

Sir Frank Whittle Studio School

Bitteswell Road, Lutterworth, Leicestershire LE17 4EW

Inspection dates

28 February – 1 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since opening the school in September 2014, leaders and managers have quickly established a culture in which pupils work hard and behave impeccably. Parents and pupils are highly supportive of their school.
- Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils are highly motivated, confident and mature. They are polite and respectful to teachers, visitors and each other.
- Pupils are cared for extremely well. Their highly effective personal coaches maintain regular contact with parents, teachers and employers to support pupils' well-being and learning.
- High-quality work experience forms an integral part of the strong curriculum. Many pupils go on to secure apprenticeships as a direct result of the skills and experience they have gained in work-based settings.
- The vocational subjects are underpinned by good provision for English, mathematics and science.
- This school provides outstanding support for pupils in need of a fresh start.
- Outcomes across the range of qualifications pupils take are good overall. Some are outstanding.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good. Strong engagement with employers enables teachers of technical subjects to maintain up-to-date knowledge of developments in the related employment sectors.
- The strong features seen in Years 10 and 11 are replicated in the sixth form. Hence, the quality of post-16 provision is also good.
- The school is supported well by the trust. Skilful and imaginative deployment of staff across the trust has proved essential to the school's success. Directors and governors provide appropriate support and challenge to the school's leaders.
- Teaching does not yet secure outstanding outcomes for pupils because it is not consistently challenging enough, including for the most able pupils in mathematics and for pupils on some of the vocational courses.
- Last year, pupils did not achieve well enough in their English language GCSE course.
- Improvements to the school's arrangements to promote high standards of literacy are not yet embedded.
- Strategies to quickly boost the reading ages of pupils who join the school lacking basic skills have been carefully planned but have yet to be implemented.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning to secure consistently outstanding outcomes for all groups of pupils by:
 - implementing, quickly and effectively, the plans that have been made to accelerate pupils' reading skills, particularly for those pupils who join the school lacking the basic skills they need to fully access the curriculum
 - embedding recent strategies that have been introduced to strengthen provision for literacy across the curriculum, including by raising expectations of boys' presentation of their work in English and mathematics
 - refining teachers' skills in devising lessons which challenge pupils to think hard in order to deepen their subject knowledge and understanding, particularly in business- and sports-related courses
 - sharing the best practice in mathematics in developing pupils' conceptual understanding and their skills in solving subject-specific problems.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The highly respected headteacher and deputy headteacher, with good support from leaders from across the trust, have quickly established a school where pupils learn well, behave impeccably and develop outstanding personal qualities.
- They have ensured that the excellent provision made for work experience is matched by good-quality teaching in the school. This explains why outcomes are good, improving and, in some cases, outstanding.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs well because it is closely matched to their interests and career aspirations, particularly where these relate to business, engineering or sport. Leaders ensure that opportunities for project-based learning are matched with discrete and effective teaching in English, mathematics and science.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' work experience placements are tailored well to complement the subjects they study in school. The range and quality of placements are excellent. Pupils' progress on their work placements and in school is monitored closely and effectively. Strong systems of communication ensure that the pupils' personal coaches, other staff and parents are kept up to date on a weekly basis about the pupils' progress and their well-being.
- The curriculum ensures that pupils develop strong interpersonal skills. Pupils' willingness to be creative, to listen to and consider the opinions of others, and their respectfulness of individual differences reflect their strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school promotes fundamental British values effectively. This aspect of learning is mapped well through the curriculum, and provision is enhanced through visits, for example to places of worship representing a variety of faiths. Pupils spoke enthusiastically and maturely about their recent celebration of Diwali. They also talked with interest and enthusiasm about a recent assembly in which they learned about the Abrahamic links between Christianity, Judaism and Islam.
- Leaders and managers promote equality of opportunity well. They are driven by their strong moral imperative that no pupil should fail. While the numbers of pupils eligible for the pupil premium or through special educational needs funding are small, leaders ensure that these pupils achieve as well as others in the school.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching carefully to ensure that pupils are learning well. Their effective checks on teaching enable them to quickly identify any staff who need additional support or training to improve their practice. Good-quality coaching and mentoring have proved to be effective in ensuring that almost all teaching is now of good quality.
- Training for staff is closely linked to their development needs, stage of career and performance management targets. Leaders have recently strengthened appraisal arrangements further to ensure that any teachers at risk of not meeting their targets are quickly identified and supported. Staff speak very positively about provision for their professional development.

- Pupils and parents are rightly very supportive of the school and the quality of education it provides. All of the pupils the inspectors met with said that they were pleased they had chosen to learn at this school.
- The school benefits from highly effective strategic and practical support from the Lutterworth Academies Trust. Staffing arrangements reflect the trust's strong commitment to ensuring that the school not only succeeds but delivers a high quality of education. Teaching in English, mathematics and science is delivered by teachers from the trust. The leadership arrangements of the two schools in the trust are aligned to ensure that the school benefits from the expertise of leaders from the other school in the trust.
- Leaders have rightly identified that, until recently, strategies to develop pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum have not been effective enough. While appropriate steps have very recently been taken to strengthen this aspect of provision, it is too early for these to have had a demonstrable impact.
- Plans to make effective use of assessment information to boost the reading ages of those who join lacking basic skills have yet to be implemented.

Governance of the school

- Governors and directors are passionate about the school and committed to the school's vision to provide an education that fosters creativity, innovation and determination.
- Governors monitor the school's effectiveness closely and are kept well informed about pupils' progress by the detailed and accurate reports they receive from the headteacher.
- Governors have recently received training in interpreting school performance information to strengthen their skills in understanding how well pupils are achieving. This has enabled them to challenge school leaders where progress has appeared to be less strong.
- Governors ensure that additional funding provided through the pupil premium, as well as special educational needs funding, is spent effectively.
- Governors maintain oversight of the curriculum to ensure that it promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and pupils' understanding of fundamental British values.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's excellent pastoral arrangements mean that any pupils who are worried or at risk of harm are quickly identified and supported. Highly effective personal coaches meet with individual pupils each week. The coaches know the pupils extremely well and are well placed to identify any changes in behaviour that may indicate wider concerns. The support provided for pupils at risk of harm or experiencing challenging personal difficulties is first-rate. The quality and effectiveness of this support are underpinned by the school's excellent communication with parents and, where necessary, with social services.
- The arrangements to ensure that pupils are kept safe on work experience are very strong. Leaders are rigorous in checking the suitability of work-based mentors to work

with young people. They ensure that mentors are well informed about relevant legislation with regard to keeping pupils safe. Staff from the school contact every work experience provider each morning to check that pupils have arrived safely.

- School leaders have recognised the need to strengthen further their practice with regard to record-keeping, to ensure that the strong practice in place is secured and not dependent on the knowledge and qualities of individual members of staff.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers ensure that learning is almost always purposeful, productive and effective.
- Almost all teaching benefits from the highly effective and positive working relationships that teachers have established with pupils.
- The small class sizes mean that teachers are usually alert to pupils who need extra help. Pupils' excellent behaviour means that the rest of the class work well when the teacher is working with an individual pupil. The small class sizes also mean that teachers are able to easily involve all of the pupils in discussions and question and answer sessions.
- Teachers are skilled in delivering the school's aims of producing young people who can manage their own learning and relate to and collaborate with others. During the inspection, plentiful examples were seen of pupils working very effectively together, for example in designing an anti-bullying campaign or in quality assuring each other's mini-steam engines against industry standards in an engineering lesson.
- Teachers in the vocational subjects maintain good, up-to-date knowledge of sector developments through the strong links the school has established with local and regional employers. Pupils benefit, where appropriate, from specialist teaching from sector specialists. For example, a health and safety unit in the level 3 BTEC engineering and business studies courses was delivered by staff from a multinational research and development company.
- Teachers are skilled in using examination criteria to help pupils understand precisely what they need to do to achieve their target grades.
- Occasionally, in business- and sport-related lessons, opportunities are missed to challenge the pupils to excel, because the scenarios they consider are not sufficiently precise to reflect the real scenarios they may encounter in their chosen careers.
- Good-quality teaching in mathematics resulted in excellent outcomes in GCSE mathematics for most pupils last year. Nevertheless, not all mathematics teaching is effective in deepening pupils' conceptual understanding and developing their subject-specific problem-solving skills.
- Leaders have taken steps to improve the quality of teaching and assessment in English this year, following last year's results which, though strong in English literature, were weak in English language. Much more rigorous assessment arrangements are in place to identify more accurately and rapidly any pupils who are falling behind in English language so that they can be supported.
- Teachers do not consistently insist on high standards of presentation in English and mathematics. Some pupils, especially the lower-attaining boys, have not developed

good habits with regard to setting out their work accurately and presenting it neatly.

- While teachers have access to a range of assessment information, including through tests of reading ages that are carried out when pupils join the school in Year 10, not enough is made of this information to provide rapid support for pupils who join the school with lower than expected reading ages.
- Actions to embed a culture of reading in the school, and to strengthen provision for those who need support with their reading, are planned but have not yet been implemented.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are highly motivated and exceptionally well informed about the world of work and the range of opportunities available to them.
- Pupils' exposure to high-quality work-related learning from a relatively young age plays a huge role in boosting their confidence, resilience and maturity. These attributes are of course highly regarded by the employers they work with. Many pupils go on to secure apprenticeships at the companies where they have trained.
- Pupils are respectful of differences and support their peers exceptionally well. Their understanding of the different communities that make up modern Britain is well developed as a result of the school's strong strategies to foster their understanding of diversity.
- Pupils are well informed about how to stay safe, including when on work experience. They are utterly respectful of difference, whether related to gender, sexuality, cultural background or faith. Pupils spoken with report that there is no bullying whatsoever at the school and the school's records reflect that none has been reported.
- Pupils are committed to supporting others in the local and wider community. At Christmas, the pupils decided to bring in presents for children at a local hospice. The school was overwhelmed with contributions.
- While girls are currently very much in the minority at the school, all of the girls inspectors met with reported that they feel safe at the school and are very pleased with the school's arrangements to support them and help them to learn well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils conduct themselves impeccably. They dress smartly in their business suits or sportswear and thrive in an environment where excellent conduct is the norm.
- Pupils listen respectfully to their teachers, employers and each other. In discussions, the inspectors found them to be delightful: candid, thoughtful and generous.
- The school's work to support pupils who previously have struggled very badly in education is exceptionally strong. A number of pupils shared very openly with inspectors how they had behaved badly in their previous schools, often resulting in

regular exclusion from school. A few had simply stopped attending.

- The school has enabled these pupils to get back on track and see the value of education and almost all of the pupils who previously have failed are now thriving. One such pupil said, 'This is the first time in my life I have actually enjoyed coming to school.' Another said, 'I love it here.' The school is, quite simply, changing these pupils' lives.
- Strategies to secure good attendance are highly effective. Pupils' attendance is in line with the average for other secondary schools. This is no mean feat given that a significant minority of pupils joined the school with previously poor records of attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Good-quality teaching, a curriculum which meets pupils' needs extremely well and excellent provision for pupils' personal development mean that the pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education or training.
- The school's first set of GCSE results in 2016 show that pupils' progress overall in their best eight subjects was in line with the national average.
- Pupils made excellent progress in mathematics and strong progress in science and English literature.
- The progress of lower-attaining pupils was outstanding in mathematics, representing progress in line with the top 1% of schools in the country. Middle-ability pupils also made strong progress in mathematics and achieved particularly well in science.
- The school's strategy of entering all pupils for examinations in the three separate sciences has proved to be effective in securing strong progress for lower- and middle-attaining pupils.
- Pupils also made good progress in their BTEC engineering courses. While all pupils passed their business-related BTEC qualifications, not enough secured the highest grades.
- It is not possible to report on the outcomes last year for disadvantaged pupils or those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities without identifying individual pupils. The school's records, however, together with observations of pupils' learning and work over time, show that these pupils achieve at least as well as other pupils nationally and often better.
- Pupils' achievement in English language was weaker than in the other core subjects last year and attainment was too low. Stronger leadership of the teaching of English, particularly in ensuring that assessment accurately diagnoses pupils' subject-specific strengths and weaknesses, is resulting in pupils now making better progress than before.
- Last year, the most able pupils made less progress than their peers. Leaders have rightly identified this as an area for development so that more pupils secure the very highest grades at GCSE and in their vocational subjects in the future.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The quality of the 16 to 19 study programmes mirrors very closely the strengths of the school reported earlier in this report.
- Sixth-form students receive good-quality teaching over time, benefit from excellent work placements and demonstrate outstanding personal development.
- Last year, high proportions of engineering students attained the highest grades.
- Students who join the sixth form without having achieved a GCSE grade C or above in English or mathematics make good progress towards securing these qualifications. Last year, for example, almost all of these students secured a grade C in English.
- The school has recently introduced an additional core mathematics qualification to enhance the mathematical skills of Year 12 students and particularly those studying engineering.
- Like their peers in key stage 4, sixth-form students exhibit maturity, confidence and resilience.
- All students complete the extended project qualification. This is an accredited qualification which enables students to pursue topics of personal interest. It makes a good contribution to students' time- and project-management skills.
- Some students have used the extended project as an opportunity to support charitable causes, often with remarkable results. For example, a fundraising event organised by one student last year has resulted in the installation of fresh water pumps in three villages in Malawi. Other students raised £600 to support the Matt Hampson Trust.
- All students progress successfully to employment, further training or university. Last year, all students who applied secured places at their first-choice universities.
- Retention rates are in line with national averages. Occasionally, students leave their courses early because they are snapped up by the employers who are keen to recruit them as a result of the qualities they have demonstrated.
- Students' achievement in business-related courses was weaker than in engineering last year.
- The school's current performance information, together with the evidence seen in lessons and students' folders, shows that most students are making good progress in business this year. This is also the case in the BTEC level 3 extended diploma in sport, which the school added to the curriculum in September 2016.
- In these subjects, however, fewer students are currently on track to achieve the very highest grades that are seen consistently in the level 3 extended diploma in engineering.

School details

Unique reference number	141012
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10023070

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy studio school
Age range of pupils	14 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	74
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	52
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Sheila Titterington
Headteacher	Paul Hostead
Telephone number	01455 205112
Website	www.sirfrankwhittlestudioschool.com
Email address	enquiries@sirfrankwhittlestudioschool.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Sir Frank Whittle Studio School opened in September 2014. The school specialises in business, engineering and sport.
- The school is part of the Lutterworth Academies Trust. Lutterworth College is the other school in the trust.
- The school is much smaller than the average secondary school. There are places for 300 pupils. Currently, there are 75 pupils on roll.
- The large majority of pupils are boys. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.

- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- All pupils undertake weekly work experience. In Years 10 and 11, this is for one day each week, and in the sixth form, for two days each week.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 21 lessons. For some of these observations they were accompanied by senior leaders from the school. They also visited pupils in their work experience settings.
- Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils in each year group and spoke informally to pupils in lessons, around the school and in their work experience settings. They also held meetings with senior staff, members of the local governing body and directors from the multi-academy trust.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation and published performance information. Inspectors evaluated the school's policies and practice, including those relating to safeguarding and child protection.
- Inspectors considered the views of the 21 parents who completed the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, and the responses to online surveys completed by seven members of staff and five pupils.

Inspection team

Daniel Burton, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Richard Pemble

Her Majesty's Inspector

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