

# Sir William Stanier Community School

Coronation Street, Crewe, Cheshire CW1 4EB

## Inspection dates

27–28 February 2018

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	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders' efforts to improve teaching and learning have been impeded by significant turbulence in staffing. This has delayed consistent application of some policies, including the behaviour policy.
- Teaching and pupils' progress still require improvement in some subjects that are taught in mixed-ability sets. Learning is limited because too little is expected of middle-ability pupils and the most able.
- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have gaps in their learning. They are catching up with better teaching, but the standards they are working at are still below those expected, given their prior attainment at the end of key stage 2.
- Examination results in 2017 were inadequate.
- Weak literacy and numeracy skills are a barrier for some pupils. These skills are developed well in support groups at key stage 3, but they are not developed effectively in all subjects.
- The school's policy on homework is not applied consistently to develop pupils' learning.
- The majority of pupils attend regularly, but persistent absence remains high for a significant minority of pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make good progress in intervention groups, but their progress slows in class lessons. Low attendance exacerbates low achievement for some of this group.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have stabilised staffing and established firm foundations to secure improvement. They are ensuring that pupils currently in school make better progress.
- Behaviour in lessons is starting to improve since the recent introduction of a new behaviour code.
- Middle leaders are leading improvements with energy and enthusiasm. Staff morale is high.
- The recent review of the curriculum provides more time to study GCSE subjects in depth.
- Good teaching is ensuring that pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science. Pupils are inspired by teaching in science.
- Pupils are making better progress at key stage 3 where teaching has been less disrupted.
- Staff are vigilant in ensuring pupils' safety and well-being. Pupils feel safe.
- Governors are aware of strengths and weaknesses and hold leaders to account to ensure that improvements to teaching and learning are sustained.

## Full report

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

- Improve teaching and learning, so that pupils make at least expected progress from their starting points and attainment at GCSE rises, by:
  - ensuring that middle-ability and most-able pupils have sufficiently challenging work in mixed-ability teaching groups in subjects such as geography, computing, business studies, music and languages
  - developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in subjects across the curriculum
  - setting homework that extends and reinforces learning, in line with the school's policy
  - embedding and evaluating the impact of new approaches to behaviour management and reducing the number of pupils excluded from lessons and school
  - using the best practice in school to improve teaching in subjects where pupils do not make good progress.
- Improve attendance and reduce persistent absence by engaging pupils in learning more effectively.
- Ensure that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make the progress they are capable of by:
  - making sure that all teachers are aware of their specific needs
  - tracking their attendance and progress closely and acting quickly to address poor attendance
  - ensuring that their needs are met in mixed-ability classes.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The impact of leadership on teaching and learning has been limited in the past due to significant turbulence in staffing. Leaders have now stabilised staffing and established firm foundations to secure necessary further improvements. They have an in-depth understanding of where improvements are needed and a clear strategy is being implemented to secure them.
- Some strategies have only been introduced very recently, so it is not possible to discern their impact in the long term. The behaviour management policy has only just been introduced and curriculum changes are at very early stages.
- The principal and senior leaders are knowledgeable and committed to improving outcomes. They are establishing a culture of higher expectations for staff and pupils. Staff morale is now high and the vast majority of pupils make a positive contribution to their school.
- There is now a capable team of teachers and leaders in English, mathematics and science, so pupils who are currently in school are making more rapid progress in these subjects.
- Many middle leaders approach their work with energy and enthusiasm; a core team of them are contributing very effectively to improvements in their subjects. In subjects such as English, science and mathematics, thorough checks on teaching and pupils' progress ensure that leaders are aware of where teaching has the most impact and of where support is needed. However, there are still weaknesses in the leadership of some other subjects. Middle leaders are increasingly sharing good practice across faculties.
- Where pupils' progress is weaker, in geography, business studies, computing, music and languages, for example, leaders are providing effective coaching and training to improve teaching.
- Leadership of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is being developed but is not yet fully effective. Leaders ensure that additional funding is used appropriately to improve pupils' outcomes. They are accurately identifying pupils' needs but are not yet evaluating the quality and impact of provision effectively. Consequently, support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities does not always meet their specific learning needs in classes.
- Leaders are aware that the examination results for pupils who left the school in 2017 were inadequate. Too many pupils did not make the progress or attain the grades they should have in GCSEs. Senior leaders are tracking the progress of all groups of pupils who are currently in school carefully.
- The procedures to manage the performance of teachers are thorough. Leaders have high expectations of teachers and set aspirational targets for pupils' progress and attainment in each subject. They ensure that staff receive good-quality training and support to develop their skills and keep up to date.
- Leaders ensure that additional funding is used more effectively now than in the past to improve pupils' outcomes. Use of the pupil premium is planned carefully, with close attention to individual needs, and this is starting to raise their achievement. Differences

between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils nationally were too wide among pupils who left school in 2017, partly due to the fact that a number of disadvantaged pupils did not turn up for examinations. However, differences are diminishing among pupils currently in school. The Year 7 catch-up funding is used effectively to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of Year 7 pupils.

- The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced. Recent changes are based on a clear rationale to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and provide more time for GCSE subjects at key stage 4. Pupils are increasingly able to study academic GCSE subjects in greater depth.
- Pupils who are at risk of disengaging with education are provided with an alternative curriculum within the school's Aspire Academy. This provision is led well and is proving successful in supporting pupils to develop knowledge and skills that will help them access further education, employment or training.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well in several subjects and through additional activities. Form time, at the start of the day, is used effectively to discuss ethical and moral issues and develop pupils' knowledge of diversity and global issues. Themed weeks, which focus on topics such as community values and combating bullying, deepen pupils' understanding of British values and promote respect for other cultures and faiths. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Extra-curricular activities enhance pupils' learning. For example, a range of sports, art, drama, music, and science, technology, engineering and mathematical activities develops pupils' skills and talents.
- Engagement with parents has developed considerably. Applications for a place at the school have increased as confidence in school leaders has grown. There were few responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, but the majority who responded would recommend the school. 'I have seen big improvements over the last few years and would like to recognise staff for the brilliant work they do,' is typical of comments received. A very small minority of parents expressed concern about provision for the most able pupils, and a few say that the new behaviour policy is too stringent.
- Leaders are seeking to develop links with other schools in the area in order to develop good practice. Previously, support from the Heath Family multi-academy trust (MAT) has been minimal and has not supported improvement adequately. The principal reports that change in the MAT leadership in September 2017 has brought better support for the school. The school improvement partner provides consistent support.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governance is improving as governors' range of skills is wider and more relevant to the needs of the role.
- Governors know the school well. They are fully aware of strengths and weaknesses and hold leaders to account to ensure that improvements to teaching and learning are sustained. They are ambitious for pupils and support and challenge leaders effectively.
- Governors are taking appropriate action to manage the school's finances. They receive detailed reports on the impact of the pupil premium, catch-up funding and additional

funding to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. They are monitoring the progress of disadvantaged and other pupils closely to ensure that differences continue to diminish.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are vigilant in ensuring pupils' safety and well-being. Pupils who are vulnerable are particularly well supported. Pupils say that they can speak to staff about concerns and they receive helpful advice and support. Staff also engage with external agencies productively to ensure that pupils can access additional help.
- Staff have completed all required training, for example in safeguarding, the 'Prevent' duty and e-safety. Weekly safeguarding updates ensure that they are fully informed about current issues concerning individual pupils in school.
- Parents and carers are kept well informed if there are any concerns. Staff work closely with families who are facing challenging circumstances and do all they can to keep vulnerable pupils in school.
- The school's policies to safeguard pupils and procedures to ensure safe recruitment of staff are meticulous. Risk assessments are thorough.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Teaching is not strong enough to result in pupils making good progress in all subjects. Leaders are aware of where teaching is weaker and are taking appropriate action to improve it. Teaching has a more positive impact on learning in Years 7, 8 and 9 than it does in Years 10 and 11. This is because staffing has been unstable in the past, leaving older pupils with gaps in their learning.
- Teachers currently in school mostly have strong subject knowledge. Leaders have taken care to recruit staff who have suitable subject specialisms. Where teaching is weaker, leaders are providing support to improve their subject knowledge and teaching skills.
- Effective teaching in Years 7, 8 and 9 is ensuring that pupils build on their prior learning systematically and make good progress in most subjects. Pupils in these year groups are benefiting from better continuity in learning.
- In Years 10 and 11, pupils are beginning to catch up as a result of better teaching, but their attainment is still below that expected, given their prior attainment at key stage 2.
- Pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science because teaching is good. Teachers set tasks that are matched closely to pupils' needs and abilities. In these subjects, teachers use assessment information effectively to fill gaps in learning. Teachers ask probing questions and provide challenging tasks that require effort and perseverance. Pupils rise to the challenge in these subjects.
- Science is a popular subject because teachers motivate and inspire the pupils. In other subjects, including English, mathematics, food technology and art, teachers expect pupils to participate in high-quality discussion and produce good-quality work.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities

within withdrawal groups and when deployed in classes. However, the needs of pupils who have SEN are not always met precisely in class lessons where there is no additional support and teachers are not aware of pupils' specific needs.

- There are still some subjects where learning is limited because teachers' expectations of pupils are not high enough for middle-ability and most-able pupils. There are limited opportunities for pupils to persevere with extended writing or challenging tasks. This occurs most often in mixed-ability teaching groups in subjects such as geography, computing, business studies, music and languages.
- Teaching in the school's alternative provision, the Aspire Academy, has improved since the last inspection. Specialist teachers support pupils to make good progress in vocational subjects and develop work-related skills. Revisions to the curriculum are ensuring that pupils are able to access GCSE courses.
- Weak literacy and numeracy skills are a barrier for a sizeable proportion of pupils. Their skills are developed well at key stage 3, with many making brisk progress to catch up in Year 7. However, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills in subjects across the curriculum.
- Teachers do not ensure that homework in some subjects reinforces and develops pupils' learning. Pupils receive little work to complete independently and so do not develop thinking and research skills as well as they could. Pupils say that feedback on homework is not always helpful.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- There are several strengths in this aspect of provision, but there are also occasions when teaching does not support pupils to become confident learners who take pride in their work. Some pupils have not acquired the communication skills to talk about their learning. Others lose interest when teaching fails to inspire them.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel safe and bullying is not a concern. Pupils have a broad understanding of different types of bullying and said that there have been no serious incidents in school for the past two years. However, a few pupils alluded to name-calling and insults based on sexuality. Leaders are vigilant and deal quickly with such inappropriate behaviour.
- Staff provide sensitive support to promote pupils' social and emotional well-being and mental health, which is highly valued by pupils and parents. Pupils say that they can always talk to an adult and feel they will be supported to cope with any concerns. The school's 'Thrive' centre provides sanctuary for pupils who need a quiet space or someone to talk to.
- Careers education, information, advice and guidance are strengths in the school's provision. Pupils receive good-quality advice from Year 7 onwards from the school's knowledgeable careers specialist. Pupils are supported to make informed option choices to support their aspirations. Work placements in Years 10 and 11 are carefully planned

to provide good-quality experiences.

- The school works closely with other agencies to promote positive relations in school and within the wider community. Work with the local youth service, police and community groups supports community cohesion and promotes respect among pupils. Pupils are rightly proud of their charity work and contributions to the local community.
- Leaders check on the safety and effectiveness of alternative provision and work experience placements rigorously. They ensure that staff have had relevant safeguarding checks. Pupils' attendance at alternative provision is checked every day.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils say that behaviour has improved recently. They understand that the new systems to manage inappropriate behaviour are designed to improve the learning environment in classrooms. The systems are beginning to have a positive impact; prolonged disruption to learning has been eradicated and minor disruptions are dealt with quickly in most lessons. However, the policy is not yet being implemented consistently in all subjects.
- The majority of pupils are attentive and cooperative in lessons. When teaching is challenging, pupils are motivated and show perseverance with their tasks. There are still too many pupils withdrawn from lessons for inappropriate behaviour, however. These pupils are managed well in the 'isolation' rooms, but they miss out on important learning.
- Over time the proportion of pupils excluded from school for a fixed period has been above the national average. The more stringent approach to managing behaviour has increased further the proportion of pupils excluded from school recently.
- Pupils behave safely in shared areas and they are supervised well by staff. Most pupils are considerate and polite.
- The majority of pupils attend regularly and the attendance of many pupils has improved following support. Attendance is good in Year 7 and broadly average across Years 8 and 9. However, despite every effort, persistent absence remains high for a significant minority of pupils in Years 10 and 11, especially for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- On entry to the school, the proportion of middle- and high- prior-attaining pupils is well below average. Recent published data shows that too many pupils who left the school in 2017 made inadequate progress from their starting points. Pupils who attained at least expected standards at the end of key stage 2 did not go on to achieve good passes at GCSE. Pupils who had low starting points made better progress as their needs were better met in small teaching groups.
- Pupils who are currently in school are making faster progress because teaching has improved. There is now a stable teaching staff, and effective systems to assess and

check on pupils' progress are being driven by senior leaders.

- Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 make good progress from their starting points in most subjects. Progress is strong in science, English and mathematics. Those who have low starting points are supported effectively in Year 7 and many make accelerated progress to catch up.
- The progress of pupils in Years 10 and 11 has recently accelerated. However, the standards they are working at are below those expected, given their prior attainment at key stage 2, due to gaps in their learning.
- Pupils in the school's alternative provision, the Aspire Academy, make good gains in their learning and in their personal, social and work-related skills. Teaching and curriculum planning in this provision have improved since the last inspection and are successful in supporting pupils into further education, employment or training.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress at key stage 3, especially in English, mathematics and science, where they are taught in smaller groups. They also make good progress in various interventions that specifically support the development of their literacy and numeracy skills and their social and emotional well-being. However, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities who are in mainstream classes at key stage 4 have not benefited from the same depth of assessment, and their learning needs are not met as precisely within class lessons.
- The most able pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science, where they are in ability sets. Pupils say that work is challenging and pacy in these subjects. However, their progress is less in some mixed-ability groups where work is not sufficiently challenging, for example in geography, computing, languages, business studies and music. Middle-ability pupils also underachieve in some teaching groups in these subjects.
- There is a high proportion of disadvantaged pupils and their progress and attainment are similar to those of other pupils in school. In 2017, the difference between the progress of disadvantaged pupils in school and that of other pupils nationally was wide.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress in Years 7, 8 and 9 alongside other pupils. In Years 10 and 11, there is little difference in progress in English, but differences are wider in mathematics. Pupils are being supported effectively to catch up.
- Pupils are supported effectively in securing and sustaining appropriate further education, employment or training placements. Despite pupils' low attainment in GCSEs in 2017, all but one of the Year 11 leavers went into further education, employment or training. A larger than usual proportion of these leavers were following alternative provision with the school's Aspire Academy, and this prepared them well for their next steps.



## School details

Unique reference number	139953
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10042450

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	689
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Cook
Principal	Jason Fraser
Telephone number	01270 660880
Website	<a href="http://www.sws.cheshire.sch.uk">www.sws.cheshire.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@sws.cheshire.sch.uk">admin@sws.cheshire.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	10–11 February 2016

## Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most secondary schools. It is sponsored by the Heath Family MAT. A local governing body is responsible for the school's work. A trust board oversees the work of all schools in the MAT.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported for their SEN and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion with an education, health and care plan is average.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The school uses four alternative providers to support 23 pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion: The Warehouse, Crewe; Camm Street Gym, Crewe; Trade Skills, Macclesfield; and work placements and work-based learning through Safe Opportunities.
- The school did not meet the government's floor standard in 2017, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' progress. The school meets the Department for

Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 4 academic performance results in 2015 to 2017.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a range of subjects. They also conducted learning walks focusing on behaviour and provision for vulnerable pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Some observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at the work of pupils who are currently in school in detail, in lessons and through a detailed scrutiny of a random sample of pupils' books.
- Inspectors met with four groups of pupils. They also spoke with pupils in lessons and around the school, to gain their views of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with: senior leaders; four governors, including the chair of the governing body; the Heath Family Trust chief executive officer; the school's improvement partner; parents; subject leaders; pastoral leaders; and SEN leaders.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's past data, current pupil progress tracking, action planning, self-evaluation, performance management, safeguarding procedures, health and safety checks, and risk assessments. School policies were seen.
- Inspectors took into account 32 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and 55 responses from staff. There were no pupil questionnaire returns.

## Inspection team

Jean Olsson-Law, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Phil Hyman	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Bailey	Ofsted Inspector
Jan Rowe	Ofsted Inspector

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