

Lord Derby Academy

Seel Road, Huyton, Liverpool, Merseyside L36 6DG

Inspection dates

24–25 April 2019

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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have an over-generous view of the quality of education provided at the school.
- The leadership of teaching requires strengthening. The impact of training is not always accurately reviewed. As a result, leaders have a too positive view of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This hampers leaders' plans to improve teaching.
- The academic curriculum requires further strengthening, especially in mathematics. Teachers too rarely give pupils the chance to learn at greater depth.
- The quality of teaching varies across and within departments. Some teachers rarely use assessment information to set tasks that make pupils think more deeply, in new ways.
- Despite an improving picture overall, too many pupils, including the most able, do not make good progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is improving, but varies between and within subjects. As with other pupils, disadvantaged pupils' progress is hampered when they receive insufficient challenge.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is held in high regard by pupils and parents and carers. It is an increasingly popular choice and is fully subscribed in key stage 3.
- The headteacher and other senior leaders, alongside governors and trustees, are very ambitious for pupils' success. This has provided an impetus for the recent improvements seen at the school.
- Overall, the quality of teaching is improving. It is consistently effective in English. Pupils enjoy and benefit from the challenging work they are set where teaching is at its best.
- Pupils with low starting points are taught effectively and make good progress.
- Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, attend school regularly. They are punctual to lessons.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good around school and in lessons. They are keen to learn.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are excellent. They are supported to become confident, kind and aspirational citizens.
- Pupils say the school is a happy and safe place. They respect themselves and others.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Teachers know these pupils well. They attend school regularly, participate fully in all aspects of school life and make good progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management, by:
 - strengthening the accuracy of self-evaluation
 - evaluating the impact of actions to improve the quality of teaching more accurately and using the findings to plan next steps
 - strengthening the academic curriculum, especially in mathematics, so that pupils are consistently provided with opportunities to learn at greater depth.
- Improve the quality of teaching, so that pupils, including the most able, make good progress across a range of subjects, by ensuring that teachers:
 - use assessment information effectively to set work that stretches pupils' thinking, knowledge and skills
 - provide pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, with sufficient challenge to aid their academic success.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and some other senior leaders have been appointed to their roles since the last inspection. Since they were appointed, their actions are having a positive impact on the quality of education the school provides. These and other leaders know the pupils and the community well. Parents, carers and members of the community have confidence in the school's leadership. As a result, the number of pupils on the school's roll has risen significantly. This is now the school of choice for many parents and pupils.
- Despite some strengthening of the quality of education provided since the last inspection, leaders' view of the school is overly generous. Leaders are right to recognise the improvements that have been made over time and since the last inspection. However, there is still some way to go before teaching is consistently strong enough to enable pupils to make good progress and to attain as well other pupils nationally.
- Senior and subject leadership has been restructured since the last inspection to provide additional impetus to strengthen the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders are extremely aspirational for pupils and their learning. This has led to a carefully researched and designed training programme for teachers. Staff say that they benefit from the training programme and some are inspired by it.
- Overall, the training programme has led to an improving picture in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. However, leaders are too generous when evaluating the impact of this training and the quality of teaching. This has hampered leaders and teachers in making the further improvements that are required to ensure that good-quality teaching is commonplace.
- Leaders' actions have sustained the good behaviour of pupils noted at the last inspection. Leaders have developed a culture where pupils are well known and cared for. This aspect is a strength of the school. Leaders' work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is excellent.
- Pupils and parents are positive about the range of subjects that leaders provide in key stage 3 and key stage 4. They feel that they are provided with courses that meet pupils' interests and needs. For example, in key stage 4, pupils benefit from the opportunity to follow the English Baccalaureate suite of academic subjects. These courses provide pupils with a positive route to the next steps in education or training for them, which they appreciate.
- Senior and subject leaders have improved the academic curriculum. However, the impact of change is not fully effective. Pupils prosper and make good progress in both key stages where the curriculum provides new, challenging and exciting opportunities for learning. This is the case in drama and English. At other times, where the curriculum does not match these strengths, such as in mathematics, pupils do not learn so effectively and eagerly. The curriculum does not capture their interest so readily and they have less opportunity to learn with fluency and at greater depth. As a result, they do not make the good progress seen elsewhere.
- The careers guidance programme is good. Pupils value the independent advice and

guidance that they receive. They say that this 'opens their eyes' to the wide range of opportunities available to them and inspires them to be aspirational for their future. As a result, almost all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, move on to further education or training.

- Leaders have embedded a strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum. Its impact underpins the 'can-do' attitude of pupils. They care about the well-being of themselves and others. Pupils are sociable, confident and aspirational. They are effectively supported to engage in the full range of activities the school provides, including the many extra-curricular opportunities on offer.
- Leadership of the use of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has been reviewed since the last inspection. Although funding is currently not fully effective, there are signs that the recent changes have added impetus. Disadvantaged pupils now attend school regularly and are less likely to be excluded from school than others nationally. However, as with other pupils, the challenge provided by the work disadvantaged pupils are set varies across subjects and classes. As a result, although there has been some improvement in the progress of these pupils, it is not consistently strong.
- The actions taken to support those with lower than average levels of literacy and numeracy to catch up by the end of Year 7 are effective. Pupils with low starting points are provided with the knowledge and skills to access learning across a range of subjects, so that they make good progress overall.
- The leadership of pupils with SEND is effective. Pupils' pastoral needs, including of those with an education, health and care (EHC) plan are met well. Most pupils with SEND attend regularly, and are supported sensitively and make good progress.

Governance of the school

- Since the last inspection, trust leaders have acted to secure improvements in the quality of education that pupils receive. Leaders of The Dean Trust, of which the school is a part, have provided additional leadership capacity at the school this year. This support has included the in-school support of the chief executive officer of the trust for three days each week. The expertise of leaders from the trust has helped to shape and strengthen improvement in the school's leadership, teaching and pupils' progress.
- Trustees have ensured that governors clearly understand their delegated responsibilities and take them seriously. Overall, they support effectively the values of The Dean Trust.
- Governors have strengthened their capacity to secure improvements. New governors have been appointed since the last inspection and others have undertaken training. This has enhanced governors' effectiveness and provides the governing board with additional expertise and skills. As a result, governors ask the right questions and challenge leaders in the areas where this is most needed. Governors are very clear that pupils' progress should be stronger and examination results more in line with national performance.
- Governors' experience of financial management enables them to support this aspect of the school's leadership effectively. For example, the imaginative use of resources to recruit strong teachers has helped support better teaching and the improving trend in

pupils' progress.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders maintain good-quality safeguarding records. They have systematic procedures for checking the background of staff when they are appointed.
- Leaders are aware of the risks pupils face, including outside school. Staff at all levels take the time to know pupils well, and to provide for their safety and well-being. Pupils value the vigilance and care provided by staff. All staff are trained in identifying potential risks to pupils. This includes risks of drug- and gang-related crime, knife crime and radicalisation.
- Pupils understand the risks that might affect them. They know how to keep safe, including when online and using mobile devices. They know how to report concerns.
- School leaders' work with external agencies and parents and carers is thorough. Leaders act swiftly, when required, to ensure pupils' safety and well-being. Referrals are made to, and followed up with, external agencies effectively.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Despite improvements since the last inspection, teaching, learning and assessment are not consistently strong enough to secure pupils' good progress.
- The quality of teaching varies between and within subjects. Pupils are taught well and learn effectively in English and drama, and within other subjects. In these cases, teachers take full account of pupils' academic needs and interests. Pupils study challenging texts regularly and investigate thought-provoking concepts. As a result, pupils grapple with complex ideas and activities with confidence and skill. They embrace the frequent opportunities to think deeply and to express their views in new and sophisticated ways. This leads to their good progress.
- The quality of teaching has improved this year in modern foreign languages. The most effective teaching over time in modern foreign languages takes place in speaking and listening activities. These activities engage and interest pupils because they provide pupils with the opportunity to apply the vocabulary, knowledge and skills they have studied in creative ways. Pupils are confident to try new ways of saying things and learn from any mistakes they make. As a result, they make strong progress in speaking and listening. However, these strengths are less evident at other times, especially in writing activities, where learning is less effective.
- In other subjects, despite an overall momentum of improvement, the quality of teaching is variable. In weaker subjects, teachers too often set tasks that do not sufficiently challenge pupils. They do not use the assessment information available about pupils' learning to set work that makes pupils think hard or sparks their interest. Pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to think deeply and respond with detail, fluency or creativity. This restrict pupils' learning.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. Leaders have asked teachers to use their

subject expertise to engage pupils in activities that enable them to really grapple with new ideas. Leaders also ask teachers to challenge and engage pupils through high-level questioning. Where this is done effectively, pupils learn well. These teachers ask pupils challenging questions and provide them with the opportunity to explore their learning and new ways to apply it before they respond. As a result, pupils respond with confidence and detail and to a high standard. They are not discouraged if their initial responses are not fully accurate and learn from any errors they make.

- However, these strengths are less evident across other subjects. For example, in mathematics, pupils are not provided with sufficient opportunities to try complex and interesting activities. Teachers have the subject expertise needed, but rarely ask pupils to use their knowledge and skills creatively. As a result, pupils struggle to apply their prior learning successfully.
- Most teachers effectively assess pupils' learning and address any misconceptions they have about the topics they are studying or in literacy during lessons. As a result, pupils speak confidently when provided with the opportunities to do so and their spelling, punctuation and grammar are typically accurate. In English and drama, pupils speak and write adventurously.
- Most pupils and parents say that they are satisfied with the homework that pupils are set. They say that it is set regularly and at the correct level.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The work of leaders to provide a tolerant and nurturing community is a very strong feature of the school. This is a school where pupils feel safe and difference is valued. Pupils are confident and supported to be who they want to be. The work that leaders have introduced to support pupils in understanding and valuing other faiths and cultures is highly effective.
- Leaders care about the views of pupils and go to some lengths to ensure that they respond to them. Pupils recognise this and say that leaders listen to them and their views. For example, the recently established 'Pupil Parliament' has been very well received by pupils. They like the opportunity to help shape the school's emotional health support provision, to enhance the range of healthy options provided in the school's café, and to review the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development curriculum.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors say that bullying is extremely rare, especially any that is prejudicial, racist or homophobic. They are confident that staff deal with any bullying quickly and effectively. Inspectors checked bullying records, which show that the few incidents of bullying are followed up and fully resolved. Leaders take effective action to support pupils to keep themselves safe from the risks of bullying and exploitation when using social media.
- Pupils' interactions with one another and adults are positive. As a result, pupils say that they are happy at school. They mix, play and pursue their own interests at break- and

lunchtime, including participating in activities that are organised by leaders. In lessons, they are confident in asking questions and thrive when provided with opportunities to express their views. They listen politely to others.

- Pupils are well mannered and wear their uniform with pride. They consistently demonstrate positive and aspirational attitudes and have high expectations of their future.
- Pupils say that staff take the time to get to know them and are considerate of their emotional and physical well-being. The support services provided by leaders are wide ranging to fully meet pupils' requirements. They include a police liaison officer and specialist provision to support pupils' emotional well-being.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is a positive feature of the school's curriculum. The SMSC curriculum tackles and explores a range of spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects and helps develop their approach to relationships and their understanding of their responsibilities and role in modern Britain.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. They respect their teachers and one another. Pupils take pride in their work and are keen to learn well. There are rare occasions when pupils lose concentration, which is often a result of weaker teaching.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is good. They move around the school in an orderly manner at breaktimes, lunchtimes and at the change of lessons. They arrive punctually at lessons.
- Pupils value the efforts that staff have made to provide an engaging school environment. They respond by treating the school environment with respect. No litter was seen during the inspection inside or outside the building.
- Pupils attend school regularly, including those who are disadvantaged. Pupils' attendance overall matches the national average for all pupils.
- Leaders manage effectively the attendance, behaviour and safeguarding of pupils who attend alternative provision.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Despite some improvement since the last inspection, the examination results for pupils leaving the school in 2018 were below those achieved nationally across almost all subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Too few pupils who left the school in 2018 made good progress. Those with low starting points made progress that matched that of others nationally. However, disadvantaged pupils, pupils of average ability and the most able pupils made weaker progress than others with similar starting points.
- Evidence in pupils' books identifies that, overall, current pupils are making stronger progress than their peers previously. However, there is still much work to do. Pupils' progress has improved most in English, where it is often good. There are also pockets

of effective progress across other subjects, including modern foreign languages and drama. However, despite these strengths, progress elsewhere is not good. The weaknesses are especially apparent in mathematics and other areas where pupils' opportunities to deepen their learning are limited. The progress that pupils make varies across and within subjects.

- Overall, the most able pupils do not make good progress. They make stronger progress in English and other areas where the curriculum matches their needs and captures their interest. Where this is the case, the most able pupils are provided with opportunities to think deeply and learn well. However, too often, these strengths are not seen elsewhere. As a result, the progress of the most able pupils suffers. Similarly, despite some recent improvement overall, the progress made by pupils of average ability varies across subjects. Pupils with low starting points continue to make effective progress.
- Evidence from pupils' work shows that despite an upward trend overall, the progress of disadvantaged pupils is too varied. Where pupils receive sufficient challenge, such as in English and drama, disadvantaged pupils make stronger progress, but this is not reflected in other subjects.
- The special educational needs coordinator takes effective steps to support the good learning of pupils with SEND. The information provided for teachers about these pupils is detailed and supported by staff training. Teachers know these pupils well and typically support their academic requirements thoughtfully and effectively. As a result, many of these pupils make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Leaders monitor effectively the quality of education for pupils who attend alternative provision. They ensure that these pupils benefit from an appropriate curriculum that prepares them effectively for the next stage of their education.
- A high proportion of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or with SEND, move on to the courses of their choice after leaving the school. However, too many must re-sit examinations in English and/or mathematics.

School details

Unique reference number	140412
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10087865

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	1,013
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Damian McGann
Headteacher	Victoria Gowan
Telephone number	0151 477 8860
Website	http://lordderbyacademy.co.uk/
Email address	vgowan@lordderbyacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 January 2017

Information about this school

- The school is an academy within The Dean Trust. The Dean Trust comprises 10 schools and academies across primary and secondary phases. The board of trustees is accountable for the school and a clear scheme of delegation exists between trustees and the local governing body. The chair and vice-chair of the local governing body meet regularly with the chief executive officer and the trust.
- Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their home language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an EHC plan is broadly average.
- A small number of pupils are educated through off-site provision at Evolve Merseyside, Meadow Park School, Motov8 Sports, Nexgen Academy and Peregrinate.

Information about this inspection

- Meetings took place with school leaders, teachers, governors, the chief executive officer and other representatives of The Dean Trust.
- Discussions were held with pupils from all year groups to gather their views on a variety of issues, including safeguarding, bullying, behaviour, teaching and the curriculum.
- Inspectors examined a range of the school’s documentation, such as the self-evaluation and improvement plan, assessment information, the pupil premium plan, attendance, bullying and behaviour records, and safeguarding information.
- Inspectors took account of 104 staff survey responses, 56 responses to the pupil survey, 44 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and 29 written responses from parents to Ofsted’s free-text facility.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school and scrutinised pupils’ work in a range of subjects and year groups. They were accompanied by school leaders on some of these observations.

Inspection team

Stephen Ruddy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
David Woodhouse	Ofsted Inspector
David Roberts	Ofsted Inspector
Ailsa Moore	Ofsted Inspector

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