

# Royal School for the Deaf Derby

Ashbourne Road, Derby, Derbyshire DE22 3BH

## Inspection dates

26–27 March 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
16 to 19 study programmes	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Senior and middle leaders lead well and have improved the quality of teaching. Consequently, pupils are now making good progress through the school.
- Teachers focus on the knowledge and skills pupils require to make progress. Teaching is well planned and tailored to pupils' needs. Most pupils meet their school targets at the end of key stage 4.
- Governors are very knowledgeable about the school and challenge leaders to raise standards further. They are kept well informed about the progress pupils make.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils study a range of subjects. In addition, there are many extra-curricular activities. These include residential experiences, when pupils take part in adventurous activities, such as canoeing.
- Most pupils work hard in lessons. The relationships between the staff and pupils are positive. Pupils' attendance is higher than for similar schools nationally.
- Children settle very well into early years. The staff provide a very caring environment to enable children to feel safe and comfortable. Children are making good progress in their learning.
- The sixth-form provision is a strength of the school. Pupils study a wide range of academic and vocational courses and are well prepared for their next steps.
- The current school development plan makes it difficult for governors to measure the success of any actions taken by leaders to improve aspects of the school's work.
- Some middle-ability pupils do not read as well as they should. They do not know enough high-frequency words to help them understand texts.
- Some pupils who have more complex needs do not focus well in lessons. This disrupts learning.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, by ensuring that the school development plan has measurable success criteria by which governors can judge whether actions taken by leaders have been successful.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, including in the sixth form, by further developing the teaching of reading to enable more pupils to recognise high-frequency words and expand their vocabulary in reading.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, by:
  - better meeting the social and emotional needs of pupils with more complex needs, to help them to develop strategies to manage more effectively their own behaviour
  - ensuring that staff consistently apply the behaviour policy.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The senior leadership team and middle leaders are successfully improving the quality of teaching and raising standards. By the end of key stage 4 and in the sixth form, pupils make good progress and attain a range of awards. These include gaining level 3 in British Sign Language and GCSE grades in academic subjects.
- Middle leaders have made a good impact on the quality of teaching in their subjects. The mathematics leader has led training on problem solving and reasoning and pupils have regularly answered challenging questions. The leads for English have promoted reading by ensuring that pupils read regularly at school and learn high-frequency words. The less able pupils have made strong progress in their reading. However, the middle-ability pupils still do not read as well as they should.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and enhanced by a range of enrichment activities. There is a focus on developing pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills. In addition, pupils choose from a wide range of subjects, other than English and mathematics, in the secondary years. In the sixth form, students can take vocational studies, such as construction, and are supported in their learning by school staff. Pupils told inspectors they receive good advice about which subjects to take. Outside the classroom, there is a wide range of trips, for example to London and Paris, and pupils take part in expeditions to achieve the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme bronze, silver and gold awards.
- Leaders have enabled staff to attend a wide variety of training to improve the quality of teaching. This has supported teachers to develop their planning of lessons and tracking of pupils' progress. Staff have moderated pupils' work with other schools to check it is accurate. In addition, training has focused on the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), particularly those with autism spectrum disorder and/or who lack emotional resilience. This has supported staff in helping these pupils to make better progress.
- The coordinator of the provision for pupils with complex needs works very closely with speech and language therapists and an audiologist to help meet pupils' needs. Leaders ensure that pupils' outcomes in their education, health and care plans are incorporated into pupils' learning plans. This makes sure everyone is aware of the outcomes and that provision is in place to support pupils to meet their targets.
- Leaders use performance management well to hold staff to account for the progress pupils make. The quality of teaching has improved, particularly in the last year. The staff work very well as a team, and the quality of teaching is consistently good across the school. Staff morale is high.
- Leaders have used the pupil premium funding successfully to improve the reading ages of low-ability pupils. They have also used this funding to deploy therapists to support disadvantaged pupils who have social and emotional needs. This supports pupils to better regulate their own behaviour and improve their concentration in lessons. The school has had too few pupils eligible for the Year 7 catch-up funding to comment on the impact of this support without the risk of identifying individual pupils.

- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Older pupils link with pupils from a deaf school in Germany, and confidently communicate using British Sign Language. Equality is promoted well, and teachers ensure pupils have access to colleges to enable them to enrol on courses which match their ambitions. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. They learn about democracy by electing a school council and study religions different from their own. Pupils demonstrate empathy with each other. Primary-age pupils commented they wanted to help pupils who struggle to manage their own behaviour.
- The primary school physical education (PE) and sport funding enables pupils to take part in competitions against other schools. Pupils participate in cross-country running and football. Leaders also use the funding to employ gymnastics teachers who use British Sign Language. Pupils have opportunities to learn a variety of sports.
- Although leaders have a school development plan which lists the actions required to improve the school, the success criteria by which leaders and governors can judge whether actions taken have been effective are not measurable. This makes it more difficult for governors to hold leaders to account.

## **Governance of the school**

- The governing body knows the school well. Governors are kept informed regularly about pupils' progress. They know the areas for development and regularly visit the school to find out about the progress the school is making. They check that disadvantaged pupils are making as much progress as other pupils in the school. However, governors cannot fully hold leaders to account because the format of the school development plan does not provide them with enough clarity to judge whether actions taken by leaders have been effective.
- The governing body has been proactively working with parents and carers and the local deaf community to improve relationships. They were involved in the planning of the celebrations for the school's 125th anniversary. This work has led to current pupils having the opportunity to communicate with former pupils. This has helped to build the pupils' self-esteem and developed their communication skills with new people.
- The governor with responsibility for safeguarding has received training for the role. She checks whether the leaders are following school policies and asks challenging questions in governing body meetings to ensure everything is being done to keep pupils safe.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The designated senior lead for safeguarding and the team of deputy safeguarding leads respond quickly to any concerns raised about the welfare and safety of pupils. All concerns and corresponding actions taken in response to those concerns are recorded and reviewed regularly. Leaders work well with a range of agencies, including children's and mental health services and social care, to keep pupils safe.
- New staff are provided with a safeguarding induction pack, which ensures they have information about a wide range of risks which could affect pupils.

- The curriculum has a strong emphasis on supporting pupils to stay safe. Pupils are taught about the dangers of radicalisation and of online grooming. Pupils have also learned about the dangers of illegal drug use.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Staff and pupils communicate well with each other. British Sign Language and spoken English are used equally in all lessons, ensuring pupils participate successfully. Lessons are purposeful and pupils are motivated. Teaching assistants support pupils well by asking searching questions.
- In mathematics, pupils are challenged well to solve problems. In Year 11, pupils worked diligently to understand stem and leaf plots, to organise data and find the median, mode and range for a set of numbers. In key stage 1, pupils solved problems using division and multiplication calculations. In Year 6, pupils draw and interpret line graphs. Pupils make good progress in this subject.
- The geography curriculum is taught well. Pupils have a good understanding of the technical vocabulary to gain a deep understanding of the topics covered. For example, pupils have learned about transportation, deposition and meanders as part of their river topic. Pupils used these words accurately when they completed research about local rivers.
- Leaders have ensured the school's assessments of pupils' progress are based on the knowledge and skills pupils have gained. Furthermore, teachers moderate their judgments of pupils' attainment with each other, and with teachers from other schools, to check they are accurate. The good-quality work in pupils' books supports teachers' assessments.
- Teachers successfully motivate and challenge pupils in the creative subjects. Pupils melted acrylic plastic in design technology to make a light. In Year 11, pupils made high-quality pinball machines. In art, pupils have been shown how to shade using paint. Pupils are rightly proud of their work.
- In English and media studies, pupils were engaged well in thinking how a camera angle can affect how an audience perceives the dynamics of the relationship between two characters. Pupils provided detailed answers to demonstrate their opinions.
- Teachers regularly hear pupils read. Pupils in the secondary department have studied challenging texts, such as 'Macbeth', and successfully explain the meanings of quotes from the texts. However, not enough pupils have a good knowledge of high-frequency words appropriate for their age to enable them to be fluent readers and to fully understand the meaning of texts.

### Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

#### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's careers advice and guidance are effective. Pupils receive impartial careers

advice from an external consultant. A school's careers adviser then supports pupils to realise their ambitions by developing individual career action plans. Pupils are supported with applications to colleges and have participated in mock interviews at Derby University to prepare them for formal interviews at colleges. Pupils are ambitious and are aware of the career pathways for university, college and apprenticeships.

- The school promotes effectively the mental well-being and physical health of pupils. The school has provided support for pupils who may be experiencing low moods. In food technology, pupils used the 'eat well plate' to evaluate whether meals are healthy, by analysing the food groups of different ingredients.
- The school works closely with the police to help keep the pupils safe. A police community support officer (PCSO) regularly visits the pupils and provides them with information about how they can contact the police, and how to stay safe on the internet. Pupils have recently learned about the consequences of sending inappropriate messages online.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The relationships between pupils and staff are positive. Most pupils respond well to the support and encouragement they receive and strive to work hard in lessons.
- Pupils' attendance is high compared with that of special schools nationally. The proportion of pupils who were persistently absent in the last academic year was extremely low. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is just below that of other pupils in the school.
- When pupils attend alternative providers, they are supported well by members of staff from the school. School leaders track the pupils' progress closely. Pupils said they felt happy and safe at the colleges.
- Pupils' behaviour during this inspection was good. However, school records show there is a relatively high proportion of incidents of poor behaviour in lessons by a small minority of pupils who have complex needs. Furthermore, pupils say staff do not consistently apply the behaviour policy, which means that poor behaviour can sometimes not be challenged as well as it should be. There have been a few fixed-term exclusions since the previous inspection, but very few pupils have had a repeat exclusion.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils make good progress in mathematics. Pupils regularly solve mathematical problems and reasoning questions. Pupils in Year 7 have successfully answered questions about the time intervals linked to bus timetables. In Year 9, pupils have completed probability tree diagrams. Pupils make good progress from their starting points and attain well in functional skills assessments and in mathematics GCSE.
- Pupils make strong progress in a range of subjects in key stages 3 and 4. Pupils attain GCSEs in geography by demonstrating a good understanding of both physical and human geography. In chemistry, pupils in Year 11 used their knowledge of the

chemical reactions of metals with acids, acquired in Year 10, to enable them to deepen their understanding of this topic. Pupils' achievement at key stage 4 ensures they are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training and employment.

- In key stages 1 and 2, pupils' writing has improved greatly from the start of this academic year. In key stage 1, pupils spell more complex words accurately and punctuate sentences correctly. A typical example is, 'The giraffe was chewing leaves off the tree and had a long tongue.' In key stage 2, the most able pupils use paragraphs to structure longer pieces of writing.
- Pupils achieve well in British Sign Language. Most pupils at the end of key stage 4 have attained level 2, which is the equivalent of GCSE level.
- The less able pupils have made strong progress in reading from the start of this academic year. They have learned more high-frequency words to enable them to improve their reading. However, the middle-ability pupils do not know enough high-frequency words to fully understand age-appropriate texts. This limits their ability to read fluently.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- The staff provide a warm and positive environment in which children thrive. The children are focused in their learning and are eager to complete the tasks set. The learning environment promotes the use of the spoken word and sign language. Displays are interactive to enable the children to recognise words and the sign that defines the word. Communication between the staff and children is effective, and as a result, the children know what is expected of them.
- Teachers supported the children very well to grip pencils correctly. Children formed their letters well and the most able were challenged to write sentences independently, a typical sentence being, 'The spider's web is black.'
- Children learn to recognise and order numbers one to 10. Children complete number problems and calculate which numbers are missing in sequences.
- Adults promote children's independent learning well. When children put on costumes over their school uniform for role play, they are encouraged to dress independently.
- Children's reading is promoted daily. Children are introduced to high-frequency words and practise reading them daily.
- Leaders work well with children before they start school. Staff visit children in their local nurseries or at home before they start school and plan a series of visits to enable the children to become familiar with school routines. All parents communicate with the staff on a daily basis. Children settle well into the school.
- When children enter the school, staff carry out baseline assessments on their abilities. This enables leaders to deploy other professionals, such as an audiologist or speech and language therapist, to support the staff and meet children's needs.
- There are too few children in early years to comment on their outcomes.
- Staff regularly assess children's abilities and check their progress against age-development milestones. However, some of the assessments are not dated, and nor do

they contain enough information to know how well a child completed a task independently. This makes it more difficult to know the rate of progress children are making.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

**Good**

- Students are very focused on their learning. They are motivated to achieve well. Students working towards level 3 in British Sign Language have produced thought-provoking presentations to encourage adults to learn to sign.
- Most sixth-form students attend college part time to complete vocational courses. For the rest of the week, students attend school to work on English and mathematics and wider skills for independence. Students appreciate the guidance they have received to choose the right college courses, and the support they receive from school staff to access these courses. The quality of the vocational courses is as effective as that of the academic courses.
- Students are passionate about the subjects they are learning. Following a visit to Auschwitz, students worked collaboratively to produce a presentation for younger pupils. A typical comment was, 'We must not forget, and we must make sure it never happens again.'
- Leaders have encouraged students become aware of topical issues and debate. Students produce their own news-reel films on a weekly basis and provide sign language and subtitles to inform others of what is currently happening in the world. Displays in the sixth form show important dates when laws promoting equality have been passed by Parliament.
- Leaders successfully build on the comprehensive careers advice and guidance students receive when they are in secondary education. The sixth-form leader works closely with the careers tutor to ensure students are placed on the most appropriate course and are able to access them. There is a wide range of accreditation available, ranging from entry level through to level 2 functional skills and GCSE. Last year, all students completed the courses they started.
- All students who have left the school since the previous inspection progressed to further education, employment or training. Typically, students progressed to further education colleges to enrol on vocational courses, such as fabrication and welding. Leaders ensure the level of challenge is more demanding than the level students attained at school.
- Students' English and mathematical skills are developed well. Leaders promote reading and encourage students to read age-appropriate books which match their ability. However, the reading ages of some students limit their ability to read correspondence sent to them. Students do not consistently demonstrate resilience when they find the texts more challenging.

## School details

Unique reference number	113044
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10057648

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	121
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	31
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Hall
Headteacher	Helen Shepherd
Telephone number	01332 362512
Website	<a href="http://www.rsdd.org.uk">www.rsdd.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:helen.shepherd@rsdd.org.uk">helen.shepherd@rsdd.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	29–30 September 2016

## Information about this school

- The Royal School for the Deaf Derby is a non-maintained special school for deaf children and young people aged three to 19 years. Most places are funded by local authorities from across the Midlands and further afield. Children in Nursery Year attend part time until they start full time in their Reception Year.
- The school has a residential boarding provision, managed by the governing body. There are currently 22 boarders.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils have an education, health and care plan. Many pupils have complex learning difficulties.

- Approximately two-thirds of pupils are boys.
- Just over half of pupils are disadvantaged. This is above the national average.
- The school uses three alternative providers. These are Derby College, Burton and South Derbyshire College, and Lees Brook Academy.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in all key stages. Some lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Inspectors reviewed pupils' work and met with three groups of pupils. Inspectors listened to pupils read and observed them at breaktimes.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, both deputy headteachers, the leaders of English and mathematics, the primary, secondary and post-16 leaders, the leaders of the provision for pupils with complex needs and teaching assistants. Inspectors met with three members of the governing body, including the chair.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan and tracking information about pupils' progress. They also looked at documentation related to safeguarding and behaviour.
- Inspectors communicated with parents at the start and the end of the school day. In addition, inspectors reviewed the 14 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 14 responses to the Ofsted free-text service for parents.
- Inspectors were supported by British Sign Language interpreters.
- Inspectors reviewed the 22 responses to the staff survey.

## Inspection team

Martin Finch, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tracey Ydlibi

Ofsted Inspector

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