

# King Edward VI High School

Westway, Stafford, ST17 9YJ

**Inspection dates** 1–2 October 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Sixth form provision		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Teaching is not consistently good enough to make sure that students learn well. As a result, too many students are not making as much progress as they could be across all subjects during their time in the school.
- Teachers' expectations of what students can achieve are not always high enough, and they do not always set work at the right level of difficulty. Sometimes more-able students find it too easy, while the less-able students find it too hard.
- The most able students do not achieve their full potential. In 2013 and 2014 GCSE examinations the percentage of high grades was below average, or well below, in most subjects.
- Despite some clear improvements in teaching and achievement, leadership and management have not yet been sufficiently effective to make sure they are consistently good.
- Senior leaders' improved systems for monitoring students' progress and attainment have not focused enough on the achievement of different groups, and they have not been quick enough in providing extra help to ensure that all groups make good progress.
- New policies, including those for improving literacy and numeracy, are not yet consistently applied by all of the staff.
- The sixth form requires improvement. Too many students have not made good enough progress. On entry to the sixth form, students are not given sufficient advice about the requirements of courses to make informed choices.

### The school has the following strengths

- Teachers have responded well to the changes introduced by the new acting headteacher and senior leaders, particularly in their approach to marking students' work.
- Students' behaviour around school and in lessons is good. They are polite, respectful and want to do well.
- The governing body has responded well to an external review of its effectiveness and is increasingly challenging senior leaders to do better.
- The governors and senior leaders are working well with the local authority to drive improvements.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons to observe the progress and engagement of students and reviewed the quality of the work in students’ books to judge the effectiveness of marking, their progress over time, and the accuracy of the school’s assessment data.
- Inspectors observed other aspects of the school day, registration time, behaviour at break and lunchtime, and students’ arrival and departure from the school.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, such as those in charge of subjects, and four groups of students. A meeting took place with seven governors, including the-Chair of the Governing Body, and a discussion was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 65 parents and carers who responded to the Parent View online questionnaire, seven letters from parents, and 30 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents, including: the school’s data on students’ progress; self-evaluation and improvement plans; information on the work of staff; training arrangements for teachers and other staff; checks on the quality of teaching; attendance and behaviour records; minutes of governing body meetings; documents relating to students’ safety; and documents relating to the management of teachers’ performance.

## Inspection team

Ann Behan, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Kevin Harrison	Additional Inspector
Nigel Boyd	Additional Inspector
Julie Griffiths	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- King Edward VI High School is an average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students who are supported by the pupil premium is average. This is additional government funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds. The proportions who speak English as an additional language, or who are at an early stage in learning English, are well below average.
- The proportion of students with a statement of special educational need is below average. No students have education, health care plans.
- There are 29 students who are working towards work-related qualifications offered by alternative providers. They study at Stafford College and PM Training, Stafford.
- Sixth form provision is part of a consortium arrangement with local schools and Stafford College.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' achievement and progress at the end of Year 11.
- The acting headteacher took up post in May 2014.

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

- Rapidly improve both teaching and achievement throughout the school, by:
  - using information about groups of students' attainment to plan suitably challenging work for students of different abilities, particularly the most and least able
  - giving students more opportunities to write extensively, and to use and develop their numeracy skills, across a range of subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness and impact of leadership and management, by:
  - making full use of assessment information, with a sharp focus on the progress of different groups of students, to identify gaps in students' learning and raise standards
  - giving Year 11 students better information on the requirements of courses offered in the sixth form
  - ensuring that all staff consistently apply the new school policies and improvement strategies.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders have not yet done enough to ensure that teaching and the progress different groups of students make across all subjects and age groups are consistently good.
- The policies and strategies introduced by the acting headteacher have not yet had sufficient time to impact on students' attainment, which remains well below national averages.
- Staff are not consistently applying the new systems and policies to improve teaching and raise students' achievement. There have been significant improvements in the consistency of marking, but use of assessment data to plan lessons and the promotion of literacy and numeracy across subjects, while showing signs of bringing about improvements, are not being fully implemented.
- Senior leaders have improved the tracking systems for monitoring students' progress and attainment. Information is gathered on a more regular basis and this is used to set more rigorous targets for students. However, leaders have not used this information rigorously enough to check the achievement of different groups of students, and have been too slow at directing extra support to where it is needed.
- The headteacher and the senior leadership team know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and over the last six months have put in place policies and systems to bring about improvements. They have introduced more rigorous systems for monitoring the quality of teaching, and have provided a wide range of training for staff which is already leading to some improvements in teaching and the achievement of some students. More rigorous performance management links the quality of teaching and students' achievement to salary progression. Staff who responded to the questionnaire were very positive about the recent changes.
- The role that subject leaders play in monitoring the work of the school was identified as a weakness by the previous inspection. Recently they are playing a greater role in checking the quality of teaching and students' progress in their areas of responsibility, and are increasingly challenging underperformance.
- The school has recently revised the subjects offered in Key Stage 3 so that students benefit from additional English and mathematics lessons. In addition, there is a greater focus on developing literacy and numeracy across all subjects. The school has opened a new library and appointed a librarian. It allocated lessons that focus on reading, which are having a positive impact on students' progress. Students benefit from a wide range of after-school activities, sporting events and educational trips.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted appropriately, particularly through registration periods, the personal, social and health programme, and citizenship lessons. Students were very positive about the way the school celebrates a wide range of cultures and religions, promoting British values of tolerance and respect. Students make a good contribution to the running of the school through the school council, house systems, as house captains, and as ambassadors at various school events.
- Good links with primary schools, colleges and universities, local businesses, and good external careers advice aid students' progression at different times in their education. Almost all students are successful in moving to education or training at the end of Year 11. However, advice about requirements of courses on offer in the sixth does not always prepare students well enough to make the right choices. As a result the number of students failing to successfully complete courses in Year 12 is high.
- There is a very positive working relationship between the school and the local authority, which has improved since May 2014. The support provided by the local authority is helping the school improve the quality of teaching, particularly in English, mathematics and science, supporting the development of leaders at all levels, and helping governors to fulfil their roles effectively.
- The school commissioned an external review of the effectiveness of its provision for students eligible for

the pupil premium, and has used the findings to revise the support given. Early indications show that this is having a positive effect on reducing gaps, particularly in Key Stage 3.

- The school makes sure that all students have the same opportunities to take part in all aspects of school life. There is no evidence of discrimination.

#### ■ The governance of the school:

- Governors have responded positively to the external review of their performance. They are collaborating well with the local authority, and the new acting headteacher, to bring about rapid improvements in the work of the school. They have recently received extensive training in how to perform their roles more rigorously. They are able to compare the performance of the school with that locally and nationally and are increasingly holding school leaders to account for underperformance of students.
- Governors are clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are better informed through more detailed and accurate reports from the headteacher and other senior leaders, and by being more actively involved in visiting school and talking to staff and students.
- Governors are clear about their role in challenging weaker teaching. They have set exacting targets for the performance of the acting headteacher and are increasingly involved in making sure that teachers' performance and pay are closely linked to students' achievement. They are using a new appraisal policy to work with the acting headteacher to successfully challenge the underperformance of staff.
- Governors manage the finances of the school well. They look closely at how additional government funding is spent and have a good overview of the impact this has on the achievement of disadvantaged students. They are rigorous in making sure that the school gets best value when purchasing goods and services.
- The governing body makes sure all statutory child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures meet current national requirements.

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

#### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is good. Students are polite and friendly and there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere around the school.
- Students have positive attitudes to learning. They are prompt to lessons, bring the necessary equipment, and settle down to work quickly. Relationships are good. Students collaborate well together and respond positively to their teachers.
- Attendance is above the national average. The school has good systems of support for students and their families so that the number of persistent absentees has reduced and is well below average. The attendance of disadvantaged students identified as a weakness by the previous inspection. Additional funding has been used to provide extra support for these students and their attendance has improved considerably.
- School tracking shows that the incidents of unacceptable behaviour have reduced, as has the number of fixed-term exclusions. Good support systems help the few students who have been excluded to reintegrate back into school. There have been no permanent exclusions for the last three years.

#### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students told inspectors that they feel safe and that teachers care for them well. They were very positive about the information they receive through registration, personal and social education and citizenship lessons. They spoke knowledgeably about staying healthy, and the effects of alcohol and misuse of drugs.
- Students know about different kinds of bullying, particularly cyber bullying, and are clear about what to do if it happens. They say that bullying is uncommon, incidents of racist and homophobic behaviour are rare, and on the few occasions that they occur the school deals with them effectively. A small minority of students told inspectors about incidents of name-calling but said that teachers deal with this swiftly when

it happens.

- The school liaises well with providers of off-site, work-related courses to closely check the attendance, behaviour, safety and progress of students who attend the alternative provision.

### **The quality of teaching**

### **requires improvement**

- Teaching is not good enough to ensure that all students make good or better progress across all subjects.
- Too many teachers do not show high enough expectations of what students can achieve. They do not use information about what students already know to set work at the right level for different abilities. More-able students are not always challenged enough because work is too easy for them, while others are held back in their learning because work is too hard and they need more help and guidance.
- The school has introduced whole-school policies for literacy and numeracy since the previous inspection. There has been a considerable focus on improving students' reading skills, with greater emphasis in lessons on allowing time for students to read out loud and silently. However, too many students are not given opportunities to practise their writing skills or apply numeracy skills to problem solving in different subjects.
- Marking was an issue at the previous inspection and much has been done to improve the quality and consistency of feedback to students. The quality of information being provided to students on how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve is much better. As a result students' achievement is improving.
- Teaching assistants are usually well deployed. They play a key role in supporting disabled students, those with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language and those who are supported by the pupil premium. As a result of recent improvements in more accurate targeting, the students they help are now making similar progress to their peers.
- Teaching is improving and is having a positive effect on students' achievement, particularly in Key Stage 3. In some lessons teachers successfully plan demanding and interesting work, which builds on prior learning, and which fully engages students' interest. In a Year 7 history lesson on Chinese dynasties, the teacher had adapted cards and worksheets for different levels of abilities, gave students the opportunity to investigate and discuss their ideas together, and provided additional support when necessary. The students responded well to the teacher's high expectations and deep questioning and made excellent progress.

### **The achievement of pupils**

### **requires improvement**

- Too many students are not making good progress across a number of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- In 2014 the proportion of students gaining five A\* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics was well below the national average, and had declined from 2013. The students who took examinations in 2014 entered the school with attainment levels significantly below those of the students who took examinations in 2013. Even so, unverified results show that too many students did not make the progress that they should have done in English, mathematics and science. They performed better in modern foreign languages, humanities and physical education.
- More-able students do not achieve their full potential because they are not always given challenging work. Not enough reach the higher grades in GCSE examinations.
- The gap in attainment between disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium and their classmates is narrowing. In 2013, in GCSE English, eligible students were roughly one and a half grades behind their classmates and other students nationally. In 2014 this narrowed to approximately one third of

a grade. In mathematics, eligible students were two grades behind their classmates and others nationally in 2013. This gap narrowed to one and a third grades in 2014. The progress of eligible students is improving because of the additional support that they are receiving. School data show that the gap in attainment is also narrowing across all other years.

- The progress of Year 7 students eligible for additional help with reading as part of the government's 'catch-up' funding is now similar to that of other students, and is sometimes better. The school's focus on reading during lessons and registration time, plus additional one-to-one support, is helping these students catch up to their classmates.
- The school's assessment data, students' work and observations of lessons show that students currently in the school are making faster progress than previously in many subjects. This is because students are benefiting from improvements in teaching and better use of tracking information. Students' rates of progress in Key Stage 3 are now better than in previous years.
- Disabled students, those with special educational needs, students from ethnic minorities and those who speak English as an additional language make at least similar progress to their peers, and in some cases better progress because of improved, well-targeted, additional support.
- Students who find traditional subjects too challenging attend a variety of different courses more appropriate to their needs. The quality of provision and progress of these students are checked regularly and they achieve at least as well as their peers. The school does not enter students early for GCSE examinations.

### The sixth form provision

### requires improvement

- Achievement in the sixth form requires improvement. Results in 2013 show average attainment on both A-level and work-related courses, but in 2014 results declined, particularly at the highest grades. At AS level students do not make consistently good progress. Students have not always been advised to take the correct courses and the proportion staying on in Year 13 is below the national average.
- Teaching in the sixth form is improving but there is too much variation in the quality across and within subjects. As a result, students do not make good or better progress in all subjects.
- Sixth formers provide excellent role models for younger students. They demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. Their attendance is good, they get on well together and contribute greatly to supporting the school's activities in a number of ways. Examples include: listening to students read; acting as sports' coaches; mentoring younger students; carrying out duties at break and lunchtime; and acting as ambassadors at different school events.
- The sixth form meets the national 16–19 interim minimum standards. Current information shows that progress at AS and A level is improving at a fast rate because teaching is improving.
- Students are positive about the quality of careers information and guidance they receive. The vast majority who complete their courses go on to study at university, some opting to take up apprenticeships.
- The school's links with other local secondary schools and the local college ensures that the range of subjects on offer in the sixth form is appropriately broad and balanced.
- Leaders of the sixth form manage the work with other members of the consortium well. They ensure that students are well cared for and safe. Monitoring and tracking systems are in place to check students' progress and to provide additional support for any students who fall behind with their work. More consistent application of these support systems is bringing about improvements in students' attainment.

## 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>	124445
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	442554

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	807
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	118
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mary Witts
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jason Christey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 October 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01785 258546
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