

# de Stafford School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	125308
<b>Local Authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	359884
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Raeside 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>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	810
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr. John Troake
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss. Caroline Longhurst
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 December 2007
<b>School address</b>	Burntwood Lane Caterham Surrey CR3 5YX
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspection team observed 36 teachers and 38 lessons, four of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at its analysis of student progress and attainment. Meetings were held with groups of students, members of the governing body, staff and a range of community partners. Inspectors also scrutinised the school development plan, policies, reports from the School Improvement Partner and records of school improvement work. They considered responses to questionnaires completed by 297 parents and carers, 99 students and 45 staff.

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

- The effectiveness and sustainability of strategies to raise attainment and improve rates of progress for all students.
- The impact of strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning and the use of assessment, with a particular focus on the learning and progress of girls and all groups in mathematics.
- The effectiveness of provision for more-able students and the impact on their achievement.
- The effectiveness of leaders at all levels in driving improvement in teaching, learning and students' outcomes.

## Information about the school

De Stafford School is a smaller than average Foundation school, serving the Surrey town of Caterham. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. The majority of students are from White British backgrounds. About half the national average speak English as an additional language. A slightly higher than average proportion of students are currently identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, most of which relate to either moderate learning needs or their behavioural, social and emotional development. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is just below average. The school has held specialist status for mathematics and computing since September 2009.

**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

De Stafford has made significant improvements since its last inspection and is now a good school. It provides a well-ordered, calm and safe community for students, who enjoy their learning and are making good progress. Strong and determined leadership has brought about improvements in key areas, such as the quality of teaching, and has reversed an historic pattern of low attainment. Attainment has risen steadily over the past three years and is now in line with national averages for overall GCSE results and for the proportion of students attaining five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C.

Students' good behaviour and above average attendance contribute well to their learning. They are effectively involved in the development of the school as a thriving community, for example through the de Stafford democracy and by working as representatives for their Social and Academic Mentoring (SAM) groups. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well cared for in the inclusion and nurture rooms and, as a result, they make good, or, in some cases, exceptional, progress. As one boy said, 'This school is limitless. It enables you to develop your talents no matter what they are.'

Systems to ensure the protection and safeguarding of students are particularly well developed. Senior leaders and the governing body have met or exceeded all statutory requirements in this area and have supported other schools by sharing good practice. Staff and students have a strong understanding of how to recognise signs of risk and stay safe.

Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now securing good progress for the great majority of students. Clear systems for gathering assessment data have been used well to set appropriate targets. Students generally know how well they are doing and how to improve, as a result of constructive feedback and well-tailored activities, although this is not consistent in all lessons. Systems are in place to identify and provide for more-able students, but the challenge for them is uneven across the school and not enough of them achieve the highest grades.

There is a good capacity for further improvement. Senior and middle leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. They demonstrate a shared and clear commitment to ongoing improvement and monitor teaching and outcomes routinely and rigorously. They have successfully overcome weaknesses through concerted action and have effectively communicated clear plans for further improvement.

Processes for managing the professional development of staff are well targeted and effective. Senior leaders have actively sought and developed partnerships to help improve the school's performance and standing in the community, as well as using de Stafford expertise to support others.

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Standards are not rising equally rapidly in all subjects, however, particularly in mathematics, where teaching is more variable. Progress for girls in mathematics has been highlighted as an area for improvement by the school and, despite some success, there is more to do to ensure that girls achieve as well as boys. The school's mathematics and computing specialism has been well used to support the development of information and communication technology in local primary schools, whose pupils move on to de Stafford. It has also helped to improve recruitment and stability in the mathematics department, but has not had enough impact beyond this initial priority, such as through cross-curricular enhancement of numeracy skills.

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

- Accelerate progress and raise attainment in mathematics, by:
  - increasing the proportion of good or better teaching
  - recognising the different needs of students, particularly girls, and tailoring lessons to meet these needs more effectively
  - providing all students with sufficient challenge and support to achieve their best
  - focusing on students' acquisition of basic skills in numeracy to enhance learning across the full range of subjects.
- Increase the proportion of A and A\* grades at GCSE by:
  - ensuring that activities in lessons support and challenge the most able
  - rigorously evaluating provision for more-able students to ensure that it has an impact on outcomes.
- Improve the quality of all assessment and feedback to be in line with best practice within the school, so that activities are well matched to meet the needs of all students and marking and feedback consistently support improvement.

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

**2**

In the large majority of lessons observed the quality of learning was good and students made good progress. Very positive relationships among students and between staff and students contribute to a purposeful atmosphere. Strategies to make students aware of how they are learning ensure that they take responsibility for their effective contribution to the lesson, as well as for the support of others. In the best lessons, this is extremely well supported by students' use of 'stop cards', prompting them to stop and think about how well they are doing and how they might progress faster.

The impact of good teaching and systems of tracking and intervention can be seen in the improved GCSE attainment in 2010. Progress overall exceeded expectations. From broadly average starting points, most groups of students made at least the expected progress and those entering the school with lower than average prior attainment made outstanding progress. Current progress of younger students indicates ongoing improvement, as do predictions for GCSE results, which are founded on proven tracking systems. The quality of learning provided through additional support and intervention is very good and lends confidence to students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who spoke of

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how they were making good progress because they feel treated as individuals and because school leaders, 'do not give up on you'.

Students' understanding of how to stay safe is well developed. They have a mature attitude to weighing up risks and deciding the safest course of action. They widely expressed the view that behaviour at de Stafford has improved enormously over recent years. Throughout the inspection they were welcoming, polite and courteous. They are responsive to adults monitoring and guiding their behaviour and their predominantly good behaviour in lessons supports their learning well. The very large majority of parents and carers and students responding to the inspection questionnaire agreed that the school deals well with unacceptable behaviour, evident in the calm atmosphere and falling rates of exclusion.

Students participate well in sports and other health-related activities and have a good understanding of how to stay healthy, evident in the healthy eating choices many make at break and lunchtime. Their involvement in choosing the school's catering service when it was first appointed is an example of their good contribution to the school community. Students eagerly take on roles of responsibility and the de Stafford democracy takes students' views directly to the governing body. They show community responsibility and awareness, even becoming involved, recently, in organising a protest against the demolition of an historic local building. Attendance is above average and the proportion of students who are persistently absent from school has fallen steadily to below the national average. Good moral and social understanding and responsible attitudes are preparing students for the next step in their education or for the world of work, although the basic skills to support this, particularly in numeracy, are less well developed. The bright green top hats and wigs sported by some for St Patrick's Day indicated students' eagerness to explore and widen their cultural understanding. Their thoughtful and empathic responses during a special assembly demonstrated that this went beyond the obvious fun.

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*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>	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
<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>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<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

## How effective is the provision?

In many lessons, there is a very successful emphasis on teaching specific skills for learning, as well as subject content. Where this is the case, students readily discuss how their personal learning and thinking skills are contributing to their good progress, for example by comparing and developing ideas with a partner or expecting to develop an answer by deeper thinking and a more detailed explanation. The best lessons also equip all students well, including the most able, to move to the next level or grade, by relating the learning directly to assessment criteria. Teachers give advice both verbally and in marking that clearly points the way to improvement and students confidently assess others' progress as well as their own. Following guidance about notation in a Year 7 music lesson, one boy voluntarily spoke up to encourage the whole class, saying, 'It's really not as difficult as you think it is, if you know these four notes, you can do it.'

While the majority of teaching is securing good progress, a minority of lessons remain no better than satisfactory. Where this is the case, it is often because the teacher has not planned effectively to secure the best progress for everyone through varied and appropriately tailored activities. In these lessons, pace sometimes slows because activities lack challenge or because the teacher does not check regularly for understanding and adapt the learning accordingly.

The curriculum is regularly reviewed to ensure that it meets the needs of all students. There is appropriate provision for a wide range of needs and interests, including work-

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related courses in construction and hair and beauty. Courses are very well adapted to meet the needs of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, with particularly effective liaison to ensure a smooth transition for these students from primary school. Strong partnerships, such as with Reigate College or through the Tandridge Confederation, enhance the school's capacity to offer a broad and balanced curriculum. A few parents and carers expressed concern that the place of modern foreign languages in the curriculum has weakened and inspectors agree with this view. The school has rightly made this a priority; uptake is set to rise and new leadership is in place. There is appropriate enhancement and extension for more-able students, such as the opportunity to study separate sciences at GCSE, but this is in its early stages. The link with Reigate College has been well used to raise awareness among younger students of the possibilities and expectations of A-level courses.

Students are known as individuals in this small school. They appreciate the 'repair and rebuild' sessions that have replaced detentions and the restorative justice approach to resolving conflict. Both of these innovations characterise the school's caring ethos. The school can point to examples of young people at risk continuing in education as a result of its careful intervention. Students receive good advice and guidance to inform their future choices. During the inspection, a highly engaging and interactive session on study skills for Year 11 students provided outstanding support for their examination-readiness and confidence.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher and senior leaders have effectively developed a climate of success by communicating high expectations of learning and achievement to both students and staff. Teaching has improved as a result of rigorous and routine monitoring and a strong sense of shared accountability. Targets and plans for further improvement are realistic, challenging, and carefully evaluated for impact. Middle leaders share the headteacher's vision for the school to be highly successful and at the heart of the Caterham community. One said, 'We feel highly accountable but we have a significant amount of freedom.' All could point to ways in which they had identified, targeted and remedied underachievement and said that they were proud to be part of the school's increasing success and improvement.

The governing body provides effective support and challenge to the school, drawing from a range of experience and expertise. It complies fully with statutory requirements, including ensuring the safety of students and staff. The governing body has a clear



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understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is fully involved in its evaluation. It has worked closely with school leaders to ensure that the school provides good value for money. The school bursar considers all budget expenditure in terms of its impact on student outcomes.

Attendance at parents' evenings is very high and a traffic light feedback system is an innovative way of keeping in touch with parents' and carers' views. The parent network group provides an effective forum for consultation. A wide range of community partners met with inspectors to commend de Stafford's growing community status. Students are widely involved, from setting up a new youth centre to helping plant a crocus maze as part of the Rotary 'Focus on the Crocus' charity to end polio. The school's promotion of community cohesion is particularly well developed locally and within the school community. Wider partnerships, with schools in very different contexts, as well as with a school in Africa, enhance students' understanding of the wider world and more diverse United Kingdom communities.

Students from different backgrounds get on well together and there is little variation in their rates of progress. The school has systems to track and analyse the progress of different groups although these need sharpening to ensure that equality of outcome is monitored and maintained. The school has correctly targeted its actions on the underperformance of girls in mathematics and provision for more-able students.

*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>2</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Views of parents and carers

A higher than average proportion of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. The very large majority of them are happy with their child's experience at de Stafford. Most agreed that the school keeps their children safe and informs them about progress. A few expressed concerns about behaviour, but a very large majority agreed

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that the school deals well with unacceptable behaviour and evidence seen during the inspection supported this view.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at de Stafford 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 297 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 789 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	100	34	177	60	16	5	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	117	39	169	57	8	3	1	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	146	49	133	45	13	4	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	122	41	150	51	20	7	4	1
The teaching is good at this school	102	34	172	58	15	5	3	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	78	26	171	58	42	14	3	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	53	18	192	65	44	15	2	1
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)	97	33	167	56	18	6	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	88	30	175	59	28	9	3	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	91	31	175	59	19	6	6	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	47	16	202	68	20	7	9	3
The school is led and managed effectively	100	34	170	57	21	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	136	46	140	47	15	5	2	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

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"><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 pupils' 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.**



17 March 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of de Stafford School, Caterham, Surrey, CR3 5YX**

Thank you for the extremely warm welcome you gave us during the recent inspection of your school. You told us that your school has improved a great deal in recent years and we agree that it is a good school. We were very impressed with your good behaviour during the inspection and with how much you enjoy your learning. You are particularly good at using your personal learning and thinking (PLT) skills to work together productively, as well as to challenge each other.

GCSE results are improving strongly, because of good teaching, which is ensuring that more of you are making good progress in your lessons. This is helped by the way you use advice and marking from your teachers to move to the next stage in your learning.

Many of you are taking responsibility within and beyond school, for example by working as SAM representatives or being part of the de Stafford democracy. This is helping to improve the reputation of your school and shows that you care about issues beyond your immediate experience.

Although many things have improved at de Stafford, more can be done. We have asked your teachers to focus on mathematics, to make sure that learning and progress for all of you in maths is improving as quickly as in other subjects. We would also like to see the best assessment and marking used equally well in every lesson, so that all of you are challenged to make excellent progress and many more of you achieve the highest grades at GCSE.

You can help by:

- continuing to work hard and act on the advice teachers give you to improve your work
- making sure you know your targets and how to improve in every lesson and asking if you are unsure
- using those PLT skills to help you think about how you can progress faster and to develop excellent team work.

Yours sincerely

Christine Raeside

Her Majesty's Inspector

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