



# West Derby School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 104687  
**Local Authority** Liverpool  
**Inspection number** 287007  
**Inspection dates** 28 February –1 March 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Ian Thompson

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive	<b>School address</b>	Quarry Wing
<b>School category</b>	Community		Quarry Road, Liverpool
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18		Merseyside L13 7DB
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys	<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 2287915
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	1163	<b>Fax number</b>	0151 2594711
<b>Number on roll (6th form)</b>	118		
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr L Bivon
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs M Rannard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 January 2003		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
11–18	28 February –1 March 2007	287007

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average size school has had specialist status for mathematics and computing since September 2006. The school's accommodation is on two sites separated by about half a mile. It serves a mixed urban area with challenging social and economic circumstances. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well above average. About 5% of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds with no groups of significant size; few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is close to average while the proportion with a statement of special educational need is below. The school has the Healthy Schools and Investors in People awards. It is part of Excellence in Cities - a project aimed at raising standards and achievement - and a member of a collaborative partnership of local schools that helps to extend its provision. The school has gone through a period of considerable change since the last inspection and more than 40% of teachers were appointed in the last two years.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education and is improving rapidly as a result of changes brought about by very effective leadership and good management. It provides satisfactory value for money. Standards and achievement are rising. This is because of the improvements secured over recent years in behaviour, attitudes to learning and the quality of teaching. The school has not had specialist status for long enough for it to have had a full impact on all aspects of its work, but provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved and additional courses have been added to the curriculum.

Students enter the school with below average standards. Achievement is satisfactory overall and good in Years 7 to 9. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 have shown sustained and rapid improvement over the last three years and in 2006, were close to average. As a result, West Derby is in the top 100 most improved schools nationally for the progress made by students in Key Stage 3. This accolade reflects the success of strategies put in place by the school's leadership to raise standards and achievement. GCSE results have been below average but have also shown improvement over the last three years. In 2006, results were close to the school's overall targets and exceeded the target for higher grades. Very few students left the school without any qualification. Nevertheless, although standards are improving in Key Stage 4, current Key Stage 4 students did not do as well in Years 7 to 9 and are still having to make up lost ground. In addition, the developments evident in Key Stage 3 have not fully fed through into improved achievement for older students. Throughout the school, standards and achievement are improving as the school's leadership rigorously tackles weaknesses identified through the monitoring process. Much has been accomplished. However, the school acknowledges that there is still work to be done in refining the process of monitoring and evaluation on which so much of the school's improvement is based. For example, there are inconsistencies in the way that middle managers check the application of school policies, such as those relating to marking and target-setting. Throughout the school, progress is slowed by the poor attendance of a substantial minority of students. This makes teachers' work unnecessarily difficult by requiring time to be spent in making up for gaps in learning, with a consequent effect on the learning of all students. Although overall attendance remains below average, it is improving as a result of the school's concerted efforts. This year, the school has exceeded its target for improvement.

Because of the development work already done, improvement since the last inspection has been good and the school has a good capacity to improve further. The leadership team has a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and priorities for development that largely matches inspection findings.

What the school does well is to provide good care, guidance and support to promote boys' personal development, which is a major factor underpinning the school's improvement. The curriculum provides well for students' personal development through a good range of alternative courses, together with extensive enrichment through extra-curricular activities. As a result, students are well prepared for the next stage of

their education or employment. Students respond well to the school's clear expectations of work and behaviour. The great majority show good attitudes to learning in response to the school's consistent expectations. They behave well around the school, get on well together and form good relationships with their teachers, all of which contribute much to the purposeful atmosphere that is noticeable during lesson times. Older students comment favourably on the differences during their time in the school that the headteacher and her staff have brought about to make it a better place to learn. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the school. There is good practice that provides the school with a platform on which to manage improvement. In the best lessons, teachers' enthusiasm and their subject expertise enable them to capture and keep students' interest. Teachers build well on good relationships to manage their classrooms well so that little time is wasted. They match the level of challenge accurately to students' needs and, consequently, progress is good. Nevertheless, there are times when too much of the lesson is directed by the teacher; opportunities are missed to develop student's independence and not all are stretched as they should be. Teachers and students deal with the difficulties of the school's poor quality accommodation well.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 3**

The sixth form provides a satisfactory standard of education. It provides the opportunity to remain in education and to take GCE A level courses for students who otherwise might not take the chance to do so. Standards are below average, but overall achievement is satisfactory in relation to students' low prior attainment at GCSE. Their personal development is good. The high rate of successful completion of AS and A2 courses enables a very high proportion to move on successfully to the next stage of their education, training or employment. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding, but do not always deploy methods that challenge those students who have a tendency to be passive in lessons. Despite the small size of the sixth form, the range of courses meets students' needs, with some electing to follow courses off-site as part of the school's collaborative partnership with other sixth forms. The quality of care, guidance and support is good. Advice about what to do next is valued by the students. Systems for setting targets and tracking progress are well established. The sixth form is well led and managed, especially in terms of helping students cope effectively with many of the demands of A level courses.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Build on students' good achievement in Key Stage 3 to raise standards and achievement in Key Stage 4.
- Improve monitoring and evaluation by middle managers to secure consistent application of school policies.
- Improve the quality of teaching to match that of the best.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 3**

Although standards remain below average by the end of Year 11, they have shown steady improvement over the last three years. Work seen during the inspection shows continued improvement. School data show that the majority of students are on course to meet their challenging targets. This improvement is the successful result of the strategies put in place by the school's leadership to improve teaching and learning, for example, using target-setting, and intervention work through booster and revision classes. There are no significant differences in the progress made by different groups of boys, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English. Standards in the sixth form are below average but represent satisfactory achievement in relation to students often low starting points.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 2**

Students' personal development and well-being are good. Students say that they like their school and enjoy their lessons. Their good work and behaviour are recognised in celebration assemblies. Retention on sixth form courses is high. New whole-school strategies are bringing about improvement and attendance is rising, although at present it still falls below the national average. Students behave well in response to their excellent relationships with teachers.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There is a calm atmosphere around the school, good levels of consideration for others, and good collaboration within lessons. Students develop good spiritual and cultural awareness through a wide range of classroom activities and extra-curricular themed days. The school has a successful link with students in Belgium and has recently achieved the intermediate International Schools Award.

Students feel safe, secure and valued. They are part of the consultative process in evaluating provision and contribute to making decisions. Students learn to be thoughtful, empathetic and caring in personal, social and health education, in religious education lessons and during reflection time. Taking an active part in school life as council members and peer mentors develops students' social responsibility and initiative. Students are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles and are involved in a broad range of sports. They gain a good understanding of issues around healthy living and keeping safe.

Personal development is enhanced by the significantly improved interaction between the school and the local community. Sixth form students have good opportunities for collaborative working. They develop lifeskills to equip them for the future, such as an appreciation of living costs, in their general studies course. The school ensures that

students are well prepared with the basic skills for the world of work and their future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in the main school and the sixth form. Students enjoy lessons, take pride in their work, behave well and benefit from excellent relationships with their teachers. Classrooms have a purposeful atmosphere where expectations are made clear and students respond well to the challenges set for them. Teachers are confident and enthusiastic and provide opportunities for students to experience a variety of learning methods and activities that motivate and encourage them to work. On occasions, learning relies too heavily on teachers' direction and activities that are not challenging enough to stretch all students. When it is done well, teachers' marking of students' work identifies strengths and weaknesses in their learning and gives them pointers for improvement. This is not consistent both within and between departments. Students are set targets and in some subjects are becoming more aware of what they need to do to improve but again this is not consistent. The setting and recording of homework are inconsistent across the school and opportunities are missed to help students develop their independence.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The school provides a good curriculum, which fulfils statutory requirements. In Years 7 to 9, it is broad and balanced and meets the needs of students of all abilities. For students in Years 10 and 11, the school provides a broad range of traditional and vocational courses, which meet their aspirations and interests. The sixth form curriculum is good and is enhanced by the collaborative arrangements with neighbouring schools. The provision for ICT has improved significantly since the last inspection. All students now follow an ICT course. Through its recently acquired specialist status, the school has increased the number of qualifications available. Together, the school's work-related learning, work experience and careers education and guidance programmes prepare students well to make informed choices about their future. A good range of extra-curricular activities, visits and trips are well attended, much appreciated by students and contribute much to their personal development.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Good quality care, guidance and support ensure that students feel comfortable in school and can, therefore, concentrate on learning. This, in turn, is helping to raise their levels of achievement. Good induction arrangements, including the use of Year 9 students to support those in Year 7, help new boys settle swiftly into school life. Good guidance for Year 9 students, those moving on at the end of Year 11 and the sixth form helps them make sensible choices for future study or employment. Students willingly go to staff if they have concerns, confident that they will be taken seriously. All those spoken to say that instances of bullying have reduced because they are tackled swiftly and effectively. Systems to promote good behaviour are applied consistently so that the school operates as a friendly, orderly community. Parents comment positively, for example, on how it has helped their son, 'come out of his shell' or, 'boosted his self-esteem'. Arrangements to ensure child protection, safe recruitment of staff, and health and safety are fully in place. Careful tracking of students' progress swiftly identifies those, including the high proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who are struggling. This leads to a range of different actions, including the use of a wealth of varied outside agencies that are tailored to individuals' needs. Students are not always given clear enough guidance about how to improve their work because systems and policies for target-setting and marking are not consistently implemented.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The quality of leadership and management is good. Sustained improvements in results at Key Stage 3 and in students' personal development, owe much to the strong and decisive leadership of the headteacher. In partnership with a good team of senior leaders, her leadership has resulted in teachers at all levels focusing effectively on raising standards through better teaching and higher expectations. The senior team's monitoring and evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses are accurate. It is based on robust analysis of performance. At middle management level, there is a secure understanding of the accountability required of subject leaders. Many set a good example to their teams by the good quality of their teaching. There are examples of middle managers carrying out rigorous monitoring, but this is not consistently embedded, as indicated by variations in marking, target-setting and in examination results at Key Stage 4. The work of the school is firmly rooted in providing equal and appropriate opportunities for all students and is leading to better achievement for all, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school's careful management of its funding is based on astute evaluation of future needs. The governing body has a good knowledge and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of



the school. Its involvement in recruitment and appointments has helped the school strengthen the quality of its teaching staff, which is having a positive impact on teaching and learning.



## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
--	-----------------------	--------------

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

### Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

As you know, a team of inspectors visited your school to check on how well it is doing. Thank you very much for the way you welcomed us into your school in such a courteous and helpful way. We were impressed by the purposeful atmosphere in the school and you can take a lot of the credit for that. We enjoyed talking to you about your work and your life in the school. Your school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education. It is improving rapidly and has some strong features.

The best things about your school are:

- standards are rising and your achievement is improving
- you are happy in the school and enjoy your lessons
- the curriculum offers you a good range of choices to match your interests and ambitions
- you are good at taking on responsibilities
- the school cares for you well so that you all get the help and support you need
- you behave well and work well together.

We have asked your teachers to improve some things to make your school an even better place to learn. These are:

- to build on the good progress you make in Key Stage 3 to raise standards and achievement in Key Stage 4. You can help by making sure that you know how to improve your work
- to make sure that school policies, for example, about homework, marking and target-setting, are used consistently to help you to do better
- to work towards making all teaching as good as the best. You can help with this by cooperating with your teachers in all lessons and pushing yourselves to do your best.

Thank you for helping us with our work. We hope that you carry on enjoying being in the school and make the most of the opportunities it offers. You can help to improve your own progress by making sure that you attend regularly. We wish you well for the future.