

Inspection of West Derby School

364 West Derby Rd, Liverpool, Merseyside L13 7HQ

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 May 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high expectations of pupils and students in the sixth form. Pupils rise to these expectations by following the 'West Derby Way'. Pupils are proud to attend this school. Leaders' careful consideration of the curriculum ensures that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged, achieve well in most subjects.

Strong relationships and mutual respect characterise interactions between staff and pupils. Pupils know that staff care for them and want the best for them. As a result, they are happy to attend school and feel safe in school.

Pupils show acceptance of those people who are different to themselves. Leaders have ensured that any bullying is dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils behave well. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in classrooms.

Pupils eagerly participate in the termly 'Personal Growth Days'. These provide pupils with a range of opportunities to help to prepare them well for life in modern Britain. For example, they have recently taken part in sessions about positive masculinity.

Pupils and students benefit from meaningful experiences with employers and universities. Added to this, some pupils enjoy working towards achieving the Duke of Edinburgh's award.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Since the previous inspection, leaders have ensured that pupils have access to a broad and suitably ambitious curriculum. Students in the sixth form can study a wide range of academic and vocational courses. Leaders have made changes to the curriculum to encourage more pupils to study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects. The proportion of pupils opting to choose these subjects in key stage 4 is increasing.

Leaders have ensured a consistent approach to curriculum design that carefully maps out what pupils need to know and when. Teachers have strong subject knowledge, and in most cases they design learning that meets the needs of pupils.

In the main, teachers routinely select activities that help pupils to build on what they know already. Staff ensure that pupils are given sufficient opportunities to consolidate their earlier learning. This helps pupils to develop a deep body of subject knowledge.

In most subjects, teachers are adept at identifying and remedying gaps in pupils' knowledge. However, in a small number of subjects, some teachers do not address pupils' misconceptions as successfully as they should. This means that, in these subjects, some pupils have gaps in their learning.

Leaders accurately identify the needs of pupils with SEND in a timely manner. Pupils and students with SEND are well supported by staff. Leaders have ensured that staff are well trained in the most effective strategies to use in the classroom. As a result, teachers adapt the delivery of the curriculum skilfully to support these pupils to learn well.

Leaders have carefully considered the support that they give to those pupils who find reading difficult. Staff identify pupils' gaps in reading knowledge and address them swiftly. As a result, these pupils catch up quickly. Furthermore, staff understand their responsibility to teach reading. Leaders have carefully chosen a rich variety of texts, linking closely to the personal, social, health and economic education curriculum, which pupils enjoy.

Pupils are keen to learn and model positive attitudes in lessons. They follow the clear routines set out by staff. Learning is seldom disrupted. This allows staff to focus on delivering the curriculum.

Leaders provide suitable careers advice and guidance for pupils. Almost all pupils and students progress to further or higher education, employment or training. Students in the sixth form benefit from enrichment activities such as driving awareness and cookery classes, which help to develop their life skills. However, in key stages 3 and 4, leaders have not ensured that there is sufficient variety of activities to cater for pupils' diverse talents and interests.

Trustees are well informed about the school. They offer appropriate support and challenge to leaders. Staff feel that leaders consider their well-being and workload. They appreciate and value opportunities for subject-specific training.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have a clear understanding of the risks that pupils may face. They have ensured that staff are trained to spot any potential signs that pupils are at risk of harm. Leaders have created a vigilant safeguarding culture where staff promptly report any concerns. Leaders act swiftly to follow these up.

Staff provide suitable pastoral support for pupils. Pupils readily share concerns with staff. They are confident that staff will help them. Leaders work successfully with external agencies to secure timely help for vulnerable pupils.

Staff ensure that the pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe and healthy. For example, pupils in Year 7 learn about the dangers of caffeine and high-energy drinks.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not always use appropriate strategies to address the misconceptions that have been identified. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should ensure that teachers respond to pupils' misconceptions appropriately to ensure that pupils are prepared well for subsequent learning.
- There are limited opportunities for some pupils to develop their talents, interests and leadership skills. This means that some pupils are not as well prepared for their future lives as they could be. Leaders should ensure that pupils have sufficient encounters to take a full and active role in the life of the school and the wider community.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	138696
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10268300
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,031
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	113
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Katherine Anne Hodgkiss
Headteacher	Sian Graham
Website	www.westderbyschool.org
Date of previous inspection	12 May 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders make use of five registered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which require schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector met with two trustees, including the chair of trustees.
- The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's records of safeguarding checks and referrals. They met with leaders who have overall responsibility for safeguarding. Inspectors spoke with staff and pupils about leaders' work to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, history, music and Spanish. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils and students about their learning, and reviewed samples of pupils' and students' work. Inspectors also spoke with leaders about the curriculum and visited lessons in other subjects.
- The inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation document, school improvement plans, minutes of trustee meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils from Years 7 to 13 about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Jenny Jones, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Christine Veitch	Ofsted Inspector
Paula Crawley	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Mitchell	Ofsted Inspector

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