

Inspection of a good school: The Derby High School

Radcliffe Road, Redvales, Lancashire BL9 9NH

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 June 2023

Outcome

The Derby High School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at The Derby High School are 'inspired to make a difference'. They enjoy coming to school and they attend well.

Leaders have established a culture where pupils are expected to be the best that they can be, and pupils have risen to this challenge. Pupils feel happy and safe in school. They say that one of the best things about school is the support that they receive from staff.

Pupils meet leaders' high expectations of behaviour in lessons and around school. When incidents of bullying are reported, leaders deal with these quickly and effectively. Pupils say that they have a trusted adult whom they can speak to if they have any worries.

There is no ceiling to the expectations that leaders have for every pupil. They will do all they can to ensure that the needs of every young person, including pupils who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are met. Pupils achieve well.

Pupils relish the ample opportunities provided by leaders to develop them into creative and responsible citizens. For example, pupils still enthuse about the school show, 'Shrek', and talk excitedly about the preparations for next year's production. Many pupil-led enrichment activities take place on the 'Sustain Bus', which pupils converted into a learning space from an old school bus.

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

Leaders and governors have a clear and ambitious vision for the school and its pupils. Leaders continue to refine some aspects of the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND and those who are disadvantaged.

Subject leaders have clearly identified the important knowledge that they want pupils to learn and retain. They have put this knowledge into a logical order so that pupils build on

what has been learned before. In key stage 4, leaders encourage pupils to study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects.

Leaders are revising assessments in key stage 3 so that they can help teachers to better identify pupils' misconceptions and any gaps in their learning. Subject leaders are at different stages of their implementation of these new strategies. As a result, some teachers do not gain a sufficiently accurate overview of how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum in key stage 3.

Teachers use their subject expertise to deliver the curriculum well. They design appropriate activities and present these clearly to assist pupils to develop their knowledge over time. Teachers' skilful questioning enables pupils to make links between the ideas in different topics and subjects.

Leaders and staff are well equipped to identify the needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders liaise effectively with parents and carers and external agencies to ensure that these pupils get the support they need to flourish. Pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers and participate wholeheartedly in the wider opportunities available in school.

Leaders have prioritised reading. They check the reading knowledge of pupils in both key stages 3 and 4. They have recently trained staff to implement a phonics programme. Leaders have identified those who are in need of this support, but they have yet to build the capacity needed to implement this quickly for all who need it. This hinders some pupils' access to the wider curriculum. Form tutors read to pupils in dedicated weekly time. Texts are carefully chosen to develop pupils' understanding around moral and ethical issues, such as the plight of refugees. Pupils in key stage 3 spoke enthusiastically about the books that they had chosen from the library, but this was not mirrored by those spoken to in key stage 4.

Pupils are eager to work hard. They are keen to succeed. Leaders and teachers encourage pupils to be resilient and independent learners. Learning is not interrupted by poor behaviour.

Leaders are passionate about the programme of personal development that they provide. They are committed to widening the horizons of their pupils and developing their talents. Leaders ensure that pupils learn how to be tolerant citizens who respect and embrace diversity. Pupils benefit from high-quality careers provision. Engagement with employers and further education providers enables pupils to make decisions that support their future career aspirations. Almost all pupils progress successfully to education, employment or training.

Governors hold leaders to account for the quality of education. They know the staff well and they balance challenge with support successfully. Staff appreciate leaders' effort to consider their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are trained regularly to be alert to the signs that might suggest that a pupil is potentially at risk of harm. They know the procedures that they must follow when concerns arise. The safeguarding team works effectively with external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families get timely help.

Leaders use the personal development programme to alert pupils to issues that may pose a risk to them. For example, pupils have learned about the dangers of gang violence and knife crime. They are aware of risks such as sexual harassment and unhealthy relationships.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At key stage 3, leaders' systems to check on how well pupils are learning the curriculum are being refined. In a small number of subjects, the current systems do not identify and address well enough the gaps in pupils' learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers receive further support to fully understand and implement the new assessment systems for key stage 3.
- Leaders' systems for supporting those pupils who are behind with their reading knowledge are under development. This means that some pupils, particularly those whose phonic knowledge is weak, do not receive the timely support they need to catch up quickly in reading. This hinders their access to the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that they fully implement and embed their plans so that these pupils are supported to catch up quickly with their peers.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2014.

How can I feed back my views?

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

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

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	105355
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10286228
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	931
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jean Lund
Headteacher	Helen Hubert
Website	https://thederbyhighschool.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	28 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school makes use of two registered alternative education providers.
- The school arranges provision for a very small number of pupils at one unregistered education provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, English and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The lead inspector met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body and other governors and had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including that relating to the curriculum, pupils' behaviour, improvement plans and leaders' self-evaluation summary.
- Inspectors considered the responses from parents and carers to Ofsted Parent View. This included the comments submitted using the free-text facility.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys.
- The lead inspector checked on leaders' safeguarding procedures, including the recruitment checks made on staff. She met with the designated safeguarding lead and staff and pupils to discuss the wider aspects of safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around school and at lunchtime. They spoke with them about behaviour and bullying.

Inspection team

Niamh Howlett, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Vicky Atherton

Ofsted Inspector

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