

de Stafford School

Burntwood Lane, Caterham, CR3 5YX

Inspection dates

12–13 December 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		Require improvement	3
Leadership and management		Require improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Students do not achieve consistently well in all subjects. Boys do not do as well as girls and some students with special educational needs do not make good progress.
- The gap in achievement between students in receipt of the pupil premium and others has not narrowed sufficiently. These students' standards in English and mathematics are not high enough.
- Data indicating the progress over time of different groups of students in English and mathematics have not been accurate in the past. This has restricted the success of support targeted at particular groups.
- The quality of teaching is too variable. Expectations of what students should achieve are not always high enough. Most teaching does not build sufficiently on what students know and the focus on writing and number skills is insufficient in a range of subjects.
- Students do not always work hard enough in lessons. This is true both for those who find the work easy and those who struggle to understand.
- The checking of teaching quality and learning over time has been too generous. Some observers have not linked judgements on teaching closely enough to students' learning.
- Significant senior leadership and management issues in the past academic year took the school's attention away from students' achievements.

The school has the following strengths

- From a below-average starting point in Year 7, the proportion of students who achieve five A* to C GCSEs, including English and mathematics, at age 16 is broadly average.
- The focus on improving students' reading is raising standards.
- Teaching staff are supportive of the new headteacher's high aspirations for the school, and his approach, after a turbulent year.
- Students feel very happy and safe at school, relating well to one another and to teaching staff. Behaviour around the school is good. Students appreciate the clubs and many after-school support sessions organised for them.
- The new headteacher and recently appointed senior management team have a clear focus on accurate monitoring of teaching and learning, already providing successful support in order to lift students' achievements.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 37 part lessons. Eight of these were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team. Senior leaders discussed their judgements with observed staff in the presence of inspectors.
- Inspection team members held meetings with senior and other leaders, groups of students and four governors. A telephone conversation took place with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the responses of 76 parents to the online Parent View and 47 questionnaires returned by staff.
- A range of documents was scrutinised. This included: governors' minutes, school monitoring information, including records relating to the performance of staff, students' work, data on students' progress and attainment, safeguarding documents, the school's self-evaluation form and improvement plan.

Inspection team

Peter McGregor, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Jane Ladner	Additional inspector
Cliff Mainey	Additional inspector
Patricia Goodhead	Additional inspector
Veronica Young	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- de Stafford is a smaller-than-average-sized secondary school.
- A broadly average proportion of students are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and students from service families.
- The school receives additional catch-up funds for the students who do not reach the expected Level 4 at the end of their primary education.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds, with small proportions from Asian and Asian British, Black and Black British, and Mixed backgrounds.
- A below-average proportion of the students speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is high.
- The school provides specially resourced provision for students with special educational needs in the form of a base for a local authority speech and language unit with capacity for ten students.
- In 2013, the school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment in English and mathematics at age 16.
- A small number of students attend the local East Surrey College for part of the week to study vocational courses, and a few students attend a pupil referral unit.
- The school provides the base for the Tandridge Education Partnership, a group of primary and secondary schools which work together.
- The headteacher is new this term and his senior team are recent appointments.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good, or better, by:
 - using assessment information so that work builds on students' prior learning
 - raising expectations of what students can achieve
 - setting and marking regular homework for all classes which consolidates and reinforces learning
 - rigorous marking of students' work that results in well-presented, accurate work.
- Ensure that tracking data on students' progress from Year 7 to Year 11 are accurate and used effectively to guide where intervention is provided. Concentrate in particular on narrowing the gaps in achievement between boys and girls, and between those for whom the school receives pupil premium funding and others.
- Accelerate the improvements being made in the quality of provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs, enabling all to be successful, particularly those who are designated as school action plus.
- Clarify the leadership and management of the speech and language unit and ensure that staff teaching there have the correct level of expertise.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The achievement of students, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs, requires improvement because it is not consistently good. Certain groups of students underachieve. Improvements are apparent this term but these are not yet secure.
- Students known to be eligible for the pupil premium achieved GCSE grades in 2013 almost a grade lower than those of other students in English, and more than a grade lower in mathematics. Poor data on the progress of student groups, including those with pupil premium funding, meant that the school had not been sufficiently aware of the problem.
- Boys' achievements have been below those of girls, and students supported at school action plus underachieved compared with their peers. Here, too, incomplete data on students' progress over time had restricted the ability of the school to identify and respond to underachievement.
- In 2012, 67% of the students achieved A* to C grades in English and this figure was maintained in 2013. In mathematics, the proportion achieving A* to C increased from 66% to 73%. Within this broadly average picture, however, students who attained highly in English at the age of 11 were less successful than was seen nationally. In mathematics, both middle- and high-achieving students on entry were less successful at age 16 than similar students nationally.
- Those students entered early for mathematics at GCSE were disadvantaged by this process, achieving grades below their potential. The early-entry policy for mathematics has been discontinued.
- The school cannot identify the progress made by those Year 7 students whose below-average entry standard attracted catch-up funding, because tracking data were not maintained last year.
- The achievement of the few students who attend the speech and language unit requires improvement as their progress is similar to that of other disabled students and those who have special educational needs.
- The school monitors the work of the small number of students who attend work-related courses at East Surrey College; they attend regularly and are successful. Checks are also made on the small number of older students who attend a pupil referral unit, to ensure that the provision is appropriate for their needs.
- Students speak with confidence and usually use Standard English well. Their written work is of a much lower standard, as weaknesses in presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar go unchecked in many lessons. Students' numeracy skills are weak because they receive insufficient attention in a range of subjects.
- Students are making good progress in improving their reading skills as a result of various initiatives. These include older students acting as buddies for younger lower-attaining readers and the use of an accelerated reading programme during tutor time.
- Good quality data are now being collected on students' progress and a start has been made on tracking the success of different groups of students. Intervention is targeted at those with the greatest needs, including those supported by the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding. Data indicate that these students are making better progress.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable. Good, and some outstanding, teaching was observed but too much required improvement. Students' progress over time and the quality of work in their books indicate that teaching is not good enough.
- Too often work is not matched sufficiently to what students' already know and tasks set are too difficult or too easy. When this happens students underachieve.
- When teachers do not state clearly what should be completed in the available time the pace of work falls away. Teachers' expectations are not high enough in these situations and students,

often boys, make insufficient progress.

- Explanations are not always clear to students, which can result in them sitting passively or fidgeting. For example, a mathematics class tried to interpret real-life graphs, including one relating to motorcycle speeds. After individual and group discussions, the teacher's lack of clarification of key points meant that a potentially motivating task became instead a source of misunderstanding and disengagement.
- It was not possible to observe specialist teaching in the speech and language unit during the short period of the inspection. The students who are taught for some of their time in the speech and language unit experience the same quality of teaching in mainstream classes as other students, and this requires improvement.
- Students report that teachers are inconsistent in their approach to setting homework, particularly for students in lower sets, and their books confirmed this.
- Some students' work is marked thoroughly with clear indications of what could be done to improve the standard. Mistakes in work and poor presentation are not commented upon in other classes. In a few cases, work is unmarked for periods of several weeks.
- Small whiteboards are sometimes used well to identify what students do and do not understand, but too much writing on these boards results in little written work in books.
- Older students value greatly the after-school sessions provided in several subjects. Teachers are very generous with their time, willingly going over aspects of work which students have failed to understand in lessons.
- Where teaching is effective, teachers use their good subject knowledge to challenge students and a range of activities is used to engage students' interest. Students improve their speaking and listening skills through effective paired and group discussions about what they are learning. In an English lesson, students made great gains in their understanding as they interpreted different images and wrote in detail about their perspectives on the character chosen, using terms they had been taught. The teacher's knowledge, excellent discussion and the rapid pace of work were combined in a most effective manner.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- When teaching is good, students engage in the learning but, where it requires improvement, students often become passive listeners. They tend not to ask questions when they do not understand or finish work early.
- Students have very positive attitudes to their teachers and the progress they are making. Several are unaware of their lack of progress, and their tendency is to drift in lessons rather than push forward their learning.
- In a few lessons, students' conduct was rather immature, but this was dealt with effectively using the school's behaviour management system. Both the rewards and sanctions systems work well. Exclusions are below average and the number of students placed in the school's internal isolation room is falling.
- Behaviour at break times and in the canteen is good. Students are courteous. Senior students support staff in supervising conduct effectively around the school.
- Bullying and racist incidents are rare and are dealt with well when they occur. Students talk confidently about feeling safe and well cared for.
- Medical logs are robust and up to date. They include appropriate detail and are reviewed and analysed by leaders, looking for any patterns that require action.
- Punctuality requires improvement. More than 100 students were late for 15 or more sessions in the past academic year.
- Attendance is a little above average and improving. Attendance procedures are rigorous and detailed. Absences of students in receipt of the pupil premium are higher than for other students; significant medical issues of a small minority of these students have affected the data.

The leadership and management **require improvement**

- Leadership and management are judged to require improvement because new, demanding systems introduced by the new headteacher, and supported by the senior team and governors, have not been in place long enough to show their impact.
- Good data systems have been introduced this academic year which enable staff to identify underachievement of individual students and groups in all years, with a view to providing equality of opportunity for all. Analysis includes identifying differences between boys' and girls' achievement, and that of those eligible for the pupil premium and the others, and how effectively disabled students and those with special educational needs are progressing. This information has yet to be used effectively by teachers in lessons.
- The headteacher identified that lesson observation judgements had been generous in the past and were incompatible with information on students' achievements. Observations tended to consider teaching skills alone rather than their impact on learning. Senior leaders carrying out joint observations of lessons with inspectors made accurate judgments about the quality of teaching and learning and fed back skilfully to teachers on the strengths and weaknesses seen. These perceptive analyses, and follow-through with coaching and training, have not yet led to teaching that results in consistently good achievement across subjects.
- New, good procedures have been introduced for the management of teachers' performance. Judgements are concerned with students' learning, whole-school priorities and an individual area of focus. The previous year's approach was inadequate and based on inaccurate lesson observation data.
- The range of subjects provided meets students' needs. A second foreign language is being introduced and the amount of curriculum time provided for mathematics increased. A wide range of popular clubs is provided before school, at lunchtime and after school.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is met through effective assemblies, and the clubs, activities and visits provided. Students get on well together with a high degree of trust among them. Few opportunities are provided to reflect on learning in lessons.
- Most leaders appraise their areas accurately. They are aware of the need to improve the quality of teaching, make better use of data to monitor and support different groups of students and to improve students' achievements.
- There is uncertainty over the line management of the speech and language unit, and the expertise of some of the staff who work there. It is unclear whether the school's special educational needs coordinator is responsible for the unit or not, and not all unit staff have had specialist training in speech and language work. The working hours of the specialist speech and language teacher and the part-time unit leader do not coincide, which is unhelpful. A local authority review of this provision is due to take place early in the new year.
- Leadership and management of the education and welfare of disabled students and those with special educational needs are improving from a low base point. What was provided in the past did not meet needs and so there was underachievement, particularly by students at school action plus. Support staff are now in place but are not always effective in lessons.
- Safeguarding procedures are secure, meeting statutory requirements. The single central register of adults associated with the school is complete and up to date.
- The local authority has provided a high level of support for the governing body as it coped in the last academic year with the resignation of the previous headteacher, the appointment of interim leaders and then the new headteacher. A local authority review of teaching and learning, half-termly meetings to discuss developments and progress, and on-going support for the new headteacher are all helpful to the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body worked very effectively to support the school during the last academic year, minimising the impact of significant leadership and staffing problems. The consequence of this workload was that some aspects of governors' role were not carried out, including checking data on students' progress, ensuring that additional catch-up funding for Year 7 and students in receipt of pupil premium was spent appropriately, and linking management of

teachers' performance to students' achievements. The governing body knows the school well and is aware of shortcomings in governance last year. Governors are trained in interpreting students' progress and attainment data, and have a wide range of relevant expertise. For example, the chair of the finance committee has a financial background and has taken on various monitoring tasks in the absence of a school bursar for some months. Governors are working closely with the new headteacher, challenging and supporting him in a balanced manner.

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	125308
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	429533

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	802
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Troake
Headteacher	Jeremy Garner
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 March 2011
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