

The Stourport High School and Sixth Form Centre

Minster Road, Stourport-on-Severn, DY13 8AX

Inspection dates 26–27 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The school's motto of 'Be the best you can be' is evident in all aspects of its work.
- Students' achievement is outstanding. They are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their lives.
- Teaching is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations, strong subject knowledge and match planned learning activities to the needs of different groups of students. They know how well students are doing during lessons and adapt their teaching as necessary. These and other features ensure that students make excellent progress.
- The sixth form is outstanding. This is because of a combination of students' progress and their success in progressing to further and higher education, training or employment.
- The behaviour and safety of students are outstanding. Students have excellent attitudes to learning and share school leaders' high expectations for conduct and courtesy. They feel very safe in school because of the mutually respectful and supportive atmosphere.
- Leaders and managers are outstandingly effective in ensuring that students achieve to the best of their ability. There is a relentless and highly successful drive to improve the quality of teaching which is linked directly to the management of teachers' performance. The governing body holds the school to account very well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 38 lessons and made shorter visits to a number of lessons across the two days.
- Meetings were held with students, representatives of the governing body, teachers, teaching assistants and school leaders.
- Inspectors took account of the 12 responses received to the online questionnaire (Parent View). The school’s recent surveys of parents and carers were considered in detail.
- Inspectors also observed the school’s work, looked at a number of documents, including those relating to the school’s data on progress, planning, safeguarding, monitoring and development, and records relating to behaviour and attendance. A sample of students’ work was also reviewed.

Inspection team

James McNeillie, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Jane Ladner

Additional inspector

Helen Owen

Additional inspector

Michael Marks

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Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school. It takes students from the town of Stourport-on-Severn and surrounding areas.
- The school converted to academy status in August 2011. It has specialisms in language and sport.
- The academy predecessor school, The Stourport High School and Sixth Form Centre, was last inspected in January 2009 and judged to be an outstanding school.
- The school is a Teaching School and the Principal is a National Leader of Education, supporting other secondary and primary schools as well as the local short-stay pupil referral unit, Forest Oak.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is broadly average, and the proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- A broadly average proportion of students is known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and students known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school exceeds the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations of students' levels of attainment and progress.
- The school is part of the 'ContinU Trust' of local secondary schools and other partners that work together to share educational provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the existing innovative practice in teaching continues to be shared and developed across all subjects and key stages.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- The quality of learning is outstanding. Students have a keen desire to learn and a willingness to contribute. There are excellent relationships between students and teachers.
- Lessons are geared towards maximising learning. In a Year 8 English lesson, students made quick progress, in part due to their enthusiasm and ability to reflect on their learning. In a Year 11 physical education lesson, students skilfully applied their prior knowledge to support their development as sports leaders. They showed a sharp awareness of what was needed, thorough preparation and high levels of motivation.
- Many of the lowest-attaining students have levels in reading which are below their chronological age when they enter the school. A range of approaches and the promotion of reading for all have a strong impact on supporting these students and helping them to develop their reading skills. As a result, they learn to read well in all subjects.
- The proportion of students achieving five GCSEs including English and mathematics at grade C or above rose from above-average levels in 2011 to well-above average levels in 2012. Attainment in modern foreign languages, one of the school's specialisms, has been consistently well above the national average. Attainment in science has risen sharply and this trend is continuing for students currently in the school. Students make excellent progress in mathematics, and progress in English is also outstanding.
- Students apply their well-developed reading, writing, communication and mathematical skills very well in other subjects.
- All groups of students are making rapid and sustained progress. The achievement of those students eligible for the pupil premium is excellent and has improved sharply across the last two academic years. Well-judged use of the available funding has been a significant factor in this, as have the very careful tracking of these students' progress and the successful academic and personal interventions. Students who attend courses not at the school for part of the week also make excellent progress.
- Individual students who are disabled and those who have special educational needs also achieve very well. This is as a result of early diagnosis of need, high-quality teaching, extremely effective individual academic and personal support, and the school's exceptionally aspirational culture.
- In the sixth form, students' achievement is outstanding. Few drop out of courses and this contributes very well to their overall success. They make the quickest progress in applied courses. Much outstanding learning was observed in lessons, with students showing high levels of independence, engagement and development in their skills and understanding.
- The high number of students who progress to further or higher education, employment or training at the end of Year 11 and Year 13 is a key indicator of their excellent achievement at school.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teachers have very good knowledge of the subjects they teach and the strategies that are

most effective in ensuring the highest quality of learning. Much of the teaching is innovative.

- Students at various stages of learning a modern foreign language are supported in gaining a wider breadth of vocabulary through the use of well-chosen information and communication technology (ICT) tools.
- Teachers skilfully pose questions which require students to apply their knowledge and provide detailed responses that considerably extend and develop their thinking.
- In the lessons observed during the inspection, a number of features were consistently used to make teaching outstanding. These included skilfully planned lessons that engaged students and helped to challenge and support the range of abilities.
- Often, there is very effective assessment of how well students are learning, and teachers make adjustments to their teaching as a result. Teachers have high expectations and these aspirations are shared by students and encourage them to strive for excellence.
- Teaching in the sixth form is challenging and well paced. In a sixth form chemistry lesson, the teacher's thorough planning was used flexibly to ensure that students' needs were met very well and, therefore, enabled them to make rapid progress. There was an excellent balance of teacher and student input to the lesson and the students were able to demonstrate the depth of their understanding through discussion.
- The opportunities students have to reflect on their work and the careful and specific guidance given by teachers, means that they know what they need to do to improve. Even at this early stage in the school year, there were examples of students responding to their teachers' marking and improving their skills as a result.
- Excellent relationships in the classroom, the willingness to contribute to discussion, and students being expected to justify their thinking make a significant contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school is improving the quality of teaching even further by ensuring innovative approaches are more widespread across key stages and the curriculum. The range of high-quality training and development opportunities available to teachers is making this possible.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Highly supportive relationships are at the heart of students' outstanding behaviour. In lessons, there is a desire to learn, and when students work in groups or independently they do so with purpose. This supports them in developing knowledge and skills quickly.
 - Students are self-motivating. For example, they get to lessons on time without being prompted by a bell or staff, and sixth form students are extremely productive in how they use independent study time.
 - Students share the school's high expectations of conduct and courtesy around the site, all of which contributes to the positive, reassuring environment of the school.
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- When individual students struggle to meet the school's high expectations, decisive and successful action is taken to address these issues.
- Students talk with confidence about different types of bullying, including homophobic, racist and cyber-bullying. They are clear that bullying is rare and dealt with quickly when it does occur.
- All groups of students, including those new to the school, feel safe. The school's own surveys of parents and carers show they agree. One student told an inspector how she felt much happier and safer now she was at this school.
- Key Stage 3 students were able to explain in detail the potential dangers of social media and how to keep safe while using it. This strong awareness of what risks they face as young adults and how to keep safe is shared by groups of students across the school.
- The attendance of students and groups of students is above average.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The Principal's relentless drive for improvement and high expectations in all aspects of the school's work are exceptional, and shared by all who work at the school. Successes are celebrated and the question of 'What next?' is ever present; complacency has no place. Responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire were overwhelmingly supportive of the leadership and direction of the school.
 - Forensic and continuous self-evaluation means leaders know precisely what actions need to be taken to strengthen further the achievement of students.
 - The monitoring of all aspects of students' achievement and personal development is exemplary. When any areas of underachievement are identified, actions are taken swiftly and with quick success. This is particularly evident in the narrowing of gaps in achievement between those students eligible for the pupil premium and their peers, as well as for disabled students and those who have special educational needs. These are key features of the school's success in ensuring equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination.
 - The management of teachers' performance is rigorous, with salary progression closely linked to the progress made by students. An extensive range of evidence is taken into account when making judgements on the quality of teaching and this is used to identify crucial next steps for the whole teaching staff or individual teachers.
 - The leadership to improve the quality of teaching is at the heart of the school's success. Teachers are constantly challenged to improve. In order to help them do so, many training opportunities are available, including short, focused 'breakfast booster' and 'tea-time taster' sessions as well as other highly effective coaching and training sessions. The impact of the Teaching School status has been integral to these developments and is encouraging innovative teaching practice.
 - An excellent curriculum, including in the sixth form, is supporting students' outstanding achievement. It is regularly reviewed to take into account the needs of the students and national priorities and is adapted as necessary, including offering work-based learning when appropriate. The offer of three modern foreign languages is part of this curricular breadth
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and makes a significant contribution to students' cultural development. Extra-curricular activities, including links with international schools and others in Britain, widen students' experiences.

- Excellent partnerships exist with other schools, as part of the Teaching School status, and with a range of agencies including children's charities. The school's membership of a wider groups of schools enables students, when necessary, to attend courses outside the school. There are strong procedures in place to ensure high-quality learning on these courses.

- **The governance of the school:**
 - ensures statutory responsibilities, including those for safeguarding, are met
 - is very well informed of the school's strengths and the next steps in its development, and asks searching questions of senior leaders to hold them to account
 - has an excellent awareness of how well the school promotes and ensures equality of opportunity in terms of students' achievement and personal development
 - has rigorous approaches to ensure that the management of teachers' performance, including that of the Principal, is both robust and supportive of improvement.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137162
Local authority	Not applicable
Inspection number	395562

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
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	1329
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reg Knott
Headteacher	Liz Quinn (Principal)
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
Telephone number	01299 872950
Fax number	01299 827972
Email address	office@shs.worcs.sch.uk

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