

Paulet High School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 124391 |
| Local Authority | Staffordshire |
| Inspection number | 359653 |
| Inspection dates | 16–17 March 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | Davinder Dosanjh HMI |

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

| | |
|--|---|
| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 11–19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 705 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 76 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Steve Jackson |
| Headteacher | Tracy Rees |
| Date of previous school inspection | 7 May 2008 |
| School address | Violet Way Stapenhill, Burton-on-Trent DE15 9RT |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. This included observing 26 teachers, visiting 26 lessons and observing two assemblies. Three of the lessons were observed jointly with a senior leader. Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, groups of students, representatives of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at progress tracking, performance data, students' work, numerous policies and school documents. The inspection team received 137 completed questionnaires from parents and carers and scrutinised questionnaires completed by students and staff.

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

- How rigorously is the sixth form monitored and evaluated to bring about sustained improvements in outcomes for students?
- How effective is teaching in meetings the needs of different students, in particular lower attaining students?
- How successful has the school been in improving spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students since the last inspection?
- How rigorous is self-evaluation at all levels of leadership and management in monitoring and improving performance?

Information about the school

This smaller-than-average school makes joint sixth form provision with Blessed Robert Sutton Catholic Sports College at the Stapenhill Post-16 Centre. In 2006, the school became a specialist mathematics and computing school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is similar to the national average as is the proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The majority of students are from a White British heritage. The school has been awarded Investors in People and has gained 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Paulet High is a good school. It provides a calm, pleasant and orderly environment. The school has high ambitions for its students and has continued to improve. Relationships between students and staff are good and the school promotes a trusting ethos, where concerns can easily be shared. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are good and on a few occasions outstanding. Students enjoy school, feel safe and have increasing opportunities for involvement in school life through the Young Ambassadors and peer mentoring schemes, 'Takeover Day' and planning for the forthcoming school fair. Staff know each student well and they are given very effective care, guidance and support throughout their time at school. The school provides good support for students from potentially vulnerable circumstances where close attention is made to their needs. Parents are also very positive about the school and comment 'there is a friendly and caring atmosphere and my son is very happy here' and also 'staff are friendly and approachable'.

Attainment, while average overall, has risen significantly since 2008. All groups of students make good progress. The proportion of students who gain five or more A* to C passes including English and mathematics improved substantially in 2010 to 60%, representing the school's best ever results. The quality of learning is good because teachers have high expectations of what students can do in lessons; they offer many opportunities for discussion, pair and group work. Assessment information is used very effectively at whole-school and subject level to set challenging targets, and prioritise support for individuals who are falling behind, but it is not always used consistently in lessons. The school community is cohesive and is working effectively to build links with the wider community. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. Improvements have been made in developing the national and international dimensions but planning and evaluation are at too early a stage to provide more than limited evidence of impact.

Curriculum provision is good and offers an assortment of courses to meet students' needs. There are vocationally designed courses and specific courses for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school's specialist mathematics and computing status makes an impressive contribution to raising attainment and achievement. It is helping to raise the proportion of students obtaining five or more good GCSEs and provides many benefits through the curriculum.

The sixth form provides a satisfactory quality of education, and students are provided with many opportunities for good personal development. A number of new initiatives have been implemented with the aim of improving achievement and these are beginning to show improvements in attendance, the number of students staying on and results in module examinations. However, teaching and learning is not monitored or evaluated with sufficient rigour to bring about strategic improvements.

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Good leadership and management and teamwork are driving forward improvements. These factors have already been influential in improving GCSE results, improving overall attendance and ensuring more teaching is consistently good. Monitoring and evaluation of aspects of the school's work are rigorous and self-evaluation is accurate. The school has a good track record of continuous improvement. Subject leadership has been strengthened and an active teaching and learning group demonstrate good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement in the sixth form by:
 - working closely with the partner school to ensure robust systems are in place to monitor teaching and learning
 - ensure schemes of work provide opportunities for independent learning
 - ensuring effective action is taken promptly in response to evaluations of the effectiveness of teaching.
 - Ensure more teaching is consistently outstanding by:
 - using the school's rigorous assessment data to set appropriate challenge for all students so they get off to a flying start in lessons
 - using the teaching and learning group to share outstanding practice and ideas.
 - Evaluate the work undertaken by the school to promote community cohesion by:
 - monitoring and evaluating the action plan
 - strengthening national and international links.

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

Since the previous inspection, there has been a strong improvement in the standards reached by students by the end of Key Stage 4. By 2010, attainment, overall, had risen from a low starting point, in 2008, to be similar to national averages for all students. In particular, the percentage of students who gained higher grades in mathematics and single science qualifications was above the national averages, and the proportion of students reaching the highest grades in these subjects was significantly above those achieved nationally. Given their starting points, which are below average, most students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. The school has a proven track record of accurate predictions and its current tracking data indicate that standards will, at least, be maintained, and that students of all abilities are making good progress towards challenging targets. This view was confirmed in lesson observations by inspectors where students' positive attitudes and evident enjoyment make a strong contribution to their good learning and progress. As a result, they achieve well during their time at the school. Students collaborate and discuss issues sensibly in groups, pairs or as a whole class. They settle to work promptly and teachers make frequent checks on learning and use a variety of tasks to ensure students are fully engaged.

Students' wider personal development is good. They are aware of staff expectations and are quick to comply with adults' requests resulting in good behaviour in lessons. Students

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understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and there is good participation in a range of extra-curricular sporting clubs. They are keen to take on extra responsibilities so they can make a positive contribution to their own school and wider community. Year 11 students act as prefects and students have visited a local care home to cook for the residents. Monitoring and promotion of attendance has tightened up, which is contributing to attendance levels that are above average. The development of work-based skills is enhanced by the range of vocational courses and lessons provide ample possibilities for collaborative work; problem-solving; evaluation of evidence; independent work and students usually make good use of these opportunities. Students benefit from a wealth of opportunities to enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, particularly through assembly. Students cooperate well with each other and show tolerance of differences and cultural diversity.

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 | 2 |
| 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?

Students' positive attitudes and behaviour are key features in the majority of lessons and make a strong contribution to their good learning. Teachers and students enjoy warm relationships in a climate conducive to learning. In the most successful lessons, for example, an outstanding Year 10 mathematics lesson, a range of imaginative activities engaged and motivated students. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace and students of all abilities make at least good progress. Teaching and learning are good overall. In a

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minority of lessons, teachers talk for too long and the pace of students' learning is slow. In all lessons, students are aware of their levels and targets. Good practice in marking and feedback was observed, for example in English. However, sometimes marking is less effective because of minor inconsistencies in the application of the school's assessment procedures.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and appropriately revised to ensure that it provides suitable pathways for students with different abilities. Specialist subjects have raised standards and statistics GCSE is a popular and inclusive option. A good range of enrichment opportunities are available for students, especially sports-related activities. Sports, including badminton & trampolining are especially popular.

Arrangements for the care of students are well organised and have been improved

- since the last inspection. The heads of year are now responsible for academic progress whereas behaviour support officers pick up day-to-day issues in terms of behaviour and general support. These support officers are rated highly by students and are a central focus for students raising concerns. Transition arrangements are thorough. Links are made in Year 6 at an early stage particularly for the most vulnerable. Careers advice and guidance is well structured at each key stage. The relationships with outside agencies are good, advice is sought and appropriate actions are taken to support both the individuals and their family.

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 | 2 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's significant improved performance in 2010 is confirmation of the success of leadership and management at all levels in embedding ambition and developing confidence in the strategies being used. Staff morale is high and there is a strong sense of purpose amongst staff. The school is meeting and exceeding challenging targets with rigorous tracking in place to check on students' progress. The tracking of data is an effective monitoring tool to support improvement. Clear lines have been established so that performance is carefully scrutinised by senior and middle leaders. There is a relentless focus on teaching and learning, so teachers have high expectations of how students will work and behave. Senior leaders have an accurate and informed view of the quality of teaching and a detailed database is informing future improvements.

The governing body understands the journey of the school and provides challenge and support. It is well informed and is well placed to drive further improvements. The school's arrangements for ensuring the safety of its students are fully in place. All staff receive

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relevant training in school and the school adopts recommended good practice across many areas of its work. There are good relationships with outside agencies to ensure the welfare of students. A wide range of partnerships promote students' academic and personal well-being. The joint arrangements for the sixth form provide good value for money. The school enjoys highly positive relationships with most groups of parents and carers. There is regular communication and additional support from behaviour support officers and the attendance officer.

The school demonstrates a strong commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity, which has resulted in the significant improvement in the performance of all groups. Any unevenness between groups is reducing because of rigorous monitoring of student performance and appropriate interventions to support students. The school has taken forward its work on promoting community cohesion effectively but has not yet fully evaluated actions, some of which are still new.

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 | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Sixth form

Students enter the sixth form with levels of attainment that are below average. Standards, while continually improving, are lower than national averages. Based on their starting points, students make satisfactory progress. Teaching and learning are satisfactory but are not monitored or evaluated with sufficient rigour to bring about strategic improvements. In the past, the curriculum was not sufficiently broad enough to cater for the low ability of some of the students entering the sixth form. This resulted in high levels of drop out rates from Year 12 into 13. The school has now addressed this with the introduction of vocational courses at appropriate levels and ensured students are given better advice and guidance with regards entry requirements for AS and A levels. Care, guidance and support for the personal well-being of students are good. Support for students entering higher

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education is very effective. Sixth form students are good role models to younger ones, they all complete an hour community project. The vast majority work within the school supporting students in lower years.

Leadership and management of the sixth form are good. New systems to tackle key areas of weakness are increasingly showing impact. Consequently outcomes are improving strongly. There is detailed tracking and monitoring of student progress with appropriate intervention strategies. Regular meetings with the partner school are effective in managing and improving the joint provision.

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 | 2 |

Views of parents and carers

A large majority of parents and carers who responded are happy with their children's experience at Paulet High School. A small minority felt more could be done to encourage their children to have a healthy lifestyle and to support them in their children's learning. Inspectors judged healthy lifestyles as good. The lead inspector had a detailed discussion with the headteacher about the results of the questionnaires to inform the school's future work.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Paulet High 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 137 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 825 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 39 | 28 | 91 | 66 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 50 | 36 | 81 | 59 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 41 | 30 | 77 | 56 | 15 | 11 | 3 | 2 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 36 | 26 | 90 | 66 | 10 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 40 | 29 | 88 | 64 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 26 | 19 | 88 | 64 | 22 | 16 | 1 | 1 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 20 | 15 | 89 | 65 | 22 | 16 | 1 | 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) | 44 | 32 | 82 | 60 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 42 | 31 | 77 | 56 | 12 | 9 | 2 | 1 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 38 | 28 | 82 | 60 | 9 | 7 | 2 | 1 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 30 | 22 | 84 | 61 | 10 | 7 | 2 | 1 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 37 | 27 | 81 | 59 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 52 | 38 | 74 | 54 | 7 | 5 | 1 | 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).

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">■ 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.



18 March 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Paulet High School, Burton-on-Trent, DE15 9RT

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome at your school. We all enjoyed talking with you and you helped us to find out about your school. The school provides you with a good quality of education. The staff work well as a team and have achieved many improvements. The school achieved its best ever GCSE results in 2010. Here are some good things we found out about it.

The school is a calm, pleasant and orderly environment.

Relationships between students and staff are good and the school promotes a trusting ethos, where concerns can easily be shared.

You enjoy school, feel safe and behave well.

Staff know each student well and work hard to care for and support you.

Students from potentially vulnerable circumstances are served well by the good attention the school gives to their needs.

Curriculum provision is good and offers a variety of courses to meet your needs.

The school's specialist status in mathematics and computing is helping to raise the proportion of you obtaining five or more good GCSEs and provides many benefits through the curriculum.

The teaching is good.

We have asked school to make the following improvements.

Improve achievement in the sixth form.

Ensure more teaching is consistently outstanding.

Strengthen national and international links.

We wish you all the very best in your studies and every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Davinder Dosanjh

Her Majesty's Inspector

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