

Lord Derby Academy

Seel Road, Huyton, Liverpool, Merseyside L36 6DG

Inspection dates

10–11 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The positive and necessary improvements that have already been made have not had sufficient impact on the progress that pupils make.
- The progress of boys, middle-ability, higher-ability and disadvantaged pupils was below national averages in 2016.
- The improvements in teaching have not had enough impact on pupils' learning over time.
- The quality of teaching is variable and at times lacking in challenge.
- The pupil premium funding has had limited impact and the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is lower than that of other pupils nationally.
- Leaders are too generous in their evaluation of how well the school is doing.
- The progress of pupils in key stage 4 is not as fast as it is for pupils in key stage 3.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and governors are resolute to see this school succeed. They are ambitious for every pupil.
- The pupils are positive role models to each other and make a significant contribution to the local community.
- The support of the local community, parents and carers has never been higher. The reputation that this is a school that insists on the highest standards of behaviour is deserved.
- The attendance of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe and secure.
- The support and training that staff receive is excellent and is building the confidence and potential of staff.
- Leaders are improving the literacy and communication skills of pupils.
- Pupils' are taught how to develop their social skills and self-confidence so as to make a difference to themselves and to society.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes by accelerating the pace at which all pupils are catching up with their peers nationally, especially in key stage 4.
- Maximise the use of pupil premium funding to ensure that the progress of disadvantaged pupils matches or exceeds that of other pupils nationally.
- Review evaluation documents and improvement plans to ensure that comparisons are made against national benchmarks so as to provide an accurate view of how well the school is doing.
- Ensure consistently high-quality teaching so as to quicken the rates of progress for pupils.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders' actions to improve the behaviour, aspirations and reputation of the school are tangible. However, these actions have not brought about sufficient improvements in the outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders' evaluation about the school's effectiveness reflects how far the school has come rather than against national benchmarks. The current provision of the school is not as good as leaders evaluate it to be. The school is still on its journey towards being good.
- Leaders do not scrutinise the impact of additional funding for pupil premium closely enough and the specific barriers for learning have not been adequately identified. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils are not achieving as well as they should.
- The additional funding received for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is spent specifically on strategies which will help them learn and the impact of this is seen in the progress made by these pupils.
- Leaders have used the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding effectively and this can be seen in the great strides that pupils make in developing their literacy skills. Pupils who join the school with reading ages well below their chronological age are supported to catch up quickly. This enables them to learn with more confidence.
- The necessary improvements in teaching to bring about the acceleration in pupils' progress have not been quick enough but impact is now being seen.
- The executive headteacher and head of school demonstrate an ardent and uncompromising belief in the pupils and staff of this school. Their grit and tenacity has resulted in a school that is ready to accelerate the pace of the journey undertaken so far. Parents told inspectors that they are 'honoured' to send their children to this school and no longer have to justify their decision.
- Leaders provide pupils with a curriculum that is well thought out and takes into account the needs and aspirations of the pupils. It provides pupils with what they need in order to make informed decisions about the next stage in their education. The full impact of the curriculum changes will be evident in the 2017 results. The extra-curricular activities make a positive impact on pupils' engagement in school and these activities allow them to expand their learning and personal development.
- Leaders have worked tirelessly and persistently at developing pupils' belief in themselves and the positive contribution that they can make to society. The social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils is sensitively and astutely planned. The pupils at this school are a credit to themselves, their parents and the local community.
- The trust provides support and training of a high quality through the teaching school. It is bespoke and meets the needs of staff at their various career stages. This support has been a key factor in the improvements made so far to developing governors' skills and expertise, behaviour management and teaching and assessment.
- Leaders hold teachers to account while being supportive at the same time. There are

robust systems in place to evaluate the effectiveness of staff and everyone is clear about the lines of accountability. The morale, dedication and commitment of the staff are contagious.

- Leaders ensure a cohesive programme of careers education, information, advice and guidance for all pupils at the school. There is a wide range of links with sixth form colleges and further education providers. Leaders have also sought to increase links with local businesses in order to help pupils into careers where there is local need. Leaders are attentive to guidance being offered that will match the high aspirations they have for the pupils.

Governance of the school

- Governors work effectively with the trust and value the support and challenge that they receive. There is transparency and openness and everyone is clear about the direction of travel. This enables purposeful relationships and there is clarity around the delegated powers that the local governing body has.
- Governors ask the right questions and hold leaders to account in a firm but fair manner. For example, following the 2016 results governors reviewed strategies across the school 'in order to get back to basics'.
- Governors take their responsibilities seriously and are proactive in seeking out opportunities to further develop their skills and expertise.
- Governors are under no illusion as to the scale of the task that faces them but they show resolve and steely determination to see the school succeed. This is evident from the tough decisions that they have had to make in recent years.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The checks that are made on the suitability of staff to work with children are all in place. The recruitment procedures are robust and all staff receive regular and appropriate training which reflects recent developments in ensuring that children are kept safe. This training includes child sexual exploitation, sexting, peer-on-peer abuse and extremism and radicalisation. Leaders have included a page on the website which provides pupils and parents with relevant information, for example 'Staying Safe Over Summer' and contact numbers and links to different agencies and organisations.
- Leaders and staff are alert to the needs of pupils and are quick to act when they have concerns. The record-keeping is appropriate and is followed up conscientiously.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching over time has not secured good progress for pupils. This is especially the case for boys, pupils who are disadvantaged and the most able pupils. However, improvements are evident, especially in key stage 3.
- The overall quality of teaching is variable across the school and in different subjects. The work for pupils sometimes lacks challenge.
- Teachers do not always address misconceptions in a timely manner. Consequently, some pupils lack an understanding of key concepts which prevents them from moving

on in their learning. Teachers' questioning of pupils to deepen their thinking is effective. Pupils are 'up for the challenge' and classrooms are a place where it is acceptable to make mistakes. This is developing pupils' confidence and communication skills.

- Teachers carefully incorporate strategies to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities so that they can learn and progress. The additional adults in the classroom support learning effectively as a result of the training and support they receive. They are proud of their role and are making a positive difference to the learning of the pupils they support.
- Leaders provide parents with informative reports about how well their children are progressing. These reports provide a clear picture of performance across the curriculum and parents say that they value this and know where their children need to improve and how.
- Homework is set in line with the school's policy. Parents and pupils are aware that homework is not an option at this school and leaders consider it an essential part of learning. Teachers provide pupils with after-school classes which is helping many of them to catch up and deepen their learning.
- Teachers and pupils have positive relationships and there is a mutual respect between them. The classroom routines are well embedded and this has created an environment which is purposeful and focused on learning. The passion that teachers have for their subjects is increasing the enthusiasm that pupils have for learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Most pupils show confidence and are keen to share their thoughts and views of how much the school has improved.
- Pupils are supportive of each other and respect their differing views and ideas. Pupils are taught the skills necessary to be reflective, empathetic and responsible. These skills are effectively modelled for them by their teachers.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are equipped to keep themselves safe both in school and when out of school. They learn about how to stay healthy, and this includes their mental health and personal relationships. Pupils say that they feel safe and that school provides information and support if they were to have any concerns or worries.
- Pupils told inspectors that this is an 'inclusive school'. The pupils who inspectors spoke to were confident that bullying would always be dealt with quickly and effectively. Leaders' records and parents' opinions support this view.
- The social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is considered as integral to the education of the pupils. Not only are these aspects of pupils' development promoted across the curriculum, every pupil follows the school's 'personal development curriculum' which is timetabled throughout the week. Leaders strongly believe that values and attitudes can be taught and inspectors saw pupils putting this into practice.

- The strong personal development and welfare evident during the inspection has not had enough impact on how well pupils achieve.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils, parents and staff are overwhelmingly positive about how much behaviour has improved in recent years. Good behaviour is the norm at this school.
- The school is quiet and orderly. Pupils move around the school in a sensible and orderly manner. They arrive to school equipped and ready to learn.
- Pupils are invariably polite towards each other, staff and visitors. Pupils are proud of their school. The high standards expected of pupils are reflected in the impeccable manner in which they wear their uniform.
- The attendance of pupils has risen considerably in the past two years and is similar to the national average. This is as a result of the concerted effort of leaders to engage pupils and parents in recognising the link between good attendance and success.
- The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is lower than the national average but higher than leaders would like it to be.
- Pupils arrive for lessons on time and little time is lost. In a small number of lessons some pupils are off task. Where this is the case, the lessons lack challenge and are not meeting pupils' needs.
- Leaders' own records and inspectors' discussions with alternative providers show that pupils at these providers attend well and behave well. Leaders regularly carry out quality assurance visits and communication happens weekly.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The achievement of pupils has been low and has shown only modest improvements in recent years.
- Too many pupils have left the school without securing a grade C or above in English and/or mathematics and a number of other subjects.
- The progress made by boys, higher-ability pupils, middle-ability pupils, disadvantaged pupils and the most able disadvantaged has been slow.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress similar to their peers nationally. The provision for these pupils is ensuring that their needs are being met. This allows them to learn and progress well.
- As a result of the huge shift in culture, raising of aspirations and higher expectations, pupils currently in the school are making faster progress across all year groups and across subjects. This is supported by the work seen in books and the school's own records. Pupils' progress is much faster in key stage 3.
- The most able pupils are rising to the challenges set for them and the work in books and learning seen in lessons indicates that they are making up for lost ground in most subjects.
- Leaders recognise that the differences between the achievement of boys and of girls

and between those who are disadvantaged and those who are not are not closing fast enough. The strategies and interventions put in place, aided by additional funding, are beginning to bear fruit, but not quickly enough in some year groups.

- Lower-attaining pupils have historically made faster progress than any other group in the school. This continues to be the case as teaching is meeting their needs.
- The literacy and reading skills of pupils are a high priority of the school and quality time is devoted every week for all pupils to read and develop their literacy skills. There is a notable improvement in pupils' reading ages as a consequence of this and pupils are keen to talk about how much they enjoy and benefit from reading for pleasure.
- The proportion of pupils who leave the school and go on to education, employment or training is above the national average. However, too many of them will have to resit English and/or mathematics.

School details

Unique reference number	140412
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10022804

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	843
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Graham Morgan
Head of school	Victoria Gowan
Telephone number	0151 477 8860
Website	http://lordderbyacademy.thedeantrust.co.uk
Email address	vgowan@lordderbyacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Lord Derby Academy opened in February 2014. It is part of The Dean Trust, a group of schools and academies. The school is led by an executive headteacher and a head of school. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate.
- School improvement is provided by the teaching school within trust. Leaders and teachers in the school also contribute to the work of the teaching school as specialist leaders of education (SLEs).
- This is a smaller than average-sized secondary school but is continually growing and has been oversubscribed in recent years. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from different minority ethnic backgrounds is well below average, as is the number of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is more

than double the national average, but the proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who receive support through the pupil premium funding is more than double the national average.
- A number of pupils attend various alternative providers: Alder Centre for Education, Basetech, Everton Free School, Evolve, Harmonise Academy, Motiv8 and New Horizons.
- In 2015, the school met the government's floor standards.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons across subjects and across all year groups. A number of joint observations took place with senior leaders. Inspectors spoke with pupils, looked at their work and listened to a number of them read.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils from both key stages about their experience of school and their learning.
- Inspectors considered 54 responses to Parent View and 42 written submissions on the 'free text' online questionnaire for parents. There were 91 staff responses and 88 pupil responses to Ofsted's inspection questionnaire. Inspectors also met with a group of five parents who requested to meet with inspectors and received two written letters.
- Inspectors met with the members of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the trust. Meetings were also held with the executive headteacher, head of school, senior and middle leaders and members of staff.
- Inspectors scrutinised a variety of documentation, including: the school's own self-evaluation and development plan; anonymised performance management documents; school policies and procedures; and the school's own assessment information. A range of documentation regarding safeguarding was scrutinised, including behaviour and attendance records and bullying logs.
- Inspectors spoke to five out of seven alternative providers.

Inspection team

Jonathan Jones, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Toni Roethling	Ofsted Inspector
Dawn Farrent	Ofsted Inspector
Kath Harris	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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