

Stocksbridge High School

Shay House Lane, Stocksbridge, Sheffield, S36 1FD

Inspection dates 5–6 March 2014

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

- Not enough pupils make the progress that is expected of them from the start of Year 7 to the end of Year 11 in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- In 2012 and 2013, standards were not as high as they should have been in many subjects, including English and mathematics, at the end of Year 11 and not enough students reached the highest grades.
- The standards reached by some boys are not as high as those reached by girls.
- There is not enough teaching that is good or better. Where teaching requires improvement, students lose interest in their learning and are sometimes inattentive.
- Behaviour requires improvement because not all teachers apply school rules consistently, so some students do not follow the rules even though they clearly know what they are.
- Not all teachers make effective use of students' progress information to plan lessons that will enable all students to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding at a fast pace.
- The quality of written and verbal feedback to students varies. Not all teachers explain clearly enough to students exactly how to improve their work. When advice is given, students are not always given time to respond to the advice.
- Students are not always clear about what it is they are meant to be learning, or how much progress they should be making.
- When judging the quality of teaching, not all leaders focus on how much progress students are making and what good progress looks like. Consequently, they are not able to be as effective as they need to be in helping to improve the quality of teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders and governors have communicated a very clear view of improvement for the school which has gained the support and commitment of staff.
- Students feel safe at school and appreciate the support they receive from adults.
- Parents are supportive of the school and say their children are happy to be there.
- Changes to the curriculum, recently formed collaborative partnerships and new systems and structures, are already impacting positively on standards of behaviour, achievement and the quality of teaching.
- There is good and outstanding teaching in the school.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, 35 lessons and parts of lessons were observed by inspectors. Three lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and an assistant headteacher.
- Meetings were held with groups of staff, students, four members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to 38 staff questionnaires. They considered information from previous school surveys carried out with parents and students. Results of 57 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were also considered and the lead inspector talked on the telephone to a parent.
- The inspectors reviewed work in students' books and listened to students read. They observed students moving around inside and outside the school and at different times in the day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and considered a number of documents, including the school's own evaluation of its performance, the school improvement plan, minutes from governing body meetings, and reviews of the school undertaken by external consultants.

Inspection team

Helen Gaunt, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Fiona Dixon	Additional Inspector
Peter McKay	Additional Inspector
Barbara O'Brien	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Stocksbridge High is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of girls is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Almost all students are of White British heritage and there are very few students for whom English is a second language.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is above average, while the proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2011 and left the school in August 2013. During the academic year 2012/2013, the governing body formed a close working partnership with Notre Dame High School, where the headteacher is a National Leader of Education. The current headteacher of Stocksbridge, appointed in September 2013, is on secondment from Notre Dame for a period of two years.
- Since September 2012, there have been a number of changes to leadership positions and many middle leaders are relatively new in post.
- A range of off-site vocational courses are offered to some students in Years 10 and 11, including at Hillsborough College, Elm Lea Fire Station, YAF, Yassy and Dimesions.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that over time, students make consistently good progress in all subjects and in all years by:
 - ensuring that teachers and teaching assistants use all the information they have about individual students to plan learning activities that are appropriate for students' abilities and they check that during lessons all students make at least good progress
 - ensuring that boys are given opportunities which keep them interested in their learning
 - providing the most able students with work that will allow them to reach the highest levels from Year 7 onwards
 - making sure that all students know exactly what they are expected to learn in every lesson
 - ensuring that all teachers provide students with advice about how to improve their work and that they give students time to respond to that advice.
- Improving the effectiveness of leaders and managers in improving the quality of teaching and raising standards of behaviour by:
 - ensuring that middle leaders take full account of the effect of teaching on students' progress in lessons, and over time, when making judgments on the quality of teaching
 - making sure that all leaders regularly check that all staff consistently apply school policies in relation to behaviour management.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students' achievement requires improvement. Standards of attainment have dipped since the last inspection, when achievement was judged to be good because school leaders did not rigorously tackle the areas for improvement which were highlighted in the inspection report. Also, between September 2011 and December 2013, information about the progress that students were making was not used to spot underperformance or to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and its impact on students' progress.
- Students' attainment on entry to the school in Year 7 is generally above the national average.
- The proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, dipped in 2012 and 2013 because leaders did not keep a close enough eye on how well students were doing. The attainment of boys was generally below that of girls and not enough students achieved grades A and A* at GCSE in a wide range of subjects.
- New leadership has reversed this trend by making sure that the progress that students are making is checked more rigorously and that any underachievement is tackled swiftly and decisively. As a result, current school data, supported by findings from lesson observations and analysis of students' work, show that attainment is rising rapidly and that students are now making much better progress.
- In 2013, students eligible for the pupil premium funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, were achieving approximately one and a half GCSE grades lower than other students in the school in English, and one and a quarter GCSE grades lower in mathematics. However, the school's information about the current performance of these students indicates that their attainment is less than one grade lower in English and less than three-quarters of a grade lower in mathematics. This shows that the gaps in their attainment are narrowing rapidly. This is because the funding is now used effectively to provide extra teaching, support and additional activities in English and mathematics for this group of students.
- The school has previously entered students early for GCSE in English and mathematics and some students have been given the opportunity to re-sit their examinations to achieve higher grades. Following a review of the curriculum, the school has decided that students will not be entered for examinations early after 2014.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are supported well by teaching assistants in classes and in additional intervention groups. The Year 7 catch-Up funding is used well to support a small group of students in the nurture group in Year 7, who receive intensive support for English and mathematics. This helps them to improve their literacy and numeracy skills, which enables them to access all areas of the curriculum. The tightly-targeted support from experienced adults enables these students to make similar progress to others.
- There is no significant difference between the progress of students from different minority ethnic groups and others.
- The school offers some students in Years 10 and 11 the opportunity to follow a range of vocational courses in establishments away from the school site. The school takes all reasonable steps to ensure that students maintain good attendance at these places and that they behave well and are safe. All students have equal opportunities to be successful. As a result, the students accessing these courses achieve well and are prepared well for the next stage of their education, training or employment.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because on too many occasions students do not make good progress and some teaching focuses more on activities rather than the impact that they have on promoting students' learning and progress.
- Where students make less than good progress, teaching does not always pay close enough

attention to what students already know and can do. As a result, some work is overly hard and some is easy.

- Sometimes students are not clear about what knowledge, skills and understanding they are meant to be developing in lessons and in their homework. On occasions, teachers do not plan learning activities that capture the interests of all boys.
- Although inspectors saw evidence, for example, in English controlled assessments, of good quality marking, this was not widespread. The quality of teachers' written marking and feedback in students' books is not always of value. Students do not often receive advice from their teachers on how to improve their work. Even when they do, they are not always given time to respond to the advice in order to extend their learning.
- The progress that students make in lessons is not always checked on rigorously enough. When this happens, progress slows and sometimes students become inattentive.
- Sometimes the work for the most able students is not challenging enough. For example, in a top set Year 11 mathematics lesson, students spent over half the lesson repeating simple quadratic factorisations (which they found straightforward) instead of moving onto more complex questions or applying their learning to solving problems to deepen and extend their understanding.
- Although teaching requires improvement, the proportion of good and outstanding teaching is growing securely. As a result, a higher proportion of students are now making good progress in many subjects.
- For example, in a Year 11 English lesson where students made outstanding progress in interpreting the meaning of the poem, *The Horse Whisperer*, students were very clear about what was expected of them. They responded with keen interest to a video clip that stimulated mature discussion and engagement. Lower ability students made rapid progress because of the excellent support and guidance that they received. Every student made outstanding progress because the level of challenge and questioning were pitched at just the right level to stimulate their thinking and deepen their understanding.
- The majority of teaching assistants make a very strong contribution to building students' confidence and supporting their learning. Individual support and intervention is increasingly helping individual pupils to overcome specific learning difficulties and to make progress in line with their classmates.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. Where students are not fully interested in learning, they are inattentive and chat amongst themselves.
- However, in most lessons students settle to tasks quickly and get on well with each other when working in pairs and groups and there are positive relationships between students and staff.
- The new leadership team has tightened the school's rules on behaviour. Students are now clearer about what is expected of them and the consequences that follow if they misbehave. Systems for recording inappropriate behaviour are more rigorous. Initially, this has led to an increase in fixed-term exclusions, although they are still lower than the national average, and to an increase of other recorded incidents of poor behaviour. There have been almost no permanent exclusions for several years.
- Most students behave well in the dining areas and in the public areas. Students are supervised well by adults around the school. Most students move along corridors sensibly although there is some boisterousness.
- However, not all staff implement the new standards consistently, and some students take advantage of the situation. For example, the school has a rule which states exactly where students are allowed to eat during breaks and lunchtimes; some students ignore this rule and some staff on duty walk past them without comment. Also, while most students wear their uniforms smartly, some wear their uniforms untidily. Again, this is ignored by some members of staff. Students confirm that there are differences between the expectations of different members

of staff and feedback from discussions with staff during the inspection supported this view.

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students say they feel safe in school, site security is good, the school teaches them how to keep themselves safe and they say that there is someone to go to if they need help. The majority of parents agree that their children are well looked after and are safe at school.
- Students understand about all of the different forms of bullying. They hold strong views that bullying should not be tolerated and told inspectors that incidences of bullying are rare and are dealt with effectively when they occur.
- During the inspection, a very small number of parents said that they were worried about the school's lack of response to their concerns. Inspectors looked carefully at this by scrutinising parental feedback to the school's own questionnaires, other school documentation and responses to Parent View. There was very little evidence to cause any concern for inspectors but they brought the issue to the attention of the headteacher.
- Leaders have worked successfully to improve attendance, which is above average. Students are enthusiastic about the range of activities that take place before, during and after school, and the opportunities they have to take part in inter-form competitions. They have also welcomed the increased focus, since September 2013, on the allocation of rewards for positive behaviour and achievement.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management requires improvement because in recent years information about students' progress has not been used effectively enough to highlight and target areas in need of improvement, particularly in relation to students' achievement and the quality of teaching. This has led to a decline in standards. In full recognition of this, the governing body has taken decisive and successful action to tackle the effectiveness of leadership and management through, for example, strengthening links with the local authority. Governors have worked closely with the local authority and forging partnerships with another school. Since the appointment of the new headteacher, rapid improvements have been made.
- The new headteacher has acted swiftly and successfully to galvanise staff and leaders into action. As a result, students' achievement and the quality of teaching are improving quickly although they are not yet consistently good. Accurate evaluation of the school's performance has helped to identify the right priorities. Staff are working together well to put improvement plans into action. Staff morale is good.
- Expectations of what students can achieve have been raised and a range of new systems have been put in place to track and monitor the performance of students and staff. For example, students are assessed half-termly and this information is used to evaluate the progress that individuals and groups are making and to target additional support. The effectiveness with which teachers use the assessment information to plan lessons is more variable.
- Checks on the quality of teaching in lessons are frequent and carried out by senior and middle leaders. However, when making judgements about teaching, not all leaders take fully into account the impact teaching has on students' progress over time.
- Middle leaders are taking much more responsibility and are now fully accountable for standards, achievement and students' behaviour. However, some are relatively newly in post and have yet to become fully effective in ensuring that all staff implement school policies consistently.
- The system of setting targets for teachers to improve their skills is robust. Teachers' targets are closely aligned to the Teachers' Standards and teachers understand that pay progression is linked to students' outcomes.
- Staff training is closely linked to the school's and individual priorities. For example, several teachers have already attended an outstanding teacher programme and are now sharing their experience with other teachers. Newly qualified teachers are supported well. Links with Notre Dame, a Teaching School, provide opportunities for staff to share expertise.
- The curriculum is well planned to meet students' different needs and is becoming increasingly

personalised. For example, the off-site alternative courses for lower attaining students in Key Stage 4 enable them to be successful in progressing to the next stage in employment, training or education. The new nurture group in Year 7 is helping to quickly boost literacy and numeracy skills for those students whose skills are well below age-related expectations when they arrive.

- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is generally well promoted. However, inconsistencies in behaviour management mean that not all students take as much personal responsibility for their behaviour as they might.
- Students receive good quality information, advice and guidance to support them at each stage of transition.
- The local authority has provided good support for this school over the past two years and has supported governors in developing a very positive working partnership with Notre Dame. The headteacher works closely and effectively with the headteacher of Notre Dame and an external consultant conducts a termly monitoring visit.
- The school has good capacity to make the necessary improvements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

– Governors have been involved with a range of partners and agencies in order to strengthen school leadership, improve their own effectiveness and increase outcomes for students. They are very supportive of the school. Having worked with a National Leader of Governance, they have undertaken a full review of the governing body, recruited new governors with skills that complement those of existing governors, undertaken a wide range of training to help them better understand students' achievement information and developed a strong working partnership with Notre Dame High School. They are already becoming more effective in challenging school leaders. Having restructured the governing body committees, governors now have increased capacity to deal more efficiently with aspects of the school in greater detail. The governing body makes effective use of a wide range of information provided by the headteacher and other school leaders. Governors are extending their skills to interpret data by undertaking extra training. They are aware of the quality of teaching and have employed external consultants to validate the school's judgements on teaching. The governing body controls resources and finances effectively and makes sure that they are matched to priorities to make the school better. Governors know how the pupil premium funding is used and are working with school leaders to ensure that it makes a positive difference to the performance of those pupils who are entitled to it. Governors monitor carefully the performance of teachers and teachers' pay is linked to their performance in the classroom.

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	107143
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	440756

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	836
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs S White
Headteacher	Mr S Davies
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2011
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