

# Paulet High School

Violet Way, Stapenhill, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire DE15 9RT

## Inspection dates

19–20 October 2016

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- This is a truly inclusive school. Governors, senior leaders, staff and pupils share a common belief that there is a place for everyone at Paulet and aspirations are equally high for every pupil.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher, both appointed to their permanent positions since the last inspection, have galvanised staff to urgently address the areas in need of improvement, leading to better teaching and better outcomes for pupils.
- In 2016, there was a considerable improvement in the number of pupils gaining GCSEs at grades A\* to C in English and mathematics.
- A higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils made good progress than in previous years. This is as a result of improved teaching, careful tracking of their progress and additional support if they fall behind. However, disadvantaged pupils still do less well than other pupils at the school and other pupils nationally.
- Teachers deliver engaging and interesting lessons and pupils make good progress across a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils value the good relationships they have with their teachers and behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Attendance has improved since the last inspection. Leaders recognise the importance of pupils attending school every day and have provided additional resources to support this.
- The sixth form requires improvement. Leaders in the sixth form are not clear enough about what needs to be improved. Teaching is not sufficiently focused on the skills required for academic success and students do not make enough progress on A- and AS-level courses.
- Inconsistencies exist in the effectiveness of different departments in delivering the school's teaching and learning priorities, including improving the quality of marking and personalised learning plans.

## Full report

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

- Ensure that outcomes of academic courses in the sixth form improve, to match or exceed those of vocational courses, by:
  - ensuring that those staff who have responsibility for aspects of the sixth form work closely together to have a common understanding of performance
  - ensuring that the good teaching seen in the rest of the school is more carefully adapted to the needs of sixth-form students, particularly in providing challenge to those capable of reaching the highest grades
  - supporting students in developing the skills required to manage the transition in work and expectations between GCSE and A-level study.
- Further develop the range of strategies and activities to help disadvantaged pupils, particularly those with low prior attainment, to overcome their barriers to learning, and ensure that disadvantaged pupils make good progress, attend regularly and engage fully in the life of the school.
- Ensure that new teaching, learning and assessment initiatives are implemented consistently across and within different subject areas by:
  - ensuring that all senior leaders have distinct areas of responsibility for which they will be held accountable, thus increasing leadership capacity and balancing the workload predominantly carried by the headteacher and deputy headteacher
  - providing additional training and support for middle leaders in effective methods of quality assuring the work of their department.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are tireless advocates for an inclusive, rapidly improving school. They articulate their high aspirations to staff, pupils and governors and provide positive role models for all staff at the school. Since the last inspection, improvements are evident in improved teaching and learning and better outcomes for pupils across a range of subjects, particularly English and science.
- At key stage 3, the curriculum is broad and balanced, offering pupils an opportunity to study a wide range of subjects. At key stage 4, the school has introduced option pathways with three distinct routes to Year 11 qualifications depending on interests and ability. Some pupils are given additional time to complete fewer GCSE courses, while others are encouraged to select a broad range of subjects that will provide better flexibility in their post-16 choices.
- The curriculum is effectively enhanced by a range of lunchtime and after-school clubs. Younger pupils participate well in a broad range of enrichment activities, although older pupils tend to attend after-school activities that are focused on study support and examination success.
- There is an effective and relevant training plan in place to improve the quality of teaching. Training on whole-school priorities is balanced, with personalised intervention to support all staff to become good teachers. Examples of good practice are celebrated and shared with staff.
- Leaders take their commitment to the school being an inclusive school very seriously. They welcome pupils who have been excluded from other schools and are usually successful in ensuring that these pupils make progress at Paulet and are able to move on to appropriate education or training at the end of Year 11.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported through a comprehensive tutorial programme. Pupils are confident that the school is equipping them with the right skills to be good citizens and they enjoy opportunities to participate in extended activities incorporating values such as the importance of democracy.
- The special educational needs coordinator is working closely with school leaders to ensure that all pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have clear learning targets included in teachers' lesson plans. As a result, teachers can confidently plan lessons that meet the needs of these pupils and target additional support from teaching assistants where it is most needed.
- Catch-up funding is used well to support the improvement of reading levels in Year 7, although there is historically less focus on improving numeracy skills.
- School leaders acted rapidly following the last inspection to improve the provision for disadvantaged pupils. There is a holistic strategy in place that makes good use of pupil premium funding to ensure that disadvantaged pupils are effectively supported to overcome their barriers to learning. The impact of these actions is seen in improved attendance, fewer exclusions, better parental engagement and better outcomes in many subjects. However, the school recognises that in all these areas, disadvantaged pupils still lag behind other pupils nationally and further intervention is still required.

- Leaders have fully embraced the findings of the last inspection and many new initiatives, for example personalised learning plans, questioning strategies and diagnostic marking, have been enthusiastically introduced. However, these strategies are not consistently applied across all departments and there is an over-reliance on quality assurance by the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Middle leaders share the vision of the headteacher of an improving school and have actively engaged with the introduction of new strategies. However, they are less skilled in ensuring that all teachers in their departments adopt the planned approach to delivering these priorities, so inconsistencies are evident.
- School leaders have actively sought the support of other local schools and the local authority to rapidly drive improvement.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors are committed and enthusiastic and have worked closely with staff and pupils to produce the school vision around 'Aspiring and Achieving'.
- Governors hold regular triangulation meetings with subject leaders and senior leaders that provide an opportunity to challenge leaders about their work.
- The governing body has a strong oversight of the school's finances and understands the need for best-value, long-term planning and reviewing leadership decisions in the light of costs. Governors are well informed about teachers' performance management and how the school makes decisions on salary progression.
- Governors understand their safeguarding responsibilities, meet regularly with the responsible leader and have undergone safer recruitment training so that they can participate in the recruitment of staff.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The culture of safeguarding is evident from policies and actions and is strongly affirmed through discussions with pupils, staff and governors. Keeping pupils safe is a priority for everyone in the school.

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

**Good**

- The good teaching at Paulet is characterised by strong relationships between staff and pupils that encourage pupils to try hard and have the confidence to ask for help when they are unsure.
- Most teachers use a variety of strategies to question pupils, checking their understanding of their work and encouraging them to think deeply about ideas.
- Most pupils enjoy their learning, appreciating the effort teachers put into making lessons engaging and motivating. Pupils believe that teachers make sure that everyone understands things.
- Improving literacy standards at key stage 3 has been a major priority for the school since the last inspection. Reading ages are carefully tracked. Pupils receive additional reading lessons and participate in regular reading challenges. As a result, the number of pupils in Year 7 who are not able to read at their chronological age has significantly reduced. Most-able readers are given more challenging texts to ensure that they continue to develop their reading skills.

- Teachers use personalised learning plans in all their lessons. These plans identify pupils at risk of underachieving and provide possible strategies to support them to do better. When used well, they are an effective tool to help pupils make good progress. However, the quality of these plans varies between teachers and subject areas.
- Most departments carefully follow the school's marking policy, providing pupils with feedback on their work that helps them understand how to improve. Marking is particularly effective in science and English but less so in mathematics.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to do well.
- Almost all pupils at the end of Year 11 successfully move on to their next stage of education or training as a result of high levels of individual support and impartial careers guidance.
- Pupils believe that bullying is rare. They know what to do if they feel unsafe and are confident that staff will act on their concerns. These attitudes are promoted by the school's open culture and positive relationships. The school tackles challenging issues such as homophobic bullying through assemblies and extended form periods.
- Staff regularly visit pupils who are placed on alternative provision to check that they are making good progress, behaving well and attending regularly. Attendance is monitored daily by the alternative provision and the school is informed and follows up with families if there are concerns.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They take a pride in their school and their work and show respect for others.
- The school's rewards and consequences system is well understood and used by staff and pupils. Pupils believe that it is effective in encouraging them to behave well.
- Pupils generally behave sensibly around the school site. Corridors and public spaces are orderly and pupils show good manners to visitors. However, younger pupils complain that at times some pushing and shoving takes place in busy 'pinch' points, leaving them feeling concerned about their safety.
- The level of absence and persistent absence is reducing year on year. The improvement in attendance is most notable for disadvantaged pupils, who have received considerable support through the school's attendance officer, including home visits when necessary. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils remains below that of others in the school.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Initial unvalidated data released for 2016 suggests that pupils make progress broadly in line with national averages.

- Although pupils generally make the progress expected of them, there is variation between different subjects. English and science have seen a considerable improvement this year to bring progress in line with the better progress evident in mathematics in 2015. Pupils did less well in GCSE courses in drama, art and physical education.
- In 2015, boys made poor progress in English. This has been a focus of the work of the English department this year where resources have been adapted to be more engaging for boys, and progress has been carefully tracked with well-targeted interventions when pupils fall behind. As a result, there has been a considerable improvement in boys' performance in English this year.
- In 2016, the school was effective in doubling the proportion of pupils who successfully gained a group of qualifications known as the 'English Baccalaureate'. This occurred because the school had encouraged more pupils to take two science qualifications, a modern foreign language and a humanities subject in their option pathway, leaving them better prepared for a wide range of post-16 and university courses. However, the proportion of pupils who study this range of examination courses is still well below national levels.
- The school's tracking information for current pupils, supported by observations of the quality of teaching and learning, suggests that disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than in previous years. Teachers have highlighted disadvantaged pupils on their personalised lesson plans so they are more aware of pupils' needs and are targeting lessons more clearly around supporting and stretching these pupils.
- In 2015 and 2016, the small group of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities made progress in line with others in the school. School tracking information for current pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities shows that they are making good progress across a wide range of subjects.
- The most able pupils make good progress. They respond well to the teaching strategies used, enjoy the challenge of teachers' questioning and have access to an appropriate curriculum. The most able disadvantaged pupils also do well, making progress in line with their peers.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils with low prior attainment have also improved but a gap still exists between them and their non-disadvantaged peers nationally. The school is aware of this difference and has prioritised improving skills and knowledge in key stage 3. This intervention has already had an impact on the progress of disadvantaged pupils in Years 7 and 8 and these pupils are now better placed to succeed as they move through the school.
- Leaders have prioritised spending the Year 7 catch-up premium to support literacy development. The focus on reading has been effective in raising reading ages, and leaders now recognise that further support will be required to raise standards of numeracy.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

## Requires improvement

- Leadership of the sixth form is distributed across several senior leaders to sustain coherent pathways in teaching and learning, behaviour and assessment from Year 7 to Year 13. This limits the school's understanding of how different aspects are combining to impact on students' outcomes in the sixth form.

- Outcomes require improvement. Standards in 2016 remained broadly in line with those in 2015 where students did not make enough progress in A and AS levels, but did well in their vocational courses.
- The quality of teaching on academic courses does not consistently support good progress. Teachers' use of personalised learning plans and diagnostic feedback is less effective in the sixth form because they do not provide enough information and challenge to stretch students to reach the highest grades. Students are not supported well enough by their teachers in developing the study skills, particularly around personal organisation and examination question practice, that will help them manage the transition from GCSE to A level.
- Students make better progress on vocational courses, where teaching is closely targeted on the needs of individual students and teachers take the time to ensure that students have developed the skills they need to move to the next steps.
- The proportion of students successfully resitting their GCSEs in English and mathematics has improved, although a significant number of students still fail to improve on their previous grade.
- The sixth-form curriculum is flexible and leaders are willing to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of students. As students are placed on the right courses, retention rates are high.
- Students enjoy the sixth form, feel safe and are well prepared for their life in Britain through the tutorial programme. Students receive good-quality independent careers advice and almost all go on to university courses, employment or apprenticeships. However, not all students participate in high-quality non-qualification activities and work experience.

## School details

Unique reference number	124391
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10020028

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	795
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	158
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Jackson
Headteacher	Ian McArthur
Telephone number	01283 239710
Website	<a href="http://www.paulet.co.uk">www.paulet.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@paulet.co.uk">office@paulet.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	17–18 September 2014

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Paulet High School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than average and the proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is also lower than average.



- Five pupils are on part-time placements at the Burton Alternative Education pupil referral unit. These placements include short-term placements with specialist vocational training providers. These are currently Project Wired (a sound and vision theatre activity), Mac Motors (motorcycle and car maintenance) and Curzon Street (construction).
- The school has sought out and received additional support from staff at the National Forest Teaching School and The Arthur Terry Teaching School Alliance for a number of different school improvement projects. This includes support from the headteachers of these schools, who are national leaders of education.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, teachers, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed lessons in all year groups and looked at the work in pupils' books. They talked to groups of pupils, both in formal meetings and in classrooms, and around the school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including information held by the school about pupils' progress, safeguarding records, self-evaluation summaries and the school improvement plan.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 25 parents via the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also took account of the views of 18 pupils and 37 staff who responded to an online Ofsted questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Deborah James, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Eddie Wilkes	Ofsted Inspector
Lois Kelly	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Feldman	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Broomfield	Ofsted Inspector

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