

# Stoke Studio College for Manufacturing and Design Engineering

Moorland Road, Burslem, Stoke ST6 1JJ

## Inspection dates

3–4 October 2017

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- In the past, pupils' learning has been disrupted by frequent changes in staff. Consequently, outcomes, such as pupils' achievement in examinations, have not been good enough. In 2017, the progress of pupils leaving the school at the end of Year 11 was weak. This was particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils.
- Outcomes for pupils are not yet good. Teaching has not yet ensured that those pupils who are behind where they should be in English and mathematics have caught up.
- Leaders have not yet identified an overall strategy for making the best use of pupil premium funding.
- Several businesses are linked to the Studio College. However, the range of work on offer is not wide. Therefore, business projects are not having a strong enough impact on pupils' progress and attainment across the curriculum.
- Sixth-form students who left in 2017 made weak progress from their starting points.
- Leaders do not ensure that pupils' learning from participation in extended work experience placements has a positive enough impact on their progress and attainment across the curriculum.

### The school has the following strengths

- Ultimate responsibility for pupils' progress, personal development, behaviour and welfare rests with their 'home' school. As a result, pupils have a full range of effective support to make sure that they are safe, behave well and attend regularly.
- Currently, the teaching that pupils receive, both at their 'home' schools and at the Studio College, is good. Pupils' progress is, therefore, improving.
- Leaders and governors are dealing with the potential closure of the school in a way that is sensitive to pupils' needs. This is helping pupils to continue to make progress.

## Full report

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

- Speed up pupils' progress in their non-vocational curriculum, especially in English and mathematics, by:
  - maintaining pupils' high attendance at catch-up sessions in their 'home' schools
  - ensuring that the day-to-day teaching that pupils receive in their 'home' schools enables them to make more rapid progress.
- Continue to improve disadvantaged pupils' progress, by:
  - acting on all of the advice given in the recent pupil premium review
  - consistently evaluating the impact of pupil premium funding on disadvantaged pupils' progress so that only the most effective strategies are used.
- Develop work-based learning so that pupils gain more from their Studio College experience, by:
  - engaging a wider range of employers in the work that pupils do on their vocational courses
  - using what pupils learn on their extended work experience placements back in the 'home' schools to maximise pupils' progress in relevant subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Having recognised past weaknesses, new leaders have quickly taken decisive action to improve standards of teaching, learning and assessment at the school. This is beginning to improve pupils' progress and has had a positive impact on their personal development, behaviour and welfare. There have been many much-needed changes to both the structure of the school's leadership and personnel. These changes have been in place for two school terms.
- At a time of uncertainty due to the trust's proposed closure of this school, members of the trust have taken effective steps to improve the quality of pupils' education. This means that all pupils currently on roll can complete their courses. The trust has done this by commissioning the schools that the pupils originally came from to provide the vast majority of the pupils' education and pastoral care. Leaders call these the 'home' schools.
- A new head of centre has responsibility for the day-to-day running of the school. He is well supported by a range of leaders from the home schools. Between them, these leaders are responsible for all aspects of the school's provision, monitoring and development. The trust no longer uses part-time staff to deliver mathematics, English or vocational courses. As a result, pupils said that the quality of education that they are getting has improved. They have less disruption to their learning, facilities are always available and their teaching is better. New leadership structures are, therefore, having a positive impact on pupils' education.
- Only a small number of teachers work solely at the Studio College. These teachers now have access to a range of effective professional development opportunities at the home schools. For example, they have recently had safeguarding and behaviour training and training on how to work with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Through leaders' effective work to improve pupils' attendance, punctuality and attitudes at the Studio College, pupils are being well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils have positive attitudes towards work and are keen to contribute to society in the workplace. In the pupils' home schools, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences are developed well. Pupils have access to a range of visits, assemblies on a variety of issues and personal, social, health and economic education. Pupils' work in religious education, for example, shows an awareness of how to resolve conflict and maintain healthy relationships.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils have access to a range of qualifications to complement their Studio College curriculum. Although the amount of time that pupils have to study their Studio College curriculum is brief, pupils value their vocational work. Many describe it as the most fulfilling part of their week. Leaders have aligned the vocational curriculum to the local economic and workforce priorities.
- Leaders are not yet fully utilising the vocational elements of pupils' learning because pupils spend so much of their curriculum at their home schools. For example, work-related learning and work experience only relate to approximately 15% of pupils'

curriculum time, and so pupils are not able to gain the most benefit from them. Leaders recognise that they have not done enough to encourage a wide range of work-based opportunities across the curriculum.

- Leaders use extra funding provided for disadvantaged pupils well. They make sure that they log spending carefully, and mentors analyse the impact of all the spending. However, the overall strategy for spending pupil premium funding is not yet in place. Extra funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is spent wisely to meet these pupils' needs effectively.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors have a range of relevant experience and expertise and effectively hold school leaders to account. They have appointed external consultants to advise them on performance management decisions so that they are independently assured of leaders' effectiveness.
- Governors have a clear strategic overview of the school. They acknowledge that in 2017 outcomes for Year 11 were weak. They have ensured that new systems to monitor teaching and learning have been put in place, and governors have a clear oversight of these systems. These systems are proving effective.
- Governors accept that, in the past, pupil premium spending has not been accounted for as well as it should have been. They commissioned a pupil premium report, which succinctly and clearly identified the issues surrounding this area of work.
- Governors have ensured that, although the Studio College may be closing and the principal has resigned, new leadership structures are in place. These structures are having a positive impact on pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The culture of safeguarding in the Studio College and at the pupils' home schools is strong. Safeguarding leaders have established effective systems by which to record and track safeguarding concerns. The same staff who are responsible for safeguarding at the Studio College are also responsible at the home schools. As a result, there is a continuity of vigilance.
- The trust has appointed a safeguarding leader across a number of schools, including the Studio College. This means that the trust has a full oversight of the safeguarding practices at the Studio College. Staff are appropriately trained, and the trust leader for safeguarding produces succinct, topical, relevant safeguarding updates for pupils, parents and staff.
- As the trust grows, it increasingly transfers staff from across different sites. Leaders are developing systems to transfer checks on staff that have been done elsewhere. While this has generally been done well, leaders acknowledge that there are instances when this is not as clearly recorded as it should be. Leaders have plans to strengthen this aspect of administration of the vetting of staff.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- The vast majority of teaching takes place in the pupils' home schools. Inspectors' sampling of pupils' work shows that effective teaching at the home schools is generally meeting their needs and enabling them to make progress from their starting points across a range of subjects. Although most pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 are behind targets in English and mathematics, they are beginning to make better progress than they have in the past.
- The teaching of vocational subjects is good. Teachers use their vocational knowledge well, and their explanations are clear so that pupils know what they have to do.
- Teachers of vocational subjects provide detailed method statements and technical worksheets. These mirror the sorts of documents that pupils will need to use in the world of work, and, so, pupils develop their work-based skills well in their vocational curriculum.
- Teachers use questioning consistently during vocational lessons. This means that they are able to deepen pupils' knowledge, enabling pupils to gain independence and problem-solving skills.
- Pupils learn practical skills alongside theoretical knowledge and this means that they make strong progress in their vocational curriculum. Teachers place emphasis on developing the sorts of skills that pupils need to undertake tasks competently with industry standard outcomes. For example, in one lesson seen by inspectors, pupils were working on mixing mortar to the right consistency so that brick joints were neat, held together well and created a clean finish. Other examples include pupils developing their manual dexterity with simple tools, while developing their technical vocabulary and work-site safety competencies. However, this strong work-based knowledge and skill development is only available for a small proportion of pupils' learning time.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils value their time at the Studio College. They look forward to developing their practical and work-related skills and are confident in the more formal, mature environment.
- Pupils particularly value the mentoring that they receive. Their mentors join them on the transport between their home schools and the Studio College. They address any issues with attendance or progress and offer an extra level of support. Pupils said that this is effective and helps them to work hard, keep safe and share any issues they may have. At their home schools, pupils benefit from the same support that other pupils at those schools receive. They said that they feel safe at their home schools because they spend most of their time there.

- Leaders make sure that pupils are well informed and prepared to face the many heightened risks of the workshop environment in the Studio College. Pupils feel fully informed about workshop safety. For example, they spoke to inspectors about the control of harmful chemicals, their awareness of fumes, the use of personal protective equipment and safe practices in the workplace.
- Pupils said that bullying is rare. If they were to experience it, they are confident that it would be well handled by their teachers. They feel that the formal working environment helps them to act in a professional and mature way, being respectful of those around them.
- A small number of pupils are in alternative provision. These pupils are doing a range of courses suitable to their needs. Leaders track these pupils' progress, personal development, behaviour and welfare carefully.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are respectful towards one another and their teachers. The instances of poor behaviour have decreased recently. Pupils said that their lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.
- In 2016–17, leaders implemented new, more stringent behaviour expectations. The number of fixed-term exclusions and repeat fixed-term exclusions increased, and was high. A small number of pupils accounted for these exclusions. This year, there have been no fixed-term exclusions. There have been no recent permanent exclusions.
- Pupils' behaviour at their home schools is also positive. Mentors travelling with pupils as they move between the Studio College and their home schools ensure that pupils' behaviour and welfare are maintained during travel. Leaders have ensured that consistent behaviour expectations are maintained at both the Studio College and the home schools. They have done this by using the same behaviour systems and sanctions in both. This is effective in helping pupils to behave well.
- In the past, pupils had high levels of absence and persistent absence. Their punctuality was poor. This has recently improved because of new strategies that leaders have put in place, including formal transport arrangements and home visits. Attendance is now broadly in line with the national average, and persistent absence has decreased markedly.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- In 2017, outcomes for Year 11 pupils were poor. Most pupils made weak progress from their starting points. Many pupils joined the school having made poor progress in Year 7 and 8 at their home schools, and did not catch up in their time at the Studio College. They did not make the progress of which they were capable. However, leaders worked with leaders of other local further education providers so that all pupils who left Year 11 in 2017 went on to level 3 courses and did not have to repeat level 2.

- Pupils' outcomes from extended work experience placements are not yet good. This is because, although pupils value their work experience and enjoy the level of responsibility and challenge, leaders do not harness the outcomes of work experience consistently so that pupils benefit from them. In too much of the pupils' curriculum, their extensive work experience is not used, referenced or reflected on.
- Pupils who are currently in the school have had less exposure to poor and disrupted teaching during their time at the school. They have also benefited from the raft of new and effective systems that have been put in place by new leaders from the home schools. In addition, they are undertaking the majority of their studies at these schools. As a result, although most pupils in the current Years 10 and 11 joined the school having made weak progress at key stage 3, pupils are making more rapid progress towards their targets. This is the case for disadvantaged pupils, most-able disadvantaged pupils and the small number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- While leaders did not have a full plan for the spending of pupil premium funding in 2016–17, they have carefully tracked the impact of funds spent this year. As a result, disadvantaged pupils' progress, including most-able disadvantaged pupils' progress, is improving overall.
- Current pupils' progress in mathematics and English, taught at the home schools, is improving overall, and more pupils are likely to gain standard passes in both of these subjects. However, the number of pupils who are behind where they should be in either English or mathematics is still too high.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

## Requires improvement

- Leaders decided to close the sixth form to new applicants in 2017. There are no post-16 students in the school. Therefore, it was not possible for inspectors to speak to students or those responsible for 16 to 19 study programmes.
- All of those pupils who were in Year 12 left Stoke Studio College. They were effectively supported to find places at other providers.
- In 2017, a very small number of pupils were in Year 13. Of those students completing their study programmes in 2017, the school's information shows that nearly all made weak progress in their vocational courses from their starting points.
- There is no officially published information about how well students who leave the sixth form sustain their place at the college, training or work to which they move. However, records show that Year 13 students who left the school in 2017 went onto positive destinations. Leaders effectively supported all students to secure places on university courses or advanced level apprenticeships. The majority of these were in engineering and construction.

## School details

Unique reference number	139590
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10037164

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 College
Age range of pupils	13 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Not applicable
Number of pupils on the school roll	53
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	0
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	David Heywood
Principal	Sarah Robinson
Telephone number	01782 603171
Website	<a href="http://www.stokestudiocollege.co.uk">www.stokestudiocollege.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:adminsupport@stokestudiocollege.co.uk">adminsupport@stokestudiocollege.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	16–17 June 2015

## Information about this school

- 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.
- The school was, until very recently, sponsored by Stoke-on-Trent College. It is now sponsored by the Alpha Academies Trust. The new trust has proposed to the Department for Education that this school should close because, in the time that the school has been open, it has not been able to attract enough pupils to be financially



viable. As a result, the school cannot teach most of its curriculum on the Studio College site.

- All pupils on roll at the Studio College were originally on roll at two local secondary schools, Excel Academy and Discovery Academy. They are still taught their non-vocational curriculum for four days each week at these home schools, where 85% of their teaching time takes place. They spend one day each week at the Studio College undertaking a vocational curriculum. Most of the leaders in the Studio College are members of staff from Excel Academy and Discovery Academy.
- The vast majority of pupils currently on roll have middle or high prior attainment at key stage 2, but had made weak progress or had weak attendance by the end of Year 8. The school is set up to admit pupils aged 13 to 19 on a curriculum of vocational and work-based learning in manufacturing, design and engineering.
- The school did not accept new applications in 2017. All current Year 12 students transferred to other providers. Therefore, the school only has pupils in Year 10 and Year 11.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at Alpha Learning Staffordshire. Alpha Learning Staffordshire is not connected to the sponsor, the Alpha Learning Trust.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the chief executive officer of the trust who is currently the acting principal of the Studio College, and the centre manager. They also met with senior leaders from Excel Academy and Discovery Academy who are currently responsible for much of the Studio College's leadership, including safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed Year 10 lessons in the vocational curriculum, analysing pupils' work in both practical sessions and theoretical lessons. Inspectors could not observe teaching of Year 11 pupils because they only attend the Studio College on a Friday.
- Inspectors sampled work from a range of subjects in the pupils' home schools where most of their curriculum is taught. They spoke with pupils from Years 10 and 11 about their experiences of Studio College and their home school.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including the school's own tracking information, vetting records, curriculum plans, risk assessments, and behaviour and attendance records.
- There were no responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. There were no responses to the staff or pupil surveys.

## Inspection team

Dan Owen, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Victor Reid

Her Majesty's Inspector

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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](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

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