

King Edward VI High School

Westway, Stafford, ST17 9YJ

Inspection dates

9–10 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Although standards in English and mathematics are rising, not enough middle-attaining students make good or better progress because work is not always challenging enough.
- The sixth form requires improvement; achievement is improving but, as in the main school, not all students are making consistently good progress.
- Whilst there is some good and outstanding practice, there is too much variation in the quality of teaching; the quality of marking is variable and does not always help students understand how to improve.
- Senior leaders are developing systems to accurately monitor the quality of teaching and progress of students but actions taken have not been effective enough in eliminating areas of weakness across all subjects.
- Students who are eligible for the pupil premium have poorer attendance and make less progress than their peers.

The school has the following strengths

- Sixth form results have improved for the last three years.
- Students are provided with many opportunities to work independently.
- Students conduct themselves politely and responsibly around the school site and behave well in lessons.
- Behaviour is good and students say they feel safe in school. Parents agree that the school looks after pupils well.
- Attendance is well above national averages and continuing to improve. Exclusion rates are low.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 51 lessons, of which seven were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, the Chair and vice chair of the Governing Body and groups of students. Inspectors also spoke with many students informally, in lessons and around the school.
- Telephone conversations were held with the local authority and a parent.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including assessment data showing achievement over time, school improvement plans, monitoring documentation and records related to behaviour and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of 53 responses from Parent View and the questionnaires completed for the inspection by 51 staff.

Inspection team

Deborah James, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Patrick Walsh	Additional Inspector
Hermione Horn	Additional Inspector
Patricia Hunt	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- King Edward VI High School is an average-sized secondary school with a sixth form.
- The majority of students are of White British heritage and only a small number of students are from minority-ethnic backgrounds or speak English as a second language.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is a little above average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is above average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or who are disabled or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards which define the minimum expectations for students' progress and attainment.
- Sixth form provision is part of a consortium arrangement with local schools and Stafford College.
- Some students in Year 10 and 11 undertake alternative courses at Stafford College and a local training provider.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure students make at least good progress from their starting points, particularly those who are middle attaining on entry, those eligible for free school meals and those in the Sixth Form by ensuring:
 - all lessons provide motivating and challenging activities that are matched to students' different needs
 - all students receive regular feedback on their work through good quality marking that gives purposeful advice on how to improve and allows students time to respond to this advice
 - all teachers use assessment information to carefully track the progress of all students and intervene if they fall behind.
- Ensure leaders at all levels, including governors, take greater responsibility for driving improvement by:
 - increasing the rigour of monitoring procedures and ensuring that rapid action is taken to improve any identified areas of weakness, including those in the quality of teaching
 - sharing the good practice of the most effective middle leaders so that all department leadership is of a consistently high standard.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The proportion of students achieving 5 A* to C grades including English and mathematics has risen over the last three years but is still slightly below average. There has been a significant improvement in the number of students gaining 5 A* to C grades in the English Baccalaureate subjects (English, mathematics, at least 2 science subjects, history or geography and a language).
- High attaining students make the expected progress in English and mathematics. However, students who achieved level 4 in their national tests at Key Stage 2 are not always making the expected level of progress by the end of Year 11.
- Students known to be eligible for the pupil premium make less progress and reach lower standards than their peers as a result of their less regular attendance. Additional support available through the pupil premium has yet to impact fully on outcomes for these students.
- In 2012, standards improved rapidly in mathematics as a result of a sharply focused intervention programme for students who are underachieving. A similar programme is being extended to English this year.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make progress in line with their peers. The same applies to students who attend alternative provision at the local college.
- Opportunities to strengthen the application of literacy skills, including reading, across all subjects are under-developed, although inspectors noted the effective use of key words in several lessons.
- Attainment in the sixth form has improved steadily over the last three years. The use of more rigorous criteria for entry along with the introduction of an effective tracking system, are helping to raise standards. However, there remain some significant variations in the rates of progress achieved by students taking different subjects.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although teaching is improving, with only a minimal amount of inadequate teaching remaining, there is still not enough good teaching and some variation in teaching quality between subjects. In a small number of lessons observed, the work was not sufficiently matched to the needs of students, particularly those who entered the school with average levels of attainment or who were in receipt of the pupil premium. In such lessons, work was not always sufficiently challenging and teachers did not consistently plan learning activities that engaged and motivated students. Teachers sometimes gave students too much information, slowing the pace of learning.
- The setting and marking of homework is irregular. This was a concern of many parents and carers who placed comments on the Parent View website. However, the school has been successful in ensuring all students are better organised for their learning and homework planners and pencil cases are visible in every lesson.

- The best examples of teaching seen by inspectors included:
 - the use of a variety of different activities within the lesson
 - questioning that made the students think hard before they answer
 - teachers with a strong enthusiasm for their subjects that fully engaged students
 - marking that clearly identified what had been done well and what needed to be improved
 - the provision of good opportunities for students to work independently and, on occasions, write at length.
- In a Year 10 history lesson on Adolf Hitler, for example, students were particularly engaged by an opportunity to write his autobiography as a Facebook page. In a Year 9 music lesson, students took responsibility for assessing their own work and set themselves sharply focused targets on how to improve.
- During the inspection, teaching observed in the sixth form was consistently good or better, with excellent use made of imaginative and challenging activities. However, evidence from examination data suggests that this is not always the case.
- Books were generally well-marked, with a focus on how to improve in humanities and science but in other subject areas there was too much variation in the frequency and quality of marking.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Attendance is high and continues to improve. Students are happy to come to school and are punctual.
- The vast majority of students behave well, both in lessons and around the school. They are friendly, polite and were keen to engage the inspection team in conversation. Break and lunchtimes are calm and orderly periods, characterised by the students' good self-management of their behaviour
- Behaviour records support inspectors' views that behaviour is good. Exclusions are well-below national levels and the rate continues to fall. There has not been a permanent exclusion at the school for 10 years.
- This positive ethos is conducive to the development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. An assembly during the inspection gave students a good opportunity to reflect on their own values and consider how their actions affected their classmates.
- Students say there are occasional incidences of bullying but they are confident it is dealt with effectively by staff or student mentors. Students are aware of the different types of bullying and know how to keep themselves safe online. Parents and carers also agree that bullying is dealt with effectively.
- Behaviour and safety are not outstanding because:
 - occasionally, poor student behaviour disrupts learning particularly where teaching is not effective in sustaining students' interest
 - the attendance of students eligible for the pupil premium is below that of their peers. The school is aware of this and is using some of the additional funding to provide targeted support.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher and senior leaders demonstrate a clear drive and ambition for the school but self-evaluation has not been rigorous enough. Although leadership has brought about improvements, for example to behaviour, attendance and standards, and has eliminated much unsatisfactory teaching, it has not ensured all students make as much progress as they need to or narrow the gap with their peers sufficiently.
- Staff training to improve teaching and the 'Teaching Toolkit' introduced last year are appropriately focused on areas that need improvement. However, subject leaders do not consistently ensure the training has had the desired impact on the quality of teaching and learning in their subject area.
- The school tracks the progress of students carefully and is currently introducing more frequent collation and analysis of achievement data to refine its picture of their progress. It is this that has led to increases in standards and indicates that senior leaders have the capacity to secure further improvement. The local authority has also provided support to the school to help this process. However, not all middle leaders use this data sufficiently to implement timely interventions to maximise achievement.
- Senior leaders have begun to make use of the pupil premium funding, increasing staffing in the English department to provide individual support for underachieving students and providing additional attendance and pastoral support. Impact measures have not been clearly defined to allow the governing body to measure the effectiveness of the school's actions.
- Broad and balanced teaching programmes are in place at Key Stage 3 but the school has not established a systematic enough approach to supporting students' literacy and numeracy development across the whole school. At Key Stage 4, a good range of pathways are offered that are appropriate to the differing needs of students, including some off-site work-related provision.
- The school resolutely acts against discrimination in all its forms.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - makes good use of the expertise of individual governors when examining the performance of the school
 - challenges the school appropriately in a number of areas but has not had sufficient information about pupil progress to hold the school to account for its impact on the achievement of all groups of students
 - ensures the school's financial resources are managed adequately.

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	124445
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	403750
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
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	870
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	112
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew White
Headteacher	Russell Davis
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2010
Telephone number	01785 258546
Fax number	01785 224231
Email address	headteacher@kevi.org.uk

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