

# Sturminster Newton High School

Bath Road, Sturminster Newton, Dorset, DT10 1DT

**Inspection dates** 6–7 June 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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

- There is too much variation in how well teachers plan and set work. Consequently, some students do not make good enough progress in lessons and, therefore, do not achieve as well as they should.
- Marking is not always frequent enough and does not always tell students what they need to do to improve their work in sufficient detail.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs or are eligible for extra government funding often do not make such rapid progress as other students.
- Although school leaders have increasingly focused on the improvement of teaching and achievement in all curriculum areas, inconsistencies remain, particularly in English and geography.
- When teaching falls below the required standard, the school does not always take swift enough action to make the necessary improvements.
- School leaders do not use information about progress to monitor and improve the achievement of more vulnerable groups of students effectively.

### The school has the following strengths

- Relationships in this school are strong. Students are happy and enjoy school. They are courteous, polite and behave well.
- This is a steadily improving school. School leaders are aware of where the school needs to improve and, more recently, have started to address those areas more robustly. There are clear signs that students are now making more rapid progress in many lessons as a result.
- The curriculum is relevant and meets the needs and interests of the students well.
- Since the last inspection, governors have become more aware of what their role entails and how to contribute to school improvement. They now provide good leadership.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed parts of 30 lessons, some with members of the senior leadership team.
- They observed behaviour in lessons and around the school during breaks.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team and other staff, including curriculum team leaders and heads of year, governors and two groups of students.
- The lead inspector also talked to the school evaluation partner.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including safeguarding records, policies, self-evaluation and plans, information about students' progress, monitoring records and the minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors took into account the views of 63 parents and carers who responded to the online Parent View survey and additional views from three parents. They also considered the more detailed information from recent surveys of parents and carers, students and staff carried out by the school.
- The views from 54 questionnaires completed by staff were also considered.

## Inspection team

Jacqueline Goodall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Justine Hocking

Additional Inspector

Richard Butler

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average, although the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of students for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional funding from the government for looked after children, students known to be eligible for free school meals, and children of service families) is below average.
- A very small number of students attend local further education colleges to study vocational courses.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school makes provision for sixth form education in partnership with another secondary school, at which the students are on roll. This provision was therefore not included in this inspection.

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

- Extend the best practice in teaching within the school to ensure that all students make sustained and rapid progress in all subject areas, including English and geography, by:
  - using the student achievement information available to plan work for individuals and groups more precisely, so that it is at the right level to enable them to accelerate their progress substantially
  - ensuring that students receive frequent and regular high-quality written feedback about their work and that this is acted upon by students to help them improve their learning.
- Ensure that all leaders implement the school's plans to improve teaching and raise achievement at a more rapid pace by:
  - using achievement information to monitor gaps between the progress of different groups of students within the school and ensure that they close more rapidly
  - taking swift and decisive action to improve the work of teachers who are underperforming.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Students join the school with broadly average attainment and leave in Year 11 with results similar to those seen nationally. There has been a very gradual rising trend over the last three years but there remains too much variation in students' progress between some subjects and between different groups of students. These include boys, disabled students and those with special educational needs, and students who are eligible for extra government funding.
- The GCSE examination results in English fell last year and the school has put much effort into monitoring teaching and learning in this subject in order to raise standards. Leaders recognise that there are still improvements to be made but are confident in their predictions for the English examination results this year, which should bring the results back on track to those of previous years. An external evaluation by the school evaluation partner has confirmed their predictions.
- Attainment in geography was below average last year and the school is aware of the need for improvements in teaching in this area.
- Students generally make good progress in mathematics, science and in several other subjects because teachers provide work that enables all students to learn. Attainment in French is particularly high. There has been a drive to increase the achievement of boys, such as the deployment of male mentors, which is beginning to reap results.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs do not always make as much progress as other students. This is because teachers do not always find ways to match activities to their needs and often give all students the same work.
- The school has used its pupil premium money to fund a range of personalised learning support programmes and other provision for eligible students. These include contributions to the School Guidance Unit, alternative curriculum provision, challenge days and employment of extra teaching assistants. The gap between the attainment of these students in English and mathematics and that of others has only narrowed slightly, however, and a difference on average of just over one GCSE grade remains between these two groups.
- Overall, students' literacy skills are developed well across the school under the guidance of the English department; opportunities are often taken rather than created, however. Students read widely and sufficiently well so that they are able to access all areas of the curriculum.
- A very small minority of students attend courses at local further education colleges. Students respond well to these opportunities, attend and behave well, and attain good results.
- Students are not entered early for public examinations in mathematics or English.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching across the school has improved since the last inspection in response to a drive for higher-quality provision and outcomes. However, not enough of it is consistently good to accelerate students' progress to ensure that they achieve well over time. School leaders recognise that there is still too much variation in the effectiveness of teaching.
- In some lessons, teachers do not make sufficient use of available data to help them provide appropriate work which matches the ability and needs of students closely enough. By giving all students the same tasks, some students find the work too hard or too easy, thus hindering their progress.
- In most lessons, students work hard to complete the work that is set by the teacher and respond well to questions and suggestions to improve their learning. There are fewer opportunities for students to plan their own work, however, although this has been a school priority this year.
- Where teaching is strong, students are given work that motivates them, challenges them to think and enables them to make rapid progress. They are taught how to plan their work

independently and are inspired to do so. In music, for example, students are able to articulate how they have developed in skills and knowledge since the beginning of their course and they also know what they need to do to reach their targets.

- Good examples of clear, helpful marking of students' work are evident, especially in textiles, art and design, and biology. This practice is not consistent or frequent enough across the school, however. Teachers do not always check to see whether students have responded to their suggestions.
- The vast majority of parents and carers who contributed to Parent View or offered their comments felt that their children were taught well.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- The school is a calm and happy place, in which students feel that they are safe and can learn without disruption. They respond positively to the school's expectations of good behaviour.
- Students report that bullying only rarely happens and they understand the different types of bullying, including prejudice-based and cyber-bullying. They appreciate that incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively. School records and the behaviour observed during the inspection support this view.
- There are many opportunities within the school for students to take on leadership roles and they are keen to do so. The school council is active in its contributions to school improvement and edited a booklet on 'What makes a good lesson'. Both students and teachers benefited from this venture.
- Teachers have excellent relationships with students and this contributes to students' mature and respectful attitudes to learning. Students work well with others, listen to their views and respond to the teacher's instructions sensibly and quickly. Behaviour for learning is not yet outstanding as students are often too reliant on the teacher's instructions and have not yet learned to guide their own learning.
- The school has effective procedures in place to support students whose behaviour is less than acceptable. There have been no permanent exclusions in the last three years and very few fixed-term exclusions. The provision for students who have been at risk of exclusion is supported by external organisations to ensure that their education is continued.
- Although the attendance of a few students is below average, most attend well. The school has put into place a range of intervention strategies to improve attendance, especially for those who do not attend regularly.
- Parents and carers who contributed to Parent View expressed considerable satisfaction with the behaviour of students and have confidence in the school's ability to keep them safe.

### **The leadership and management** require improvement

- Despite some strengths, leadership and management require improvement because senior leaders have not done enough over time to embed improvement strategies securely within the school, especially in monitoring the gaps between the progress of different groups of students within the school and to take decisive action to eradicate weak teaching.
- The headteacher is widely respected within the community and has the full support of staff, governors and parents and carers in her leadership and management of the school. She has developed expertise within her leadership teams, including governors, to make improvements to the performance of both teachers and students. The impact of her leadership and that of her teams has been more noticeable in the last year and is the result of increased expectations and accountability of all staff. There is documented evidence of the capacity of the headteacher, governors and other leaders to bring about these improvements.
- The school now has effective systems to track and monitor the attainment and progress of

individual students. Leaders have not done enough to ensure that all teachers make good use of this information to help them plan their lessons more precisely to meet the needs of students. In addition, they have not ensured that expenditure of extra government funding focuses on addressing the needs of more vulnerable students or monitored rigorously whether gaps in achievement of different groups of students are closing rapidly enough.

- Since the last inspection, there has been an increased focus on sharing expertise in teaching and the provision of both general and personalised training. This has linked closely with teachers' targets to improve their practice.
  - Arrangements for managing the performance of staff are appropriate. Governors and senior leaders take action when a teacher's performance is less than good but this action is sometimes not as decisive or as rapid as it should be.
  - The curriculum is broadly traditional, well planned and enables students to follow appropriate courses of their choice and to move to the next stages of their education or careers. The school actively works to offer equal opportunities to all students. A range of extra-curricular trips, visits and activities enhances the curriculum. In addition to a wide range of sporting, music and drama opportunities, students participate in charity work, supporting organisations such as the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, World Jewish Relief and their link school in Cameroon. Some students undertake gardening projects for Age UK.
  - All areas of the curriculum make a contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, students consider parables about forgiveness and reconciliation in religious education, discuss environmental advantages of using computers rather than paper, and learn about genetic engineering in biology. Leaders audit this provision well and have secured an increase in multicultural activities.
  - The local authority provides effective support for this school. The school evaluation partner not only visits regularly to monitor the school's performance but has also contributed to curriculum area reviews and support for underperformance.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Governance is now good. Governors have increased their contribution to school leadership considerably since the last inspection. They have engaged in suitable training, including attendance at school development activities. They understand the need to explore current staff performance in more detail, ask appropriate searching questions of senior leaders at an earlier stage, and systematically check the progress of the school in meeting its aims and objectives. They have not yet taken sufficient action to ensure that underperformance in teaching is addressed quickly enough but are clear about their role in rewarding teachers through salary enhancement in accordance with their performance. Governors monitor the expenditure of extra government funding but do not evaluate its impact on raising students' achievement in sufficient detail. Governors undertake their statutory responsibilities seriously and ensure that the safeguarding arrangements and financial management are carried out effectively.
-

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113875
<b>Local authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	412771

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	560
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Sarah Lyster
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jayne Barron
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16–17 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01258 472642
<b>Fax number</b>	01258 471521
<b>Email address</b>	office@mynhs.net



Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013

