have agreed that Dixons Unity will have its own Support and Guidance meetings due to the number of referrals and level of need. The Cluster team are also going to be housed in our building.
- We also have a dedicated Behaviour Support Mentor who provides a link between Alternative Providers and the Academy. This role includes visiting the provisions on a regular basis for induction, review and support meetings as well as supporting reintegrations back to the academy. We are an active member of the AIP and our Senior Vice Principal Chairs a subcommittee on Quality Assurance of our Local Authority provisions.
- The Principal is active in our most poverty-stricken area, New Wortley, being a Trustee of the New Wortley Community Centre Association and the New Wortley Core Team.

Changes since the results

- We have changed little. The academy is on a journey which requires careful strategic planning over months and years, not constant uncertainty brought about by the introduction of different strategies. We aim for clarity, consistency and aim to have the integrity to believe in what we do for the benefit of our community.
- Following the results, all Heads of Subject produce a presentation which analyses the results and produce an action plan based around the steps needed to be taken to address areas of underperformance. Data Day allows classroom teachers to reflect on how they will do this in the classroom.
- We are resolute in our vision:

The academy is united behind a common purpose of empowering young people from all cultures and backgrounds to improve their life chances and develop a lifelong love of learning which enriches the local community. We all work hard to climb the mountain to university or a viable alternative and to secure a progress 8 score of +1.0.

And Values:

- **Integrity**
We stand up for our beliefs. We are honest with ourselves and each other – even when this is difficult. We do what is right; not what is easy. We do our best every day and ask ourselves, 'How can I be better today than I was yesterday?'
- **Resilience**
We aspire to educational excellence and realise that this is a never-ending journey to climb the mountain to success. We support each other to overcome all barriers to success and recognise that hard work beats talent and that every failure is a lesson.

- **Respect**
We respect ourselves and each other and understand the gravity of our work here. We expect the highest levels of respect and civility from our students, parents and colleagues. We are professional. We are proud of our school.
- We ask ourselves 6 Critical Questions to ensure organisational success:
- Why do we exist? *To challenge educational and social disadvantage in the North.*
- How do we behave? *Work hard; Be good; be kind.*
- What do we do? *Establish high-performing non-faith academies which maximise attainment, value diversity and build cultural capital*
- How will we succeed? *Academic rigour, Aligned Autonomy (the balance between consistency and self-determination and putting Talent first.*
- What is most important right now? *What is the one area we must work towards to be successful?*

We believe that we have the recipe for success at Dixons Unity and have already seen improvement in progress, behaviour and culture. Right now, the greatest threat to success at the academy is attendance.

Culture

- Exclusion were very high for the first academic year as we worked to gain control of the academy, the classrooms and introduce high expectations for all.
- We have seen a dramatic reduction in exclusions as we work towards ensuring all students value their education and, with increased community and parental engagement, we are confident that this will continue to be the case term-on-term and year-on-year; following a pattern we have experienced in our other turnaround schools.
- There have been 75 fewer instances of exclusion (215 – 2018 / 140 – 2019) in the first half term.
- 23 fewer students have been excluded this year compared to 2018 over the same period (79 – 2018 / 56 – 2019). A reduction of 4% of the cohort. This is with increased student numbers.
- Figures for students excluded more than once are now 0.8% below National figures (3.9% vs 4.7%)
- Instances of isolation have reduced by 33% in comparison to 2018 and by 46% in comparison to HT6 of 2017-18.
- Isolation is staffed by SLT.
- Students sit at single tables and work through booklets with a range of tasks produced by each subject area.
- Students spend part days in isolation (p1-3 or p5 and 6) for returns from exclusion and instances of missed detention.
- Students may be issued with a full day in isolation only as a measure to avoid exclusion and often where Reasonable Adjustments might need to be made.
- Students with additional needs also would receive intervention from the Wellbeing Hub and LS rooms as part of their time in isolation.
- Mentoring and step out is also used to enable all students to have the best chance of succeeding in completing their isolation. Non-teaching pastoral teams provide this – usually their Assistant Head of Year.

Community Engagement

- Ultimately, our vision is to have far-reaching, high impact on our community by ensuring that our young people go on to lead happy and successful lives. Improving the educational outcomes of our students has a tangible effect on the opportunities, outlook and sense of worth in our community. Unfortunately, the previous school failed a generation in our community and, as a result, we have had to work very hard to engage our parents and our community.
- We undertake food collections and baby supplies for our families which are delivered by our safeguarding team.
- We provide free uniform to our families who live in poverty.

- We are working with Aldi Armley to provide support to families who are living in difficulty.
- We have a dedicated EAL team / student induction programme and are working with the Refugee / Migrant Team and the *Community Connectors* to reduce barriers to our community. We provide translators for all of our EAL families.
- The academy is a part of the Burberry Foundation Project, aiming to bring experiences of the Arts to young people in areas of high social and economic disadvantage
- The Principal is an active member of Community Action Groups, including Council-led initiatives.
- The Academy will be serving Christmas Dinner this year and providing an *experience of Christmas* for our families who do not have the resources to provide this for their own children.
- Bryan Pearce works with local businesses and community groups to bring their support and expertise in to the building, including local and national employers. We were winners of the National Enterprise Challenge (MOSAIC) in 2019.