

Royal School for the Deaf Derby

Ashbourne Road, Derby, DE22 3BH

Inspection dates 27 February–3 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Inadequate	4
Sixth form provision		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- The governing body is not fulfilling its statutory duty to ensure the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe meet requirements. Too much information has been taken on trust and governors have not ensured that promised actions to improve arrangements have been taken.
- Emergency safeguarding systems put in place by leaders recently are unsound and are not being followed as described. Pupils are at risk because of this.
- Leaders' systems for investigating pupils' absence from school are not secure. There is insufficient contact with families when pupils are absent.
- Leaders' risk assessments of the school site are poor. Some health and safety arrangements are inadequate.
- Information about the progress and achievement of pupils is not analysed precisely enough to know if all pupils are making good enough progress.
- Leaders do not have an accurate view of teaching and so actions to improve it have not had the intended impact.
- Interim leadership arrangements have given key roles and responsibilities to staff that do not always have the required knowledge, experience, or time.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough and they do not always set work at the right level of difficulty. As a result, pupils are not making the progress they should.
- Pupils do not consistently get clear feedback on how they can improve their work or always understand what their targets are.
- Leaders do not have an informed view of the progress students in the sixth form are making when in school or at college. They do not share information with parents regularly enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are exceptionally well supported to develop communication skills and, as a result, they are able to make progress with their learning and their social development.
- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In the early years, children's learning needs are identified quickly and their progress carefully monitored so that they make good progress.
- Pupils are passionate about the school and about the very positive impact it has had on their lives. There is clear evidence that pupils make strong progress in their personal, social and emotional development.
- The school has some effective middle leaders who have an accurate and thorough understanding of their areas of responsibility.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with no notice following a complaint made to Ofsted which raised serious concerns. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector decided that an inspection of the school should take place to follow up on whole-school issues that were raised. Inspectors sought to establish whether:
 - safeguarding procedures met requirements, including that staff and pupils' concerns are acted on
 - leaders, including the governing body, are effective in monitoring and evaluating policy and practice for safeguarding within the school.
- The Principal was not present during the inspection. There has been an Acting Principal in post since January 2015. The inspection team liaised with the Acting Principal and other school leaders.
- Inspectors observed parts of twenty-two lessons, six of which were observed jointly with the Acting Principal. During some of these lessons, inspectors talked with pupils and looked at their books. Inspectors observed arrival and departure times, break and lunchtimes, and pupils' movement around school.
- Inspectors met with a number of staff including the Acting Principal who also leads the Year 11–19 department, the early years leader, the primary leader, the sixth-form leader, subject leaders, the complex needs leader, the behaviour leader and the human resources manager. Meetings were also held with the Chair of the Governing Body and the newly appointed designated safeguarding governor.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of written evidence, including school policies, safeguarding documents, risk assessments, records of behaviour, and the school's information on pupils' progress and examples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met formally with three groups of pupils. They also spoke informally with different pupils in lessons and at break and lunch times.
- The team considered 22 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents or carers (Parent View) and spoke with a number of parents.
- Inspectors took into account responses from 75 staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors were supported by British Sign Language interpreters.

Inspection team

Karen Gannon, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tina Shepherd	Her Majesty's Inspector
Deirdre Duignan	Her Majesty's Inspector
Janet Bird	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- Royal School for the Deaf Derby is a non-maintained special school for deaf children and young people aged 3–19. Places are funded by local authorities and pupils attend from across the Midlands as well as further afield. Children in the Nursery class attend part-time until they start full time in their Reception Year.
- Approximately three quarters of pupils are of White British heritage.
- Approximately two thirds of pupils are boys.
- Nearly half of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. This is a much greater proportion than seen nationally. Four children are looked after. The school receives additional funding, known as the pupil premium, to support the education of these groups of pupils. The school receives physical education and sports funding for primary pupils.
- A high proportion of pupils arrive part way through their education.
- All pupils have or are awaiting statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans. Many pupils also have complex learning difficulties.
- The school provides pupils with access to learning through British Sign Language (BSL) and English. Although some pupils use British Sign Language as their first language on entry, many have no language of communication on arrival.
- All sixth formers and some pupils in Key Stage 4 study offsite at alternative provision for some part of their week, supported by staff from the school. Alternative providers include Derby College, Access Training and Woodlands School.
- The school has residential boarding provision, managed by the governing body. There are currently 39 borders.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- As a matter of urgency, improve the quality of leadership and management including governance, particularly with regard to the safeguarding of pupils by:
 - ensuring governors fulfil their statutory duty to keep children safe in school,
 - ensuring governors hold the school's leaders to account for the safeguarding of pupils
 - completing a full audit of all aspects of the school's work around safeguarding and ensure swift action is taken to deal with omissions and breaches
 - implementing a safeguarding policy and other key policies that specifically meet the needs of the pupils attending the school
 - ensuring there is a clear, system in place to check pupils' non-attendance is recorded, followed up swiftly and closely monitored
 - completing a full and comprehensive safety audit of the site, taking immediate action to make safe any issues identified
 - ensuring all safeguarding procedures are followed rigorously by all staff.
- Further develop leadership and management by:
 - making sure that leaders at all levels have the knowledge, skills and time to fulfil their roles and are held accountable for their areas of responsibility
 - ensuring that all governors hold school leaders to account rigorously for the achievement of pupils

- effectively monitoring and accurately evaluating all aspects of the school's work in order to plan and implement the necessary improvements
- ensuring that leaders at all levels have an accurate and informed view of pupils' progress.

■ Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, by:

- ensuring that teachers take pupils' starting points into account when planning lessons so that work is more closely matched to their learning needs
- sharing the good and outstanding practice that already exists in the school
- making sure that pupils understand their targets and know how to improve their work
- ensuring that all teachers have consistently high expectations of what all pupils can achieve
- providing greater challenge for pupils.

■ Improve provision in the sixth form by:

- ensuring that leaders have an accurate and informed view of students' progress when in school and when at alternative provision
- providing students with accurate information on how to improve their work.

An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on safeguarding, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- There is currently a shortfall of leaders with experience and expertise in key areas.
- The most serious weaknesses are in the management of safeguarding. Inspectors were provided with details of new systems to keep children safe implemented after the school's December 2014 residential inspection. They found these to be flawed and not always followed as described.
- There are seriousness weaknesses in the way the school responds when pupils do not attend. There is no clearly defined process for checking why pupils are not in school and that they are safe. There is not enough contact with families when pupils are absent for longer periods.
- A number of key policy documents are out of date or do not refer to the specific needs of the school's pupils. Many use inappropriate terminology. Leaders rightly recognise that there is significant work to do to complete these updates. The school's single central record of the suitability of staff and other adults to work with pupils is incomplete. Furthermore, despite being identified as a concern in December 2014, some of the documents associated with it are still stored inappropriately. The school's leaders are not able to identify which of their staff have been trained appropriately in safeguarding and who still needs to be trained.
- Some key files are incomplete and badly organised; one file for a looked after child had not been updated since 2012. Pupils are at risk because records are not always complete or dated and there is often no clear indicator of who has taken what action and when.
- The quality of risk assessments is poor. A number of significant risks and hazards were identified by inspectors, including: a large, deep, poorly-fenced concrete pond directly adjacent to a Year 1 classroom; a room used by pupils who are out of lessons which locks from inside; an open room with heavy equipment stored dangerously; and toilets for younger pupils being used to store glue. Swift action was taken to make safe the most serious of these during the inspection.
- Most staff have a deep and strong commitment to the pupils at Royal School for the Deaf Derby and are unreservedly supportive of the Acting Principal. The school's leaders now taking on new responsibilities are working exceptionally hard to bring about the changes needed. However, they do not always have the experience, knowledge, or time to have the necessary impact. Some effective middle leaders have a thorough understanding of their areas of responsibility.
- School leaders gather a range of assessment and progress information about individual pupils but much of this is confusing and does not provide an accurate enough view of how well pupils are doing. The Acting Principal and other leaders now realise that they are currently not clear what this information is telling them and, therefore, do not rigorously hold teachers to account for their work.
- The primary school physical education and sports funding is being thoughtfully spent to improve pupils' involvement with and enjoyment of sport, including involvement in a range of activities and events. Pupil premium funding has been spent in a number of ways including providing additional staffing, radio aids for pupils linking listening skills to reading and supporting trips locally, nationally and overseas. The school has not used the progress information that it has to evaluate the impact of this spending.
- Senior leaders monitor the performance of teachers and link these to pay progression. Some underperformance is challenged and support provided as needed. These processes are being strengthened.
- The curriculum is carefully designed to meet pupils' needs, to support them through all stages of their education and to provide them with the skills and confidence to play an active part in life in modern Britain. Students in the sixth form role-played ordering and paying for fast-food when no-one in the restaurant understands sign language, which allowed them to work together to explore how they might achieve this.

- Pupil's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is carefully supported through a wide range of lessons and activities throughout the school, although this is less so in the sixth form. Pupils understand tolerance, respect and equality and what this means for people who are different. Staff and pupils are fiercely proud of their 'equality for all' community. Pupils talk about and demonstrate how important it is to help each other and people in the wider world.
- Pupils receive highly individualised career support and guidance. Travel training programmes support older pupils to travel independently to their college or work placements.
- Parents who spoke with inspectors or who responded to the online questionnaire were largely supportive of the school although some voiced concerns about the behaviour and safety of pupils, about the progress their child was making and about the leadership of the school.
- I strongly recommend that the school does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is inadequate. For too long governors have relied almost exclusively on information and assurances about the school from senior leaders, much of which have been inaccurate. They do not fully appreciate the extent or significance of the school's current situation. Nevertheless, there are examples of some leaders being asked challenging questions about provision reflecting some more effective practice.
 - Governors have not fulfilled their statutory duty to safeguard children because they have failed to challenge school leaders and taken too much information on trust. There have been three different designated safeguarding governors since November 2014. The newly appointed post holder has just completed his initial training.
 - Governors do not have an accurate view of the progress made by pupils, the quality of teaching, or the impact of pupil premium spending because insufficient information has been given to them about these matters.
 - Governors are involved in the performance management of staff and have brought some challenge to this process.
 - Not all governors attend governing body meetings regularly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The Acting Principal acted swiftly to improve behaviour, when she moved to her role in January 2015, recognising that staff felt unsupported to implement the school's behaviour policy. There has been a recent rise in fixed term exclusions because of action taken but there are clear signs that this has had a positive impact and staff and pupils agree. The behaviour leader closely monitors incidents of poor behaviour and the action plans to support pupils. There is clear evidence that this support is now having a positive impact on behaviour.
- The pupils are keen to learn and largely interested in their lessons across all year groups and subjects. Attendance is good and relationships between staff and pupils are very strong.
- Staff at the school are exceptionally skilled at understanding and supporting pupils' communication needs and pupils appreciate this greatly. A number of pupils asked to meet inspectors to tell them how and why Royal School for the Deaf Derby had made a difference to their lives. Pupils are very proud of their school.
- Staff are well supported by the complex-needs leader, so that they quickly understand the additional complex needs of a growing number of pupils. Support is put into place where needed and is tightly monitored. Pupils know to use time out when they need it and can say how staff help them to manage their behaviour.

- Pupils care about one another and have an understanding of the importance of helping others because staff model high levels of care. They develop a strong understanding of discrimination and the need to be tolerant and thoughtful to others through lessons and activities across the curriculum. Sixth-form students are proud to be part of the accredited 'buddy system' that provides support to other pupils throughout the school. Pupils are confident that this helps everyone to make friends and be supportive, particularly those pupils who are new to the school.
- Pupils arrive and depart calmly and behave well on the transport that takes them to and from school. They know that it is important to get on with each other and with the staff who support them. Pupils say that there are few incidents of bad behaviour and that staff do act to 'help sort things out' when things go wrong.
- Most parents feel that the school manages behaviour well but a small number indicated that they had some concerns.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is inadequate. This is because the governing body has not fulfilled its statutory duty to keep children safe by properly holding the school's leaders to account for their work in this area.
- School leaders, including governors, have not ensured that important child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures are in place. Where they have recently been put into place, governors have not ensured that they are being followed as stated.
- Leaders' risk assessments of the school site are poor. Some health and safety arrangements are inadequate.
- Pupils learn about staying safe through a range of lessons. Students in the sixth form recently worked with a theatre company to adapt and perform a play for older pupils and some could tell inspectors how this had helped them to learn about the dangers that they might face out of school. Not all pupils who met with inspectors were as confident to identify how to stay safe out of school.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school because they are confident that staff care for them. Teaching and support staff can explain what they would do if they had a concern about a child or an adult.
- Students' attendance at off-site provision is carefully monitored and absences are reported to the school immediately by the school staff supporting the students.
- Attendance levels are good because school leaders have worked closely with families to achieve this. Pupils want to come to school; they have friends and they want to learn.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Across the school, there is too much variation in the quality of teaching. Expectations of what pupils can achieve over time are not always high enough. This is especially true of the more able. Pupils say that their work is too easy at times and inspectors saw evidence of this in their books.
- Teachers do not always consider pupils' different starting points when planning lessons and so not all pupils make good or better progress over time because they are completing the same tasks as others of very different abilities.
- School leaders do not always have an accurate enough view of the progress that pupils make to be able to challenge underperformance. Not all teachers assess pupils' progress effectively in lessons over time.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects other than English or to develop their mathematical skills in different subjects.

- Not all pupils have clear enough information on how to achieve their targets or know how well they are doing. Teachers' comments in books do not always support pupils' learning.
- School leaders rightly prioritise supporting pupils to acquire and extend communication skills. Teachers and support staff work closely with British Sign Language teachers and specialist speech and language therapists to develop highly individualised programmes for pupils. There is clear evidence that this has a significant impact. Pupils and parents are very appreciative of this.
- The teaching of reading, including the development of visual phonics skills (learning to match letter shapes, sounds and signs), is effective and progress is very closely monitored. Where extra support is needed this is very well provided by a skilful support team.
- Teachers and support staff work closely together to ensure that there are clear routines in place that help pupils to settle to work quickly. There are strong relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils are very appreciative of the help they get with their learning and are confident to ask for support. Work is generally neatly presented.
- Where teaching is strongest, lessons are innovative and expectations are extremely high. Older pupils studying 'The Merchant of Venice' were confidently able to speculate how characters' behaviour might be explained by racism, fear or other experiences. The teacher's careful questioning, and skilled linking to lyrics from a recent popular song, enabled them to explain their reasoning and reflect on how this was relevant in modern Britain.
- Older pupils stay for 'homework club' one night each week. This provides space and resources for pupils to complete activities. However, homework set is not always matched closely enough to pupils' needs to extend their learning. Some parents say they would welcome additional work for their children; inspectors agree.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Information about the progress and achievement of pupils is not sufficiently analysed. Nevertheless, although it is not completely clear, there is evidence that some pupils are making steady or good progress in some subjects across the school.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception Years make reasonable or better progress in their learning because staff quickly identify and act upon children's learning needs, provide very strong support to develop early communication skills and monitor progress carefully.
- Pupils' language and communication development is a significant strength because the school provides expert support and opportunities throughout the school day for staff to model these skills and for pupils to practise. The parents of younger pupils particularly appreciate this support. The school staff work hard to prepare pupils for the next stage of their education and to encourage independent living skills.
- Pupils do not always know how to improve their work. This is because teachers' marking of their work is mostly celebratory. Teachers do not pinpoint for pupils what they need to do differently to improve.
- Pupils' enjoy their lessons and understand why it is important to learn.

The early years provision

is inadequate

- The concerns about the leadership of safeguarding across the school mean that the inspectors cannot be confident that the same concerns do not exist in the early years provision.
- Teaching in the early years is good. There is an effective balance of adult-led and independent play activities that allows children to investigate, think for themselves and learn with other children. For

example, Reception children were observed giggling with delight when they were deciding how to build a tower together without it falling down.

- The learning areas are vibrant and stimulating. They provide a wide range of indoor and outdoor learning opportunities. Children's numeracy and literacy development are well supported through play-based, first-hand experiences. They begin to learn visual phonics in their Reception Year.
- There is strong support for children when they enter Nursery or Reception and, rightly, the school focuses on supporting the development of communication skills. In many cases, this involves introducing the children to a language of communication for the first time.
- Children make good progress because their needs are quickly identified and support is put in place. Progress is strongest in communication and language skills and in children's personal, social and emotional development.
- Progress is closely monitored and the team supplement their understanding of progress by using British Sign Language assessments to demonstrate even the smallest steps of development.
- Reception children are well prepared to move to Year 1. They spend one afternoon each week at a local mainstream school where they learn alongside other children.
- Parents greatly appreciate the support they receive from the school which includes regular updates on progress and development.

The sixth form provision

is inadequate

- The concerns about the leadership of safeguarding across the school mean that the inspectors cannot be confident that the same concerns do not exist in the sixth form provision.
- Leaders do not have an accurate and informed view of students' progress either when they are learning in school or elsewhere. Information about students is not shared well enough with parents. Inspectors were unable to judge the achievement of students because insufficient evidence was presented by the school.
- Teachers do not track students' progress carefully enough and so they do not always know students' starting points when planning work. Students say that they are not always sure how to improve their work. Teachers' comments in books do not always make this clear. They do not always have the highest expectations for students or for the quality of work that they produce.
- Students study a wide range of subjects with a number of off-site providers. Timetables are highly personalised and there is close support from school staff when students are learning out of school. Arrangements to keep students safe while on external courses are secure.
- Students are positive and passionate about their experiences in the sixth form although they would like to have better facilities, particularly their social room. They feel well supported by staff and relationships are strong. Students receive advice and guidance to help them plan for the next steps in their education or career and for independent living. A number of students are being supported to study for their driving theory test.
- There are fewer opportunities for cultural activities and for further developing their knowledge of some key aspects of life in modern Britain. Some students are active and enthusiastic members of a theatre group. Students talk enthusiastically about working to achieve the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and about their leadership roles within the 'buddy scheme'.

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	113044
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	463310

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	Special
School category	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	132
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	30
Number of boarders on roll	39
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rosemary Guy
Principal	Cheryll Ford
Date of previous school inspection	16 October 2013
Telephone number	01332 362512
Fax number	01332 299708
Email address	principal@RSDD.org.uk

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