

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



9 March 2017

Helen Shepherd  
Headteacher  
Royal School for the Deaf Derby  
Ashbourne Road  
Derby  
Derbyshire  
DE22 3BH

Dear Helen Shepherd

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Royal School for the Deaf Derby**

Following my visit to your school on 2 March 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in September 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with: you, the headteacher; senior leaders; subject leaders; governors; and an external adviser who engages with the school as its school improvement officer. I visited six lessons across key stages 2, 3 and 4 to observe teaching, during which time I looked at pupils' books. I visited these lessons with the leader who has responsibility for teaching and learning. I observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime, during which time I spoke with pupils. I evaluated the school's improvement plan and analysed the school's latest achievement data. I looked at the school's records relating to governance, the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning. I checked the school's safeguarding procedures, including looking at the school's single central register and recruitment procedures.

## **Main findings**

You and your senior leaders have taken robust action to resolve the areas for improvement that inspectors identified at the last inspection. You have drawn up a detailed school improvement plan that focuses precisely on the actions that you will undertake to improve further the quality of teaching, the curriculum and the progress that pupils make in their learning. The plan includes clear processes by which you and the governors measure the impact of these actions. You have wasted no time in implementing these actions.

Subject leaders are now at the forefront of the drive to improve the quality of teaching. They undertake regular visits to lessons to check on the quality of teaching and to ensure that pupils make the progress that they should. You have ensured that the subject leaders are secure in this work. For example, you have ensured that they have received appropriate training, including through undertaking joint visits to lessons with you and your senior leaders. In their drive to improve the quality of teaching, subject leaders work closely with each other. This is enabling them to develop a precise understanding of the quality of teaching across the full range of subjects in both the primary and secondary provisions. Subject leaders, for example, have an accurate understanding of where there is effective classroom practice. They ensure that they share such practice with all teachers.

Subject leaders carefully check that teachers use information about pupils' prior learning to plan activities that provide pupils, including the most able pupils, with appropriate challenge. Subject leaders check pupils' books to ensure that they are making the progress that they should. Where they are not, subject leaders take appropriate action to ensure that pupils receive the necessary support to catch up. This is enabling greater proportions of both primary and secondary pupils, including the most able pupils, to make at least the progress they should in their learning.

You have been quick to review the school's curriculum to ensure that it meets the requirements of the new curriculum, particularly in key stage 2. In so doing, you have provided opportunities for teachers in the secondary provision to teach pupils in key stage 2. Pupils in key stage 2 learn from teachers who have good knowledge in their designated subject areas, including science, food technology, computing, history and geography. As a result, these pupils are now more secure in their understanding of these subjects. That teachers from the secondary provision teach these pupils is also preparing them more effectively for their move into key stage 3.

You have ensured that the procedures teachers use to assess pupils' learning are now consistent across all subjects. The descriptions for the different levels of understanding contained within these assessment procedures provide pupils with precise information to help them to move their learning to the next level. Teachers

use their assessment of pupils' work well to plan the next steps in pupils' learning, including for the most able. This includes in mathematics, where all pupils now receive more opportunities to practise the skills they are developing to solve real-life problems. In the Year 10 books that I looked at, for example, the most able pupils studied different types of data, and considered the problems they would encounter when using the data that they had collected when surveying people's opinions. Other Year 10 pupils considered the cost of products, and used their understanding to choose, from a range of firms, the travel firm that provided the holiday that was the best value for money.

The early years leader has ensured that there is now a closer evaluation of children's achievement, both during and after the activities that children undertake. These reviews enable adults who work in the early years provision to evaluate in a timely manner the impact that the activities have had on each child's learning. Adults are now able to identify more quickly where children have not made the progress that they should, or where they are in a position to extend their learning further. Consequently, adults are able to adapt learning well to meet an individual child's needs.

Members of the governing body are ambitious for the school. They are fully aware of the role that they must play in securing the necessary improvements to the school's provision. Governors have received effective training to ensure that they provide appropriate levels of support and challenge to your leaders. They now meet with leaders at all levels to receive information about the quality of the school's provision. They ask challenging questions of these leaders. Governors also regularly visit the school and meet with staff to check on the accuracy of the information with which you provide them. As a result, governors have a precise understanding of the school's strengths, and of those areas where further improvement is necessary.

### **External support**

In your drive to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, you and your leaders engage well with local schools and with the improvement services that the local authority provides. For example, you have engaged well with an external adviser to ensure that you and your leaders, including your governors, have received appropriate training to develop the necessary skills to drive further improvement. Your subject leaders engage well with local schools to share best practice and to check the accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' understanding. This has enabled subject leaders to be secure in their evaluation of the quality of teaching and of the progress that pupils make in their learning. Crucially, your engagement with local mainstream schools has ensured that pupils receive effective opportunities to engage with the local community. This, in turn, is enabling them to prepare well for their next steps, and for life in modern Britain.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools

commissioner and the director of children's services for Derby. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Simon Hollingsworth  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**