

# The Derby High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105355
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bury
<b>Inspection number</b>	336482
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Coleman HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	868
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Philip Emmott
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Alyson Byrne
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 March 2007
<b>School address</b>	Radcliffe Road Bury Lancashire BL9 9NH
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 31 lessons, observed 29 teachers and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of students and the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work, and looked at school data, policies, students' work, safeguarding procedures and records, and questionnaires from 149 parents and carers together with those from staff and students.

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

- the quality and impact of the school's extensive range of partnerships with other institutions and providers
- whether all students are making enough progress in English
- whether the quality of teaching and learning is improving due to the training provided by the leadership's strategies and is it consistently ensuring that all students make at least good progress
- whether the rates of students' attendance are improving.

## Information about the school

The Derby High School is average in size with similar proportions of boys and girls. There are above average numbers of students eligible for free school meals, from minority ethnic groups, and/or who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average and the number with a statement of special educational needs is a little above average. The school has specialist status in science and the arts which was first awarded in 2003.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

### Main findings

The Derby High School is a good school with some outstanding features. Due to the success of the leadership's strategies, an outstanding curriculum is provided which combined with good teaching, ensures that all students make good progress. Standards of attainment have risen consistently since the last inspection and overall are now above average. The high quality of pastoral care, guidance and support has been sustained and further improved. Changes to the composition and roles of the senior leadership team are having a strong impact on the outcomes for students especially in the specialist subjects where examination successes are high. The school has effective procedures to monitor the school's progress and evaluate the impact of its improvement plans. Given this range of improvements to the school's provision and pupil outcomes, the capacity for improvement is good.

An extensive range of partnerships contributes outstandingly well to the school's curriculum and extra-curricular provision. The impact of these broadens students' experiences and enhances their personal development and well-being. Well established links with The Ogden Trust results in significant students' achievement in science. Increasing numbers of students are opting to study separate sciences and the school's results are rapidly improving and are above the national average. For example, in 2009, students completing GCSE Physics achieved a 100% pass rate for grades A\* to C and more than 70% gained an A\* or A grade which is significantly above that found nationally. There are many links with local schools including excellent provision in sport. The aspirations and self-confidence of students benefit greatly from their involvement in tournaments which are organised with local primary schools including basketball, rugby, netball, gymnastics and dance. Work with Alliance Learning has led to outstanding results in Engineering in which 100% of students who entered for the GNVQ qualification passed in 2009. A number of students have been inspired through the school's partnerships and have succeeded in a range of local and national awards.

The school has successfully eradicated the imbalance in students' progress seen at the last inspection when underachievement was found in some pupil groups. Standards are rising and all groups of students make good progress. The leadership is also tackling well the slower progress made by students in English. There is a legacy of students' underachievement in English in Key Stage 3 which hinders the standards currently attained by the oldest students. The pace of this improvement has picked up significantly this academic year and evidence from the school's good tracking system and from observations in lessons shows that students are now making good progress in English. The impact of new curriculum leadership in English, effective staff training and improved teaching means that students are on track to achieve higher standards in

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English in 2010 than ever before.

Overall, the quality of teaching is good, as at the last inspection. The proportion of good and better teaching is improving but there remains some inconsistencies and variability such as in the quality of marking. In some lessons, insufficient preparation and planning lead to too much time being given to organising activities and this hinders students' progress. Not all teachers make effective use of assessment information to ensure that the level of challenge is right for all students in the class. As a result, the pace of learning is sometimes too slow. Opportunities are missed in many classrooms to effectively display students' work in order to celebrate students' achievements, reinforce learning and to encourage and motivate students.

The quality of provision for students' care, guidance and support is outstanding. The school's pastoral team is first-rate in providing very well targeted programmes of support and intervention for students, especially the most vulnerable. Excellent use is made of external agencies which, in harmony with the school's multi-disciplinary team, ensure that the health, safety and well-being of students are extremely well catered for. The strategies implemented to improve students' attendance are resulting in significant improvements. From an average percentage of overall attendance and below average persistent absence in recent years, the figures for 2009 and school data during 2010 show above average rates by both measures.

## **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve the consistency of good quality teaching and learning by:
  - ensuring that all marking gives students clear and helpful guidance about how to improve their work
  - making more effective use of assessment to plan inspiring tasks which are well matched to all students' learning needs
  - displaying students' work consistently in classrooms to improve the learning environment and to motivate students' interest and enjoyment of learning.

## **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**2**

The levels of skills and knowledge with which students enter the school in Year 7 are broadly similar to those found nationally; though the proportion of higher attaining students is lower than average. Overall, good progress is made and students' attainment is above average. The percentage of students gaining five A\* to C GCSE grades in 2009 was above average and when English and mathematics are included, the figure is near to average. In lessons seen during the inspection students made mostly good progress. In English lessons, the good gains being made currently are enabling older students to make up for underachievement previously found in Key Stage 3 and they are on track to achieve above average standards this year. Progress in lessons in the specialist subjects is good and sometimes outstanding, enabling students to attain very high examination pass rates in subjects such as science, dance, music and drama. For example, in an

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outstanding drama lesson seen by inspectors, students show a clear understanding of facial expression, movement, gesture and body language. Students are all involved and happy to be spotlighted in front of their peers as they adapt an expression to fit the situation. Students make equally good progress regardless of gender, ethnicity, prior attainment or eligibility for free school meals.

There is strong moral code in the school which is consistently applied by the staff and, as a result, students' behaviour is good. Relationships between students and with staff are strengths of the school and make very good contributions to students' learning and personal development. Students feel safe because of the high levels of care shown by staff and the rigorous systems in place to support their well-being. They adopt healthy lifestyles by taking an active part in the many extra activities on offer and due to the effectiveness of the school's provision for personal, social and health education. Students take full advantage of the many opportunities to engage in the life of the school and extend these experiences by working, performing and helping in the local community. Students achieve well and enjoy school. Cultural development is outstanding and students are aided by a very large number of visits to the theatre, art galleries, the opera, and arts festivals. Students are inspired by a variety of visitors to school who have included Lord Winston and the former head of Mission Control from Russia.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<sup>1</sup> 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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**The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

**1**

## How effective is the provision?

The majority of teaching is good and because of this, and the outstanding curriculum and very good attitudes to learning of students, good progress is made. Much of the classroom teaching is quite formal in style to which students respond by listening attentively. Students' concentration and levels of interest are very good. In some lessons opportunities for students to discuss their work and develop their ideas form a regular part of their style of learning and in these lessons the rate of progress is better than the norm. In other lessons, too much instruction and explanation occupies too much time and thus limits the amount of progress which is made. Computers and digital projectors are used well in many classes to illustrate learning and to focus attention and concentration. Variations are evident in the quality of marking, use of assessment and in the learning environment of classrooms.

The curriculum provides an outstandingly broad range of opportunities for students to learn from many varied experiences. Since the last inspection the choices for students in Key Stage 4 has widened and includes the option of separate sciences, AS mathematics, German, French and Urdu, engineering, and Diplomas in creative and media, and business administration and finance. Flexible organisation allows students to undertake a mix of courses which is personalised to their needs and career aspirations. Alternative off-site provision is very effective in re-engaging disaffected students. In Key Stage 3, recent strategies to provide integrated humanities are impacting well on students' literacy skills. Students in Year 9 can now begin mathematics GCSE a year earlier than is usual and all students study for an information and communication technology qualification. The curriculum is enhanced by a range of outstanding partnerships in the arts, science and sport. There are a great number of extra-curricular activities in which a large proportion of students participate and enjoy. The school's specialist status is used effectively to enrich the curriculum, raise achievement, develop community links, and to raise students' confidence and self- esteem.

The care, guidance and support of students are an outstanding strength of the school. The school's work with students, families and the full range of external agencies enables students to fully develop the personal skills needed for future life and to sustain their learning. Transition arrangements from Key Stage 3 to 4 and post-16 are very good. Excellent strategies are in place to improve students' attendance so that the overall percentage is now above average and the school works closely with a small number of students who are persistently absent. Vulnerable students are very well supported and achieve significantly well in their learning and personal development.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

**The quality of teaching**

Taking into account:

The use of assessment to support learning

**2**

2

<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has successfully built an effective senior team who provide good support to her clear leadership. Since the last inspection the curriculum has been widened, excellent partnerships developed, students' progress has improved and standards have risen. The leadership's monitoring of the school's provision accurately identifies the strengths and areas for improvement such as the slower progress of students in English and the lower standards attained in some subjects such as history and design technology. Improvements to the quality of teaching have been achieved but the school recognises that further work is needed to raise this to the outstanding level of the provision in the curriculum and in the care, guidance and support of students.

The governing body is extremely well informed through information from the school, the local authority and from many visits to the school and discussions with the school staff. Governors rigorously hold the school to account for its performance and challenge the senior leaders to make continual improvement. Led by a knowledgeable Chair, the governing body acts decisively in the best interests of the students in the school and takes strong consideration of the views of parents and carers. All the statutory requirements are in place such as the safeguarding systems for vetting and checking staff. The school's finances are well managed and the good outcomes for students mean that value for money is good. The school makes an outstanding contribution to community cohesion through the many links and partnerships and it promotes equality of opportunity for students and tackles discrimination ensuring that all students achieve well.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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



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<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Views of parents and carers

About a quarter of parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaire. The vast majority are supportive of the school's work. Around 12% of parents and carers raised concerns about the school's management of students' behaviour and there were three written comments in this regard. Inspectors looked closely at students' behaviour in lessons and around the school, at the start and finish of the school day and during break times. The inspection judgement is that students' behaviour is good. While there is some occasional low level disruption, the school manages this well and students say that any incidents are quickly dealt with by the staff.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Derby High 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 149 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 868 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	36	90	60	5	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	78	52	65	44	5	3	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	72	48	73	49	4	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	71	48	72	48	5	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	58	39	86	58	5	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	55	37	81	54	13	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	32	93	62	9	6	0	0
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)	58	39	83	56	5	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	49	33	94	63	4	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	69	46	59	40	18	12	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	28	93	62	11	7	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	56	38	77	52	10	7	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	76	51	63	42	7	5	1	1

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



12 March 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of The Derby High School, Bury, BL9 9NH

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed being in your lessons, meeting with you, and were particularly impressed by your behaviour and the high level of care, guidance and support provided for you by the school.

These are the main strengths of your school.

- The Derby is a good school and cares for you exceptionally well and provides excellent support when you need help, especially in your personal development.
- There are many outstanding links and partnerships with your community and the choices available in Key Stage 4 for different courses are excellent.
- The school keeps you safe by having good, effective systems to check on people who work at the school and makes sure your health and safety are looked after.
- All of you make good progress, especially in science and the arts and you achieve above average standards.

We have asked the headteacher and the school's leaders to:

- increase the proportion of lessons that are good or better
- improve teachers' marking of your work
- ensure that the assessments of your work are used well to provide interesting and exciting activities in lessons
- improve the display of your work in classrooms.

You can do your part to help by ensuring that you attend school regularly and always work hard. The team joins me in sending you best wishes for your studies and we hope that you all do very well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr John Coleman

Her Majesty's Inspector

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