

Stoke Park School and Community Technology College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103728
Local Authority	Coventry
Inspection number	355442
Inspection dates	22–23 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Dilip Kadodwala HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
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	1090
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bobbie Kelly
Headteacher	Marie Harrison
Date of previous school inspection	21 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors, including one who focused for half a day on the school's provision for safeguarding students. Inspectors observed 33 teachers teaching 33 lessons and also made a brief visit to lessons to check on students' learning. They held meetings with a group of parents, groups of students, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documentation, including development plans, school and national data, and the school's evaluation of its effectiveness. Responses to questionnaires from 243 parents and carers, 52 members of staff and 141 students also provided additional evidence.

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

- the strength of the rise in students' attainment, especially in English and mathematics, and whether students' learning and progress are improving securely because of the quality of teaching
- the effectiveness of leadership and management in tackling underperformance and sustaining improvement over time.

Information about the school

This is a larger than the average sized secondary school. Around 64% of students are from White British backgrounds, the remainder representing a variety of different ethnic heritages. Students of Indian backgrounds form the largest single group, comprising around 20%. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of students identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is high, while the number with a statement of special educational needs is average for the size of school. The school has been a specialist technology college since 1997. It was designated a Trust school in September 2008. The school has achieved a number of awards including International Intermediate Schools Award, Inclusive Schools Award, Sportsmark, Artsmark Silver, Leading Parent Partnership Award and Healthy School 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?**2****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

Main findings

This is a good school. After a period of leadership transition, the school is now ably led by the acting headteacher. Students' achievement has improved well over the last academic year and this reflects the school's good capacity for sustained improvement. Current tracking data show that students are making good progress, including in mathematics where standards in GCSE results dropped in 2009. The senior leaders' determination to tackle this through changes in leadership and teaching are already making a difference. There is still further progress to be made in tackling fully the period of underachievement in this subject by the end of Key Stage 4. The overall results in GCSE are average. The proportion of students who gain five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C including English and mathematics has been rising over recent years, with improvement better than the national rate. The 2010 pass rate on this indicator is broadly in line with the national average, representing a good improvement, particularly in English. Challenging targets have been set for 2011 and senior leaders are confident that they will be met in the light of students' current gains.

The good curriculum is effective in meeting students' needs and aspirations. Adjustments to it have maximised students' opportunities to gain relevant qualifications and increased their motivation and enjoyment. The range of extra-curricular activities has a good take-up and enhances students' enjoyment of school. Good engagement with parents and carers and the forging of close partnerships, including through the school's specialist status, also account for rising standards and students' well-being. The positive relationships between staff and students are evident in lessons and in the informal exchanges between them. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Students have a well developed understanding of right and wrong and respect for diversity, including social, religious and cultural diversity. Students understand the importance of good health and the great majority are committed to adopting healthy lifestyles. The school is justifiably proud of the outstanding care, guidance and support it provides for its students. Students who are most at risk are carefully monitored and the very constructive use of education welfare services results in removing barriers to learning. Some of this is reflected in significantly reducing the rate of persistent absenteeism by a small minority of students.

Much of the teaching quality is good and some is outstanding. This accounts largely for the students' good achievement and progress in lessons. Challenge for the students is well-directed to meet their particular needs, and contributes to their enjoyment of learning. Since the last inspection, there has been improvement in the consistency of monitoring of teaching by middle leaders and the sharing of effective practice. These contribute well to raising the quality of teaching.

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The effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. This represents a decline from being good at the last inspection. Although there is some good quality of teaching and learning, overall they are satisfactory. Expectations for learning are not sufficiently high and there was a lack of rigour in tracking students' progress last year which resulted in a drop in students' attainment. Senior leaders have accurately analysed strengths and weaknesses in provision and have a clear strategy to capitalise on improvements secured so far.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 4 by ensuring that:
 - challenging targets set for all students are met through effective teaching and leadership.
- Improve the effectiveness of the sixth form by:
 - setting higher expectations for teaching and learning
 - ensuring that the tracking of students' progress is robust and leads to success.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

From their below average starting points on entry to the school, students' achievement is good. Observations of teaching and learning during the inspection confirmed that standards are rising, particularly in mathematics, where a period of underachievement is being tackled successfully. Where particular groups of students have been found to be underachieving in the past, for instance those from Indian heritages, leaders have taken action to ensure that it is reversed successfully. In contrast to the situation seen nationally, the achievement of students known to be eligible for free school meals is similar to that of most other students. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported by staff and they are given carefully selected teaching which is targeted to tackle their specific needs. As a result, these students also make good progress. In the lessons observed, there were good relationships between students and teachers. This enabled students to be well motivated, engaged and they clearly enjoyed learning. They worked well independently and also used peer support and assessment to improve the quality of their work. Typically, students arrive at lessons prepared to work hard. They listen attentively to teachers and when other students are giving their responses. In the majority of lessons seen across the school, students' progress in learning was good. They consolidated their skills and knowledge and developed greater understanding of new ideas and concepts.

Students' attitudes to learning are positive. They enjoy lessons, are punctual and work well with each other or independently, for example when using computers. This reflects the school's success in harnessing the resources provided through its technology specialist status. Students learn in a supportive and inclusive environment where they feel safe and valued as individuals. They have good opportunities to take on responsibilities which they do willingly, both in school and in the wider community. For example, their contributions to create the Stoke Park Youth Centre. The rate of attendance is average. The level of persistent absence reduced significantly from 7.5% in 2009 to 3.9%. Students of all ages and backgrounds mix well together and racial harmony is very evident. Students say that bullying is uncommon and are confident that any instances are dealt with effectively. Behaviour in lessons is conducive to good learning. Where more challenging behaviour

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exists it is dealt with positively, with the result that the students concerned often go on to make good progress. The proportion of fixed term exclusions is low and there have been no permanent exclusions for many years. Students have a proper regard for safety and a secure awareness of risks to their personal health and well-being. A good proportion of students choose to eat healthy food options and most engage in at least the minimum of two hours of physical activity expected each week. Improvements in basic skills in English and mathematics, along with considerable strengths in the students' use of information and communication technology, mean that students' development of skills needed for their futures and the workplace is good.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teachers' expert subject knowledge and enthusiasm, coupled with the setting of a sharp pace in lessons using a wide variety of activities, resulted in students' good enjoyment. Teachers' carefully targeted questions and well-considered and challenging tasks, that are matched to students' specific abilities, are elements which lead to successful learning. Teachers make good use of assessment to tackle misconceptions in learning. They build on students' knowledge and understanding through the careful use of students' progress data to inform planning and teaching. The quality of marking is mostly consistent so that students know how to improve their work.

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The curriculum meets students' needs well because it has been adjusted to accommodate them, as well as providing the studies to which students are entitled. Some aspects are innovative, for example the 'breakthrough programme' which focuses more on practical elements, thereby re-engaging those students who are experiencing difficulties. A wide range of vocational courses, supported by the technology specialism, contribute well to students' achievement. Enrichment activities available before, during and after school hours have good participation across a comprehensive range of students' ages and abilities.

Very well targeted support for all students enables them to make the best of the opportunities provided. The school's close working with other services and families ensures that students most at risk of underachieving have barriers removed. For example, the school hosts the hearing impairment unit for the city and students with hearing impairment have access to staff and resources which enables them to make progress in learning that is similar to their peers. The Connexions service is based at the school, enabling students to easily access information and guidance to help with their future career choices.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher, supported by senior leaders, has successfully communicated an ambition for higher achievement. The success of their drive for improvement is evident in raising students' attainment by the end of Year 11 and in ensuring that there is no inadequate teaching in the school. The systematic monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning ensures that improvement is embedded. Monitoring and evaluation are effective, giving leaders at all levels an accurate view of progress towards targets set for students' achievement. Strong systems for accountability between senior and middle leaders concentrate on students' performance. A wider evaluation of each faculty's performance draws on a good range of evidence and results in suitable action plans to tackle areas of improvement. The process of evaluation includes the governing body, enabling it to hold the school to account, as well as to provide support through initiatives, such as commendations to students, which are highly valued by parents and carers too. Equal opportunities are promoted effectively, for instance through the rigorous analysis of the performance of different groups. The impact is evident in that no group of students is now underachieving. Safeguarding procedures are robust and there are effective systems in place to ensure students' safety. There is a good understanding of the community's needs and careful auditing of what the school does to promote community cohesion has led to a detailed action plan which is implemented well. The extended school provision

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also helps to promote good community cohesion. Given the students' good achievement, the school provides good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

The open access sixth form provides a satisfactory quality of education. Students attainment on entry is below average. Results in examinations at end of Year 13 are average. However, the proportion of students attaining high grades at advanced level is below average, so progress is satisfactory overall. Very few students leave during the year and a higher number stay on for three years reflecting the school's desire to ensure that students have every chance to succeed. Students speak appreciatively about the support and guidance they receive and the majority progress to either further education, employment or training. The curriculum is broad and augmented through partnerships with other schools. Students have many opportunities to undertake responsibilities and many do so, contributing positively to local community groups and to the well-being of younger students, for example through mentoring. Teachers' predictions for students' performance in 2010 did not match actual results. Leaders have put into place more robust structures to ensure that this weakness in assessment is tackled. Initial indications are that these strategies are working.

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These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

Around 22% of parents and carers returned a questionnaire. A group of five parents visited the school to speak to the lead inspector. Most parents and carers who responded view the school as doing a good job overall. A very large majority of parents and carers say that their children enjoy school and are kept safe. Inspectors endorse the view that teaching is good at the school. The majority of the very few parental criticisms were offered constructively, and these were discussed with the acting headteacher. Some parents and carers feel that the school does not deal with unacceptable behaviour effectively. Inspectors asked students, observed behaviour during break times and reviewed records and concluded that the school operates a firm but fair system to ensure that students' learning is not disrupted.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stoke Park School and Community Technology College 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 243 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1090 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	23	168	69	16	7	3	1
The school keeps my child safe	72	30	161	66	8	3	2	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	51	21	151	62	18	7	6	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	19	162	67	16	7	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	51	21	165	68	12	5	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	43	18	162	67	19	8	3	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	15	162	67	26	11	4	2
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)	55	23	147	60	14	6	3	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	18	166	68	16	7	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	48	20	138	57	30	12	11	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	14	155	64	19	8	7	3
The school is led and managed effectively	38	16	161	66	20	8	6	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	62	26	160	66	12	5	5	2

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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. 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"> ■ 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.



24 September 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Stoke Park School and Community Technology College, Coventry, CV2 4JW

Thank you all very much for welcoming the inspectors and being helpful when we inspected your school recently. We reached conclusions that I would like to share with you.

Your school is a good school. The acting headteacher and other senior leaders are effective in ensuring that all staff share the common purpose of raising standards and improving your learning further. Their drive for improvement is seen in the most recent GCSE results which reflect a continuing, rising trend. We observed good teaching and learning in the majority of lessons we visited. Some of the teaching and learning were outstanding. Tracking data shows that, from your starting points, your achievement is good.

The school offers a good curriculum which is well matched to your needs and the care, guidance and support you receive are outstanding. The staff work hard to ensure that you are kept safe and your behaviour is good. Attendance is average compared to schools nationally. You make good contributions to school life and the local community and you enjoy participating in a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

The effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. In order to make it better than that, we have agreed with senior leaders that higher expectations should be set for teaching and learning. We have also asked that the tracking of students' progress is used robustly to make sure that all students reach their potential in the sixth form.

Although GCSE standards are rising, there has been a period of underperformance in mathematics. To improve further, we have asked senior leaders that the challenging targets set to raise standards are met through effective teaching and leadership. You can all play your part by rising to the challenges teachers set for you.

Best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Dilip Kadodwala

Her Majesty's Inspector

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