



John Port School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112990
Local Authority DERBYSHIRE
Inspection number 289484
Inspection dates 13–14 December 2006
Reporting inspector Shaun Dillon HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Main Street
School category	Foundation		Etwall, Etwall
Age range of pupils	11–19		Derbyshire DE65 6LU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01283 734111
Number on roll (school)	2042	Fax number	01283 734035
Number on roll (6th form)	353		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Barrie Whyman MBE
		Headteacher	Mr Michael Crane
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–19	13–14 December 2006	289484

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

John Port School is a very large school which has specialist status in technology. The proportions of students with learning difficulties or disabilities are low compared with national figures, as are the proportions from minority ethnic backgrounds or with a first language other than English. The numbers of students who are eligible for free school meals or who come from deprived backgrounds are also relatively low. Students' attainment when they join the school aged 11 is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of John Port School is good, with many outstanding features. Achievement and standards are good. Students attain high standards and make good progress. This is because the quality of teaching and learning is good. Most students have good attitudes to learning and very good relationships with their teachers.

In the last three years, managers have made improvements to curriculum choice, teaching and learning, and guidance. Consequently, the progress made by students in Years 9 and 11 in 2006 improved considerably. Managers accept that they need to maintain improvement strategies to sustain this recent rise in achievement. The use of students' target setting, so that they know what to aim for and how to get there, is good in some subjects but less so in others.

Students are confident and feel secure in the school environment. Even though the school is very large and the campus is imposing, students joining the school at any age quickly feel settled. Students receive outstanding care, guidance and support. Managers have improved the accommodation and surroundings considerably and continue to do so. Staff enable students to develop personally, to improve their well-being and to mature in many outstanding ways. The provision of and participation in a very wide range of enrichment activities are exceptional. Students' behaviour is good and their attendance is high.

Although the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is very good, that in Years 10 to 13 lacks alternative provision for students of lower abilities and those who would prefer different options. Managers are aware of this and have plans to improve choice and relevance.

The specialist technology status has enabled increased information and communication technology (ICT) resources, improvements to curriculum choice and greater use of ICT to aid learning. It has supported outstanding links with local schools and the community. However, in some areas, the ready availability and use of ICT resources to aid learning are insufficient.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and has a good capacity to improve further. Governance, leadership and management and value for money are outstanding. The school is very popular. Relationships between staff and students are harmonious and productive and the school works very effectively with external agencies.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form's effectiveness is good and has some outstanding features. Students have mature attitudes to learning and act with an exceptionally high level of responsibility towards younger students. Teaching and learning are good, and enable students to make good progress and reach above average standards on GCE AS and A-level courses. The range of advanced courses is wide, but the lack of alternative courses restricts opportunities for less able students. Students have outstanding

support and guidance to help them achieve well and make appropriate progression choices. Leadership and management are outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Widen the range of accredited options in Years 10-13 to meet the needs of all students, but especially of lower attaining students
- Extend the good practice in the use of assessment data at subject level to help students make better progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Achievement and standards are good. Students enter the main school with standards that are above average. By Year 9 they reach well above average results in the national tests. They gain high standards in science, and although standards are more variable in English and mathematics, they are regularly well above average. GCSE examination results are also significantly above average. Over 70% of candidates gained five or more GCSE grades A* to C in 2005 and 2006. The proportion gaining A* and A grades is above average, and rose significantly in 2006. Every student gains some GCSE qualifications. The school usually achieves and sometimes exceeds its increasingly challenging targets.

Progress is good throughout the school. Students achieve well and build successfully on their standards on entry. Boys achieve particularly well, but some less able girls make slower progress than most students. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities usually make progress in line with that of their peers.

In the sixth form, standards at GCE AS and A-level are above average. Students achieve well and largely gain the places in higher education and employment that they seek. Most students in Year 12 and all in Year 13 complete their courses.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. This is reflected in students' high levels of motivation, good behaviour and exemplary attendance. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and is successfully promoted within lessons, particularly in citizenship and religious education. Students develop a very good understanding of different cultural backgrounds. They show considerable respect and consideration for one another and learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour. They were highly effective in reviewing the code of conduct.

Students feel safe. Incidents of bullying are few and are rapidly resolved. The school promotes healthy lifestyles very effectively through the food available and the many

sporting activities. The school council is very productive and is proud to have informed the improvements to lunchtime menus. Students participate fully in a wide variety of very good extra-curricular activities including sports, drama and music. Older students make an excellent contribution to the school community by acting as positive role models. Many are involved very usefully in buddy reading schemes, lunchtime activity clubs for younger students, peer-mentoring and in-subject support. The personal, social and health education programme incorporates student involvement in the wider community very successfully. Students are well prepared for the world of work through work experience and the enterprise curriculum.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning are good. In most lessons, students respond well to teachers' high expectations and a good rapport underpins productive classroom relationships. Teachers show a real commitment to helping students progress, and use their subject knowledge well to monitor and support students' understanding. In the best lessons, students have the opportunity to work independently and are actively engaged in planned tasks. The good quality of teaching and learning results in the above average standards and good progress made by students. Assessment procedures and marking in the main school offer students clear guidance on how to improve, although students are not uniformly aware of their target grades in all subjects.

In the few less effective lessons, teachers do not plan in sufficient detail or are insufficiently clear about the purpose of lessons. The work involves students less and is insufficiently adapted to take account of their differing needs. Opportunities for using computers to support and enhance learning are missed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is good. The Specialist Technology College status has ensured that all students take some aspect of technology to examination level. In Years 7 to 9, the curriculum is very good. Art, music and drama are taught as separate subjects each week so that students get a rich experience in the expressive arts. Gifted students may study two foreign languages after the first year. Lower attaining students are given extra literacy support.

In Years 10 and 11, all students choose from the same menu of subjects offered in school and at GCSE level. The options do not suit the aptitude and capability of some students, particularly lower achieving girls. In the sixth form, students select from a wide range of mainly academic subjects but with few options for lower attaining

students. Life skills courses are well structured to support students' excellent overall development. Enrichment activities within and outside school are extensive and popular, helping students to extend their learning beyond the classroom.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The school is well ordered and students feel valued and secure. Managers take their duty of care very seriously and organise child protection and health and safety procedures well. The transition from primary schools is exemplary and students settle well. Staff use the student planner very well to reinforce procedures and keep parents fully involved. Older students provide excellent support, particularly for more vulnerable youngsters. Not all teachers in the main school inform students how well they are doing and how to improve their work, whereas practice in the sixth form is very good. Students at risk of falling behind with work receive very close monitoring and help. Students with learning difficulties are identified well and supported to do their best. Higher achieving and talented students are challenged appropriately. The student support centre facilities and service are very good. Students are advised well about the relevant courses on offer and very effective guidance helps students move on to further study and employment.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding, which agrees with the school's self-evaluation. Leadership and management of the sixth form are also outstanding. The governors and the leadership team know the school's strengths and areas for improvement well and set out a clear strategy to improve the students' experience. The school continues to get better because governors hold senior managers accountable and uphold their aims, just as senior managers challenge and support middle managers. Furthermore, the headteacher is an inspirational leader who commands respect from staff and students and who promotes an inclusive school.

In the last three years, leaders and managers at all levels have improved the analysis and use of data, school-wide target setting, progress monitoring between key stages, guidance, GCSE choices and the rigour of teaching and learning observations. As a result, the progress made by students in Years 9 and 11 in 2006 improved considerably.

Financial management is outstanding. Governors and managers monitor income and expenditure rigorously and prudently. Allocation of resources relates to the school's priorities and improving provision for students. Value for money is outstanding.

Teachers are well qualified and engage in relevant staff development, based on faculty and guidance teams' needs and the strategic plan. Managers have improved the school's accommodation considerably.

Governance is outstanding. Governors have relevant expertise and experience and are very committed to raising standards. They ensure that the school meets current requirements for safeguarding its students. Managers take reasonable steps to check the suitability of all staff. The school has an appropriate race relations policy but is not yet monitoring its implementation. All areas of the school are accessible to people with restricted mobility, except for the learning resource centre.

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Inspection judgements

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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
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

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1	
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	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
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

15 December 2006

Dear Students

John Port School, Main Street, Etwall, Derbyshire, DE65 6LU

Thank you for the welcome which you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed the meetings we had with some of you at lunchtime and the brief conversations we had with many of you in lessons and around the school. We were impressed by your responsible behaviour and by your positive attitude to learning in most lessons.

We judge that your school is a good one which has many outstanding features. For example, the care, guidance and support you experience are excellent. Many dedicated staff work very hard to enable you to enjoy school and to progress and mature as responsible individuals. They care very well indeed for your personal development and well-being. Most of the lessons you have are good and help you to learn new topics. In some, however, the pace is slow and you are not involved in enough interesting activities. We liked to see that most of your work is of a high standard and much of it is on display throughout the school. Many of you do well in your external tests and progress well.

We are pleased that so many of you join in the wide range of extra activities and that you enjoy them. We are also impressed with the school council and the impact that it has had on healthy eating and the design of the new buildings. We think that the relationships which you have with each other and with your teachers are very good. Most of you are respectful and are working together with staff to make the school a good place to be and learn.

We think the school could be even better than it is now if it:

- Widens the range of choices you have in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form so that those of you who may benefit from courses other than GCSEs and GCEs may take them
- Ensures that all of you know the level at which you are working, the level you are aiming for and know how to get there.

Best wishes for your future.

Shaun Dillon HMI

Lead inspector