

Sir William Stanier Community School

Coronation Street, Crewe, Cheshire, CW1 4EB

Inspection dates 10–11 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The principal and senior managers focus strongly on securing better teaching for students. They maintain high expectations of both staff and students and this emphasis on quality is securing better achievement.
- Leaders ensure that the school's curriculum responds to the needs of students. It is adjusted and developed to ensure students' good progress irrespective of their circumstances.
- Students have responded to the 'zero tolerance' of poor behaviour in classrooms. As a result, they apply themselves well and are eager to learn. Attitudes to learning have developed well and are now contributing to good achievement in lessons.
- Students feel safe in school as they have confidence in the adults' ability to deal with any concerns they raise; pastoral care is excellent.
- Good teaching is addressing the gaps in students' knowledge, skills and understanding and resulting in good achievement.
- Students, from their starting points, make progress that is at least in line with the national average in English and mathematics and across a wider range of subjects.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are supported well and are making outstanding progress. The gaps in achievement between disadvantaged students and other students in the school and nationally are closing, as are the gaps between boys' and girls' performance.
- Governors offer appropriate challenge and support for senior leaders. They monitor regularly the impact of actions taken by the school to improve teaching and raise achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The achievement of students is not yet outstanding in English, mathematics and a range of subjects.
- Some students' below-average attendance and higher than average rate of persistent absence reduces their opportunities to learn; this is particularly true for boys and disadvantaged students.
- The questions teachers ask do not consistently develop students' deeper understanding nor do teachers always use opportunities to develop students' speaking skills and confidence.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed and analysed teaching and learning across a range of subjects and year groups, some of which were jointly observed with one of the school's senior leaders. Inspectors also made a number of short visits to lessons. They attended an assembly and visited a number of tutor sessions.
- Meetings were held with students and staff, subject leaders, senior leaders responsible for different aspects of the school's work, members of the governing body and the executive principal, who is at the school one day in the week. Telephone conversations were held with the School Improvement Officer and a local authority representative.
- Inspectors looked at the school's self-evaluation and development plans, monitoring records, information about students' progress, safeguarding documents and samples of students' work.
- The views of 45 parents who responded to Ofsted's on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account, as was the school's own survey involving 134 parents. Inspectors also looked at the 77 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Pankaj Gulab, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Stephen Wall	Additional Inspector
Catherine Davies	Additional Inspector
Kathleen Harris	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-size secondary school.
- There are more girls than boys on roll.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students, those supported through the pupil premium, is much higher than average. The pupil premium is additional funding to support students known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school population is mainly White British, with a lower than average proportion of students from other ethnic groups.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is lower than the national average.
- Alternative provision is provided for a small number of students at Trade Skills, Changing Education, Safe Opportunities and South Cheshire College.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The school is part of the Heath Family Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school supports other schools in the trust and local authority.
- Sir William Stainer Community School became an academy in September 2013. When the predecessor school, using the same name, was inspected, it was judged to require improvement.
- The executive principal visits the school once a week and is a National Leader of Education. The principal is responsible for the day-to-day running of the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise the achievement of all students, particularly for boys and those who are deemed to be disadvantaged, through improving the quality of teaching by:
 - giving students more opportunity to contribute in lessons so they develop in confidence and take greater responsibility for their learning
 - encouraging students to reflect more on their learning and to read more widely
 - improving the quality of questioning so that it fully involves students in developing their speaking skills and deepens their understanding
 - enhancing the impact of teachers' marking
 - sharing more widely the good practice that exists in the school.
- Secure better attendance, particularly for some boys and disadvantaged students, so the gaps in achievement between different groups of students reduce even further.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The principal and the senior leadership team are determined to make sure students achieve well and improve their chances of success later in life. Governors and staff share this vision and culture leading to strong morale, which is rapidly driving forward progress in the school.
- Targets set for students' achievement appropriately challenge them. Leaders' detailed analysis of students' progress towards these targets occurs on a regular basis and the action that they take in response to this analysis ensures students' good progress.
- The school has a good understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement and has worked successfully to address the underachievement of different groups and in particular subjects, so that attainment gaps are narrowing.
- The work of middle leaders is a strength of the school. They are good practitioners and this benefits their team as they can share and promote good practice in their departments. All teachers receive detailed progress data for their classes, which allow them to support those students who are at risk of underachieving. This is helping to raise students' achievement in the classroom.
- Robust arrangements are in place to check the quality of teaching and its impact on the achievement of students. A coaching and support programme has been developed to improve teaching practice in order to enhance students' experience and to promote better learning. Inspection evidence indicates that these strategies are successful in improving students' achievement. The curriculum is well designed to meet the needs of students and is monitored to check its success. Where initial courses have been less successful, students have been redirected to learning that better meets their needs and interests. This was particularly successful in re-engaging some Year 9 disaffected students in learning.
- A comprehensive personal, social and health education programme focuses on students' personal development and prepares them well for playing a positive role in modern Britain.
- There are extensive arrangements to provide opportunities for extra-curricular and enrichment activities. These, alongside curriculum experiences, are helping to develop students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Students were observed engaging sensitively in a history lesson focused on the Holocaust, and in English, on a discussion between two characters about racism.
- Effective careers guidance provided for all students is leading to very few students not in employment, education or training. The school secured a charter mark for careers guidance last term.
- The effectiveness and review of the support arrangements for those who are disabled or have special educational needs are outstanding. Arrangements in place to support those who arrive with low literacy skills or with English as an additional language are comprehensive. 'Early bird' sessions, a reading laboratory and use of 'reading buddies' from Year 10 are well established and have a positive impact on students' literacy skills.
- The care and concern for vulnerable students is exceptional. Leaders in this area are skilled in identifying depression and other psychological needs alongside the need for a sense of belonging and what helps students to achieve. Several case studies show the school has been successful in supporting these students to experience success in all aspects of their life, including achieving well.
- The detailed analysis of progress information and a clear focus on reducing gaps in achievement between different groups of students through successful support arrangements are evidence of the school's good promotion of equal opportunities. The school effectively fosters good relationships and tackles discrimination robustly. The school's use of the pupil premium funding is effective in reducing the gap between the performance of disadvantaged students and others in the school and nationally.
- The Heath Family Multi-Academy Trust has been instrumental in providing clear and useful support to help the school develop. For a short period of time, successful subject leaders in the trust were used to provide support for middle leaders. Now the capacity of the school to improve has grown considerably, the support has been reduced. Some of the good practice at the college is now used more widely across the trust and in partnership with the local authority. The executive principal of the trust works at the school, one day a week, to plan for the long-term development of the school and the part it plays in the trust.
- The arrangements for safeguarding students are thorough and meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has been restructured and a new Chair of the Governing Body took over at the beginning of this academic year. As part of a renewed structure, governors have undertaken a skills audit, attended training on how to interpret progress data and participated in on-line safeguarding training. Governors are committed to the school and give of their time to visit the school to gain a better understanding of the school's work.

- Additional meetings of the governing body committees have been introduced to track more closely the progress of students. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and the areas for improvement for the school. Governors' monitoring of the impact of the spending of the pupil premium funding has been strengthened with a governor nominated to do so regularly. Governors are aware of the quality of teaching in the school through regular reports from senior leaders. Performance management is robust with governors turning down increases in salary for teachers who do not meet their targets. Different middle and senior leaders are invited to every governing body meeting to share aspects of their work and justify the progress or lack of it in the areas they oversee. Governors are aware of the strategies the school uses to prepare students for life in modern democratic Britain. All of the above allows governors to provide appropriate support and challenge for senior leaders.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good.
- Students acknowledge that the higher expectations put in place by the new principal are having a beneficial impact on their learning. Students' attitudes to learning are positive and they are open to being directed in their learning by teachers. Where they are encouraged and engaged effectively by teachers, students show an eagerness to learn.
- Students are proud of their school, come smartly dressed and ready to learn. Movement between lessons is mostly sensible and considerate of the needs of other. During break and lunchtime, students mostly mill around in groups and mix well with each other. There is a pleasant atmosphere around the school created by students getting along with each other. Students are courteous to adults and visitors and willingly give honest replies to questions asked of them.
- Students regularly demonstrate good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development at lunchtimes when different groups of students perform in the central atrium to the delight of other students. The respect shown to and appreciation of other cultures was demonstrated well by the way in which students listened to and applauded a Slovakian rock band that performed in their own language.
- Attendance and punctuality have improved year-on-year but attendance is currently still below the national average. The proportion of students who are persistently absent has also reduced but still remains above average. The school analyses absences carefully and has special arrangements in place to support the improvement of some students' attendance. There is clear evidence of the positive impact of these strategies; students' lateness has significantly reduced.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Students spoken to say they feel safe and have been made aware of how to avoid the risks that are sometimes presented by the use of new technologies. They say that, while some bullying occurs, adults in the school deal with it effectively when it is reported.
- A thorough personal, social and health education programme makes students aware of dangers of drugs, 'legal highs' and issues around radicalisation.
- Parents, through the on-line parent questionnaire, Parent View, and those who responded to the school's own questionnaire, indicate the school keeps their children safe and promotes good behaviour.
- The school carefully monitors students' attendance, behaviour and safety at alternative provision. Misbehaviour is rare by students attending alternative provision.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching over time is good. Changes in staffing, alongside strong focused coaching and development for staff, have resulted in an overall improvement in the quality of teaching. This is contributing to an increase in the rate at which standards are rising.
- Most teachers use clear, detailed information about the progress students are making and the gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding to design lessons which address the gaps and build on the knowledge already gained. This focus is helping teachers to ensure that they meet the needs of students through offering a range of challenging work.
- Teachers are consistently securing good and better progress as a result of their careful matching of work

and challenge to help students progress further, particularly in English.

- The teaching of mathematics has been strengthened significantly through changes in staffing and training; as a result, students in this subject are making good progress. This is evidenced in students' books and through the results of numerous test papers that students undertake.
- Teachers know their students well and provide appropriate support by targeting questions and adjusting work so all make good progress. Occasionally questions do not afford opportunities for students to develop fully their speaking skills or promote their self-confidence.
- Teaching assistants are used well and this and different seating arrangements ensure that students and those with special educational needs make good to excellent progress. These arrangements are also successfully used to target disadvantaged students and some weaker boys. This was typified in one lesson, where the teaching assistant read out questions which students had difficulty in understanding and effectively supported a group of students with special educational needs.
- Where teaching leads to good or better achievement, there is effective planning based on students' needs. Teachers' good subject knowledge effectively captures students' interest. Teachers enjoy positive relationships with students, and as a result, students engage actively and take responsibility for their own learning. The pace of learning reflects how quickly students gain knowledge, understanding and skills. Teachers are not afraid to change their lessons in light of how effectively students are learning and this ensures all achieve well.

Where progress is less secure, teachers do not clearly tell students what they should be doing.

Questioning is cursory and teachers move on too quickly without securing deeper understanding. Teachers do not capture students' interest and this leads to them lacking the confidence to contribute to the lessons. Sometimes students lack the confidence to say they have not understood the work.

- Many students arrive in Year 7 with well-below average literacy skills, and most teachers rightly focus on providing opportunities to develop these skills. However, this is still inconsistent across and within subjects. Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to involve students in reading for understanding and developing the use of key subject specific language. Teachers do not consistently highlight students' repeated errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar in order to reinforce their literacy skills.
- Teachers regularly mark students' work and offer feedback. Comments often help students improve, although in a few books comments are general and not helpful in driving learning forward. Sometimes students fail to make the most of the guidance offered or next steps suggested and as a result, they lose opportunities to make progress in their learning.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students enter the school with standards in English and mathematics that are well below the national average. Standards achieved by Year 11 students at the end of last year were an improvement on the year before. Work in books and progress in lessons show the standards reached by Year 11 students this year are already higher than at the same time last year. In 2014, the proportion of students attaining five A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, was broadly average. Inspection evidence suggests an improvement on this outcome this year.
- The school has analysed in detail the reasons why last year a few students, given their starting points, did not make the progress expected of them. Appropriate targeting this year is driving forward the achievement of students in Year 11. The school has entered some students early for GCSE mathematics to enhance their engagement. Students' work in books analysed by inspectors and progress observed in lessons support the school's data that students are making good progress in English and mathematics across all year groups.
- The attainment of disadvantaged students at the end of Year 11 last year was a grade behind non-disadvantaged students in school in English, and one and a half grades behind in mathematics. The attainment gap with other students nationally was a grade behind in English, but two grades behind in mathematics. Extensive additional support is ensuring this group of students is continuing to close achievement gaps with non-disadvantaged students. The gap in the progress of disadvantaged students in the school and other students nationally is reducing quickly. This is because of the focus each teacher has on these students in the classroom and specific intervention arrangements organised by the school. Very effective teaching and support are ensuring that this group of students is making increasingly good progress.
- The most able students make good progress. The proportion of A* to A grades increased last year and inspection evidence identifies continued improvement. The most able students have a good understanding of complex work, completing challenging tasks successfully.

- Disabled students and those with special educational needs progress exceptionally well as a result of the outstanding support they receive. Teachers support this progress through rigorously reviewing students' progress and organising appropriate support.
- Girls performed better than boys did last year. The focus on reducing this gap is proving successful this year with more boys performing as well as the girls.
- Students who attend alternative education providers are successful in their studies with most progressing on to education, employment or training.
- The school uses early entry to GCSE examinations selectively with positive outcomes for those students involved.
- Arrangements to support students with weak literacy and mathematics skills are in place and successful in addressing these weaknesses. There is a club before school starts in the morning, the 'early bird', which has helped almost every student involved to improve their reading skills. The school purchases a reading book for every student to help them engage in reading more widely and often. However, many students spoken with in different year groups say they have not continued the practice of reading widely and often.

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 prepare well 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	139953
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	444663

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	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	850
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Cooper
Principal	Jason Fraser
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
Telephone number	01270 685360
Fax number	01270 213809
Email address	office@sws.cheshire.sch.uk

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