

# de Stafford School

Burntwood Lane, Caterham, Surrey, CR3 5YX

**Inspection dates** 14–15 October 2015

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher, ably supported by his senior team, provides good leadership. As a result, there have been significant improvements in the quality of teaching and students' outcomes since the previous inspection.
- Leaders make effective use of information on students' progress to identify strengths and weaknesses.
- Middle leaders' clear focus on raising the quality of learning and teaching for different groups of students in their subject areas has led to improved outcomes.
- Students make good progress in English and mathematics and in most other subject areas.
- Disadvantaged students currently at the school now make much better progress than in the past.
- Teaching is good overall. Teachers make effective use of their good subject knowledge, together with accurate assessment, to target appropriate learning activities which meet the students' needs well.
- Students' behaviour is good. The vast majority of students behave in a mature and respectful manner in lessons and around the school.
- Parents and their children are rightly proud of the school. They recognise that it offers a caring community where students are kept safe and their welfare matters greatly.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Very occasionally, a small minority of students, mainly boys, sometimes drift off task and disrupt lessons, which can slow the pace of learning.
- While students with disabilities or special educational needs are making better progress than previously, they are not yet making the same levels of progress as their peers in every subject area.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not yet consistently strong in science and resistant materials.
- Too few opportunities exist to promote students' understanding of different cultures and faiths.

## Full report

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

- Improve achievement so that outcomes are outstanding for all groups of students by:
  - ensuring that all students, especially those with disabilities or special educational needs, make rapid and secure progress in every subject
  - closing the few remaining gaps in the progress made between disadvantaged students and others
  - deepening students' understanding of different cultures and faiths so that they are better prepared for life in modern-day Britain.
  
- Ensuring all teaching reflects the best practice currently in the school by:
  - making sure high-quality questioning promotes rapid progress in all subjects
  - promoting teaching that addresses the learning needs of all boys more effectively
  - challenging students to think more deeply to form more detailed explanations in all subject areas.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher has shown strong and determined leadership and has achieved substantial improvements in the quality of teaching and students' outcomes since the last inspection. His high expectations of what students can achieve are shared by teachers and leaders at all levels. As a result, students' progress, although not yet outstanding, has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Parents' feedback positively endorses all that the school offers.
- Senior leaders know teachers' individual strengths and areas for further development well because they monitor the quality of teaching closely. Advice is sought from the local authority and partners from other schools to verify the accuracy of leaders' and teachers' judgements.
- Middle leaders trust and respect the governors and senior leaders. They value greatly the challenge leaders bring to their work. Working together has ensured that teaching is now securely good, particularly in subjects such as English, history, geography and religious education.
- Middle leaders are a dedicated and enthusiastic team. They are determined to continually improve teaching and learning in their subject areas. By making good use of the information available to them about students' current achievement, they support teachers effectively to improve the quality of their teaching.
- Teachers and teaching assistants feel well supported to bring about improvements. They value the opportunities for training and put it to good use in their planning and teaching to seek better learning outcomes for all students. The staff surveys returned show a very high level of staff morale and satisfaction with the leadership of the school.
- The subjects on offer meet students' needs well. Senior leaders have significantly expanded provision in modern foreign languages and the humanities so that a far greater proportion of students are now able to access a broader range of subjects.
- Leaders ensure that careers advice and guidance is well organised and effective. Students in Key Stage 4 feel very well informed about the range of opportunities open to them at age 16, including the variety of college courses, different institutions, and the qualifications required to support their aspirations.
- Leaders ensure that the Year 7 catch-up funding is used to very good effect to raise standards of literacy and numeracy for those students arriving at the school with lower than average attainment in English, mathematics or both subjects.
- The well-stocked, and well-used, library is a strength of the school and staff can evidence how the targeted support it has offered groups of students is accelerating the progress that they make in literacy and mathematics during Key Stage 3.
- Leaders make effective use of the pupil premium funding. Published information does not show a significant reduction in the gap between the standard of achievement of this group and their peers, but disadvantaged students currently at the school are making rapid progress. As a result of the schools' accelerated reader and book buddy programmes, students in Year 8 whose reading was below age-related expectations have caught up with their peers.
- Students in Year 11 who attend East Surrey College one day a week benefit from their experiences of a broader and more vocational curriculum. Their progress and their welfare are overseen by a nominated member of staff who liaises frequently with college staff.
- A very small number of students attend the local pupil referral unit to meet their particular level of need. Good links between this provider and the school are helping to ensure the welfare and progress towards appropriate qualifications for each of these students.
- Social and academic mentoring time is used well, to monitor and support individual students' progress and reflect on current affairs. The well-taught curriculum, combined with regular opportunities for learning outside of the school day, ensures that students gain a good awareness of moral, social and spiritual issues. There are fewer opportunities to learn about the diversity of cultures and beliefs in modern Britain and so students' understanding of these areas is more limited.
- Leaders work closely with a link adviser from the local authority to provide suitable support for the school. Regular monitoring and review visits take place to affirm both the accuracy of the leaders' self-evaluation and the quality of their improvement work. Good use of consultants from the local

authority has led to better teaching and leadership in a range of subjects.

■ **The governance of the school**

- Governors share the headteacher’s aims and vision for the school and they manage the performance of the headteacher well. They attend to their own training needs and have recently recruited new members with specific skills and experience. As a result, governors have the capacity to offer increasingly robust and systematic challenge to specific aspects of the school’s work that are not yet outstanding.
  - Governors have successfully challenged leaders to raise the quality of teaching and learning and hold them to account for further improvements. Leaders report regularly on their areas of responsibility and governors check that they have suitable targets for bringing about improvements. The governors’ planned calendar of focused meetings and visits enables them to evaluate aspects of the school such as safeguarding, the quality of teaching and provision for students with special educational needs. This has ensured that they have a good understanding of the school’s performance and its day-to-day work. Governors scrutinise performance information, alongside externally produced analyses, in order to assess the success of the school against its own targets, and national standards.
  - Governors ensure the fair and consistent application of policies and that only the best teaching is rewarded with pay increases.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff and governors receive suitable safeguarding training. This means that staff understand and carry out the school’s policy and procedures well. Risk assessments and recruitment processes are sound.

**Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good**

- The quality of teaching has improved and is now typically good. Most teachers have very good relationships with students. Teachers know students’ strengths and weaknesses well, and provide them with additional support and challenge within and outside lessons. Teachers’ close monitoring underpins better learning and improved outcomes.
- Systems to track students’ progress have improved since the last inspection. Teachers access detailed progress information about each student to inform their plans and teaching strategies. For example, in science improved planning is enabling teachers, and teaching assistants, to support students with special educational needs to understand key words and to sequence their predictions. As a result, current achievement in science is much better.
- Most teachers have high expectations and good questioning skills. Inspectors found evidence that teachers’ probing questions help most students engage and this has facilitated good progress in their work over time.
- Teaching in English is consistently strong because the head of department is very clear about the approaches that are needed to ensure that students achieve well. Sound systems are in place to support teachers’ assessment of students’ work and appropriate support is given for any students who lag behind. As a result, outcomes in English continue to improve rapidly.
- Teaching in mathematics is usually good. In mathematics lessons in Key Stage 4, students are very aware of their personal goals. Teachers provide helpful resources and advice enabling them to practise key skills. These approaches, combined with regular use of practice examination questions, have recently led to significantly improved outcomes for all groups of students.
- Teachers share responsibility for the development of literacy and communication skills, encouraging students to apply them well in most subject areas. Students’ work demonstrates that they are challenged to write well across a range of subjects and the school’s busy library is in constant use. In some areas more work needs to be done to improve students’ presentation of their work. In mathematics, science and technology teachers are working to promote literacy but more focus needs to be given to challenging deeper thinking and encouraging students to write longer and richer explanations.
- Teachers use a consistent approach to marking across the school. In many lessons students are given time to reflect on the feedback that they have received. The majority of students find this opportunity useful and many use it to correct their work and contribute further ideas in the form of a dialogue in their books which improves their understanding.

- In some practical subject areas there is still some variation in the quality of teaching. In a minority of lessons the teaching does not meet the learning needs of all students, particularly boys. Senior leaders are aware of this and more work is planned to share best practice across the school.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Students are safe and secure in the school, and they feel well looked after. Good systems are in place to offer help and support, sometimes involving external agencies when appropriate. A very high proportion of parents responding to Parent View affirmed that their child is looked after well at school and is happy here. Parents' faith in the school is well founded.
- Staff care a great deal about students' achievement and personal development and so working relationships between staff and students are very strong. Year 10 and 11 students told inspectors that they particularly value academic mentoring time and they trust their teachers and the school's systems. Parents agree and believe that these good relationships underpin the progress their children make.
- Students value the opportunities they have to learn about keeping themselves safe, in and around school, as well as online. Learning about e-safety has an appropriately high status.
- Attendance is in line with national averages and improving. Disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities and those with special educational needs, have contributed disproportionately to absence levels in the past, but this is changing and currently these attendance gaps are narrowing.
- Exclusions for poor behaviour are used sparingly and as a last resort. Rates of exclusion have been below national averages for some time. In the past, disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities and those with special educational needs have had higher exclusion rates than their peers. Better resources to support these groups of students have resulted in marked improvements in their attitudes and behaviour. Any differences in exclusion rates are being eliminated.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- This is a happy, caring and purposeful school with a calm and businesslike atmosphere. Students conduct themselves well around the site at all times. Nearly all students are confident, polite and respectful to staff, visitors and each other. They know the standards expected of them and take a pride in their uniform and their school. Parents recognise and value this.
- In most lessons students show an enthusiasm for their learning and engage well in the tasks they are given. Punctuality is generally good and the students come well equipped and ready to learn.
- In a small minority of lessons, behaviour is not as impressive. In these lessons, not all students receive the challenge they need to maintain their interest or keep them fully engaged in their work. Where this happens, it tends to be a small number of the boys who can disrupt learning with chatter or silly, off-task behaviour.

## **Outcomes for pupils are good**

- Outcomes are consistently good in most subject areas. Teachers monitor students' learning and provide a range of helpful support and guidance for those who lag behind. This means that students achieve well in English, mathematics and across a range of other subjects. Students' learning in science and in resistant materials is secure but is not as strong as in other areas because there are still some variations in the quality of teaching.
- Students in the COIN Centre achieve well because the support they receive is well matched to their needs and allows them to play a full part in lessons and in the life of the school.

- The school has made good strides to improve the lack of progress over time for students with special educational needs. Better identification and support is now ensuring improved progress for these students in most subject areas. Leaders have introduced new systems to share relevant information with classroom teachers, helping them to improve their planning and exploit fully the availability of teaching assistants in class. Consequently, the progress of students with special educational needs has improved but they are not yet making the same levels of progress as their peers in all subject areas.
- Over time disadvantaged students in Key Stage 4 have underachieved in English, mathematics and other subjects. They have made less progress than other students nationally and within the school. This is no longer the case. Students in Years 10 and 11 are making rapid progress from all starting points.
- In Key Stage 3 progress is good in English and mathematics and improving in science. The majority of students are on track to meet, or exceed, the high targets set for them. Improvements in the quality of teaching have rapidly narrowed the gaps between boys and girls as well as between disadvantaged students and their peers.
- GCSE results in 2015 went down. However, the current achievement of Key Stage 4 students reflects better rates of progress and higher standards. Inspectors' scrutiny of current Year 11 progress information and students' work indicates much improved levels of progress for all student groups in English, mathematics and science. Furthermore, there is a reduction in the variation between the students' achievements in different subjects.
- The few students who attend East Surrey College for part of the week achieve well in the vocational subjects they study there. They also acquire a valuable range of qualifications from their school-based work. This results in a useful package of skills and qualifications which prepare them well for their next steps in employment or training.
- High-quality careers information, and good links with local colleges, ensure that students are confident and well placed for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	125308
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	10002308

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	746
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alison Etheridge
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jeremy Garner
<b>Telephone number</b>	01883 347818
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.destafford.org.uk">www.destafford.org.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@destafford.org.uk">admin@destafford.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12–13 December 2013

## Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized school.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or have special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding) is broadly average. Some students are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium.
- A few students in Key Stage 4 attend East Surrey College for one day each week to follow vocational courses, and a very small number attend Reigate Valley College, a local pupil referral unit.
- The school has dedicated provision to support students with speech, language and communication needs. Ten students are currently supported in this unit.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 36 part lessons. They were accompanied by senior leaders in 12 of them. Inspectors visited the Communication and Interaction (COIN) Centre, the specialist provision on site for students with speech, language and communication needs.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior staff, representatives of the governing body, other staff, a representative of the local authority, and groups of students.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including the school's records relating to behaviour and attendance, safeguarding records, performance information, development planning, self-evaluation documents and policies.
- Inspectors took into account the 81 responses to Parent View, two letters from parents, and the 75 staff survey responses received.

## Inspection team

Matthew Newberry, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Janet Pearce	Her Majesty's Inspector
Harry Kutty	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Morris	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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