

Inspection of West Derby School

364 West Derby Rd, Liverpool, Merseyside, L13 7HQ

Inspection dates: 11–12 September 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school and they feel safe. They say that staff look after them and want the best for them. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and respectful.

All staff expect the highest standards of behaviour from pupils. Behaviour around the school is good. Corridors are calm. Pupils are polite and well-mannered. Most pupils behave very well in lessons. Their attitudes to learning are positive. This means that pupils can get on with their work without distractions from others. Occasionally a small number of pupils misbehave, but staff deal with issues quickly. Bullying is rare. If pupils report any concerns to staff, they are confident that staff will respond effectively and with sensitivity.

Pupils attend many clubs and activities. The sporting and musical life of the school is strong. Many pupils take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. This lets them learn new skills and broaden their experiences. Leaders encourage sixth-form students to take part in a wide range of enrichment activities. These include, for example, charity work and supporting younger pupils' learning.

Leaders and other staff work closely with families to help pupils at West Derby School become responsible young adults.

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

Since the previous inspection, leaders have improved the school in many ways. Leaders create a positive and welcoming atmosphere. They encourage pupils to follow the 'West Derby Way' and 'be proud, aim high, work hard and be nice'. Staff speak positively about the support and training that they receive from senior leaders. Leaders consider the well-being of staff when introducing new ways of working.

Leaders have improved pupils' behaviour across the school. They have insisted on high standards, good manners and respect. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Few pupils are excluded from school and there are many strategies in place to support any pupils who struggle to follow the school rules. Opportunities for pupils' personal development are many and varied. Pupils are well prepared to become responsible young adults and for life in modern Britain.

The importance of good attendance is high profile across the school. As a result, pupils attend well and there are few pupils who are regularly absent from school. The attendance of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is lower than that of others.

In key stage 3, pupils have too few opportunities to learn about some subjects, such as geography, history, and religious education (RE), in detail. Also, the range of

subjects offered by the school at key stage 3 is narrow. For example, pupils in Years 7 and 8 do not currently get the chance to study technology. The curriculum at key stage 3 does not stay as broad as possible for as long as possible. It is not as ambitious as the national curriculum.

In key stage 4, pupils can choose to study from a wide range of subjects. However, older pupils do not have enough opportunity to study RE. Few pupils choose to continue to study a modern foreign language. Leaders have put plans in place to improve pupils' enjoyment of this subject so that more pupils choose this as an option.

Leaders want pupils to achieve well. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 11 is rising, particularly in English and mathematics. In these subjects, leaders have clear plans about what is taught to pupils and when. For example, in mathematics, pupils use their knowledge of algebra when working out ideas about complicated graphs.

The progress of pupils is also improving gradually. However, weaknesses in the curriculum mean that some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils with SEND are well supported in their learning. Most pupils go on to appropriate destinations when they leave school. Careers education is a strength of the school.

In the sixth form, teachers know their subjects well and use assessment effectively to check how well students are achieving. In their planning of the sixth-form curriculum leaders consider the needs, opportunities and challenges of working in the city of Liverpool and the region's labour markets. This helps students to be properly prepared for a range of future careers. Students on vocational and applied general courses achieve well. However, students on academic courses do not do as well as they could. Some students do not finish their courses. As a result of high-quality careers advice, almost all students progress onto appropriate further education at university, employment or apprenticeships.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff's up-to-date training enables them to identify any pupils in need of help and support. Staff know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil. Leaders work well with a range of other agencies to help protect pupils and keep them safe. The school teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe, both online and in the community.

Leaders ensure that pupils are aware of any safeguarding risks in the local area. Pupils say that there are trusted adults in school who they can turn to if they have any concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders and governors need to ensure that pupils follow a broad curriculum which is similar in breadth and ambition to the national curriculum. They should further improve the curriculum by increasing the depth of learning for pupils in different subjects in key stage 3. Leaders should also increase the opportunities for key stage 4 pupils to study RE in greater depth.
- In the past, disadvantaged pupils have not achieved as well as their non-disadvantaged peers across the country. Leaders need to ensure that all pupils, and particularly disadvantaged pupils, know more and remember more so that they achieve well in their studies.
- Students in sixth form following academic courses do not achieve as well as those pupils who study vocational or applied general courses. This is particularly true for disadvantaged students. Retention rates on academic courses are lower than on other courses. Leaders need to improve the quality of guidance for students on entry into sixth form. Leaders need to make sure that the academic curriculum accurately meets the needs of students so that students stay on their courses and achieve well in academic qualifications.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	138696
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10087863
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1014
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	129
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Susan Price
Headteacher	Sian Graham
Website	www.westderbyschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 January 2017

Information about this school

- The school currently uses alternative provision at Harmonize Academy and ACE (Alder Centre for Education) to contribute to the education of a small number of key stage 4 pupils.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- During the inspection, we spoke with pupils, both formally and informally, about their work and school life. We held meetings with senior leaders, trustees, subject leaders and the school improvement partner from the local authority.
- We reviewed documentation, which included leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, and the school development plan. We

scrutinised information about attendance and behaviour.

- We considered the views expressed by parents and carers in the 66 responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View, as well as parents’ comments received via the free-text facility on Parent View. We considered the 25 responses to a questionnaire for pupils and the 47 responses to a questionnaire for staff.
- We focused deeply on English, mathematics, geography and computing during the inspection. We met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with pupils, met with teaching staff and looked at pupils’ work. We also considered other subjects as part of the inspection.
- We reviewed a range of documentation about the school. This included information about safeguarding, including the school’s record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff and support for pupils. We also spoke to representatives of the alternative provision used by the school.

Inspection team

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