

Ofsted October 2016

- This is a truly inclusive school. Governors, senior leaders, staff and pupils share a common belief that there is a place for everyone at Paulet and aspirations are equally high for every pupil.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher, both appointed to their permanent positions since the last inspection, have galvanised staff to urgently address the areas in need of improvement, leading to better teaching and better outcomes for pupils.
- In 2016, there was a considerable improvement in the number of pupils gaining GCSEs at grades A* to C in English and mathematics.

Characteristics of the School

Paulet High School is a mixed comprehensive school for students aged 11 to 18, situated in Stapenhill, Burton-upon-Trent. In September 2014 we set up our own sixth form provision 'The Paulet Sixth Form College'. Previously we have shared our sixth form provision with The Blessed Robert Sutton School. Students are drawn from the immediate area and increasingly from beyond our traditional catchment. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is above average. There are 864 students on roll, with 170 students in the sixth form. Attainment on entry is below average, and for many students, levels of literacy on entry are a barrier to progress. The percentage of students with a specific learning need is around 6% of the school roll. Most of these have learning difficulties, some have emotional and behavioural problems and a small number have physical difficulties. The majority of students are of white UK heritage, with a small, but increasing, number of students (around 8%), identified as having English as an additional language. We increased our Pan from 130 to 150 in September 2015 and took 160 into Year 7 in September 2017. Early indications suggest this will be repeated in 2018.

The school is well known in the area for offering a caring, friendly school environment. We work hard to promote the school in the wider community and recognise the importance of tackling underachievement at all levels. Our Ofsted inspection in October 2016 recognised the progress we have made since our last inspection and judged us as GOOD. Almost always good, and often outstanding, teaching is helping to raise standards and students' positive attitudes and good behaviour are making a strong contribution to their achievement.

Catchment Area

The catchment area contains a mixture of council and privately owned property, predominantly the former, although the development of private housing in the Brizlincote Valley is altering the school's traditional intake. Most students live within walking distance of the school.

Most of the communities in the area are well established with families who have lived locally for many years. 14% of students are registered as eligible for a free school meal [though many more who are eligible do not register]. While there has been a limited tradition of further education, post-16 stay-on rates have increased in recent years.

School Context and Direction

The school is well placed to move forward into an exciting period of development and progress. An open consultative style of leadership has created a sense of collegiality among staff and a greater confidence in further improving standards. Although student numbers in the area have been falling in line with national trends, we are attracting many applications from outside our catchment area. Parents are supportive of the school reflecting continued confidence in the local community.

The school is well regarded by the students. Our most recent survey of student attitudes found the vast majority of them feeling positive about the quality of teaching and support they receive in school. The school is universally described as safe, friendly and welcoming. Recent musical productions and performances have shown high levels of student participation and interest and extra-curricular sporting opportunities are well supported. There are effective procedures for monitoring student behaviour and for taking action where the behaviour of a student is affecting learning. Staff know students and parents well and there are effective liaison arrangements.

Curriculum and Teaching Arrangements

The school operates a 25 period week with four one-hour lessons in the morning and a one-hour lesson in the afternoon. Students are in school from 8.30am until 2.50pm, with a 20 minute morning break, at 10.45am, and a 45 minute lunch break at 1.05pm. Parents' evenings and school events are usually held on Tuesday evenings, though these are not every week.

Staffing

The school has a teaching complement of 52 including the Head. Currently there are no shortages of specialist subject staff. Staff have good qualifications and are committed to developing and improving teaching skills. The senior leadership team consists of the Head, Deputy Head and four Assistant Heads, one of whom is the School Business Manager. Curriculum planning and development are steered by the Senior Leadership Team and Subject Leaders, while pastoral care and guidance are led by members of the SLT working with the three Heads of Year, the Behaviour Support Team and an Attendance Officer. Various groups meet regularly with the Senior Leadership Team to review general school policy and there are a variety of voluntary groups of staff who meet to consider such things as improving teaching and learning. Many colleagues provide one to one tuition in mathematics and English and there are always revision classes offered on Saturdays and during the Easter break.

The school has a non-teaching staff complement of 44. We have excellent support staff whose numbers have been increased to fulfil our commitment to the workload agreement.

Governing Body

There is a strong Governing Body which understands its role as one of support and challenge. The Governors have a range of different and complementary skills and they work hard to ensure the school is successful in all areas. There is an effective committee structure where key decisions are made. Governors are fully involved in school life. There are two Governor Focus days a year where Governors spend time in lessons, talk to students and staff and receive training on current issues. Governors also attend Open Evenings, Awards Assemblies, Takeover Days and many more events.

Ian McArthur
Headteacher
February 2017