

Stoke Park School and Community Technology College

Dane Road, Coventry, CV2 4JW

Inspection dates

11–12 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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

- Leaders and governors have improved aspects of teaching and achievement, but improvements have been inconsistent or too slow in some areas.
- Leaders' evaluations of the school's performance and plans for improvement have not given sufficient prominence to the weaker achievement of some groups of students, and in some subjects.
- Achievement in mathematics declined considerably in 2014. By the end of Year 11, students made significantly less progress than other students nationally.
- The gaps between the progress made by disadvantaged students and their peers in school and nationally have not closed over time in mathematics.
- The attendance of disadvantaged students has improved, but remains too low.
- The most able students do not make enough progress in a number of subjects.
- The quality of teaching also varies between subjects and within subjects and as a result, student's achievement is not consistently good.
- Some teachers do not have high expectations of students' work or apply the school's marking policy consistently to help students improve their work.
- Students' behaviour requires improvement because students' attitudes to learning are not good in all lessons.
- The sixth form requires improvement because students do not make enough progress in their A-levels or AS-Levels.

The school has the following strengths

- Many students, including disadvantaged students, make good progress in English.
- Achievement in some other subjects is good.
- The school offers high quality provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs, and for students who speak English as an additional language.
- Students' safety is given a high priority. Students have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.
- The curriculum both in the main school and the sixth form is broad and balanced, meeting the needs and aspirations of a range of students. Students' spiritual, moral, cultural and social understanding is well promoted.
- Some teaching is highly effective where teachers' strong subject knowledge, skilful questioning and the brisk pace of learning enable students to make good progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 39 lessons. They carried out some joint observations with senior leaders. Observations of other aspects of the school's work were also made, such as tutor time.
- Inspectors were joined by a British Sign Language interpreter on the first day of the inspection.
- Inspectors also looked at students' books and folders during lessons and as a separate activity.
- Meetings were held with groups of students and the school's staff, including senior and middle leaders. Discussions were also held with members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- There were 20 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire that provided evidence for the inspection. Inspectors also took into account surveys of parents' views carried out by the school.
- The views of 71 members of staff were analysed in response to Ofsted's questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, school policies and minutes of meetings of the governing body. Information about students' progress, attainment, attendance and exclusions were also examined as were the school's records of safeguarding, and of teachers' performance linked to salary scales.

Inspection team

Chris Chapman, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Alun Williams

Her Majesty's Inspector

Gary Anderson

Additional Inspector

Lynne Thorogood

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Stoke Park School and Community Technology College is a larger than average-sized secondary school with a sixth form.
- The school is managed by a local governing body and by a trust board that is made up of partners from local industry and from universities.
- Some courses in the sixth form are offered through consortium arrangements with a number of other local secondary schools. As a result, some students attend courses at other sites.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students, who are those eligible for support from the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government for students known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after in public care), is above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- Just over half of students are from a White British background, which is smaller than average. Other students come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Approximately one tenth are from Indian heritages.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- A small number of students in Key Stage 4 attend part-time courses at places away from the school site. These places include Learnfit, the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Heart of England Training Ltd and Coventry and Warwickshire Training.
- The school has a specialist resource provision for students with hearing impairment on the site. This provision is managed by the local authority. All students who attend are registered full-time at the school. There are currently five students who are supported by this provision.
- In 2014, the school met the current government floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The current headteacher leaves his post at Easter 2015. A substantive replacement has not yet been appointed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all students and groups of students make good or better progress by:
 - securing challenge and high expectations for all students in all lessons
 - ensuring that students receive high quality guidance from their teachers and use this to improve their work
 - promoting consistently good attitudes to learning in all lessons.
- Improve leadership and management so that areas of weakness are identified quickly and tackled by:
 - strengthening the quality of school self-evaluation through a sharper focus on strengths and weaknesses in the achievement of students and groups of students across all subjects
 - ensuring that plans for improvement directly tackle identified weaknesses and offer targets so that leaders can measure the success of their actions
 - setting targets to improve teachers' performance that are more closely linked to the progress of groups of students
 - ensuring that governors receive robust, high quality information so that they can hold leaders to account and drive improvements forward
 - closely monitoring that all teachers consistently apply school policies.
- Improve achievement by:
 - reducing the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching between, and within, different subject areas, including mathematics
 - ensuring that the gaps in progress and the attainment of disadvantaged students and others in the school close rapidly in all subjects, particularly mathematics

- continuing to improve the attendance of disadvantaged students
 - ensuring that the most able students are challenged to excel.
- Improve the sixth form so that achievement in academic subjects rises by rigorously monitoring students' progress and the quality of teaching in different subject areas.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The school's self-evaluation is too focused on successes without fully acknowledging areas of weakness. Information about the school's performance has not been analysed with sufficient rigour. As a result of weaknesses in evaluation, the school development plan is not focused sharply enough on tackling specific achievement issues in subjects, or with key student groups. This has resulted in limited improvements in some areas of achievement.
- Although leaders have secured some improvements in the sixth form since the previous inspection, these improvements have not yet led to good achievement in academic subjects.
- The school's evaluation of pupil premium spending is not thorough. Although the school uses this funding to support a range of strategies to improve the welfare, aspirations and achievement of disadvantaged students, leaders are unclear of the impact of these strategies. For example, the measures leaders use to demonstrate the successful use of this funding actually show aspects of students' performance that are not improving, and in some cases declining. This spending has therefore not been effective in raising the achievement of disadvantaged students in some key subject areas such as mathematics by the end of Key Stage 4. Governors have also raised their concerns about the quality of this information to leaders.
- Teachers are set targets to improve their work based on the professional Teachers' Standards, and for ensuring that the students they teach make good progress. The headteacher has used these targets successfully to promote better achievement in Key Stage 3. Decisions about teachers' pay increases based on their performance are taken seriously. These targets are not rigorously linked to the achievement of different student groups.
- Teachers and teaching assistants value the opportunities they have to attend high-quality training. This training is matched to both the school priorities and the development needs of staff. However, this training has not fully addressed issues such as improving the achievement of disadvantaged students.
- Leaders, including subject leaders, check on the quality of teaching in school by conducting lesson observations, focused monitoring weeks known as 'spotlight' weeks, learning walks and scrutinies of students' work. These checks are not currently rigorous enough to ensure that policies, such as the marking policy, are applied consistently by teachers.
- Senior leaders have given training to develop the expertise of middle leaders, a number of whom are new to their role. A review cycle is making all leaders increasingly accountable for bringing about improvements in their areas. Variability in the quality of teaching within some departments and in achievement across subjects means that the impact of some subject leaders is not as strong as that of others.
- Students follow a broad range of courses in all key stages and this is an important strength of the school. At both Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5, students can choose academic and vocational courses that meet their needs, abilities and interests. Leaders ensure that those students with low basic skills on entry to the school receive good support to develop these skills. Students are guided well in making informed decisions about subject choices and future career paths because of the school's effectively planned programme of careers education, advice and guidance. As a result, almost all students move to positive and appropriate destinations when they leave school or the sixth form.
- Leaders have also ensured that the curriculum equips students with positive values and a breadth of experiences. Students are taught how to keep safe, how to tackle bullying, intolerance and discrimination. They learn about democracy and other cultures and faiths in religious education and personal, social, health and citizenship education lessons. In Year 11, this work is further developed through following a GCSE general studies course, which covers a broad range of topics relevant to life in modern Britain and global society. All of this means that students are well prepared for life in modern Britain and have good opportunities for spiritual, moral, cultural and social development.

- Students' experiences and values are further deepened through a rich offer of well-attended extra-curricular activities that encompass artistic, sporting and academic areas, a wide range of visits, a well-planned assembly programme, guest speakers and partnerships with universities and employers. The school's focus on fundraising and international links has enabled students to work with and visit schools overseas. The many displays around the school, and excellent examples of students' artwork further celebrate and project the quality of the school's work in these areas.
- The school's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity is firmly embedded within the school's mission statement and ethos as a 'fully inclusive school'. This is reflected strongly in the curriculum, and in the school's strong provision for students supported by the specialist resource provision, other disabled students and those who have special educational needs, and for students who speak English as an additional language. However, because disadvantaged students and the most able students do not achieve as well as they should, the school has not yet been successful in fulfilling these aspirations for all students.
- Arrangements for the safeguarding of students meet statutory requirements.
- Leaders carefully check on the attendance and progress of the small number of students who spend part of their week studying away from school with a training provider. They make sure that each student is on the right course that matches their ability, interests and needs so that when they leave school they are able to progress to an appropriate post-16 course.
- The views of parents and staff about the work of the school gathered during the inspection were mixed. Some expressed concerns about the behaviour of students in the school. The school's own records of the views of staff and parents presented a more favourable view, with the large majority supportive of the school's work. The school is increasingly successful in engaging with hard-to-reach parents to improve the attendance and achievement of some students.
- The local authority has offered 'light-touch' support to the school, as a result of its rising achievement since the previous inspection. They have conducted visits to review the school's performance and supported the school in developing and delivering plans for improvement. This has not focused enough on some areas, such as the sixth form.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are highly ambitious for the success of the school. They actively promote and oversee the development of the school's ethos as an inclusive, caring school and push leaders to improve standards of teaching and achievement. However, they have not secured consistently high standards in all areas.
 - Safeguarding is given a high priority by governors. They monitor staff training and seek confirmation that the right checks have been undertaken for all members of staff. Regular updates ensure that they are well informed about safeguarding issues and their resolution.
 - Reports from the headteacher and school leaders ensure that governors understand the strengths of the school and areas that need to be developed. They have a realistic view of how the school is performing in relation to national standards. They also recognise the deficiencies of the school's self-evaluation documentation.
 - Governors oversee teachers' performance and challenge decisions about pay progression so that teachers are held to account for improving their performance.
 - Governors ask probing questions and challenge leaders over the quality of information that they receive. They have challenged leaders over the robustness and lack of impact demonstrated in the information about pupil premium spending that they have received. This lack of high quality information has limited governors' ability to affect much needed improvements for disadvantaged students.
 - Governance of the school is further enhanced through a trust board, that features partners from industry and universities. These links have provided a range of opportunities for students in the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**requires improvement****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. This is because students' attitudes to learning in lessons are not consistently good. Where the pace of learning is too slow, or tasks are not well matched to the needs of students, a minority of students lose interest, stray off-task and begin to engage in low-level disruption.
- Not all teachers, parents and students say that behaviour in the school is good. Some students told inspectors that older students' behaviour was better because their lessons were more focused.
- Students generally conduct themselves well when moving between lessons and at break and lunchtimes. They benefit from a range of activities during break times and lunchtimes that are well supervised by staff.
- Students treat the school buildings with respect. Following break and lunchtimes, little litter was seen. Most students follow the school's rules for uniform, although a few were seen flouting this.
- Leaders are taking action to improve behaviour in the school. Overcoming what the headteacher describes as 'a resistance to learning' for some students is a key priority of the school improvement plan. Pastoral leaders and form tutors work well to improve students' behaviour and engagement with school. A wide range of support is offered for students who present particularly challenging behaviour. This work has resulted in a reduction in fixed term exclusions so far this academic year. Records of negative behaviour also show improvements on previous years. Incidents of negative behaviour during lessons are relatively higher for some subject areas, including mathematics, which shows that leaders have not yet secured good attitudes to learning in all subjects.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Students say that bullying is rare. The school's records show that any incidents of bullying are tackled and dealt with efficiently. Assemblies, posters around the school and personal, social, health and citizenship lessons give a high profile to anti-bullying week, and teach students about the different forms of bullying and its consequences. This includes use of discriminatory and homophobic language.
- Improving students' attendance has been given a high priority. Overall rates of attendance have improved over time and are approaching that of other schools nationally. The school is working hard to reduce the proportion of those students who do not attend school regularly. This includes closer work with students' families and a range of programmes to encourage students' engagement with school life. This has led to some improvements, but rates of absence are still too high for some groups of students and in particular disadvantaged students.
- Personal, social, health and citizenship education lessons and assemblies promote students' awareness of risks very effectively. Students have a good awareness of the dangers of working on the internet, drugs, alcohol and road safety, and how to keep safe in relationships. In a Year 9 personal, social, health and citizenship education lesson, students demonstrated a good understanding of the risks of 'sexting'.
- Staff have been well trained in how to keep students safe. Some staff have also received training by 'Prevent' on how to recognise the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.
- Students, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs, say they feel safe and the majority of parents confirm this. Students value the care, guidance and support that the school offers.
- The behaviour and safety of students attending off-site learning is closely monitored because of good links with the providers of these courses.

The quality of teaching**requires improvement**

- Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school mean that some students do not make good progress in their learning.
- Teachers' expectations of the quality of work that students produce are not always high enough. Some teachers accept work from students that is untidy and not completed to a high standard.
- Teachers do not always match work carefully to the range of students' abilities in their class. When this is the case, the most able students finish their work quickly; they do not always move on to more challenging work, and have to wait for others to catch up and so their progress slows. When teachers do not plan activities and tasks that are interesting and engaging enough, students become restless, chatty and distracted.
- Sometimes teachers do not check the understanding of students well enough to ensure that they fully understand the work that they are given. This also results in some students making slower progress than others.
- Although the school has clear policies about marking of students' work, teachers do not apply this consistently. In the best examples, for example, in modern foreign languages and English, teachers mark books regularly and write comments that help students to improve future work. They also carefully correct spelling and grammatical mistakes. Students are then given opportunities to improve their work based on this guidance. However, in other subjects some books are not marked regularly or the guidance offered is too cursory so that it does not help students know what to do to improve.
- There are also many strengths of teaching in the school. Where teaching is strong, it is characterised by good subject knowledge, careful planning and high expectations. For example, in a Year 11 French lesson, the teacher planned the lesson based on assessments of students' prior knowledge and understanding. A brisk pace of learning was set and tasks and activities selected that motivated students to achieve their best. The teacher checked to ensure that students were learning well. As a result, all students were challenged to make good progress in their comprehension skills.
- Many teachers are very skilful in using questions to help students to think hard and to deepen their understanding of the topic they are studying. They choose their questions carefully, target them at specific students and do not accept brief or superficial answers.
- In a number of lessons seen, teaching made an impressive contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. For example, in a Year 8 religious education lesson, students responded thoughtfully to a speech by Martin Luther King and went on to explore the issues of discrimination and prejudice. Through their discussions and work, students articulated a good awareness of values such as respect and tolerance.
- Teaching assistants are effectively deployed in lessons. They are very skilled at offering support for students with a range of needs, including students who speak English as an additional language, disabled students and those who have special educational needs. As a result, they ensure that students can access learning in lessons, and make good progress.
- Students supported by the specialist resource provision receive good quality support in lessons, including through the use of sign language, and from teaching assistants. Students receiving one-to-one tuition benefit from teaching that is well matched to their communication needs.
- Literacy has been given a high profile in the school. In lessons, teachers share and reinforce key vocabulary for students. Students are given opportunities to read in their English lessons and during their form tutor time. There is also a focus on students producing extended pieces of writing across subjects during assessment weeks, and teachers correcting literacy errors when marking students' work. Some of these strategies, particularly the additional support offered for students with weaker reading skills on entry

to the school, are successful. However, not all aspects of the school's work, particularly the literacy marking policy, are applied consistently, so that the impact is diminished.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Following a period of improvement, in 2014 achievement in mathematics declined sharply. The proportion of students making expected progress fell to significantly below that of other schools nationally. Although the school records show that leaders are expecting better results this academic year, inspectors found that the progress made by students in mathematics lessons was inconsistent and requires improvement.
- By the end of Key Stage 4, the progress made by disadvantaged students in mathematics has been consistently below that of other students in the school and nationally. In 2014, less than half of disadvantaged students made expected progress, which is less than in previous years. As a result, the gaps between the attainment of these students with their peers widened to more than one grade in the school and more than one grade in relation to other students nationally. These wide gaps are further reflected in the proportion of disadvantaged students achieving five or more A* to C grades, in which little improvement has been seen over the last three years.
- The progress of the most able students is too slow and in 2012 and 2014 was, overall, significantly below that of other students nationally. Too few students who enter the school with high attainment make good progress in either English or mathematics by the end of Year 11, particularly students who enter the school with Level 5c. The most able also made less progress than other students nationally in the humanities subjects.
- Students do not attain as well in history, religious education and some design and technology subjects as they do in other subjects.
- In the past, students have not made enough progress at Key Stage 3. This has resulted in a number of interventions taking place in Key Stage 4 in order to make up for the progress that has not been made in previous years. The school's records of the achievement of students currently on roll show that students are now making quicker progress during Key Stage 3. The gap between disadvantaged students and their peers is also closing more quickly and inspection evidence supported this.
- Since the previous inspection, until 2014, achievement improved in a number of areas. For example, the overall proportion of students securing five or more A* to C grades in English and mathematics rose to be broadly in line with national average in 2012 and 2013. Given students' low starting points on entry, this reflected good overall attainment.
- The school has used early entry in English and mathematics as a strategy to raise the achievement of students. This has helped to support some improvements to achievement in the past because students have had the opportunity to re-sit examinations to get a better grade. This also means that published data for 2014 do not reflect the final achievements of students in the school.
- With the exception of the most able, many students achieve well in English. This also includes disadvantaged students, who made better progress overall than other students nationally in 2012 and 2013. Although progress for disadvantaged students was not as strong in 2014, the gaps between their attainment and that of others in school remains largely unchanged at just over half a grade, and just over half a grade from other students nationally.
- Students also achieve well in a number of other subjects, including art and design, sports, business studies and in some science courses. Students' progress in languages has improved over time.
- The school offers effective support and provision for students with low basic skills on entry, students who speak English as an additional language, disabled students and those who have special educational needs. The needs of these students are identified early, and the curriculum well-adjusted to meet these needs, with 'nurture groups' in Years 7 and 8. High quality on-going support is offered where needed. As a result, students who speak English as an additional language make good progress. The achievement of disabled

students and those who have special educational needs by the end of Key Stage 4 was not as strong in 2014 as it has been in the past, but current students in the school are making quick progress.

- Students who are supported by the specialist resource provision often start with levels of attainment that are well below average and make good progress. They are set high expectations and challenging targets. All students go to employment, education or training.
- Many students from minority ethnic backgrounds, including Indian students, make better progress than students from White British backgrounds. Some Pakistani students make slower progress in relation to others groups in the school, but this is improving.
- Students who attend courses away from the school site on a part-time basis benefit by taking work-related qualifications that are matched to their needs and interests. Students do well in these courses. For example, last academic year, all students achieved the qualification they were studying for.

The sixth form provision

requires improvement

- The sixth form requires improvement because those studying academic subjects do not make enough progress. The attainment of students in A levels, including the proportion of students securing the highest grades, shows slow improvements over time and is well below average. Few students secure the highest grades.
- Leadership of the sixth form also requires improvement because leaders have not yet secured good overall achievement. Improvement plans and checks on the quality of teaching and students' progress have not raised achievement quickly enough, or tackled the variation in performance between different subjects effectively.
- Students' achievement in different subjects is inconsistent. Students achieve better in art and design and design and technology. Achievement in mathematics is improving. A small proportion of students follow vocational subjects. Students make better progress in some of these courses than other students nationally.
- There were some improvements in AS level attainment last year, which rose to be broadly in line with national averages. A greater proportion of students than in the past secured the highest grades. This shows that improvements are being made for current cohorts.
- In the majority of lessons seen in the sixth form, teachers used good subject knowledge and probing questioning to help students to make progress. Teachers also used mark schemes and example answers well so that students were able to develop a secure understanding of what they needed to do in order to do well in their work. Sometimes, however, teachers did not check the learning of students carefully enough, so that they could be sure that all students of different abilities were making progress; this meant that some students made slower progress than others.
- Leaders have improved how they set targets for students and now monitor how well students are progressing against these more closely than they have done in the past. The school's records of students currently in the sixth form show that many are on track to secure their targets. Inspection evidence confirmed this.
- The curriculum features a broad range of Level 2 and Level 3 courses that suit a range of needs and interests. The choice of courses on offer is further enhanced through consortium arrangements with other schools. The sixth form provides suitable opportunities for students to re-sit English and mathematics, with some positive successes in English.
- All students have a range of opportunities to develop employability and study skills including opportunities to follow the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme, and supporting younger students with their reading.

- Students have access to high quality information, advice and guidance. A well-structured careers programme is supplemented by visits to universities and higher education fairs. Students' attendance and welfare are closely monitored. As a result, a high proportion of students enter education, employment or training and an increasing number of students go on to study at university.
- Behaviour in the sixth form is good and this is a view shared by the students. In lessons, students demonstrate a keen interest in their studies and particularly approach discussion opportunities with enthusiasm. They have a secure awareness of how to keep themselves safe.
- Students are positive about their experiences in the sixth form. They feel well supported by their teachers and form tutors. They say that they are well taught, but that sometimes teachers' explanations did not always help them fully to understand ideas, and that they would benefit from alternative approaches.

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	103728
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	453311

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
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	1054
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	150
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bobbie Kelly
Headteacher	Matthew Pike
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2010
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