

# Stratford upon Avon School

Alcester Road, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire CV37 9DH

<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 March 2016
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders and staff have improved examination results since the last inspection, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Leaders have high aspirations for pupils and these are shared by parents, pupils and staff.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability now make good progress.
- The quality of teaching overall is good and this leads to pupils making at least good progress in their different subjects.
- Teachers know their pupils well and the quality of relationships between them helps pupils to make good progress.
- The sixth form is good. The curriculum and quality of teaching enable pupils to make good progress academically. Pupils' personal development in the sixth form is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. The care staff give to pupils is very strong and the school's approach to keeping pupils safe is excellent.
- The school provides very impressive support to pupils, including those in the sixth form, to ensure that their next steps in education, training or employment are successful.
- The governing body is rigorous in its support and challenge of the headteacher and other school leaders, which has really helped the school to improve.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some teaching is not challenging enough. When that happens pupils quickly lose their enthusiasm for learning.
- The school's work to strengthen pupils' literacy and numeracy skills requires further development.
- Some subject leaders are not effective enough in ensuring that all teaching is at least good.
- When teachers give pupils time to reflect on their work and follow the guidance they are given, in line with the school's assessment policy, this helps them to improve. However, not all staff follow this policy consistently.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
  - ensuring that the work pupils are set consistently provides a sufficient level of challenge for their abilities
  - making sure that all teachers use the school's marking policy consistently, including encouraging pupils to review their work so that they know how to take the next steps in their learning
  - formulating a clear whole-school policy for how pupils' literacy and numeracy skills should be developed, so that practice is effective in all years and subject areas.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that all subject leaders are rigorous in quality assuring the highest expectations of their colleagues, so that all pupils benefit from teaching and assessment that is good or better.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher has been relentless in his drive to deal with all the issues raised in the previous inspection. He has given the school community a renewed energy to improve progress for all pupils in the school. In 2015, pupils achieved outcomes at GCSE which were above the national average for the first time since the last inspection.
- The leaders of English and mathematics have been particularly effective in improving the outcomes of pupils since the last inspection. Pupils' progress overall in English and mathematics rose significantly in 2015 and is now well above the national average. The progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs or disability also improved in 2015. Information the school has on all groups of pupils now indicates that this improvement will continue.
- Senior leaders have established systems for assessing the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. This information is also used to determine effective opportunities for training and development for teachers and other adults who support learning.
- Subject leaders fully support the headteacher's determination to sustain the positive outcomes that pupils now make. They have welcomed the importance of accountability, but also recognise that there is still more to do to ensure that all teachers apply these expectations consistently.
- Underperforming staff have been challenged strongly since the last inspection and leaders now link pay and responsibilities to progress and teachers' success in raising the achievement of all groups of pupils.
- The school uses additional funding for disadvantaged pupils well, so the majority now make at least good progress. Pupils are supported through a range of extra activities, as well as teaching which is more effective, to ensure that they achieve as well as they can.
- The school's curriculum is broad, balanced and inclusive. It includes a good range of subjects at Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. The school's published aim through its curriculum is to 'engage, enthuse and inspire' and this aim is met. Pupils receive very effective guidance so they can choose subjects in which they are interested and which help them to make good progress.
- Pupils enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities that are available to them and this adds significantly to their enjoyment of learning experiences.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through taught lessons in SPHERE (religious education and personal, social and health education). Pupils are given many opportunities to think about important current events, and pupils reflect carefully and maturely on some difficult and sensitive issues. The school's involvement in the West Midlands National Citizenship Service in 2015 had a particularly positive impact on pupils. These opportunities are very effective and highly regarded by them.
- Displays around the school reflect cultural diversity, respect, tolerance and equality of opportunity. Pupils think carefully about life in modern Britain, the importance of their values and the way they are prepared for adult life. Pupils in all year groups discussed these matters with inspectors, and even sought out inspectors to continue this discussion. This affirmed the way the school encourages confidence and maturity from its pupils.
- Pupils in Year 7 who receive additional funding to catch up to the expected level of literacy and numeracy are given extra help through small group work, specific support in class, homework club and a dedicated reading club. This work contributes well to the good progress now being made by pupils in Year 7 and Year 8.
- Some subject leaders are not effective enough in ensuring that all teaching is at least good. Where this is the case, quality control systems lack robustness and the quality of teaching lacks challenge.
- Leaders need to ensure that appropriate attention is paid to literacy and numeracy development, because there is no clear policy for how all staff should promote and teach these skills across all subjects of the curriculum.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors have been highly effective in challenging and supporting school leaders to improve the school's performance since the last inspection. They are well trained, informed and experienced, and come from a wide range of backgrounds. They have robust systems in place to check how well the school is performing and are innovative in the way they regularly review their own processes, so that there is no complacency. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that

still need more work to ensure consistent improvement.

- Governors maintain a high profile in school and their partnership with parents, teachers and pupils is at the forefront of their work. They ask appropriate and challenging questions based on an accurate understanding of school information on pupils' progress. They are effective in the way they review subject areas and other key parts of the school's work.
- Governors have ensured that teachers' pay is linked to progress and have robust systems in place to review the headteacher's performance. They take seriously their responsibility for ensuring that the school's finances are used to maximum effect. They know how the pupil premium funding is spent and challenge leaders on the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire agree. Procedures are rigorous in ensuring that all checks follow the correct guidance regarding child protection and safer recruitment. Staff training is comprehensive and includes the 'Prevent' training, which focuses on dealing with radicalisation and extremism. Rigorous checks are in place to ensure that no staff miss out on any relevant training. Keeping children safe in school has the highest priority and pupils have several contact points if they are in need of help. Safety is also promoted well through the curriculum, with issues covered through the SPHERE programme.

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

- The quality of teaching is now good, with some areas of outstanding practice, particularly in the sixth form. As a result, pupils in school now make good progress in all key stages.
- Where teaching leads to the best learning, teachers have high expectations of pupils. Pupils are challenged in their lessons and teachers use the answers pupils give to questions to deepen their understanding still further. In these lessons, work in pupils' books and folders is also well presented, indicating pupils' pride in their work. Pupils show that they both know and understand what they have learned so that they are well prepared for success in examinations.
- Pupils and parents believe that teaching has improved since the last inspection. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and the great majority of pupils are keen to learn and achieve well. The enthusiasm teachers have for their subject helps to motivate pupils and prevents them from becoming bored.
- Teachers know their pupils well and they are aware of the need to ensure that disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or a disability are challenged and supported appropriately. They do this effectively.
- Pupils at risk of underachieving are provided with good support which ensures that, where they lack confidence or understanding, they catch up quickly.
- Teaching assistants are particularly effective as they challenge and support pupils well. They guide pupils in their learning without doing the work for them, and this helps to encourage deeper thinking and independence.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is usually good and adults manage any issues that arise well. This means that teachers and pupils can stay focused on learning. This also influences the good progress pupils make.
- Although teaching is good, it is not yet outstanding. The school's evidence about teaching over time shows that some lessons lack challenge and, when this happens, pupils lose focus and become distracted.
- Most, but not all, teachers are effective in using assessment information to plan lessons which meet the needs of all groups of pupils. This inconsistency means that, sometimes, pupils do not know how well they are doing and what they have to do to make their work even better.
- Some subject areas develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills well and this is seen in their work in books. However, the good strategies are not used consistently across the school.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The positive and supportive culture in school supports pupils' well-being effectively.
- Leaders have put great emphasis on making sure that pupils are safe in school and they are taught how to protect themselves from risk or harm of any kind. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and know about online safety when using the internet, the dangers of substance abuse and the importance of sexual health. Pupils know what to do if they feel unsafe or unhappy.
- The school's SPHERE programme is comprehensive, effective and highly valued by pupils. This programme is linked to assemblies so that themes relate to pupils in all key stages. Pupils told inspectors how their learning in these lessons had helped them personally to deal with various situations.
- Many pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities and opportunities to show initiative, for example through supporting a range of charitable activities.
- The high profile of staff, including senior leaders around the school, supports pupils' confidence. Pupils say that if bullying of any kind happens, the school deals with it effectively and quickly. Bullying, however, is a rare occurrence.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are positive about the school, are keen to learn and say that behaviour has improved significantly since the last inspection. This is also reflected in the improved attendance of pupils overall, which is now better than the national average.
- The school works alongside a local sporting club to reach out to key groups of pupils with strategies to improve their attendance. This is monitored well by leaders, as is attendance at the alternative provision, and is beginning to have a positive impact on improving these pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
- Leaders in school communicate well with pupils, including their parents, so that positive engagement and partnership is encouraged and respected.
- Pupils arrive to lessons on time, bring the right equipment with them and look smart.
- Pupils know how to behave safely in practical areas such as science, technology and physical education.
- Pupils are polite and courteous around the school and move sensibly around the building.
- The number of pupils who are repeatedly excluded from school for short periods of time because of poor behaviour is fewer than in the past because of the effectiveness of strategies to improve behaviour.
- Behaviour in the great majority of lessons is good or better. However, in the small number of lessons where teaching lacks challenge, pupils lose motivation to engage in their learning.

## Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' attainment has risen significantly since the previous inspection. GCSE results, particularly for A\* to C grades including English and mathematics, were above the national average in 2015. The proportion of pupils making at least expected progress in English and mathematics in Key Stage 4 was also above average.
- The school's information shows that outcomes for pupils in school now are good across all year groups and in most subjects. Progress is particularly strong in English and mathematics, humanities and languages, and the school is strengthening its provision across the curriculum to ensure that this good progress continues.
- The progress of all groups of pupils in school now has improved, and in some cases significantly so. Disadvantaged pupils, as well as pupils who have special educational needs or a disability, make good progress and are closer to the achievement of their classmates in school and those nationally than has been the case in the past. Those pupils who are likely to underachieve are also identified much earlier and benefit from additional support and a range of strategies to help them do well in their examinations.
- The attainment of most-able pupils achieving five A\* to C grades including English and mathematics was slightly above the national average for this group of pupils in 2015. Also, the proportion of most-able

pupils who made more than expected progress in both English and mathematics was above national figures. The most-able pupils in school now make good progress, particularly when they receive teaching that challenges them to think deeply in lessons.

- Parents are confident that pupils now make good progress at the school and this was also confirmed by pupils in their discussions with inspectors.
- Senior leaders check regularly on the progress being made by the small number of pupils who attend the alternative provision and the evidence available confirms that they make good progress.
- Pupils receive information, careers advice and guidance of the highest quality to help them make the right choices to move forward with their learning. This is a real strength in the school. Activities to help pupils develop their personal skills and enrich their learning experience raise their aspirations and ambitions to do well and proceed to the next stage of their education.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- Learners in the sixth form follow a good range of academic and vocational programmes and achieve well. Outcomes since the last inspection have improved significantly, exceeding the national average in some measures across learning pathways at AS, A level and vocational subjects. This is the result of improved teaching, mentoring and personalised support for individual learners. Outcomes in the sixth form are now good. Information given by the school indicates that this improvement is likely to continue in 2016.
- Learners in the sixth form retake English and mathematics at GCSE if they have not already achieved a grade C in Year 11. Although the numbers who re-sit are small, learners do improve on their previous grades.
- Leadership in the sixth form is good and has improved since the last inspection. Leaders have high expectations of learners, and teachers are accountable for monitoring learners' progress within a robust process which is well managed by an experienced team of senior leaders. Any concerns that emerge over inconsistencies in the ways teachers check the progress of learners are picked up very quickly by leaders.
- The number of learners who stay on to complete their courses in the sixth form is high and leaders monitor those learners who are at risk of leaving for whatever reason. Two thirds of learners in the sixth form proceed to higher education and others move on to apprenticeships or employment.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form has improved significantly. It is now good and in some areas it is outstanding. The strength of some teaching is an example of excellent practice for the main school, particularly in terms of deeper thinking and challenge for learners. In a Year 13 English language lesson, the level of engagement, motivation, independent analysis and academic rigour was quite exceptional.
- The sixth form curriculum is well balanced and meets learners' needs well. Leaders have planned programmes of study that clearly meet the national requirements for this group of learners.
- Learners' personal development and welfare in the sixth form is outstanding and is supported by a well-structured programme with a clearly identified rationale that meets learners' needs. This includes work experience, which students enjoy and value greatly. As a result, learners become confident, highly articulate and ambitious young people.
- Opportunities for learners in the sixth form to act as role models for the main school are given through the vertical tutor system, where representative learners from all year groups are brought together pastorally.
- Enrichment, careers education and guidance and the development of employability skills are delivered through compulsory lessons and support from two dedicated members of staff. This provision is very strong and students speak positively about the impact it has on their choices and how it prepares them for their next stages of learning.
- Behaviour in the sixth form is good. Learners are dressed smartly and show confidence, maturity and independence. Learners feel safe and well supported. Pupils say they are listened to. Their attendance at school is good and in line with learners in the main school. They value their education in the sixth form and the support they are given, saying that their teachers 'go above and beyond' to help them.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137236
<b>Local authority</b>	Warwickshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10002467

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,386
<b>Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes</b>	227
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Pete Whyman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Neil Wallace
<b>Telephone number</b>	01789 268051
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stratforduponavonschool.com">www.stratforduponavonschool.com</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:staff@stratfordschool.co.uk">staff@stratfordschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12–13 December 2013

## Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized secondary school, and has a sixth form.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disability is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is below the national average. The pupil premium is extra funding given to schools to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals, or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government’s current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils’ attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- Very small numbers attend an alternative provision for learning at Stratford College and Thornleigh House School.
- The school’s sixth form provides a range of academic and vocational courses, all of which are taught on-site.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching across a range of lessons in order to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Many of these lessons were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Pupils' work was sampled in lessons and through formal reviews of various subjects at Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and the sixth form.
- Inspectors also reviewed a range of documents, including the school's own information on the progress of current pupils, planning and monitoring documentation, minutes of the governing body, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to keeping pupils safe.
- Meetings were held with pupils across Years 7 to 13, as well as informal meetings at break and lunchtime, and with members of the governing body. Discussions also took place with senior leaders, subject leaders and staff responsible for the pastoral care and guidance of pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading as part of their lessons and an inspector listened particularly to pupils reading in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- Inspectors evaluated the responses of 407 parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. They also took account of the views of pupils and members of the school's staff through the online inspection questionnaires they returned.

## Inspection team

Huw Bishop, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Natasha Lloyd	Ofsted Inspector
Nigel Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Naylor	Ofsted Inspector
Josie Leese	Ofsted Inspector



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