

West Park School

West Road, Spondon, Derby, DE21 7BT

Inspection dates 25–26 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Students of all abilities make outstanding progress and reach standards of attainment that are well-above average. They enjoy their learning and are determined to do well.
- Students say how much they value the extra support that teachers provide. This together with consistently good and outstanding teaching enables them to achieve and exceed their targets.
- Behaviour in lessons is exemplary and relationships between teachers and their students are warm and supportive, creating a calm and productive working environment.
- Students show great pride in their school and show a high level of self-discipline, so that their conduct around the school is always calm even when unsupervised. They say that they feel safe from bullying and that adults support them very well.
- The inspirational head teacher, very well supported by his senior team and by governors, has established a climate where students succeed. The whole school community shares his vision and high expectations.
- Leaders ensure that every student receives the teaching, care and support they need in order to achieve and to understand their responsibilities as good citizens.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 41 lessons, three of which were seen together with senior leaders. They also made a number of further short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with students, governors, a representative from the local authority and staff, including subject leaders.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at policies, self-evaluation and development planning, monitoring records, minutes of meetings of the governing body, information about students' progress, safeguarding documents, and samples of students' work.
- The views of the 101 parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account in addition to the school's own survey of parents' and carers' views, and 60 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspection was carried out in response to a complaint being made to Ofsted which raised serious concerns. The complaint was deemed to be a qualifying complaint and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector decided that the inspection of the school should be brought forward to follow up the whole-school issues that were raised. Inspectors sought to establish how effectively the school deals with allegations of bullying and if students feel safe.

Inspection team

Mary Davis, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Clare Adamson	Additional Inspector
Philip Kelly	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Needham	Additional Inspector
David Martin	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- West Park School converted to become an academy on 1 April 2011. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The school is a larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average, and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic heritages is well below the national average as is the proportion speaking English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for some students including those in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school is a specialist mathematics and computing school.
- Thirty-eight students follow a variety of part-time off-site vocational alternative courses provided by Murray Park School, and Derby College in hair and beauty, construction and animal care.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Move more teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - ensuring that teachers' feedback on students' learning consistently provides clear information on how to improve and that written marking consistently provides students with opportunities to respond to advice by practising skills, correcting mistakes or undertaking a new challenge
 - by providing more opportunities for students to work in pairs or groups so that all are fully involved in their learning.
- Ensure that leaders, including governors, have a clear overview of the performance of different groups of students, to enable them to fully evaluate the impact of additional funding on the progress of those eligible for the pupil premium in order to further close the gap between this group and their peers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Students enter the school with average levels in the basic skills of reading, writing, communication and mathematics. By the end of Year 11, the proportion of students gaining 5 good GCSE passes including English and mathematics is consistently well-above average.
- Students make outstanding progress from their starting points. They were keen to tell inspectors how much the school encourages and supports them. There is no significant difference between the rates of progress of students from different ethnic backgrounds or the very few who speak English as an additional language.
- There is a strong focus on the promotion of literacy skills across all subjects, where students are frequently encouraged to read out loud. Systematic support to promoting reading throughout the school results in students making rapid progress and developing confidence. Students show a love of reading and the school library is very well used.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make exceptional progress as a result of the outstanding teaching and support that they receive. For example, in an outstanding English lesson, Year 11 students were observed showing good understanding of different poetic devices having built their skills gradually over time, so that they were confident to undertake a challenging task.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding is used appropriately to provide support for literacy and numeracy, including through a nurture group.
- Likewise in high-ability groups, students develop independent learning skills through having a clear understanding of what is required of a high quality answer. Students know their targets and are constantly encouraged to strive to achieve the highest grade.
- All students are entered for GCSE mathematics in their final year in order to maximise teaching time. Students speak of their determination to achieve their targets and of the extra support they receive to help them to do so.
- Students for whom the pupil premium provides additional funding make significantly better progress and attain well above this group nationally in both English and mathematics. However, in 2013 they were almost half a grade behind their peers in English and almost a grade in mathematics. The school's current progress data shows that this gap is closing year on year and will close further for the current Year 11 cohort.
- The progress of students following alternative off-site courses is frequently checked and the school ensures that these students also achieve well. The proportion of students who leave the school not in education, employment or training is very low.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The rapid progress made by students of all abilities and year groups, and the high standards they reach, show that the quality of teaching is outstanding. Leaders' rigorous checks on teaching shows that a large proportion of teaching is outstanding and almost all is consistently good. During the inspection a high degree of consistent practice was observed and a large

proportion of outstanding teaching.

- Teachers know their students very well and tasks are well matched to students' individual needs in their classes. They have very high expectations of what each student can achieve and resources are very well prepared, often promoting students' independence by enabling them to research information for themselves. They deploy teaching assistants very well to provide high quality support to students who need extra help.
- For example, in one French lesson observed where teaching was outstanding, the teacher provided a variety of active tasks that enabled students to share ideas and generated a great sense of fun. Students built skills in writing, speaking and listening, not only looking up new vocabulary in the dictionaries provided but also competing to be the first to discover and use new words.
- Most teachers use questioning very skilfully to promote students' thinking, challenging students to justify their response. For example in a Year 11 lesson, the teacher provided time to think before answering and then asked other students to add to the response given, enabling them to develop the ability to discuss their ideas with each other. Students knew that if they were unable to provide an answer straight away, the teacher would return to them later in the lesson. Here students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was very well promoted through opportunities to reflect on the futility of war and to empathise with the war poets.
- A very few teachers miss opportunities to ensure that students have a sufficiently detailed understanding of how to improve when they provide feedback during lessons. Although the marking of students' work usually provides clear targets for development, some teachers miss opportunities to enable students to respond to advice, by practising skills, correcting mistakes or being set an additional challenge.
- In the best lessons students were able to work in groups or pairs so that they could share their ideas and support each other. In a small minority of lessons teachers missed this opportunity to actively involve all students in their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Standards of behaviour throughout the school are exceptional. Students have a clear understanding of the boundaries set for them and the consequences should they fall short of the school's very high expectations. They fully accept this behaviour code and understand that it is there to ensure their learning is not disrupted.
- Students show enthusiasm for their learning and are attentive and engaged in all lessons across the school, responding very quickly to instructions and showing a determination to do well. They are polite and courteous to adults.
- Students show great respect for each other and for the school environment. For example, students' artwork and delicate pottery is displayed openly and is never damaged in any way. There are no lesson bells, so that students take responsibility for moving to their lessons after a break without being told. Despite the sometimes cramped school building, it is a calm and orderly environment.
- Students told inspectors that they feel very safe. They have a clear understanding of bullying and the different forms it can take, including a good understanding of e-safety. They say that there is zero tolerance for racist or homophobic bullying and that adults support them very well

if they are troubled in any way.

- They enjoy taking responsible roles, for example through the school council, or acting as sports leaders, a role for which they receive training, enabling them to provide leadership to younger pupils, such as organising primary school sports days.
- Attendance is consistently above average and the school's leaders provide outstanding support for students and their families facing challenging circumstances. Great care is taken to ensure that those on alternative courses attend well. The coordinator not only accompanies them to their college but also keeps in close contact to ensure their well being.
- Leaders ensure that the very high standards of behaviour are maintained. Incidents are comprehensively logged and exclusions are low.
- Almost all parents and carers, all staff and students agree that behaviour is good and that students are kept safe.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher is a figurehead for the school and the community, and for the traditional values that he insists on for his staff and students. He knows all students and has high expectations of them all. He is well supported by his long-standing senior team. All staff responded positively to the questionnaire with many speaking of their pride in the school and its students.
- Leaders, including subject leaders, monitor the quality of teaching closely. Common areas for development, identified through lesson observation and through teachers setting themselves targets, lead very appropriately to a wide variety of well-focused training and support. Rigorous performance management procedures are well established and links with salary progression are clearly and consistently applied. Teachers are closely held to account for meeting their targets and for the progress of their students.
- The school knows itself well. Self-evaluation is detailed and appropriate priorities are identified for improvement. These strongly focus on raising the aspirations and achievement of all groups of students. There is a strong capacity for further improvement in this school where equality of opportunity is successfully promoted and discrimination eliminated.
- The strong middle leaders, including those responsible for students' well-being and behaviour, value the support of their line managers through regular meetings that have helped them to establish clear and consistent procedures across the school and to drive improvement. They receive appropriate training that supports their professional development very well.
- Leaders are rigorous in their tracking and analysis of every individual student's progress. Underachievement is quickly identified and a very wide range of support put in place including through the regular catch-up and revision sessions during lesson 6. Some opportunities are, however being missed, to fully evaluate the impact of the additional funding on the progress of students eligible for the pupil premium, to ensure that the gap in performance between this group and their peers continues to close rapidly. The additional funding has enabled an additional member of staff to be appointed to monitor the progress of this group and to provide in-class support for targeted students.
- The courses that students follow are outstanding because they promote the high achievement of students of all abilities and support students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

very well. The focus on EBacc subjects has been highly successful, while the provision of alternative vocational courses, including construction and hair and beauty has ensured that all needs are met. A wide variety of enrichment activities, including a strong emphasis on music and sport, are highly popular with students, achieving local and national success.

- Close partnerships with local colleges and other providers support vocational courses. There is a high level of collaboration with the school, ensuring that all are attending, behaving and making progress.
- The school strives to engage parents and carers in the education of their children and an on-going relationship is developed throughout their school career. Leaders listen carefully and respond to any concerns. The website and newsletters provide detailed information and phone calls and frequent text messages keep parents informed about activities taking place. Parents and carers, through a variety of surveys, express a high degree of satisfaction with all aspects of the school's work.
- The local authority has provided good support for the school on its journey of improvement, providing a forum for sharing good practice and the provision of training, including for governors. It recognises the strength of the leaders and governors, identifying the school as a beacon of good practice.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors are very well informed and use their wide range of skills and expertise to challenge and support the school. The governing body is well organised so that every aspect of the school's work is scrutinised. Governors are keen to undertake additional training in order to further develop their effectiveness. They have ensured that effective performance management procedures are in place and lead appropriately to salary progression. They have ensured that safeguarding procedures and practice are exemplary. They are fully aware of the pupil premium funding but their understanding of its impact on raising the achievement of this group of students is an area for development.

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	136634
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	425096

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1243
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neville Taylor
Headteacher	Brian Walker
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01332 662337
Fax number	01332 280767
Email address	info@westpark.derby.sch.uk

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