

# Royal School for the Deaf (Derby)

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113044
<b>Local Authority</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Inspection number</b>	357249
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 February 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Janet Thompson HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	133
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	26
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rosemary Guy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Cheryll Ford
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 December 2007
<b>School address</b>	Ashbourne Road Derby DE22 3BH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01332 362512
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<b>Email address</b>	principal@rsdd.org.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Inspectors observed 22 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 20 teachers, observed more informal activities and met with the principal, groups of pupils, staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including the school development plan, safeguarding policies and protocols and the language and communication policy. Inspectors also scrutinised 38 parent and carer questionnaires, 86 questionnaires from pupils and 58 completed by staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas outlined below.

- The achievement of different groups of pupils including those with additional complex learning or behavioural needs.
- How well are pupils prepared for their future so that they can adapt to a range of different situations and be as independent as possible?
- Engagement of pupils in lessons and how they develop skills of enquiry and problem solving so that they make the best possible progress through each of the key stages.
- How consistently high expectations of achievement are evident in all lessons and shared by all staff.

## Information about the school

This is a day and residential special school providing education for deaf children and young people from across England. The previous two social care inspections judged the boarding provision as outstanding: as a consequence, this was not inspected on this occasion. English and British Sign Language (BSL) are used throughout the school and there are deaf and hearing staff. Pupils have access to a range of support services within the school including speech and language therapy and audiology. Over half the pupils are at an early stage of English language acquisition and many have additional needs including complex learning disabilities, physical disabilities, social, emotional and mental health needs. More than half the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. There are more pupils in the secondary department than primary, many of whom previously attended other schools. A small number are looked after children. Most pupils are White British; nearly one fifth of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The school has achieved many awards including Activemark and Sportsmark Gold for physical education, the Health Promoting Schools Award, Fairtrade Schools Status, International School Status and Careers Mark. In February 2010, the school had a geography survey inspection and the overall effectiveness of this subject was good.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

The vast majority of pupils enjoy attending this school. The school provides a good standard of education, enabling pupils to make good progress. Pupils start at the school in different year groups and with very different educational experiences. The majority of pupils start at the school with academic levels well below those expected for their age. Detailed assessment at the start of every placement helps the teachers to provide suitably challenging work. The communication policy ensures both signing and speaking are valued equally and approaches used stem from the individual needs of the pupils. Pupils make good progress from very different starting points although progress in literacy is satisfactory overall. Pupils without additional complex needs gain good GCSE accreditation at the end of Key Stage 4. Careful tracking, refined since the last inspection, gives a much clearer picture of pupils whose progress is slower than expected, enabling senior staff to make successful changes to the provision. Additional interventions have helped pupils to improve their academic progress as well as their behaviour and social skills. Over the last few years, there has been an increased emphasis on the teaching of reading and writing which has helped to raise achievement. However, some older pupils are still finding literacy skills a barrier to gaining higher accreditation. Attendance is high and there are no pupils who are persistently absent from school. Pupils develop a good understanding of different cultures and the cultures of deaf and hearing communities are celebrated.

Leaders and staff at the school have continued to increase the quality of provision for pupils since the last inspection and some aspects are outstanding. There is exemplary practice to help keep pupils safe and healthy. The outcomes of this are reflected by the pupils' views and how safe they feel as well as their developing understanding of how to ensure their own emotional well-being. There are some missed opportunities to enable older pupils to take a more active role in decision making.

Teaching is usually good and staff use what they know about the children to plan lessons effectively. In the best lessons, pupils are actively engaged and develop good enquiry and problem-solving skills, but this is not consistent across all lessons. The Early Years Foundation Stage offers a good curriculum which is taught well. It covers all the areas of learning and has a specific focus on developing language and communication. Involving the speech and language therapist in curriculum design has ensured this aspect of learning is prominent in all key stages. The curriculum is well designed to ensure pupils are given the opportunities to study a breadth of subjects while also ensuring there is sufficient time to study British Sign Language. Pupils in Key Stage 4 and students in the sixth form are able to follow personalised curriculum pathways. The school provides these in conjunction with partner schools and colleges.

Evaluation of pupils' achievement is more robust than at the last inspection and has enabled the principal and the governing body to continue to improve provision in response

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to pupils' needs. Improvements since the last inspection demonstrate that the school has a good capacity to improve.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by ensuring that teachers:
  - use more targeted, probing questions to develop higher-order thinking
  - actively engage pupils in lessons
  - enable pupils to develop better skills for independent enquiry and problem-solving.
- Ensure consistent and accurate teaching of literacy skills across the curriculum by:
  - ensuring good examples of literacy are demonstrated by staff across all subjects
  - by providing more consistent opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their literacy skills.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Pupils make good progress in most lessons because the work is carefully matched to their individual needs. Where progress is better, teachers use skilled questioning to ensure pupils think carefully and refine their answers to demonstrate fuller understanding. Progress is increased where writing is modelled well and pupils are encouraged to give attention to learning the subject area and improving their literacy skills. In primary classes, pupils are actively engaged, helping them to develop their understanding and apply what they have learnt in a variety of situations. In the secondary department, the best lessons also have these features and in these lessons pupils are less reliant on adult support to succeed. Where the balance of support and challenge is carefully planned, pupils also make better progress. In these lessons, staff encourage and enable pupils to 'have a go' before giving direct support.

Pupils behave well around the school and in lessons. All but one of the pupils who completed questionnaires agreed that they felt safe and this mirrors the results of independent surveys commissioned by the school. If instances of inappropriate behaviour or bullying occur, pupils feel confident that they will be dealt with quickly and the meticulous records kept by the school also reflect this. There is successful support for pupils who have particular behavioural difficulties and they learn to manage their behaviour within the supportive structures arranged. Some pupils make outstanding progress so that they can manage their own behaviour. For boarding pupils, the liaison between the residences and the school is also highly effective. Pupils are supportive of each other and the Year 11 'buddies' and 'helpers' enable new pupils to feel at ease and welcome when they start at the school. Pupils have a range of responsibilities in the school. The school councils are given good levels of responsibility and are able to put the views of pupils to the leadership of the school to help decision making.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	*
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

\* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good because teachers have a detailed knowledge of the pupils' abilities and plan accordingly. Where teaching is best, staff have high expectations of what pupils are able to achieve and provide opportunities for them to work things out and evaluate their own work individually and as a group. Staff work seamlessly so that British Sign Language and English are used and all pupils can access their first or preferred language. Additional symbol support is available for younger pupils with more complex needs and this helps them to access the lesson and make good progress. Information and communication technology has had a higher profile in the last few years and some teachers are using this as an effective tool to improve pupils' learning across the curriculum.

Throughout the key stages, the curriculum ensures that pupils have access to a breadth of subjects and additional time for areas of study that are a priority for their needs. In the primary department, links between subjects are made so that pupils gain greater understanding. The range of accreditation opportunities has been increased in the secondary department so that pupils have a wider choice than GCSE subjects. This has been of benefit to those who have more interest in vocational studies and for pupils with more complex additional needs. Primary pupils especially enjoy participating in the lunchtime clubs and going on visits that support the curriculum. Secondary pupils benefit

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from a range of opportunities, for example, Duke of Edinburgh awards, that help to develop independence and self-reliance. The focused homework sessions at the end of the school day have been welcomed by parents, carers and pupils alike and are helping to raise achievement.

Care, guidance and support are good and some elements are outstanding. The way in which the school supports pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable and those with complex needs is exemplary. Residential placements often play a particularly successful role in this. For example, they ensure that pupils who have been excluded by previous schools make great gains socially and academically. Support to attend regularly is highly successful, as is additional support provided for those pupils who are looked after or those with mental health difficulties. The guidance and support pupils are given to help them become more independent and resilient in a range of different situations is good. The opportunities to access a range of experiences are good but expectations of what pupils can do and manage for themselves without a substantial amount of structure and support are not always high enough.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The principal has very high aspirations for the pupils and this ambition is shared by most staff. Some senior leaders have very new roles. They have effectively evaluated performance in their areas and action to drive improvement is just beginning. All teachers and particularly those new to the school are given good professional development. If they are not qualified teachers of the deaf, they undertake this qualification and are given good support from the school. This has enabled the school to successfully bring in teachers from mainstream schools with new ideas while maintaining the expertise required for teaching deaf children and young people.

The school has many partners who successfully provide specialist support to help improve pupils' well-being, and other partners to extend and enhance the curriculum offer. These excellent partnerships have helped to promote equal opportunities and establish exemplary arrangements for safeguarding pupils. The school has meticulous record keeping and monitoring systems that help to keep pupils safe. Staff understand the additional vulnerability of deaf children and young people and this, alongside the persistence of staff when working with other agencies, ensures very strong safeguarding arrangements. Leaders at the school are effective in tackling discrimination, and progress made by different groups is good. They have identified where improvements can be made to the school curriculum and teaching to ensure attainment gaps reduce further. The

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school has put in place good actions to promote community cohesion. The work is especially strong in promoting awareness and understanding of deaf and hearing cultures.

Members of the governing body are known within the school and both pupils and staff appreciate their involvement. The contribution they make to focused work on identifying the strengths and areas for development has provided good challenge and contributed to driving improvements.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Learning is fun and children make good progress. Activities are presented in imaginative ways and a good range of resources are available both inside and outside. Children happily move between activities and there were many examples of them playing alongside each other. A favourite activity during the inspection was bathing the dolls, and children shared the resources well. The teacher is especially skilled in guiding children and enabling them to resolve their own conflicts, for example, when two wanted the same toy. However, occasionally, other staff do not give the children enough space to try things for themselves. Close work with the speech and language therapist helps to ensure there are sufficient good quality opportunities to develop language. Staff are skilled at reinforcing and extending the children's language, whether it be British Sign Language or English. For children with some hearing, there are plenty of opportunities to work with sounds and develop careful listening skills. During the inspection, one child took great delight in holding large cardboard tubes up to her ear so that the teacher could make sounds down them. Many of the children start with levels below that expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. They make good progress across the areas of learning although progress in literacy is slower than other areas. The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has high expectations for the children's progress. She has



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identified the particular skills that children find more challenging. Rather than accepting slower progress because these are difficult areas for deaf children, she has introduced new strategies to give the children more opportunities to focus on these skills. Assessment is detailed and evidenced with annotated photographs and pieces of work. The file provides a clear picture of progress. Links with other Early Years Foundation Stage teachers through Derby local authority help to ensure assessment is accurate and develop new ideas.

Staff are well qualified and have had appropriate training to ensure children are safe and to make sure any additional needs, for example, physical needs, are met. All the welfare and learning requirements for children of this age are met. Links with many parents and carers are established through the toddler and parents group prior to children starting at the nursery. This provides a good foundation for effective liaison with parents and carers and assists regular communication.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Sixth form

Students make good progress from a range of different starting points in their courses, whether vocational or academic, although progress in literacy is satisfactory overall. A significant minority do not make good gains in their literacy and this remains a barrier to them gaining even higher achievement on their courses. Students themselves say they would like more support for English skills so that they could be more independent in reading and writing and produce better coursework. The curriculum is tailor-made for the individual interests and needs of the students and this helps them to succeed so that some students achieve exceptionally well. The range of courses includes access to A levels, vocational qualifications and entry level courses. In the last academic year, a high proportion of students left to move on to higher education. Excellent partnerships with local colleges and other providers enable the school to provide a wide range of options. Students are given good support by staff helping to develop their educational, vocational and communication skills.

Students are clear about how to keep themselves safe and healthy, both physically and emotionally, and praise the courses that support this. They understand the behaviours they should or should not adopt and are developing strategies to deal with their emotions. Students are fully involved in making choices about the courses they follow and are consulted on how things are going and activities they wish to take part in. They do not feel as involved in the design and structure of their support and would like to be more

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involved in decisions about this and the development of rules and systems within the sixth form.

Teaching and learning are good and the targeted individual support is appreciated by students in their courses. Teaching is best when questions are carefully thought out and targeted to probe students' understanding and extend their thinking. Lessons are most successful when students are given opportunities to solve problems for themselves rather than staff too readily giving an explanation. There is some teaching which is satisfactory and in some lessons opportunities to extend students' literacy are missed. In these examples, written support is used too little or teachers read for students rather than adapting texts to enable them to read for themselves. Care, support and guidance are good overall with particular strengths in the support for transition to the next steps in education or training. The work with other agencies to support and safeguard students is excellent.

Leaders in the sixth form provide a clear direction and are aware of what needs to be improved. There is a clear determination to put quality support in place for students and develop excellent partnerships. This and the involvement colleges and other providers all help to support students in developing an understanding of deaf and hearing communities.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

## Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school and the vast majority think teaching is good and that their children are making good progress. They are unanimous in the belief that the school keeps their children safe and inspectors found the systems and structures in this area to be exemplary. The school is committed to communicating with parents and carers and they feel well informed about the progress their children are making. A very few parents and carers are less convinced that the school responds to their queries and suggestions and a very few are concerned that expectations of their children are not always high enough. The majority of teaching is good and although inspectors observed some that was satisfactory, over time pupils are making good progress from very different starting points.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Royal School for the Deaf (Derby) to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 38 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 133 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	82	7	18	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	79	8	21	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	22	58	16	42	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	47	18	47	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	24	63	11	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	63	13	34	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	61	13	34	1	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	24	63	12	32	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	76	6	16	2	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	66	11	29	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	63	12	32	2	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	29	76	8	21	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	76	7	18	2	5	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



4 February 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Royal School for the Deaf (Derby), Derby, DE22 3BH**

Thank you for making my colleague and me very welcome during the inspection of your school. It was a pleasure to meet so many of you and we were interested to hear your views. You attend a good school.

Most of you make good progress regardless of when you started at the school and you enjoy your education. You usually behave well and for those of you who find this difficult, there is good support to help you. Teachers are committed to checking how much you are learning and ensure you receive the support you need to achieve. Progress in literacy is not as strong as other areas and we have asked the school to make sure you have more opportunities to improve and practise your literacy skills across the curriculum.

Staff provide you with a good and enjoyable education. The school has excellent links with other schools and colleges, helping to provide you with a good range of options when you are in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. Staff work hard to make sure you are safe and healthy and the vast majority of you feel safe and well supported in these areas.

Although most teaching is good, some is satisfactory. We have asked the school to ensure all teachers ask you more searching questions and give you opportunities to be actively engaged in lessons. This will help you to develop better skills in research and problem solving.

The school continues to improve and I know many of you are keen to help this happen. I am sure you will continue to make useful suggestions and give staff ideas to help the school improve. I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Janet Thompson

Her Majesty's Inspector

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