

Sir Thomas Boughey High School

Station Road, Halmer End, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST7 8AP

Inspection dates

7–8 February 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The achievement of Year 11 disadvantaged pupils in 2016 was well below that of other pupils in the school and nationally. The achievement of this group of pupils over time has not been addressed adequately by previous school leaders.
- The quality of teaching and learning is not good enough to ensure that all groups of pupils consistently make the progress they should. Weaker teaching is characterised by: a lack of challenge; questioning that does not check and extend knowledge and understanding; and planning that does not take enough account of pupils' prior attainment and needs.
- School policies, including those about behaviour management, and marking and feedback, are not consistently and effectively implemented.
- The behaviour for learning of a small group of pupils is not good enough. Not all teachers deal with poor behaviour promptly and effectively. The school's behaviour policy does not support them, or sanction pupils, effectively enough.
- Historically, leaders have not ensured a broad and balanced curriculum for all groups of pupils. This contributed to the poor achievement of disadvantaged pupils in 2016. The content of some whole-school aspects of the curriculum has not been robustly planned and monitored.
- Academic and pastoral performance, including attendance, has not been monitored and evaluated sufficiently well to inform and direct school improvement.
- The roles and responsibilities of leaders at all levels have not historically made a sufficiently strategic contribution to school improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- Attainment overall, including at the highest grades in most subjects, is above the national average.
- The good relations that exist between pupils and staff make this a strong school community.
- The new headteacher is totally committed to improving the school. She has the full confidence of other leaders, and of staff, who are all equally committed. Together they have the capacity to improve the school rapidly and ensure that all pupils achieve good outcomes.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the performance of disadvantaged pupils so that the differences between both their progress and their attendance compared to other pupils in the school and nationally diminish rapidly.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that pupils make the progress they should. Do this by:
 - improving the level of challenge so that pupils, regardless of their prior attainment, are suitably stretched to achieve their potential
 - improving the quality of teachers' questioning so that it checks and extends pupils knowledge and understanding, and encourages them to think deeply and develop their oral communication skills
 - raising expectations about pupils' attitudes to, and behaviour for, learning so that disruption in lessons is rare, and, if it does happen, is dealt with promptly and effectively
 - improving teachers' use of information about pupils' prior attainment and learning needs in order to plan learning that enables them to make at least good progress.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - all pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum that meets their needs and enables them to reach their potential
 - the whole-school curriculum and the provision for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education are robustly planned and monitored
 - rigorous monitoring and evaluation of academic and pastoral performance information informs the school's improvement agenda in a regular and systematic way
 - the leadership structure and the roles and responsibilities of leaders at all levels make an effective strategic contribution to the school's development and improvement
 - school policies, in particular those concerned with behaviour management and marking and feedback, are consistently and effectively implemented by all staff and leaders.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Recent changes to leadership are beginning to have a highly positive impact on the school. Staff are very supportive of the new headteacher and of the different approach she is bringing to the school and its culture. There is a strong sense of unity among staff, who are receptive to change and ready to meet the challenge of improving the school.
- Although very new in post, the headteacher has a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what its priorities for improvement are. She provided a highly reflective, honest and accurate review of the school's performance – one that matched precisely the judgements made by inspectors. She is very receptive to change and to the external support, which she has sought, because she is intent on ensuring that the school improves rapidly.
- The new headteacher's commitment and determination, and the strong support for school improvement evident among senior and middle leaders and all staff, mean the school has the capacity it needs to improve and become a good school again.
- Leaders can identify clear areas for improvement, including the progress of disadvantaged pupils, the standards of behaviour for learning of some pupils, and the quality of curriculum provision for some pupils. However, they are not as clear about how to strategically plan to improve these areas by developing systematic checks and measures to evaluate their impact. The current structure of leadership does not support strategic decision-making effectively enough.
- Urgent actions have already been introduced to improve areas that form the key priorities for the school to address. The school is working hard to implement the recommendations of a local authority project on supporting disadvantaged pupils. Intervention plans for disadvantaged pupils are being used regularly in lessons. These identify the barriers that individual pupils face and the actions that teachers might take to try to overcome them. To reinforce and develop these actions, an external review of the use and impact of pupil premium funding has been commissioned to take place shortly after this inspection.
- Appropriate support is provided for those Year 7 pupils who join the school with low levels of literacy and numeracy and the support extends into Years 8 and 9 for individual pupils. There is an increasing focus on getting support right for underachieving pupils throughout key stage 3, rather than simply using a 'sticking plaster' approach to the needs of underachieving pupils in Year 11.
- Leaders and managers make effective use of additional funding to provide well-structured support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The behaviour for learning element of the school's behaviour management policy is not applied consistently by staff and leaders because the policy itself is not yet robust enough. Its rules, boundaries and sanctions are not sufficiently clear. Monitoring and effective actions to improve this aspect of school provision are at an early stage. Leaders recognise that this is an area that requires immediate and effective action to remove all disruption to learning and ensure that pupils make the progress they are

capable of.

- Middle leadership is improving. Leaders at this level are becoming more accountable for performance in their areas of responsibility. Pastoral heads of year make a strong contribution to the school. Middle leaders are beginning to collaborate together to share and spread the good practice in the school. However, they, and all senior leaders, are not yet gaining enough insight into what good or better leadership is like in other schools. The improving quality of middle leaders and their willingness to embrace change add to the capacity to make changes and improve the school.
- A lack of curriculum opportunities in the past has been a contributing factor to the low achievement of disadvantaged pupils. This has been quickly rectified with interim changes for current key stage 4 pupils. More extensive changes to the key stage 4 curriculum are planned for the next academic year.
- The range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities is extensive, including charitable work, sporting activities, art, drama and music activities, science and technology activities, and foreign trips. Many of these contribute well to the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school offers a range of exciting aspirational activities for all pupils, including higher-ability disadvantaged pupils.
- Careers education starts in Year 7 and becomes more work-focused in the upper school. There is good support for apprenticeship career routes. Mock interviews with local businesses help Year 11 pupils to focus on career choices and to develop their confidence. Girls are invited to participate in a 'female engineering day', which reflects the school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities.
- The quality of provision for PSHE is variable because of the way the programme is delivered and the fact that monitoring is not robust enough. As a result, it is not clear that all pupils have the opportunity to learn well about a range of risks, such as extremism and homophobia. In this regard, leaders are not proactive enough.
- Senior leaders are confident in their judgements about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. A more rigorous monitoring system is now in place that involves senior and middle leaders. The quality of professional development is improving and is increasingly linked to pupil progress data, the findings from learning walks and scrutinies of pupils' work. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving. However, the school's marking and feedback policy is not yet implemented consistently by teachers. Performance management is now more rigorous and makes use of a range of information to reflect the responsibilities and contributions of staff.
- Regular and detailed reports are provided for parents about pupils' achievement, their attendance and behaviour.

Governance of the school

- Governors are highly supportive of the new headteacher. They recognise that they were too accepting of information provided to them in the past and did not challenge leaders sufficiently. They now feel more able to challenge, as well as support, school leaders because communication is more open and regular. They are receiving appropriate training, and their knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths, weakness and priorities are improving rapidly.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safe recruitment processes are in place. All staff have had appropriate levels of training. Good relationships are evident with outside agencies, which support the school's work to safeguard its pupils. Pupils say they feel safe and procedures keep them safe. The safeguarding policy is detailed and takes account of the latest guidance.
- While safeguarding arrangements are effective and meet requirements, they do not yet permeate the curriculum and promote a very strong culture of safeguarding. This is because not all aspects of safeguarding policy are fully incorporated into the broader school curriculum, for example topics such as domestic violence, forced marriage, and extremism. Leaders recognise that policy statements in this area and the taught curriculum do not always marry up well.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving. The school's monitoring data and the improving trend in pupils' progress data support this.
- Where teaching, learning and assessment do not ensure that pupils make rapid progress, there tends to be a lack of challenge for pupils with different abilities. As a result, the most able pupils are not stretched and the less able pupils lose interest. There are missed opportunities to use questioning to effectively check and extend learning, deepen thinking or develop and encourage more sophisticated oral skills and analysis.
- Sometimes pupils go off-task or engage in low-level disruption. Not all teachers challenge this behaviour quickly enough and as a result, occasionally, the learning of others is affected. This is more likely where teachers' expectations about what pupils can achieve, and how they should behave, are too low. It is also where lessons lack challenge, interest and pace – in other words, when work is too easy, or too hard, or just not interesting enough.
- Teachers do not always use available information to plan to meet the needs of some groups, for example disadvantaged pupils. Sometimes it is used well to plan learning but these plans are not implemented effectively. As a result, pupils do not make the progress they should.
- Where teaching is strong, challenging tasks and use of high-level questioning ensure that pupils remain engaged, enthusiastic and active participants in their learning. Off-task behaviour is addressed promptly and effectively so that learning is not disrupted. For example, in a Year 8 English lesson where pupils were analysing a poem, effective planning, strong relationships and highly effective questioning were evident. Pupils were motivated and enthused. The level of challenge for different abilities was appropriate and encouraged the development of independent and deeper thinking. Occasional off-task behaviour was dealt with immediately so that all pupils remained engaged and learned well throughout the lesson.

- Where learning is effective, pupils' books indicate that they take pride in their work and, for example in English, show clear development of language use, structure, confidence and fluency.
- Where teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning, detailed planning indicates that teachers know pupils well and, for example, are aware of the barriers facing disadvantaged pupils and introduce strategies in their lessons to overcome these. For example, they praise or ask well-chosen questions of those who are less confident, and support and refocus those who find it difficult to concentrate.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils are polite and helpful, behave appropriately with visitors and are comfortable in conversation with them. Most pupils demonstrate pride in their work, are keen to show how their work has improved and are interested to talk about it.
- Aspects of the curriculum promote pupils' personal development and understanding of wider issues well. For example, a religious education lesson tackled the complex issue of immigration and made good links to fundamental British values and the 'Prevent' duty. This helped pupils to form balanced perspectives and supported them as they struggled with thinking about this. British values are considered regularly in assemblies.
- Pupils enjoy school and value their teachers. There are good relations between pupils and their teachers and support staff. Pupils say they are very well supported and that they enjoy being part of this tightly knit school community.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They understand that there are different sorts of bullying. They say that bullying is rare and they always know a teacher to go to who they are confident will take appropriate, prompt and effective action.
- Pupils who are withdrawn from mainstream lessons, for example to attend the learning support unit, feel comfortable and very well supported. They say they value the smaller, quieter learning environment that it provides.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Behaviour around the school is generally good. Pupils say that, in general, behaviour in lessons is positive but note that occasionally a few pupils misbehave.
- Fixed-term exclusions have been, and are still, above the national average for all pupils, for pupils who are disadvantaged and for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, they have been falling over recent years and current school data indicates that this fall is continuing.
- Observations during the inspection reflect the school's own monitoring data, which indicates that very occasionally poor behaviour in lessons disrupts learning. School

evidence suggests that this is particularly in Year 9. This is usually linked to a lack of appropriate challenge in teaching and learning and the fact that when it happens not all teachers respond promptly and firmly. The whole-school processes for teachers and leaders to follow in managing off-task behaviour and low-level disruption, and the consequences for pupils of this type of behaviour, are not yet clear enough.

- Attendance for disadvantaged pupils and for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is low but improving slowly. Persistent absence for these groups is high but falling slowly. Leaders are now working hard to try to incentivise good attendance, particularly for those who are persistent non-attenders. A dynamic and proactive educational welfare officer ensures that strong, early help and family support are in place.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Attainment overall at GCSE is above the national average. Attainment of the most able pupils at the highest grades in most subjects is also above the national average. However, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, is well below that of other pupils in the school and nationally.
- Despite the above-average attainment of most pupils in the school, insufficient attention has been given to ensuring that all pupils make the progress they should from their different starting points.
- In 2016, the progress made by disadvantaged pupils with middle or high prior attainment was well below that of other pupils nationally with similar starting points. A lack of appropriate curriculum provision for these pupils in the past contributed to their low achievement.
- An improving picture of progress for all groups, including the most able, among current cohorts of pupils is evident. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils and others who are underachieving in Year 11. This reflects the improving use of pupil premium funding, the more effective interventions to support and promote learning, and the additional learning time now devoted to core subjects.
- The progress made by low-ability pupils in all groups, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is in line with expectations because of the strong support they receive and the directed interventions to help them achieve.
- Pupils from all groups make progress at least in line with expectations in science, languages and humanities.
- Destination data indicates that almost all pupils who leave the school at the end of Year 11 go on to further education or training. A greater proportion of all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, than the national average progress successfully to the next stage of their education or training. This has been the case over time and is a result of the strong support provided by the school.

School details

Unique reference number	124393
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10025396

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	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	704
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kelly Beeston
Headteacher	Jane Hingley
Telephone number	01782 729400
Website	www.sirthomasboughey.staffs.sch.uk
Email address	office@stb.coop
Date of previous inspection	8–9 May 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Following the retirement of the previous post holder, the current headteacher took up the post of acting headteacher on 1 January 2017 and was subsequently appointed to the substantive role at the beginning of February 2017.
- The school is smaller than the average secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is average.
- The large majority of pupils are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below the national average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards.

- No pupils attend alternative, off-site, provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 29 lessons, some jointly with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors observed an assembly and visited a number of tutor sessions.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, and with senior and middle leaders. Discussions took place in specific meetings with pupils, as well as during lessons and at break and lunchtimes. A phone conversation with the chair of the governing body took place and a further meeting was held with another member of the governing body. A meeting was also held with a representative of the local authority.
- A range of school documents were reviewed, including: the school’s self-evaluation; minutes of governors’ meetings; and school monitoring data about attendance, behaviour, progress and the quality of teaching and learning.
- The 123 responses to Parent View were considered. A technical problem meant that no responses were received for Ofsted’s online surveys of staff and pupils. Instead, the school conducted its own staff survey on day two of the inspection. The 43 responses to that survey were taken into account.

Inspection team

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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