

Stuart Bathurst Catholic High School College of Performing Arts

Wood Green Road, Wednesbury, West Midlands, WS10 9QS

Inspection dates

13–14 November 2013

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		Requires improvement	3
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

- Leaders, managers and governors have not fully eliminated shortcomings in attendance, achievement and teaching.
- Students' achievement requires improvement because progress is not consistently rapid throughout the school, especially in English.
- More-able students do not always make enough progress to reach the highest standards of which they are capable.
- The sixth form requires improvement because students do not make rapid enough progress in their AS level courses.
- The quality of teaching varies too much and too often teachers do not provide suitable work to keep students of all abilities working at full stretch.
- Marking does not always give clear enough advice to all students on what and how they should improve their work.
- The level of exclusions last year was high and, where teaching is weaker, students are not always fully engaged.
- Governors have not always acted fast enough to address weak teaching and must challenge underperformance when it arises.

The school has the following strengths

- GCSE results have improved in 2013 and are closer to the national average.
- Attainment is improving in mathematics, religious education and science. More students are achieving at least the standards expected of them at GCSE.
- All students with statements of special educational needs are well supported in their learning.
- Additional government funding is being used well to reduce the gap in attainment that exists between students eligible for free school meals and the others.
- The effective training teachers are receiving this year has improved teaching.
- Under the strong direction of the new headteacher, leaders and managers are securing improvements in teaching, behaviour and standards.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 34 lessons, of which eight were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition they made a number of shorter visits to year assemblies and tutorial sessions.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the school leadership and management and groups of staff.
- Members of the inspection team held meetings with four groups of students representing all age groups in the school. Discussions also took place with students informally.
- Meetings were held with the Chair and other members of the Governing Body.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and scrutinised documents including the school's own evaluation of how well it is doing, the school improvement plan and statistical information about students' achievement, attendance and exclusions.
- There were 66 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View and 36 responses to the staff questionnaires. Additional comments were received from parents and carers.

Inspection team

Rob Ridout, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Helen Owen	Additional Inspector
Janet Catto	Additional Inspector
Shannon Moore	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Stuart Bathurst Catholic High School is a smaller-than-average sized 11 to 19 comprehensive school. The sixth form is well established.
- The current headteacher was appointed in October 2012.
- A little over half of the students are from White British, Irish or other White or mixed White background. The proportion from minority ethnic groups is above the national average. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is also above the national average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average. These are students known to be eligible for free school meals, looked-after children and those from service families.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is well below average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also well below average.
- All provision for students on alternative programmes is arranged by the school. A small number of students follow courses with Walsall College off site. A proportion of students in Key Stage 4 follow work-related courses at the school.
- 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?

- Continue to improve the consistency of the quality of teaching so that all lessons are brought up to the standards of the best by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what students are capable of achieving
 - ensuring that all teachers consistently plan and actively support the development of students' reading and writing skills in their lessons
 - providing all students with sufficiently challenging work that captures and retains their interest for the full duration of the lesson
 - planning and teaching different tasks matched to the needs and abilities of all students, especially the more able
 - making marking and feedback to students consistent across the school so that they know exactly what they need to do next in order to improve, and checking that students respond to this advice.
- Improve leadership and management to further increase the rate of students' progress in all subjects, particularly in English, by:
 - setting targets that consistently exceed national averages in order to accelerate progress to good
 - making sure middle leaders and classroom teachers use progress data to identify what individual students need to learn next and plan for this in their lessons
 - supporting team leaders to continue to raise aspirations and increased rates of progress through the setting of more challenging targets
 - increasing the level of challenge from governors in holding leaders and managers to account for the school's performance.

- Increase standards in the sixth form so that students following both A and AS Level courses consistently achieve at least as well as other students nationally by raising the quality of teaching to that of the best.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- When students join the school in Year 7 their attainment is generally average. Their progress varies across different subjects and in year groups. However, by the end of Year 11 the overall attainment of students remains at least average.
- Since the last inspection the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, has fallen year on year until 2013 when it rose sharply. In spite of this it remains below average. Achievement in mathematics has improved, but many students do not make as much progress as they should in English. Given their starting points, GCSE results in 2013 show that students made expected rather than good progress overall, despite good achievement in science and humanities subjects.
- Year 11 students have been entered early for GCSE examinations in English and mathematics. Early results in English show that students are making at least the progress expected of them.
- Leaders and managers forecast that the proportion of current Year 11 students achieving five good GCSEs including English and mathematics will be slightly better than average in 2014. Detailed tracking by the school shows that students will secure at least expected outcomes in English, make good progress in mathematics and even better standards in science.
- The achievement of both students who speak English as an additional language and students from minority ethnic groups is similar to that of other students in the school.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs receive extra help in lessons and in small groups. This is helping them to catch up and many of these students are making accelerated progress and achieve at least as well as their peers in school.
- The gaps in attainment of those students who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium with other students narrowed in 2012 in English and in mathematics. In 2013, the gap has continued to narrow in English so that students who are supported by the pupil premium typically leave the school with GCSEs which are one quarter of a grade below those of their peers. In contrast the gap in mathematics has widened and similar students typically leave the school with GCSEs which are three quarters of a grade below those of their peers. This is because standards in mathematics have improved at a significantly faster rate for other students.
- Year 7 catch-up funding is being used well to improve reading skills. A range of programmes has been running and has resulted in better attitudes towards reading, especially in boys, and improved levels of reading overall.
- Achievement in the sixth form requires improvement. While there is inevitably some variation in the performance of students in different subjects, they are now making the expected progress from their starting points in Year 13. Standards at AS Level remain below the national average but are improving.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Too much teaching still requires improvement as standards are not high enough and teaching does not promote good progress. Teachers' expectations of what students can do in lessons are sometimes too low. The planning of learning does not provide enough challenge or support to all groups of students. Teaching is pitched at the level of average-ability students and so is not sufficiently demanding for the most able who then do not make the rapid, sustained progress of which they are capable.
- Where teaching requires improvement the marking is too brief and students do not receive the detailed written guidance and support they need to know the next steps in their learning. Teachers do not routinely check for errors or follow-up their comments.
- Too much teaching in English requires improvement. Not all teachers are aware of what students know or can do and so lessons do not always provide enough opportunities for students to acquire new knowledge or skills and apply them in meaningful ways.
- There are strengths in teaching. Teachers nurture good relationships and there is a mutual respect between adults and learners in the classroom. These good relationships promote a positive learning environment.
- Teaching of both mathematics and science is improving and starting to boost progress. Students say they particularly enjoy the chance to undertake activities and experiments. Some say they learn best through paired work while others enjoy group work as it gives them the opportunity to learn from their peers.
- In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations, use the data well to inform their planning and provide learning that challenges students and maintains the highest levels of enjoyment. The best teachers use questioning effectively to check, probe and develop students' reasoning and understanding. In such lessons, students are clear about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Good progress is secured.
- The skills of classroom assistants are often used well to support those who may be struggling, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs. Frequent discussions with the teacher ensure students get the right support and achieve well.
- The attendance and behaviours of those students engaged on alternative courses have improved. Their attitudes are more positive and they show greater confidence towards their studies. As a result past poor performance has improved and now students are doing as well as their peers.
- Teaching in the sixth form requires improvement because not all teachers use their good subject knowledge well to provide for more independent study or enable learners to challenge each other through paired activities or small group work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Behaviour requires improvement because students report that off-task behaviour does occur in some lessons. Inspectors also observed a small number of students who did not move sensibly between lessons.
- Behaviour has improved since the appointment of the current headteacher. Students generally

mix well. The majority of students are polite, considerate and respectful to each other and adults. Older students say that behaviour is much better and conduct in lessons is generally good.

- The school's records show that levels of exclusions rose to a high point in the spring of 2013, but as behaviour has improved the number of exclusions has fallen significantly and is now much closer to those seen nationally.
- Students are taught about the different forms of bullying. They are clearly aware of the dangers associated with social networking sites and know how to deal with issues they may encounter on them. Students say that bullying is not a problem and that any incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively by the school.
- Attendance has been below the national average for the last three years but has improved due to the effective action of the school to promote its importance. It is now broadly average.
- In the sixth form, students attend well and make a positive contribution to the school. Sixth formers recognise the recent improvements since the appointment of the current headteacher and speak positively about the guidance they receive from the school.
- Students feel safe at the school and are taught how to be safe through a variety of programmes taught by their teachers and outside agencies.
- Parents who completed the online questionnaire reported that bullying is uncommon and largely agreed that their children feel safe at the school. One parent wrote in saying that she 'could not praise the school enough as both my children love the school'.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Subject leaders do not check the quality of teaching consistently well across the school, especially in English. Middle leaders do not use data about students' achievement effectively enough to make sure teachers plan work that is set at the right level for students.
- The new headteacher has brought a clear direction and set of priorities for the school. He is well supported by the governing body and a restructured and reinvigorated senior leadership team. Parents, staff and students welcome the changes he has introduced, which have helped to develop a respectful, open and professional culture within the school.
- The school improvement plan shows that leaders and managers are working on the right issues for the school to be good. Much work has already begun to raise teachers' expectations but it is still too early to see the full impact of their actions.
- Leaders have a realistic view of how well the school is doing. The headteacher and members of the senior team recognise the importance of improving teaching and accurately judge its quality. The agenda drawn up by the team and the wider staff sets out a clear view for the future and the expectations the school has of all staff. More robust and rigorous systems for holding teachers to account for the progress of students are now in place.
- Leaders and managers responsible for student behaviour have had a positive impact on conduct generally and fostered attitudes that promote better learning in the classrooms.

- Better leadership and the more rigorous management of teaching combine with a well-planned programme of staff training to highlight where the best practice lies and raise the quality of teaching in the school. The impact of senior leaders is reflected in the good or better teaching seen during the inspection and the better results seen mathematics and science this year.
- Data on both the quality of teaching and the impact it has on student progress is collected at half termly intervals. Regular meetings are held to review the impact of actions previously agreed and the next steps to support future improvements agreed. Since September 2012, targets have been based on the progress expected nationally and senior leaders rightly recognise the need to set targets that consistently exceed this in order to accelerate progress to be good.
- Subject leadership is strengthening, particularly in mathematics and science. Through short visits to lessons subject leaders have a better understanding of the quality of teaching. Plans are being implemented to ensure greater consistency between the work of all subject leaders and to support some, especially in English, to enhance learning and raise student achievement.
- Leadership of the sixth form is improving. Robust tracking has led to the implementation of appropriate and effective support so standards are rising at both AS and A level. However, teaching remains inconsistent.
- The curriculum is used well to support the achievement of students particularly at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Good programmes and plans are in place to provide a wide range of subjects at GCSE, AS and A Level. The school is addressing students' literacy needs through a wide range of practices led from the 'Good Shepherd Centre'. This includes reading in tutor time as well as one-to-one support for those who need it in Years 7 and 8.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively. Students take on leadership roles within the school as part of the student council and are generous in their fund-raising for charities. The school tackles discrimination in a manner that promotes tolerance and harmony.
- Local authority support for the school and governors is also beginning to have impact and have helped the school to secure a more realistic view of itself and of the quality of teaching.
- Safeguarding procedures meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Historically, the governing body has not acted quickly enough to ensure senior leaders bring about the improvements required in achievement and the quality of teaching. This year, the governing body led by the new Chair of the Governing Body has taken some courageous decisions that are now beginning to reflect in better teaching and learning for the students in the school.
 - Current governors are highly committed to the success of the school and recognise that students' progress is not good enough. They are now challenging the school to improve this quickly, particularly in English. As part of this drive, they are committed to ensuring that pay awards depend on the progress made by students that teachers have clearly supported and are responsible for.

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	104020
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	427138

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary controlled
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	821
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	113
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alistair Campbell
Headteacher	Jeremy Harris
Date of previous school inspection	17 November 2010
Telephone number	0121 556 1488
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