

Stafford Manor High School

Wolverhampton Road, Stafford, Staffordshire ST17 9DJ

Inspection dates

9–10 January 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and the senior leadership team are unwavering in their ambition to raise aspirations for all pupils, regardless of their starting points. They provide strong and determined direction for staff and pupils across the school.
- The curriculum is well planned to meet pupils' needs. Leaders involve pupils in its planning to ensure that it captures their interests and prepares them well for the future.
- Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the leadership of the school. Staff questionnaires state that high expectations are coupled with a 'common sense' approach to workload.
- Progress made by disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities has improved significantly over the past three years. These pupils now make stronger progress than other pupils nationally.
- Pupils behave well around the school and are well mannered and friendly. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive.
- Teaching in a wide range of subjects has improved strongly over the past three years, especially in mathematics, and progress across the school is now good.
- Governors have a clear understanding of whole-school strengths and weaknesses. They provide support and appropriate challenge to ensure the school's continued success.
- Senior and middle leaders have created an ethos of learning and development. Teachers value the training and support they receive and as a result teaching has improved.
- Progress made by boys in English is currently below national figures for this group. Teaching in this subject does not always sustain the interests of these pupils and work in books does not reflect the high expectations seen in other areas.
- Sixth-form provision has improved since the previous inspection. Students are very appreciative of the care, guidance and support they receive. However, progress made in some vocational subjects is not as strong as in other areas.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve boys' outcomes in English by ensuring that teachers:
 - systematically check for understanding during lessons
 - provide tasks that engage and sustain boys' interest.
- Improve outcomes in sixth form vocational courses by ensuring that teachers:
 - regularly check on students' progress
 - take prompt action to help students catch up if they begin to fall behind with their work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and the senior leadership team have had a significant impact on improvements across the school. They are committed to raising academic standards and have implemented a range of systems to monitor the quality of teaching to ensure that no pupil falls behind.
- The ethos of the school can be summed up in a staff comment, 'Pupils are at the heart of everything we do.' From the development of the curriculum to the tracking of progress, the needs of the pupils are at the forefront of every strategic decision. As a result of this approach, pupils are fully engaged in their own improvement and value greatly the work undertaken by leaders.
- Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is significantly below average. Key stage 4 progress information shows that progress has risen sharply over the past three years and is now above the national average. Assessment information provided by leaders shows that this trend is continuing across key stage 3 and evidence seen in pupils' books supports that view.
- An unrelenting focus on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils has been effective. Leaders and governors have undertaken careful research and engaged in external projects to ensure that they identify the best possible provision for these pupils. As a result of this work, the progress of disadvantaged pupils has risen from significantly below national expectations in 2015 to being in line with other pupils nationally in 2017.
- Leaders have applied the same attention to detail to bring about improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers are provided with bespoke professional learning programmes that have helped to make improvements in their practice. The staff questionnaire shows that teachers are, without exception, wholly positive about the support they receive and as a result staff morale is high.
- Leaders have welcomed and encouraged external validation and have used information from the evaluation of teaching and governance reviews to develop and support their existing practice. In partnership with the local authority, leaders have developed strong links with other settings and used this expertise to hone skills in areas such as moderation of pupils' work.
- The curriculum is a strength of the school. The broad and inclusive approach ensures that pupils experience a range of subjects across key stage 3, embedding their foundation skills. As a result, they are well equipped for the challenges of the key stage 4 curriculum. Pupils have the opportunity to share their preference for available options in key stage 4 and this influences the subjects offered by leaders. Leaders and governors review the curriculum annually to ensure that the subjects offered meet the needs and interests of pupils. For example, there are increasing opportunities to study humanities in line with increased demand and extra-curricular clubs to develop conversational skills in modern foreign languages.

- Middle leaders work with enthusiasm and commitment. They make careful checks on the quality of teaching and implement appropriate interventions when practice does not meet the required standard.
- Leaders place an emphasis on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. There is a commitment to help others across the community, and pupils raise funds for charities and community groups. Pupils demonstrate knowledge of British values such as tolerance and democracy but some small gaps in understanding remain. The school has recently introduced a 'what it means to be British' topic to develop and further embed British values across the school.
- Parents' views of the school are positive. Information collated by leaders shows that 94% of parents would recommend the school. The popularity and success of the school are further reflected in the increasing number of applications for places from the local community.

Governance of the school

- Good governance has been instrumental in bringing about improvements across the school. Governors play an important role in the design of the school's improvement planning and ensure that actions undertaken from the plan have the desired effect. They encourage external validation for both the governing body and leaders to ensure that assertions made about the performance of the school stand up to scrutiny.
- Governors have been proactive in ensuring that all their members receive the appropriate training in order for them to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively. Governors check that specific roles are allocated to those with the appropriate skillset and can clearly articulate the effect of their work across the school. Governors hold leaders carefully to account in relation to their responsibilities for safeguarding and ensure that their own knowledge in this area is up to date and comprehensive.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Effective safeguarding systems are an integral part of the school's culture. All staff, including governors, have undertaken a range of training relevant to their role in school. All concerns are comprehensively tracked and receive appropriate and timely responses. Pupils' welfare is supported and the leaders' mantra of 'be curious, be sceptical, think critically and systematically but with the presence of compassion' is evident within the ethos of the school.
- Leaders and other staff members work effectively with external partners to support pupils.
- Leaders and managers ensure that appropriate recruitment checks are undertaken, and keep organised and detailed records.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, for both 11 to 16 provision and in the sixth form, has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Teachers have responded positively to the support and direction provided to them by leaders and there is greater consistency and quality across a range of subjects.
- There has been a significant improvement in the teaching of humanities. Historical outcomes in this subject area have been low, especially for boys, but as a result of action taken by leaders, teaching over time is now good.
- Pupils benefit from good teaching in mathematics. This is because work in this subject is carefully matched to pupils' abilities. Pupils are taught how to use strategies to work things out for themselves and check their learning. In lessons, teachers regularly check pupils' understanding and intervene with support when necessary.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge and use it to plan challenging activities to enhance pupil engagement. Questioning is carefully targeted to allow pupils to think more deeply about their learning.
- Assessment is used effectively by teachers to help pupils to build on and apply prior knowledge. This was illustrated to great effect in a history lesson, where pupils were asked to use learning from previous lessons to examine the impact that migrants have had on Britain since 1250.
- Teachers plan carefully for the needs of different groups within lessons. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receive strong support from both their teachers and teaching assistants to make sure that they learn effectively.
- Leaders have implemented a new homework system following feedback from pupils. Pupils are fully engaged in the new online system and as a result, homework completion rates have increased significantly.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are strong. Pupils learn in a purposeful and supportive environment. As a result, the vast majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do their best.
- Teachers' feedback to pupils is in line with the school's policy. Teachers quickly identify where errors or misconceptions occur and communicate this to pupils. However, not enough attention is given within lessons to checking that pupils have understood these errors, and on occasions mistakes are repeated.
- Where English teaching is less effective, the needs of boys are not well met. This is because pupils do not receive the appropriate support or guidance from teachers in order to complete tasks successfully. This was reflected in the work scrutiny conducted by inspectors, where examples of untidy presentation and unfinished work in some boys' English books were left unchallenged.

Personal development and welfare

- Leaders' work to support pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Staff know and care for the pupils well. Members of the school community treat one another with trust and respect, leading to a highly positive climate for learning.
- The development of pupils' welfare is a priority for the school. Through the personal, social and health curriculum, staff ensure that pupils are clear about how to keep themselves safe. Pupils are equipped with strategies that support them to manage emotions and risks. This is highlighted in the school's approach to mobile phone usage. Pupils are allowed to use mobile phones in school but must follow the set guidance. Pupils are clear about the expectations of this policy and adhere to them strictly.
- Pupils, from Year 7 to the sixth form, are resoundingly positive about the care they receive in school. They state that any concerns are quickly dealt with and they are clear about how to access support on a range of issues. Pupils also comment that bullying is rare, as is the use of derogatory or racist language. If it does occur it is strongly challenged by staff. Pupils also spoke about the individualised support they have received in times of difficulty.
- There are a variety of opportunities for pupils to develop their personal qualities. As well as taking part in fundraising events, pupils are involved in social enterprise projects and have the opportunity to take part in debates, with the most recent taking place in the Houses of Parliament.
- There is a good programme of careers education and guidance throughout the school. The individualised and impartial advice that pupils receive prepares them well for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite and friendly and behave well around school. Transitions between lessons are smooth and there is a calm, orderly atmosphere during unstructured times of the school day such as lunchtime. Information collated by leaders shows that almost all parents agree that pupils are well behaved.
- There is a clear and well-understood behaviour policy implemented across the school. The vast majority of staff agree that behaviour is well managed by leaders. Pupils know what standards of behaviour are expected of them and can speak clearly about the rewards and sanctions employed by the school. Leaders' information shows that the consistent approach to managing behaviour has led to a significant reduction in behavioural incidents.
- In lessons, the vast majority of pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. They bring appropriate equipment to lessons and arrive promptly. They are keen to engage in discussion on a variety of topics and listen to one another's contributions respectfully.

Rare examples of disengagement occur when tasks set do not capture the interest of pupils or pupils are not given the appropriate guidance to allow them to succeed.

- The attendance of pupils is now generally in line with national averages. Leaders analyse attendance figures carefully and work closely with parents and carers and outside agencies to create tailored interventions to support individuals in sustaining and improving their attendance. As a result of these programmes the school has seen a reduction in both unauthorised and persistent absence. Leaders have maintained this consistent approach and continue to highlight the importance of strong attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils across all year groups make strong progress from their starting points. They enter the school with prior attainment that is below average in each year group. In 2017, published results showed that pupils made progress that was at least in line with others nationally. This demonstrates significant improvement since 2015, when progress made by pupils was below that expected from other pupils nationally.
- Progress made in mathematics is rapid and is now in the top 20% of schools nationally. Strong progress in this subject is made regardless of pupils' starting points. Progress for all groups in this subject is above the national average.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, have improved significantly over time. Disadvantaged pupils make progress that is in line with other pupils nationally and the school's current information shows that this trend is continuing across all year groups.
- The progress made by pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is strong. Information presented by the school shows that this positive picture is continuing, and is further reflected in the provision made for pupils in lessons and work in books.
- In 2017, pupils made strong progress in a range of subjects, especially lower- and middle-ability pupils. The progress of high-prior-attaining pupils is improving but remains low in English.
- Leaders gather a range of accurate assessment information about pupils' performance across the school. Current information suggests that outcomes for pupils will continue to improve. This judgement is based on internal progress information which is then externally validated and moderated.
- Outcomes in humanities are improving quickly. Evidence seen during the inspection shows that progress made by pupils in this subject is strong and is reflected in pupils' work. Leaders are aware that these improvements now need to have an impact on examination results and progress made by pupils at the end of key stage 4.
- Pupils' attainment is improving and the attainment gap between pupils and other pupils nationally is closing. Achievement in mathematics is high, with attainment above the national average. While attainment in English is lower, because some boys are still not making the progress they should be, it is rising steadily.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils entering the English Baccalaureate, a government measure covering five GCSE subjects, remained low.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The sixth form has improved strongly since the previous inspection. Students are provided with excellent pastoral care and speak very positively about the academic support they receive in order to prepare them for the next stage in their education, employment or training. Students' behaviour around the school is good.
- Students have individual study programmes that build on their prior attainment. The head of sixth form ensures that students are well matched to their chosen courses. Students receive additional independent careers advice so that they can make informed decisions. As a result, retention and attendance rates are positive.
- Due to the small numbers of students in the sixth form, published information does not give a clear picture of performance. Leaders keep comprehensive information on the performance of students, which demonstrates strong progress across academic subjects. However, a small number of students are not attaining highly enough in vocational subjects. Leaders are aware of this and are addressing these issues, for example by taking action when the quality of a course or the quality of teaching is not of an appropriate standard.
- All students take part in work experience. It is matched to their interests and career aspirations and allows them to gain valuable experience and apply their learning in a different context.
- Students are very positive about the academic guidance and teaching they receive and willingly act on advice and feedback from teachers in order to improve their work.
- Leaders provide effective guidance for students to make plans and consider their next steps in education, employment or training. As a result of this improved guidance, there has been an increase in the number of students applying for places at higher education institutions.
- The small proportion of students that enter the sixth form without a good GCSE pass in English and mathematics receive appropriate teaching that enables them to gain these qualifications at a higher grade.
- Students in the sixth form continue to contribute to the life of the school through the organisation of enrichment days for pupils in Years 7 to 11. Students also benefit from a personal, social and health programme which covers a wide range of topics, including religious education.

School details

Unique reference number	124467
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10042863

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	310
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	42
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ali Summers
Acting Headteacher	Richard Lycett
Telephone number	01785 258383
Website	www.staffordmanorhighschool.com
Email address	headteacher@smhs.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 December 2015

Information about this school

- Most pupils are White British. Very few are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs, or who are supported by an education, health and care plan, is well above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.

- The school uses the educational facilities of The Hollies PRU and The Haven for a small number of pupils. No mention is made of these pupils in the main body of the report as to do so would risk identifying the pupils.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons or parts of lessons, of which three were jointly observed with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors made other short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and senior leaders, other members of staff, groups of pupils, and the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and a telephone conversation took place with a representative from the local authority.
- There were insufficient responses from Ofsted's online survey Parent View to form a judgement about parents' view of the school. However, inspectors took into account information from school leaders' own parent questionnaires.
- Inspectors took into account the 34 responses from the online staff questionnaire. There were no responses from the online pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents. These included leaders' self-evaluation of the school, the school improvement plan, a range of assessment information, minutes of governing body meetings, a selection of policies, curriculum plans and records concerning pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Josie Leese, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jacqueline Newsome	Ofsted Inspector
Huw Bishop	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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