

West Derby School

365 West Derby Rd, Liverpool, Merseyside, L13 7HQ

Inspection dates

7–8 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Sixth form provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Students' achievement in mathematics is not good enough and has declined since 2012.
- Teaching requires improvement because it is not consistently good across all subjects, particularly mathematics, to enable all students to make good progress.
- On occasions, the same level of work is set for all students without a consideration of their abilities. More able students, particularly in mathematics, are not challenged well enough.
- Questioning is not routinely sharp enough to enable students to think more deeply and learn more effectively.
- Teachers do not insist on student responses to their marking and students therefore miss further learning opportunities.
- Students are not always adequately engaged in lessons and do not always have sufficient opportunities to develop independence and a love of learning.
- Not enough disadvantaged students make good progress in English and mathematics.
- Leadership and management require improvement because the academy priorities as outlined in development plans are not detailed enough in relation to how or when improvements are to be secured. Subject improvement plans do not take account of more able or disadvantaged students' achievement.
- Leaders do not routinely check on the quality of teaching of all teachers within the academy.
- The overall effectiveness of the sixth form requires improvement because students' achievement is not consistently good.

The school has the following strengths

- Governors have a good understanding of the issues the academy faces in mathematics and are actively involved in driving improvements.
- The student support centre provides good quality care and support for its students.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Students are ready to learn and keen to progress in lessons. Attendance is in line with that seen nationally.
- The academy is increasingly effective in promoting students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and in preparing them for life in modern Britain.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a wide range of subjects taught across the academy to different age groups. Several lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors visited morning form periods and an assembly.
- Inspectors met with four groups of students formally, representing the full age and ability range.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders and representatives of the governing body. A meeting was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation including: development plans; the academy's view of its own performance; data relating to students' attainment and progress; information on attendance; documents and records about behaviour and safeguarding; records of the monitoring of teaching and learning; and the performance management of staff.
- Inspectors looked at a comprehensive sample of students' work in their books.
- Inspectors analysed the 26 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and also took account of the 47 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Peter Cox, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Bernard Robinson	Additional Inspector
Judith Straw	Additional Inspector
Alan Parkinson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- West Derby School is an average-sized academy for boys with a mixed sixth form.
- The proportion of students who are disadvantaged and supported through pupil premium is much higher than the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below average.
- The majority of students are from White British heritage.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is small.
- The proportion who are disabled or who have special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- West Derby School converted to become an academy on 1 September 2012. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics, so it is consistently good by ensuring that:
 - activities and work meet the needs of students of all abilities, especially the most able
 - questioning helps students think more deeply about their learning
 - teaching consistently engages students' interest and helps them to develop a love of learning
 - marking is consistently effective in helping students improve their work and that students respond more readily to teachers' comments.
- Improve overall achievement by ensuring that:
 - students' progress in mathematics at least matches that seen nationally
 - gaps in attainment between disadvantaged students and others in the academy close further.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by making sure that:
 - academy and subject development plans clearly detail the journey toward making the necessary improvements and that checks on progress are more frequent
 - the needs of disadvantaged and the most able students are emphasised in subject planning
 - the rigour of monitoring and judging the quality of teaching is enhanced and that checks are made more frequently throughout the academic year.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership provides a safe, secure and purposeful environment for the students. Expectations of the students are known and the climate for learning is positive, leading to good attitudes and behaviour shown by the students.
- Leadership and management require improvement because the academy has not yet secured sufficient improvement in performance in mathematics since the drop in standards in 2014. Systems for monitoring students' progress in mathematics have improved this year but there is still too much underachievement. Leaders, managers and governors are working hard to overcome the previous year's underachievement with some success, but much more remains to be done.
- The academy has an overgenerous view of its effectiveness. There are clear procedures in place for the performance management of teachers but the monitoring of the quality of teaching is not rigorously undertaken through a systematic approach of lesson observations for all staff. Furthermore, there is no clear strategy contained within the academy's improvement plans on how to improve teaching and move it to outstanding.
- Leaders are confident the improvement needed in mathematics will happen this year. The academy predicted the fall in achievement in 2014 and worked at preventing the drop but without the anticipated success.
- Subject leaders are not consistently effective in helping drive improvements in their areas of responsibility. Action plans are not good because they do not identify well enough just how different groups of students are to be enabled to make good and outstanding progress given their starting points.
- The curriculum is, on the whole, broad and balanced. Students choose from a range of academic and vocational subjects at Key stage 4. Literacy is addressed through the work of all departments and the pupil support centre. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is integral to the academy's values although the monitoring of these opportunities in lessons is not sufficiently strong enough to ensure consistency of practice across all subjects.
- There is a high priority on promoting students' personal development and preparing them for life in modern Britain. Careers guidance begins in Year 7 as a way of raising aspirations and ambition. There is a wide range of visits and visitors to the academy. The curriculum provides suitable opportunities for students to develop their skills in reading, writing, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and speaking. Progress in mathematics, however, is slower than in English and this impacts on the school's overall performance. The monitoring of the implementation of agreed curriculum content lacks rigour; in some lessons students are not always given the opportunity to reinforce and develop their numeracy and literacy skills.
- Leaders have made some effective use of pupil premium funding. Smaller class sizes and group support are leading to the achievement of some students gathering momentum. As a result, gaps in the attainment of these students compared to the attainment of non-disadvantaged students in school and nationally are beginning to close.
- The academy's arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements. Staff and governors receive suitable safeguarding training. Leaders make sure that arrangements to keep students safe on entry to and exit from the academy, crossing the busy dual carriageway, are as effective as possible.
- The academy has maintained an effective working relationship with the local authority and buys in additional support when needed. The local authority undertook, at the request of the academy, a review of mathematics. The development points contained within that report have helped set the improvement agenda which includes reshaping the Key Stage 3 curriculum and strengthening the department's leadership and management.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a clear view of the academy's strengths and weaknesses. They have a good understanding of achievement and attainment data and are fully aware how and why achievement in mathematics fell in 2014. They are equally clear about what needs to be done to address this. They have good oversight of the academy's finances, including how pupil premium funding is used and the impact this is having on the achievement of disadvantaged students. Governors make sure that teachers' pay is linked to their performance and refuse, with guidance from the headteacher, to sanction pay increases when performance is not good enough.
 - Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. Governors ensure the curriculum and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural programmes contained within it promote traditional British values including an understanding of the risks of extremism.

- They also ensure that the school provides equality of opportunity for all students regardless of ability or background and are determined to see that the gap in attainment between disadvantaged students and others is reduced further. There is a wide range of relevant expertise that enables them to work effectively. Governors have good lines of communication with parents and keep themselves up to date on educational issues through regular training.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good.
- Students behave well in lessons; they are pleasant, polite, relaxed and comfortable together. They wear the uniform correctly and present themselves to a good standard. They attend regularly and in line with those rates seen nationally.
- Students arrive promptly at the beginning of lessons and settle quickly. They generally have the correct equipment needed in the lessons and respond well to instructions and requests from their teachers.
- They want to learn and, when the teaching is engaging and exciting, stay focused to the end of the lessons. As a result, the learning in lessons flows smoothly most of the time.
- Students' behaviour is not outstanding because they do not always take the responsibility for their own learning. Too often they are seen to be over-reliant on their teachers and less reliant on themselves asking questions and exploring problems and contexts more thoroughly.
- Some students, particularly younger ones, do not always take pride in their work and there was evidence of incomplete work and work of a poor quality in a small number of exercise books.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students feel safe and secure in lessons and around the school. On the rare occasions when students experience bullying they say it is dealt with quickly and effectively by staff. They are aware of the different forms bullying can take, including racist and cyber-bullying. They are tolerant of others' sexuality, background and religious beliefs.
- Inspection evidence supports the view of the majority of parents who responded to the Parent View online survey, that their sons feel safe and well cared for by the academy.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- On occasions, the same work is set for all students regardless of their abilities and starting points. This often leads to the more able students in particular not learning as quickly as they could. This is especially evident in mathematics. Student progress data for this term and the work seen in their books demonstrate significant underachievement in this subject. Leaders and managers have identified this and are actively going about securing the necessary improvements. This is a challenge to all because of the significant ground students have to make up, in Years 8 and 10 particularly. The quality of teaching in mathematics has been inconsistent for some time, as seen in students' books and progress data. As a result students' rates of progress in mathematics are too variable.
- Questioning in class is generally not effective enough. Questions often focus purely on checking that students know the correct answer, rather than on helping them think more deeply, responding to the comments of others and helping develop as independent thinkers and learners.
- Marking is regular and sometimes suggests work to be undertaken to make advances in learning. However, it is inconsistent in its quality and frequency across the academy and within subjects. As a result, students do not routinely respond to their teachers' comments on how to improve their standards or complete work which is not finished.
- There is evidence of well-planned learning taking place in some subjects, such as English and geography. Activities challenge students well, paying due regard to their starting points and consequently enabling them to make good progress.
- In some subjects, good subject knowledge of the teachers is evident and high expectations set for students including a clear emphasis on spelling, punctuation and grammar, helping improve literacy skills. The development of numeracy skills lags somewhat behind in most subjects. There is evidence of some successful collaborative learning between students, leading to good progress, for example in the humanities subjects. In these subjects, students often make good progress because they are given

opportunities to support each other in their learning.

- Relationships between teachers and students are good. Those boys spoken to during the inspection have a high regard for their teachers and appreciated the extra mile most go to in order for them to be successful.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students come from their primary schools with broadly average attainment, although the Year 11 boys who left last year arrived with attainment much lower than that seen nationally. Students in the current Year 11 entered the school with just above average levels of prior attainment.
- In 2014, the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics, was significantly below average when measured by students' first attempts at sitting their examinations. The results were better after the students took their examinations again, but were still lower than in the previous two years.
- Since 2012 students have secured above average results in English and further improvements were seen in 2013. However, overall attainment in English in 2014 dropped to a level much below that seen nationally. In mathematics, students had secured above average results in 2012 but since then there has been a decline. Results in mathematics in 2014 were much lower than those seen nationally and in comparison to English at the academy.
- Some subjects performed well, including art and design, photography, ICT, travel and tourism, media studies, sports studies, computer science, biology, physics and chemistry. In these subjects, attainment was at or above the national level equivalent for grades C and better and at the higher grades of A* and A.
- Students' progress in learning declined in 2014 when compared to previous years. Not enough students made good progress when considering their starting points. Students' progress in learning in mathematics has been in decline since 2012. The academy's regular data collections anticipated this lower than average performance. The academy predicts better performance from the current Year 11 but there is still underachievement evident in mathematics in Year 8 and in Year 10.
- Inspection evidence, including a scrutiny of work in students' books shows that achievement overall requires improvement. It is not good because it is too variable across subjects and year groups.
- The attainment of disadvantaged students was lower than other students in the school. One third of those students gained five GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics. The attainment gap has closed considerably when compared to 2012 and 2013.
- In mathematics the gap has narrowed but not as quickly as in English. Overall, disadvantaged students attained one third of a grade less than other students in school.
- The gap in attainment of disadvantaged students in English and mathematics widened considerably in 2014 when compared with other students nationally.
- The progress disadvantaged students make is less than that of non-disadvantaged students in the academy and nationally. The considerable dip in performance in 2014 is marked. In English only seven disadvantaged students of the 65 in that year group made good progress and only one in mathematics. However, should predictions be met in 2015 then the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and others in the academy will have closed on that seen in 2014 and 2013.
- The achievement of disabled students and those with special educational needs is in line with other students in the academy and sometimes better for some students because of the very effective support they receive from the support centre.
- The achievement of the most able students requires improvement because their needs are not sufficiently well met in mathematics.
- The academy has in the past provided multiple opportunities for students to sit English and mathematics examinations early so that they secure better grades.

The sixth form provision

requires improvement

- Students' achievement in the sixth form is improving but remains variable. They arrive into Year 12 with results in previous examinations that are below the national average. Standards improve over time but remain below average by the time they leave after two years. Predictions for 2015 look to be much better than in previous years.
- The progress that students make in Year 12 is stronger than in Year 13 where they perform broadly in line

with that seen nationally.

- Leadership and management of the sixth form require improvement. While revised systems and procedures introduced by the recently-appointed head of sixth form, including tracking and planning, are rigorous and systematic, the impact on overall achievement of the students is yet to be seen.
- Recent changes to the sixth form curriculum have seen the removal of some subject choices and the introduction of five new subjects designed to meet the interests and abilities of students more closely. Students increasingly study courses that suit their ambitions and prepare them well for higher education and employment. There is a balanced curriculum of academic and vocational courses.
- The behaviour and attitudes to learning of students in the sixth form match those in the main school and are good. Students say they feel safe, secure and well cared for. The quality of learning and the progress made by students over time is in line with the main school and requires improvement. This is because not all students are making good advances in their learning given their starting points.
- Students understand issues relating to discrimination and diversity. They receive appropriate inputs through assemblies and form time to help prepare for life and work in Britain. They receive helpful, impartial advice and guidance to help them shape their futures.

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	138696
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	453324

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	963
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	124
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Callant
Headteacher	Margaret Rannard
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0151 235 1333
Fax number	0151 259 4711
Email address	admin@westderby.liverpool.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

