

West Derby School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104687
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	336347
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Brian Padgett HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1068
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	173
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr L Bivon
Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Rannard
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 35 lessons and 35 teachers to observe teaching and learning. They held meetings with governors, staff, groups of students and a representative of an external agency involved with the school. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, which included the school's tracking records, policies and 258 returned questionnaires from parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the consistency of students' progress, especially that of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- how well the vision and values of the school are embedded in all its work
- how well the school helps students overcome the difficulties they face and raises their aspirations for the future.

Information about the school

The school is of average size for a secondary school with a sixth form. It has specialist college status for mathematics and computing. The vast majority of boys are of White British heritage. A high proportion of the boys, almost twice the average, are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of boys who are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is very high. Boys with special educational needs and/or disabilities have additional learning needs, emotional and social needs, or a combination of both.

The school is on two sites. Boys in Key Stage 3 are taught at the Quarry site and those in Key Stage 4 at Bankfield. Sixth formers are taught at both sites. The school is due to move into a new building on a campus close to the Bankfield site in September of this year.

The school has achieved the National Healthy Schools Award, the International School Award, the Basic Skills Award, Investors in People, the Inclusion Charter Mark and Sportsmark.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. It is exceptionally effective in helping boys make excellent progress, including those who have fallen behind with their work in their primary schools. By the time they leave, boys achieve well in academic and vocational subjects and very well in many aspects of their personal development. The school has a positive, welcoming ethos where staff and students enjoy very good relationships and show respect for each other. The boys are proud of their school and teachers are proud of the boys' achievements. The vast majority of parents/carers are very pleased with their choice of West Derby and recognise its growing reputation for excellence.

The school's results at Year 11 and in the sixth form have improved year-on-year. In adding value to students' performance, it is one of the most successful schools in the country. The school consistently exceeds challenging targets. Standards at GCSE including performance in English and mathematics are now broadly average compared with all schools. Boys in the current Year 11 are on track to continue the trend of improving performance. The school makes a virtue of its split sites by emphasising different curriculum priorities in each key stage. Each part of the school is equally effective. On both sites, there is the same high quality of care and support for the students, which the boys value greatly. The school's specialist status, for mathematics and computing, makes a positive impact on the school and on the surrounding community of schools.

Senior staff are exceptionally effective leaders and managers. Together with the support of the governing body, they have transformed the school for the better. Leadership and management are securely embedded at all levels. Morale is high and staff are increasingly confident to innovate. The headteacher and her staff have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They recognise that the task ahead is to raise standards further, and that the key to achieve this is for further improvements to the quality of teaching and learning. With the success already achieved and the imminent prospect of moving into a twenty-first century building the school is exceptionally well placed to sustain its record of improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise boys' levels of attainment further by:
 - improving the marking of students' work to help them know what to do to get better
 - improving the quality of learning in lessons by tailoring tasks more closely to

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the learning needs of individual students, or groups of students with the same learning needs.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Boys enter the school with low standards in the basic subjects. Cohorts vary from year-to-year but in general, boys are on average a year behind in their work. The majority are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Boys from all groups make exceptional progress in relation to their starting points. As a result, standards have risen each year and continue to rise. By several indicators, standards are already above average, but by the most commonly used indicator, the proportion of students who obtain five good passes at GCSE including English and mathematics, boys' attainment is average. This represents good achievement.

In lessons, students listen well and take a pride with the presentation of their work. Lessons are often lively. The boys are keen to contribute their views during discussions and good humour is a feature of most lessons. The boys respond best when they are given a variety of tasks to complete within the lesson, and they enjoyed lessons with a fast pace. Some low-level disturbance to learning was observed when lessons lacked challenge.

Students make very good progress in their personal development whilst at the school, particularly in their self-belief and self-esteem, where they make excellent progress. The boys have a real voice in the development of the school, through the school council and they have made a significant contribution to the design of the new building. Attendance has improved and now meets the national average for secondary schools. Boys' behaviour is good in and out of school. Although exclusions occur, the boys involved generally accept the school is correct to accept only the highest standards. Those who have issues with managing their behaviour have high regard for the help and support they receive. Students feel extremely safe in school. They know they can turn to staff for help and appreciate the security arrangements the school has put in place to guarantee their safety. Sport and physical activity play a large part in their lives and they acquire a good understanding of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The school has first-class support and care systems for all boys, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These are activated early, on induction to Year 7, and cover support for learning and for social and emotional support, where required. The school has excellent connexions with external agencies. It provides a focus for multi-agency support from children's services for students and their families. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities at both sites. The curriculum is exceptionally well-tailored to the needs of students. In Key Stage 3 there is a very good balance of provision between providing for the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, where the greatest needs lie, and provision of a well-integrated curriculum to motivate and interest the boys in the world around them. The curriculum also includes relevant opportunities to support the boys' personal development, through lessons in citizenship, personal, social and health education and the social and emotional aspects of learning. The school has a very successful approach to providing for students as they move to Key Stage 4 and make choices about the courses they will study for examinations. It is a leading school for the new ICT Diploma. Overall, outcomes are very positive: all students achieve success in their chosen pathways, with many students exceeding their targets. Very few students leave without securing places in employment, education or training.

Of the teaching observed during the inspection, three-quarters was good or better, with one in four lessons judged outstanding for their quality and the positive difference they made to students' learning. As in the school in general, the relationships between teachers and the boys were invariably good. Teachers have good levels of subject

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knowledge. The majority of teachers plan exciting and varied work for their students and build in opportunities to teach aspects of English and mathematics, whatever their subject expertise. In Key Stage 3, the boys are taught in classes differentiated by ability. Teachers ensure that work is matched to the different abilities in each year but not always to individual needs within the class, although significant differences sometimes exist. Throughout the school, students are aware of their targets and the levels at which they are working. Some excellent examples of helpful marking were seen, particularly in English, but generally, there is inconsistency in the way students' books are marked.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The vision and values for the school introduced by the headteacher on her appointment, which are fully supported by the governing body, have been achieved. The school's distinctive approach, through high quality care, teaching and respect for young people is resulting in rates of added value to rival those of the best schools in the country. It has achieved this with all students, including those who have had difficulties in their early education and lives.

The school has leadership and management of high quality at all levels provided by a dedicated team of senior and middle leaders. The success the school enjoys is giving managers increasing confidence to innovate further. They are supported and challenged to achieve greater things by a governing body with good representation from parents and carers and much specialist expertise. Governors are ambitious for the school's continuing improvement. There have been clear improvements in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. Senior and middle leaders closely monitor the quality of teaching and rigorously track the progress of each student. Pastoral and academic leadership are well integrated. There is excellent teamwork amongst leaders and managers.

The school's partnership with parents and carers is good. It enjoys the confidence of the vast majority of parents and carers because of what it has achieved for the boys. It has forged excellent partnerships with other schools and agencies to support the progress and development of the boys. Arrangements for safeguarding are of good quality. The school vigorously tackles discrimination and ensures equal opportunities for its students. It has made a good start to promoting community cohesion through audit and plans to promote respect and understanding in the community. Some plans, however, await the

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move to improved facilities in the new building, such as plans for a greater involvement with adult learning.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Sixth form

The sixth form has grown in size considerably since the last inspection. The intake is open to the full range of students. The school provides good guidance for Year 11 students to help them make choices. Overall, attainment on entry to the sixth form is below that seen nationally. However, students make good progress and the results are broadly in line with national averages, and improving year-on-year. Students are able to choose from a good range of subjects. The choice is enhanced by the good collaborative arrangements with neighbouring schools and colleges. The quality of provision is good; students speak highly of their experience within the sixth form. All students are aware of their targets and receive regular assessments and reports as to their progress towards meeting these targets. Teaching is of good quality and students experience a good range of activities. They say they receive good feedback and support from their teachers. Leadership of the sixth form is good.

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These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were very positive about the school and its teachers and how they support students to achieve their best. A very few parents and carers worried whether their children were safe from bullying and gang culture. Inspectors looked into this issue and found that boys felt very safe in the school. The school has been successful in encouraging boys to 'leave it at the gate', referring to bad attitudes in the community. Behaviour in school is good and boys show respect for staff and each other.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at West Derby School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 258 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1068 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	69	27	168	65	15	6	6	2
The school keeps my child safe	105	41	144	56	5	2	3	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	94	36	142	55	18	7	4	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	91	35	142	55	17	7	4	2
The teaching is good at this school	112	43	130	50	7	3	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	74	29	155	60	19	7	4	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	65	25	163	63	17	7	5	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	81	31	146	57	11	4	3	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	84	33	150	58	13	5	5	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	110	43	123	48	16	6	8	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	64	25	145	56	21	8	7	3
The school is led and managed effectively	91	35	144	56	10	4	4	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	114	44	127	49	6	2	6	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



19 March 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of West Derby School, Liverpool, L13 7DB

You may recall the school had its Ofsted inspection recently. I am writing to you as the lead inspector to inform you about the findings of the inspection. You can access the full report on the Ofsted website at www.ofsted.gov.uk On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank all of you for your help during the inspection, especially those boys we talked to in interviews and during lessons. Your views were important in helping us come to our judgements.

We judged that West Derby School deserves the top grade of 'outstanding'. You have every reason to be proud of your school. The progress you make from when you enter Year 7 to when you leave is exceptional. The school keeps on getting better. If you have problems with learning, the school helps you to succeed. Everyone gets excellent support from the teachers and staff and does really well in their school work and in developing good attitudes. No one leaves without a qualification.

Behind the scenes, leaders and managers of the school at all levels have been very effective in transforming West Derby into the school it now is. Work on improving teaching and the curriculum and arranging extra support where needed have all been managed successfully. Important values and beliefs about what your school should do for you and how it should feel to you have been securely embedded. That is why the school felt so calm and positive when we visited for the inspection. We were impressed to see the very good relationships and respect between you and your teachers on both sites.

The school is in very good shape to take on the challenges ahead. For you to compete with the very best students from other schools you need to reach the highest standards. Teachers will be working out ways of helping you reach higher levels. In September, you move into a new, 21st-century new building and, for the first time, Key Stage 3 will be together with Key Stage 4, bringing new opportunities and new challenges.

On behalf of the inspection team, I wish you continued success.

Yours sincerely

Brian Padgett

Her Majesty's Inspector

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