

Ken Stimpson Community School

Staniland Way, Werrington, Peterborough, PE4 6JT

Inspection dates 10–11 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- GCSE results have not been good in all subjects, and progress is not consistently good in all year groups because teaching varies.
- Teachers do not use all the information they have available to match learning activities to the needs and abilities of their students.
- Some teachers talk for too long at the beginning of lessons and do not allow students to work on their own enough.
- Marking is not regular enough, and does not give students enough guidance on how to improve their work.

The school has the following strengths

- Students currently in the school are making better progress and are on track to reach higher standards.
- The behaviour of students is good. Their attitudes to learning are very positive and the good relationships between teachers and students contribute strongly to improving achievement.
- Students feel safe in the school and have a good awareness of the dangers and risks they might face. Incidents of bullying are rare and are dealt with effectively.
- The school makes everyone feel welcome. In recent years, large numbers of students have joined the school after Year 7 and they have integrated into school life extremely well.
- The sixth form is good. Students make good progress as a result of good and improving teaching and the wide range of subjects on offer.
- Leaders, managers and governors are doing a good job. They have improved behaviour and students' achievement in English. The quality of teaching is improving and the school has a good learning atmosphere.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 46 lessons, of which 11 were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team made a number of shorter visits to lessons to look at specific things and they listened to students reading.
- Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, four groups of students and school staff, including middle leaders and senior leaders.
- Inspectors took account of the 48 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection.
- 44 staff questionnaires were received and inspectors considered the responses to these.
- They observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including documentation about how the school manages and improves teaching and decides on pay, records relating to attendance, behaviour and the monitoring of the quality of teaching, minutes of governors’ meetings and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Simon Blackburn, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Genevieve Usher	Additional Inspector
Jalil Shaikh	Additional Inspector
Lynn Lowery	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is well above average and the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium is close to the national average.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is above average, as is the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language.
- A high number of students join the school in different year groups or partway through the academic year.
- The school provides work-related education for some of its Year 10 and 11 students through Peterborough Regional College, and has formal arrangements with other providers to extend the subjects students can take in the sixth form.
- The school meets current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and improve achievement by ensuring that teachers:
 - use all available information to closely match learning activities to the abilities and needs of students
 - offer all students opportunities for independent learning early in lessons
 - give students regular, high-quality feedback that recognises what they have done well and provides achievable steps to help them improve
 - allow students time and encourage them to reflect on and respond to teachers' comments about their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement is getting better, but it is not yet good because teaching does not always challenge students enough. When students' work does not demand enough from them, they learn more slowly and so their long-term progress is not as rapid.
- Standards vary from year to year. Sometimes students join the school during Year 10 and 11 with low standards or at the early stages of learning English, and this can affect results. Standards are generally a little below average. Standards have varied between subjects because students have made progress at different rates, but the school has had some success in improving this.
- In 2011, the proportion of Year 11 students making the progress that is expected nationally, or doing better than this, was above average in mathematics but well below in English. The school worked very hard to improve rates of progress in English and in 2012 a much higher proportion of students made or exceeded expected progress in English. Concerted action by leaders and managers has also ensured that achievement in some other subjects, for example, business studies and geography, has improved significantly.
- Progress of some groups of students, for example, higher ability students and those supported by the pupil premium, has also improved. These students make progress at the same rate as their peers. Current students are making progress at the same rate as is typical nationally. There is some good progress but it is not fully consistent across subjects and year groups.
- Students who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language are well supported by a specialist team of teachers, intervention tutors and teaching assistants. As a result of this, and additional funds for technical bilingual dictionaries allocated through the pupil premium, these students make rapid gains in language skills and are able to learn well in all main school lessons. In general, students from minority ethnic backgrounds make progress that is similar to other students in the school.
- Students' literacy skills are well developed as a result of a clear focus, consistently applied by all teachers across the school. Students read, and read aloud in many subjects across the curriculum and do so with confidence and fluency. Students are given the opportunity to develop their skills in communication and mathematics in many subjects.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are helped by the cross-subject approach to literacy and also supported by tutors and teaching assistants. Where they have support they make good progress, but in a few whole-class lessons their progress can be slower when work does not fully meet their needs.
- Learning and progress in the sixth form are good as a result of the high level of individual challenge presented to students. Students in Years 10 and 11 who attend work-related courses off the school's site achieve well, as their progress and attendance are monitored closely by school managers.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Senior and middle leaders have had a strong focus on the quality of teaching over recent years and have secured significant improvements. However there remain some inconsistencies where identified good practice is not fully applied. Teaching is not yet good because work is not always demanding enough and because the good marking and feedback in some classes is not consistent across all. Teaching is, however, good in the sixth form.

- Sometimes, teachers do not take enough account of students' starting points and the level of challenge is not sufficiently targeted to ensure that all students are learning new and difficult things. As a result, the progress of some students slows or is not sustained. In more effective lessons, teachers use all the information they have about students' past learning to plan lessons that challenge them at the correct level, ensuring they make progress from the very start of the lesson.
- Another reason work does not always demand enough of students is that they are not always given enough opportunities to explore their own learning or to get involved in study on their own. Sometimes teachers talk for too long at the start of lessons; this means more active learning is delayed so students are not fully engaged.
- Students say that the quality of teaching they receive is variable, but better in the sixth form, and that marking is of inconsistent quality. Inspectors found this to be the case. In the sixth form, class sizes are generally small and teachers make good use of this by questioning individual students and challenging them at every opportunity.
- In the best assessment and marking seen, students received very detailed feedback which also required them to consider and respond to the teacher's guidance or to extend their learning through more challenging tasks. However, this level of challenge and reflection is not consistent across subjects. Marking is occasionally too infrequent or does not give students clear guidance on how they can improve their work.
- There are examples of excellent teaching. In an outstanding Year 7 poetry lesson oral feedback was rapid and accurate so that students could articulate precisely what they needed to do to improve. Skilful questioning explored how emotional responses to different poems might depend on the students' social background, so developing their spiritual and cultural awareness.
- Parents and carers feel that their children are taught well at the school and inspectors saw signs of improving teaching in many subjects. This is reflected in the better progress students are making and in the rising standards of students currently in the school. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally strong.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- During the inspection students behaved very well around the school, and showed courtesy and good manners to visitors, staff and to one another. In lessons, students have positive attitudes to learning, arriving punctually and settling to work quickly.
 - A very large majority of parents and carers agreed that the school makes sure its students are well behaved and students themselves generally echoed this view. One Year 7 student was highly positive about behaviour at the school and said that this is a 'safe, healthy and happy' school.
 - Almost all parents agree that the school deals effectively with bullying, and inspection evidence and discussions with students do not reveal concerns about it. Students are aware of the different forms of bullying and how to keep themselves safe.
 - Senior and middle leaders have invested a great deal of time in revising policies for exclusion and internal seclusion (where students are in school but separated from their usual classes). The successful use of restorative justice, mentoring and 'talk time', used to modify behaviour have resulted in a significant reduction in fixed-term exclusions and in repeat internal exclusions,
 - The school routinely analyses behaviour information to identify patterns and to celebrate
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improvements so that any problems are quickly identified and steps taken to do something about them.

- Attendance is improving and is now broadly in line with national averages as a result of the success of the positive strategies the school has introduced to encourage students to come to school.

The leadership and management are good

- The principal, senior leaders and governors have a clear vision of how they want the school to be, and this has the improvement of teaching and learning at its heart. They have had a good impact in improving the school in some areas: behaviour and has improved and improvements to teaching and changes to the literacy strategy have ensured standards have risen in English.
 - Senior leaders and the governing body have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school through well-structured self-evaluation activities. For example, the school has an accurate system that tracks the progress of students, and leaders check on learning in lessons and identify how teaching should improve. The weaknesses that are identified through self-evaluation feed into carefully-designed improvement strategies that are having a good impact on achievement, for example in the 2012 results for Year 11.
 - The school can show evidence of ways checks on lessons and follow-up work have been successful in improving teaching. However, leaders at all levels are well aware of the need for greater consistency to ensure that the improvements are fully successful in all subjects and year groups. At the moment, areas for improvement are accurately identified but not followed through with consistent rigour in every subject area. The school has tightened its management systems to address this.
 - The more formal performance management process (which assesses how well teachers are doing and reviews their pay) is well structured. It effectively links the identified needs of teachers to good quality training, and teachers find it to be a supportive system that helps them improve what they do.
 - The curriculum is good and is flexible enough to be amended for individuals. The school offers choices of subjects that provide a good match to students' needs and abilities. For example the curriculum is adjusted effectively for those students requiring additional literacy support in Key Stage 3.
 - The school's leaders, including governors, have a clear strategy for the support allocated to students known to be eligible for the pupil premium. From the £65,000 allocated, the school uses £3000, with matched funding from other sources, to support literacy improvements through a summer school, as well as funding nurture groups for vulnerable students and a supervised after-hours study club.
 - The students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strongly supported by a rich programme of activities, trips and visits.
 - Partnerships are a strong feature of the school's work and the 'Fruitful Project' is an excellent example of the impact these have on learning, particularly students' social development. Students have planted and tended an orchard in the school grounds and Year 11 students were observed teaching primary pupils from three local schools how to look after the trees that they were going to help them plant in their own orchards later in the term.
 - The local authority provides effective support through the work of the senior school
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improvement adviser.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors provide outstanding support and challenge. They actively seek performance information and gather first-hand evidence on which to base their evaluations and decisions.
 - They have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, the community it serves and the needs of its students. This ensures they make the right decisions about what the school should do.
 - Governors are financially astute and have a clear understanding of the allocation of school resources, including the pupil premium.
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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	110882
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	405309

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	1054
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	184
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bridget Holland
Principal	Richard Lord
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2010
Telephone number	01733 765950
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