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19 April 2018

Ms Helen Hubert
Headteacher
The Derby High School
Radcliffe Road
Bury
Lancashire
BL9 9NH

Dear Ms Hubert

Short inspection of The Derby High School

Following my visit to the school on 28 March 2018 with Osama Abdul Rahim, Ofsted Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in November 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since then, the school has experienced changes in staffing and leadership. Prior to you joining the school, there was also a period of interim leadership during which time the deputy headteacher was acting headteacher. Since your appointment in April 2016, you have continued the journey of improvement. You leave no stone unturned in your quest to improve the life chances of pupils at The Derby High School. You are ably supported by your senior leadership team and governors.

You are committed to ensuring that all pupils receive a good quality of education. Staff share your vision and welcome your open and consultative approach. They value the many opportunities that you give them for their professional development. Middle leaders say that they are more accountable for their roles. Your self-evaluation of the school is honest and accurate and identifies key areas for further improvement. You have continued to improve teaching and learning and have put in place effective systems to track pupils' progress. In 2016 and 2017, pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, made above-average progress from their starting points.

The school's motto, 'excellence, tradition and imagination', underpins everything. You and your staff team have created an inclusive and caring learning community. Pupils are polite and welcoming and wear their uniforms with pride. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they enjoy learning and that staff 'go the extra mile' for them. Relationships between staff and pupils are based on mutual respect.

Pupils from many different backgrounds work well together in lessons. The curriculum meets the needs of pupils. Pupils' learning opportunities are enriched by visitors, such as an astronaut coming into the school, and trips to careers events, museums and universities. Pupils are grateful for the wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as football and rounders. They are also involved in charity work. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to develop their leadership skills, for example through being school prefects.

Parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and said that they would recommend the school to others. One parent said, 'Teachers genuinely care.' Another parent commented: 'My child is happy, well supported and is making excellent progress.'

Since the last inspection, there has been significant change in the composition of the governing body. Governors are passionate about the school and highly effective. One commented, 'We want pupils to be happy and safe and make a great contribution to society.' Governors know the strengths and areas for improvement of the school well. They use their wide range of skills and expertise effectively to support and challenge leaders through their regular visits.

At the previous inspection, the inspectors asked leaders to ensure that pupils made faster progress in mathematics. Since the last inspection, the mathematics department has experienced a number of staffing and leadership changes which have had a detrimental impact on teaching, learning and pupils' progress. You have now brought stability to the department and have strengthened teaching. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and use assessment information well to plan learning that challenges all pupils, including the most able. However, you have rightly identified the need to improve the standards that pupils reach in mathematics by building on their problem-solving and reasoning skills.

Teachers have many opportunities to share strong practice across the school, for example through staff development sessions every other Wednesday afternoon. Leaders have worked with teachers to encourage them to challenge pupils consistently in all subjects. This can be seen in the improved outcomes across a range of subjects over time. For example, in 2016 and 2017 progress was above average in modern foreign languages and science.

You acknowledge that the attendance of pupils, particularly those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, could be further improved.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. All necessary checks are made when appointing adults to work with children. Staff and governors receive regular training on how to keep children safe, for example from abuse, radicalisation and extremism. Staff know what to do should a concern about a pupil arise. Leaders

work with a range of external agencies to provide vulnerable pupils with highly effective support. Referrals are made effectively and in a timely manner.

All of the pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they feel safe. They also said that bullying is rare. Pupils are confident that staff will deal effectively with any problems. Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe, for example when they are online. Staff, parents and carers agree that pupils are safe at school.

Inspection findings

- My main line of enquiry for this inspection related to the pupils' progress in mathematics. This had been an area for improvement since the previous inspection. In 2016, pupils made broadly average progress in mathematics. However, in 2017, pupils' progress dipped to below the national average. You have introduced a range of initiatives to improve this. You have secured the services of a consultant who has improved teachers' subject knowledge of the new mastery mathematics curriculum. Leaders have focused on improving the accuracy of teachers' assessments. A review of the school's latest assessment information, observation in lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work shows that progress in mathematics is improving. However, you understand that pupils can make more rapid progress if there is a stronger focus on reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- In 2016, the progress pupils made in English was below the national average. Pupils are now benefiting from stronger teaching and are making better progress. Leaders have revised schemes of work to match the GCSE curriculum. This is helping to ensure that pupils are better prepared for their examinations. Teachers use questioning skilfully to probe understanding and encourage pupils to think more deeply. Pupils' books showed evidence of challenging work set by teachers. Pupils' progress in English improved in 2017 and was broadly average. Current assessment information and lesson observations show that pupils are making good progress in English.
- In the past, the small number of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have not made the progress that they should. The newly appointed special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has improved support for these pupils. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities benefit from effective interventions and the provision of specialist support. Progress is carefully tracked by leaders. Teaching assistants work well alongside the teachers to provide encouragement and support for pupils. Inspection evidence indicates that the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is improving.
- You identified in 2016 that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities were excluded more than their peers. Leaders and the SENCo have introduced a range of strategies, such as mentoring, to include these pupils more in school. Consequently, there has been a drop in the exclusion rate for this group of pupils. They behave well in lessons and around the school.
- My final line of enquiry related to leaders' actions to improve pupils' attendance. In 2017, overall attendance was below the national average and persistent absence was higher than the national average. Leaders, together with the

attendance officer and education support officer, work closely with families and monitor pupils' attendance closely. Leaders have taken decisive action, including issuing fixed penalties where pupils' attendance is low. Regular attendance is celebrated through rewards. As a result, the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school has decreased. However, you recognise that some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, continue to attend school less regularly than others in the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers build on pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills so that progress in mathematics improves further
- pupils' overall attendance continues to improve, especially that of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bury. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ahmed Marikar
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this short inspection, inspectors met with you, other senior leaders and a group of middle leaders. I met with three members of the governing body and with a representative of the local authority. Accompanied by senior leaders, we visited a number of lessons to observe learning and scrutinise pupils' books. We met with a group of pupils and spoke to others in lessons and around the school.

We took account of 44 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, including 42 free-text responses. We also considered the views of 45 staff and 30 pupils through Ofsted's online questionnaires. A range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation and information about pupils' attainment and progress. We evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies on keeping children safe, records of training, safeguarding checks and attendance and behaviour information. Inspectors also undertook a review of the school's website.

The Derby High School

Radcliffe Road, Bury, Lancashire, BL9 9NH

Inspection dates 12–13 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The leadership of the school is outstanding and is rigorously focused on raising standards.
- Students make good progress over time in a significant number of subjects, including English.
- Students for whom English is an additional language make particularly strong progress.
- Achievement and attainment gaps between disadvantaged students and their peers have closed.
- The quality of teaching is usually good, with some outstanding teaching.
- Students' behaviour is good. The school provides a safe and harmonious environment for learning.
- Attendance is above average.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong.
- Advice given to students about the next steps in their education is excellent.
- Governance is strong; governors are supportive of the school and challenge the leadership rigorously.
- Relationships with the local community and partner primary schools are very solid.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in a few subject areas, and particularly in mathematics, is not accelerating rapidly enough, particularly for more-able students.
- Students do not yet routinely act on advice given by their teachers in marking to enable them to make swifter progress.
- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and the degree of challenge to enhance students' learning, which impact on students' levels of engagement and progress over time.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a range of subjects and for different age groups. Four of the observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors also visited morning tutor time and two assemblies.
- Inspectors looked closely at samples of students' written work across a range of subjects and year groups. They observed students' behaviour around the school between lessons and at breaks and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, a group of teachers, four groups of students, the Chair and three members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation including: development plan summaries; the school's view of its own performance; data relating to students' attainment and progress; information on attendance; documents and records about behaviour and safeguarding; records of the monitoring of teaching and learning, of performance management of staff and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors carefully analysed the 34 responses from parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the 68 questionnaires which were completed by staff.

Inspection team

Julie Yarwood, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Patrick Geraghty	Her Majesty's Inspector
Bernard Robinson	Additional Inspector
Stephen Wall	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Derby High School is a slightly smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students who are disadvantaged and supported through the pupil premium is significantly high, when compared with most schools. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average. The majority of these students are of Pakistani heritage.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- The school offers alternative provision for a very small number of students at a local authority-run pupil referral unit and at Elms Bank Specialist Arts College.
- The headteacher is a local leader of education (LLE).
- A new Chair of the Governing Body has been appointed since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion of pupils in mathematics who make better-than-expected progress, in particular more-able students, by:
 - developing students' ability to think more deeply about the subject
 - planning lessons based on secure assessment information that will support and challenge the most-able students
 - ensuring that all teachers have sufficiently high expectations for all students' attainment and progress.
- Continue to embed high levels of challenge consistently in all subjects in order to develop students' thirst for learning, by ensuring that:
 - the school's outstanding practice is shared across all provision so as to develop teachers' skills and to raise standards of teaching, learning and assessment from good to outstanding.
- Ensure that students are given time to respond to teacher feedback in marking, so that they are clear about how to reach the next steps in learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher and senior team provide an uncompromising approach to securing the very best for the students in the school. Their work is underpinned by a strong sense of purpose, a thorough understanding of their community and a determination to provide the best life chances for all students.
- Leaders have established a culture of high aspiration and ambition and have secured significant improvements in key areas over time. These improvements include an increase in the proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE grades at A* to C, including English and mathematics, and acceleration of the progress made by disadvantaged students.
- The school's checking of its performance is honest and self-critical. The monitoring, tracking and evaluation of school performance is rigorous. School leaders are astute in assessing performance and, where necessary, taking speedy actions to implement improvements.
- School leaders place a high value on the professional development of teachers and the importance of sharing strategies and approaches to improve teaching and learning.
- Middle leaders are effective managers and motivators within their area of responsibility. They have a clear view of where provision needs to improve. Middle leaders are held rigorously to account by senior leaders for their performance.
- Leaders set highly aspirational targets for students, which are reviewed regularly. Pupil premium funding is used very effectively. As a result of a whole-school approach over time, significant improvements in the performance of students from disadvantaged backgrounds have been secured.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Clear and appropriate pathways are offered at Key Stage 4. The curriculum at Key Stage 3 has a strong focus on building aspirations, self-confidence and improving literacy skills.
- Learning opportunities support the active promotion of fundamental British values. Students are knowledgeable about faiths and cultures other than their own. Morning tutor time is used well and gives students regular opportunities to learn about, and reflect on, national and international issues.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a significant strength of the school and is interwoven across the curriculum. Learning in the classroom is enhanced by an extensive range of trips, visits, and cultural experiences. This approach ensures that equality of opportunity and good relations are fostered very effectively. As a result of their experiences, students are prepared very well for life in modern Britain.
- Relationships with parents and the local community are well developed. Effective communication extends to parents not only of current students in the school, but also to parents of children in the partner primary schools.
- The percentage of students who progress to post-16 studies is high. School support for progression is targeted well and includes sessions for parents and students on ways of financing a university course.
- The school meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding students well, including for a very small number accessing off-site provision.
- The local authority understands the needs of the school well and provides good support, in particular for students for whom English is an additional language.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body demonstrates great pride in the school and provides strong support to the headteacher and senior leadership team.
 - Governors have a very accurate view of the strengths and areas for development of the school and rigorously hold school leaders to account for improvement. They have a comprehensive understanding of school performance data and challenge and comment effectively on students' attainment and achievement.
 - Through conducting learning walks and holding regular meetings with heads of department, governors have a very clear understanding of the quality of teaching and learning. They have a very strong understanding of how the school uses performance management to tackle underperformance, accelerate improvement and reward good teaching.
 - Governors have an excellent knowledge of pupil premium funding and expenditure and monitor its impact on the achievement of those students for whom it is intended very carefully.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is good. They treat each other with courtesy, dignity and respect and engage positively with staff and visitors.
- Students are fully aware of the school's policy on the '7Rs' (respectful, responsible, reasonable, ready, resourceful, resilient and right impression). They understand the importance of these values when making choices about their behaviour.
- Incidences of bullying are rare. In the few incidents that occur, students say that issues are dealt with promptly and effectively.
- Staff in school manage behaviour well and have high expectations. Students are in general well prepared for learning. In lessons where the work is matched to students' needs and teaching is strong, students show excellent levels of engagement and a passion for learning. Variety in engagement occurs in the quality of learning where the level of challenge that work presents is not appropriately pitched.
- Staff are effective in their supervision of students at social times and on arrival to and departure from school and are positive role models for the behaviour that they expect. Older students equally, in their role as prefects and mentors, offer good support to younger students and strengthen the positive ethos of the school.
- Students' attendance is good and improving. Rates of attendance are above the national average and persistent absence rates are lower.
- The number of exclusions has decreased and appropriate strategies using outside agencies are in place to help the school address any issues which arise.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Policies and procedures for safeguarding are fully in place and robust and are reviewed regularly by senior leaders and the governing body.
- Students say that they feel safe in school and this is endorsed by all parents who completed the online parental survey.
- Students understand how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. This includes bullying of all types and keeping safe in specific situations according to the time of year. Students discussed a most recent example of this relating to fireworks.
- The school is proactive in its approach to working with outside agencies to secure support for students. Senior leaders rigorously pursue referrals that they have made, so that the most appropriate additional help is secured for young people who are vulnerable.
- The school has taken part in a pilot for a regional group looking into combating extremism and groups of students have taken part in workshops which have enhanced their understanding of issues on a national level.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers' strong subject knowledge and enthusiasm lead to students enjoying their learning and making good and improving progress over time.
- Expectations of what students can achieve are generally very high and teachers provide students with good support to help them to achieve.
- Across the school and in a significant number of classes and subjects, students achieve outstandingly well and make very rapid progress in their learning. This is especially the case where activities are consistently challenging and are closely matched to students' abilities and needs. This was demonstrated at the highest level in Year 7 dance and drama. In both subjects, students applied themselves with enthusiasm to the tasks and in doing so, acquired high levels of new skills, self-confidence and self-esteem.
- On occasions, there is inconsistency in the level of challenge presented by activities. Some tasks are too hard for some students and some are too easy. This is sometimes the case in mathematics and in a small number of other subjects. The school is working hard to tackle this and bring about greater consistency and raise expectations and standards still further.
- Relationships between teachers and students are mostly strong and positive. This results in students being confident learners who willingly express their thoughts and ideas with a sense of maturity. This was evident in an English lesson in which students maturely debated the importance of the use of correct

language by young people.

- Much questioning requires students to give extended reasons for their contributions, thus developing students' oral skills effectively and consolidating their learning.
- Marking is regular and comments are generally helpful. Students do not, however, always act on the comments, which means that opportunities to enhance their progress further are sometimes missed.
- Students read well and most say that they enjoy reading. Students' literacy skills are promoted well across the curriculum by regular and systematic reading and by the strong encouragement from teachers to use key subject vocabulary.
- Lower-attaining students and those with special educational needs receive strong and effective support, both in class and through targeted additional interventions. As a result, most make very good progress.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students enter the school with below average attainment and the majority secure a good standard of attainment on leaving the school. The percentage of students who attain five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, has risen significantly and data show that for the first time, in 2014, this exceeded the national average.
- The proportion of students who make expected progress in English has increased and is now above average. In mathematics, although performance was below average in 2013, data provided by the school for 2014 indicate that this is now broadly in line. Inspection evidence and analysis of data indicate that this positive trend is set to continue.
- The percentage of students making better-than-expected progress from their starting points in both English and mathematics has increased in 2014. There is, however, further work to be done to ensure that this more frequently applies to more-able students in mathematics and that they think more deeply about the subject.
- The gaps in achievement in English and mathematics between students known to be supported by the pupil premium and their peers closed in 2014. Data indicate that disadvantaged students made better progress from their starting points than their peers did.
- In 2013, GCSE performance in English showed that the standard attained by disadvantaged students was approximately half a grade lower, when compared to their peers and to other pupils nationally. Information collected on inspection indicates that in 2014 the gap closed rapidly and there is now no significant difference between the standard achieved by disadvantaged students and others.
- In mathematics in 2013, disadvantaged students achieved on average half a grade lower than their peers in school and approximately one grade less when compared with other pupils nationally. Data for 2014 indicate that this gap is closing, but at a slower rate than in English.
- Students for whom English is an additional language made good progress in 2013. Data for 2014 indicate that this group of students exceeded their peers in terms of the proportion making expected progress from their starting points in English and mathematics.
- As a result of targeted intervention and support, students with special educational needs make good progress from their starting points.
- The most-able students perform exceptionally well in some subject areas. These include the sciences, French and, in 2014, English. This group of students is very well prepared for the next stage of their education and the progression into selective sixth form and further education colleges is impressive.
- The school does not routinely enter students early for GCSE examinations.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	105355
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	448306

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	841
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Whitnall
Headteacher	Alyson Byrne
Date of previous school inspection	10 March 2010
Telephone number	0161 764 1819
Fax number	0161 764 9365
Email address	a.e.byrne@bury.gov.uk

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