

John Port School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	136591
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	382232
Inspection dates	7–8 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Michelle Parker HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Independent
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	2006
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	306
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barrie Whyman MBE
Headteacher	Wendy Sharp
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Main Street Etwell Derby DE65 6LU
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 36 lessons taught by 36 teachers. Meetings were held with parents and carers, groups of students, staff, and the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors. Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at whole-school development planning, teachers' planning and school policies. In total, the responses on questionnaires returned by 465 parents and carers were analysed. The team also analysed questionnaire responses from 96 staff and 165 students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well do all groups of students achieve, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those students at most risk of exclusion?
- How effective have leaders and managers been in improving teaching and learning?
- How well do all groups of students in the sixth form achieve?

Information about the school

John Port became an academy in April 2011. It has specialist technology status and is significantly larger in size than the average comprehensive school. The large majority of students are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is smaller than average, as is the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is very low.

The academy has achieved a number of awards including Careers Mark, Arts Mark silver, an Eco School award, Investors in People, Basic Skills award and has gained national Healthy Schools Status.

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 outstanding school has many features of high quality. The school's ethos of 'giving everyone the opportunity to succeed' is the successful 'golden thread' running through all of its work. This ethos is also reflected in the school's unremitting drive to demonstrate continuous improvement. Despite the considerable upheaval of the last couple of terms as the school became an academy, staff are united in striving to improve students' lives. Consequently the school's change of status has had minimal impact on students' progress and their learning.

The school is excellently led by an exceptional headteacher, who is ably supported by a capable senior leadership team and the governing body. This strong leadership has resulted in high attainment at the end of Key Stage 4. The majority of teaching is good or better and, as a result, the progress of all groups of students is good with some making exceptional progress, for example those who speak English as a second language. Occasionally students are not encouraged to be independent learners and opportunities are missed to develop self-help strategies, resulting in slower progress. Senior leaders have a very good and accurate understanding of the school, enabling them to swiftly address areas of weakness, for example planning additional training sessions to support staff development in the use of assessment information. Ambitious school development plans are well thought through and enable the school to maintain its drive for continual development. Together with its successes in bringing about changes that benefit students' learning and progress, this means the school has outstanding capacity to sustain further improvements.

The school recognises that a few aspects of its work do not always meet the highest expectations. Behaviour, both in lessons and around the school is good. However, a few parents and carers, staff and students are understandably concerned when behaviour does not meet the school's high standards. The school successfully uses a good range of strategies to support students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and may potentially become disengaged from their learning. Effective supervision by staff means that the large and complex school site is calm and safe for students at all times. This strong and dedicated team approach is reflected in all aspects of child protection work. Consequently, students feel safe in school and know there is someone they can go to when they have concerns.

Most students enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their significantly higher than average attendance and take up of extra-curricular opportunities. Safeguarding and the promotion of students' well-being are outstanding and students take an

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active part both in their school and in the wider community. For example, older students act as mentors to younger students and help pupils in the local primary school. The school's specialism effectively supports the development of a wide range of courses and close links with a major car manufacturer through its work with young engineers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that good and outstanding practice in teaching and learning is consistently in place throughout the school by:
 - helping students to develop a range of self-help strategies to promote and support their independent learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Students enter school with attainment that is above the national average and the good progress they make throughout the school means that they reach high standards by the time they leave at the end of Key Stage 4. In 2011, students who speak English as an additional language made exceptional progress. Carefully tailored interventions enabled these students to develop their English with greater confidence. All groups of students in lessons observed during the inspection made good progress. Teachers set high expectations and differentiate work to ensure that students achieve the learning objectives. Students are clear about what they have to do and find the work enjoyable and challenging. In lessons, learning moves at a good pace because everyone is ready to start work on time. All students have a clear understanding of their targets and can explain how they need to improve their work. In good and better lessons students use information about how well they are making progress to deepen their own learning. Despite the extensive size of the school site, students arrive promptly at lessons, ready to learn. Disruptive behaviour has reduced and this has helped the school to develop a positive learning culture. Effective intervention from the whole guidance team supports improvements in behaviour.

Students who are identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive high quality support and this enables them to make at least good progress. Teaching assistants also provide high-quality support in lessons. The student support team provides a safe haven for students when they find learning in a busy classroom too much, or if they require individual support. Students can access this support to help with homework or at break and lunchtimes. The Bridge project recently located to a dedicated facility, provides a very carefully tailored learning environment for students at greatest risk of exclusion. The centre enables students to re-engage with their learning and make good progress.

Students have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. The huge increase in the uptake for school meals, high take-up rates for activities such as a dance-fitness programme and for sports including weight training, plus a well developed health education programme, all contribute to this outstanding aspect of

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the school's work. Students develop excellent work-based skills. They have many opportunities to develop leadership skills through, for example, sports leadership together with high levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. Well planned programmes to develop their understanding of the world of work are effectively supported by Connexions. The school plays a vital and essential role as the hub of the community; opportunities are enhanced, for example, through the school's enrichment days, charity fund-raising and year and school council involvement of students. Students are encouraged to think deeply about ethical and moral dilemmas and through discussion form their own opinions. Students appreciate cultural diversity and the school has worked effectively to broaden their horizons through a wide range of regular school visits abroad.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers use their good subject knowledge to engage the interests of students. For example, in a good design and technology lesson, students were encouraged to explore ideas of sustainability in their choice of materials for a lamp they were designing and making. Students responded thoughtfully to the teacher's questioning, and were encouraged to expand on their thinking, and explain their understanding. The teacher then used the students' responses effectively to challenge misconceptions. Teachers' marking is detailed and students are encouraged to reflect on feedback and demonstrate their understanding through improving their work. Students use these insights to make accurate judgements upon the quality of each other's work when they are asked to discuss them in lessons. In the few satisfactory

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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lessons, teachers sometimes missed opportunities to develop students' independent learning. This limits opportunities for students to develop their own self-help strategies.

The curriculum is outstanding and students are supported in making good progress because courses capture their interests and help them play to their strengths. The school has judiciously developed a broader range of courses and qualifications. It offers students rich opportunities to help with their personal development and general well-being. The school is very responsive to students' needs and ensures it customises its provision to meet the changing needs of students. The wider choice available to students has been successful in engaging students in their learning and contributes to their good progress. As a result, more students are moving onto higher level courses. Strong links with other partners such as local colleges in Derby and Burton-on-Trent support students as they move into further education. The school has developed highly personalised and effective provision at 'The Bridge', which ensures that some of the school's most vulnerable students remain interested and engaged in learning through imaginative cross-curricular courses.

High-quality care, guidance and support ensure that students make good choices about the subjects they wish to study. In addition, strong partnership working ensures that students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable receive a well structured individual introduction into school. This approach helps to allay fears and enables students to get off to a good start, minimising the risk of students failing. The school identified that communication with parents and carers was insufficiently responsive and that complaints made by parents were not resolved quickly enough. The introduction of non-teaching guidance staff has effectively addressed this and ensures parents and carers are contacted swiftly. In addition there are strong links between every students' well-being and their academic work.

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 headteacher and the senior leadership team have quickly identified areas of weakness and addressed them. They identified weaknesses in teaching and learning, for example, which contributed to poor behaviour and some groups of students not achieving their potential. This has led to a strategic programme of professional development which has invigorated the teaching staff, improved the quality of teaching and enabled teaching assistants to become fully involved in supporting

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learning. The changes have also led to improved behaviour. The school has effective performance management systems which link closely with the school's development plans and ensure that all staff receive high-quality professional development. Rigorous and extensive monitoring of teaching and learning and the careful tracking of students' progress enables the school to respond swiftly should any concerns arise. This allows the school to act quickly in addressing emerging training needs of all staff, for example supporting and encouraging staff in studying for master's degrees related to specific behaviour or learning disorders and vocational qualifications for cleaning staff. The school's leaders, and middle leaders in particular, are highly responsive in tackling discrimination and promoting equality. Consequently, the school has improved its provision for its most vulnerable students.

The highly effective governing body makes an exceptional contribution to the work of the school and to shaping its direction, through for example the school's conversion to academy status. Its members use their extensive professional skills in pursuit of excellence in the school and in actively setting priorities for improvement. They understand the school very well and use this knowledge to effectively challenge and support the school's leaders over its performance.

The school has worked energetically to build positive relationships with parents and carers, promoting their understanding of how to support their child's learning, through a wide range of parental extra-curricular activities. Attendance at parents' evenings has significantly improved and the school is eager to build upon the good relationships it now has with the majority of parents and carers.

Safeguarding procedures are exemplary and the school's multi-agency work is used by the local authority as an example of good practice. The school is very active in its work with a range of external organisations and is quick to identify areas of improvement. For example, the school identified that the number of buses and cars on a busy road near to the school were a road safety hazard. The congestion around the school became dangerous. The school has worked with a range of agencies to ensure that there is now a safer and more efficient procedure for buses entering and leaving the site. Consequently, the traffic jams which used to occur have gone and students are kept safe.

The school's promotion of community cohesion is good. The school understands its context and uses this information to effectively tackle a wide range of local issues, from the impact of gang culture to tackling racism. Consequently, the school community is highly cohesive, and bullying and incidents of racism are very rare. Students play a key role in identifying and supporting charities, raising over £29,000 last year. The school works closely with different communities in Africa encouraging mutual respect for different cultures.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and	1
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driving improvement 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	1
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

Outcomes in the sixth form are improving and standards are high. All students make good progress and some make outstanding progress. The school has worked effectively to address the dip in performance from the previous year. This is a very inclusive sixth form and the school takes care to provide a range of pathways that meet students’ needs well. Students in the sixth form take an active role in the management and organisation of the sixth form centre. These opportunities help to develop students’ skills and encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning. Students collaborate well. In an outstanding science lesson, students built on their understanding of the combustion engine through moving around the room, reading and adding to each others’ work. This helped them challenge ideas and considerably raised the bar for achievement. Enrichment days are used effectively to raise aspirations and broaden students’ horizons. The members of the new sixth form leadership team are determined to improve the quality of the sixth form. They rigorously monitor teaching and learning and listen effectively to the views of students. This information is used effectively to develop and improve the sixth form and has led to high rates of retention and good attendance. Students commented on the high quality of care, guidance and support they received and how responsive school was to their suggestions. Careful thought is given to ensuring that students receive comprehensive advice to help them identify their next stage of education, training or employment.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2

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The quality of provision in the sixth form Leadership and management of the sixth form	2
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Views of parents and carers

Overall, parents and carers have a positive view of the school and are encouraged to talk to the school about their concerns. Parents and carers who spoke to the inspection team commented favourably on the high quality of education and support their children received. The overwhelming number of parents and carers are happy with their children's experience at school. However, several of those who returned questionnaires expressed reservations about behaviour and the extent to which the school supports their children's learning and encourages them to be healthy. Parents and carers expressed a number of other individual concerns but there was no pattern to these. Inspectors thoroughly investigated all parental concerns. Inspection evidence showed improvements in students' behaviour, learning and high take up of healthy activities. The school has acted upon individual concerns raised by parents, carers and students and followed them up assiduously. The school takes parents' and carers' views seriously and adapts its work to reflect this.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at John Port 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 465 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 2006 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	125	27	290	62	31	7	5	1
The school keeps my child safe	118	25	316	68	22	5	2	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	116	25	296	64	36	8	6	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	112	24	293	63	42	9	4	1
The teaching is good at this school	79	17	326	70	28	6	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	52	11	293	63	97	21	3	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	8	295	63	92	20	12	3
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)	83	18	275	59	54	12	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	75	16	323	69	40	9	6	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	72	15	258	55	90	19	17	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	56	12	262	56	73	16	11	2
The school is led and managed effectively	64	14	287	62	55	12	13	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	100	22	311	67	33	7	6	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



9 December 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of John Port School, Derby, DE65 6LU

Thank you for the warm and friendly welcome you gave to the inspection team. We appreciated the insights you gave us into your school. We were very impressed by your mature and thoughtful comments, which helped us gain a clearer view of your school.

We were very impressed with you and your conduct around your large school site. We agree with you that you go to an outstanding school, which has many features of high quality. This is because of the outstanding work of your headteacher, together with all the staff who have worked with determination to make the school a safe place for you to learn. Your attendance and punctuality to lessons is impressive. Although some of you expressed reservations about the quality of behaviour, we were impressed by the way you conducted yourselves around the site and the cooperative way in which you worked with each other and respected each other's views. It really feels as though you live the school's ethos of 'everyone having the opportunity to succeed.'

Your attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 and the sixth form is high and you make good progress. This is because of good quality teaching and learning, together with the high levels of carefully tailored support you receive. You work well in lessons and are encouraged to be independent. However, we have asked the school to help all teachers develop strategies to increase your ability to learn independently.

We hope you will continue to take up all the rich opportunities your school offers you, and we wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Parker
Her Majesty's Inspector

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