

Stuart Bathurst Catholic High School

College of Performing Arts

Wood Green Road, Wednesbury, West Midlands WS10 9QS.

Inspection dates

20–21 April 2016 and 18 May 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The progress pupils make in Years 7 to 11 across the range of subjects they study is uneven and not yet good.
- The achievements of different groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able is too variable across year groups. Girls and pupils from White British backgrounds have not achieved as well as they should have on leaving the school.
- Teaching is not yet consistently effective in improving learning.
- Pupils sometimes do not receive work that is pitched at the right level for their ability. Some pupils are not moved on to harder work quickly.
- Some teachers do not plan well to support pupils who have special educational needs or disability.
- Leaders have not checked the progress of some pupils carefully enough.
- The impact of some subject leaders in bringing about improvements in teaching and achievement in their areas has been uneven.

The school has the following strengths

- As a result of good leadership, the school is improving. The headteacher and governors are creating a culture where staff and many pupils are committed to improving the school further. Standards have risen in many areas.
- Behaviour and pupils' personal development and welfare are good. Pupils are polite and courteous. Attendance has risen considerably.
- The sixth form has improved and is now good. Good teaching enables students to make strong progress.
- Teaching is improving and leading to better outcomes in many areas.
- Pupils have good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. They are taught to understand British values effectively.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and thereby raise achievement in the main school by:
 - ensuring that teachers set work that challenges pupils of different abilities to learn well, especially the most able pupils
 - making sure that teachers check pupils' learning carefully in order to move pupils on to harder work as soon as they are ready
 - making sure that teachers have the skills to provide effective support for pupils who have special educational needs or disability
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, including pupils from White British backgrounds and younger pupils in English.
- Further strengthen the impact of leaders in monitoring teaching and its impact on pupils' progress by:
 - robustly checking any differences between the progress of different groups of pupils
 - ensuring that initiatives to improve the progress of pupils are carefully evaluated
 - ensuring that all subject leaders are trained in how to use all the information that they have about teaching and pupils' progress so that precise action is taken to improve teaching and inconsistencies in the quality of teaching are reduced
 - making sure that leaders who are relatively new to post, such as the leader who oversees provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability, are well supported to have a strong impact in their area of responsibility
 - ensuring that teachers follow the school's marking policy to correct spelling, punctuation and grammar errors in all subjects, so improving pupils' written English.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Under the good leadership of the headteacher, the school has made important improvements since the last inspection. This is reflected in the much higher standards that pupils achieve on leaving the school, the good quality of provision in the sixth form, improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' good behaviour and attendance. Although leaders have not yet eradicated all areas of weakness, they are taking robust action to tackle these, and can demonstrate the positive impact of their work. As result, the school is continuing to improve.
- The headteacher has reshaped the culture of the school so that all staff feel empowered and supported to make a contribution to the school's improvement. He has appropriately high expectations of all members of the school community and has taken appropriate action where these expectations are not met by staff. Relationships between adults and pupils are highly positive and these are driven by the Catholic ethos, which permeates all aspects of school life.
- Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They evaluate the school's performance and use this information to identify the right priorities to improve the school. These priorities drive plans for improvement and systems to manage the performance of staff to ensure that all staff are accountable for helping to raise standards at the school. Leaders and governors check regularly whether the work they are undertaking is successful. However, some initiatives, such as the strategies leaders have used to raise the aspirations of girls in the school, are not monitored sharply enough, nor have leaders focused sufficiently on the progress of some groups of pupils, such as pupils from different minority ethnic backgrounds or those who speak English as an additional language.
- Subject leaders check teaching and achievement regularly in their areas and they have appropriate strategies to do this. The successful impact of this work is reflected in improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in many areas. Where subject leadership in the past has been weak, for example in English and science, new subject leaders have focused well on taking robust action to bring about improvements and are successfully accelerating the pace of positive change.
- The member of staff who leads the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and disability only took up this post one week before the inspection. This person has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to secure improvements in this area, such as ensuring that more detailed information about the specific learning, behavioural and emotional needs of this group of pupils is gathered and shared with staff, including through training. Consequently, a minority of this group do not make consistently good progress.
- Leaders have recognised that disadvantaged pupils have not achieved well enough on leaving the school in the past. Robust action taken last academic year raised the performance of this group of pupils in mathematics. However, this work was less successful in English. Leaders have responded to this issue decisively, and have ensured that improving outcomes for this group of pupils features prominently in the school's improvement strategy. In addition, leaders have actively sought an external review of their work in this area in order to help them to further strengthen provision. Consequently, leaders now use and monitor the impact of the additional pupil premium effectively and disadvantaged pupils are catching up with others better than they have in the past across most year groups.
- Leaders make sure that teachers undertake regular training opportunities through the 'teaching and learning action group'. This work has had a strong impact on improving teaching and learning in the sixth form and on pupils' personal development and behaviour. However, although teaching has improved, this work is not yet enabling pupils to benefit from consistently strong teaching across key stages 3 and 4. Leaders have recognised that training has also not supported teachers to follow the school's marking policy with respect to correcting the accuracy of pupils' written English in all subjects.
- The school offers pupils a good balance of subjects to follow as well as a wide range of extra-curricular activities and revision sessions. The curriculum is well planned and it has a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and personal development, including for sixth-form students. It makes a strong contribution to helping pupils develop their awareness and understanding of a wide range of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues, as well as British values. These aspects of the curriculum are taught in 'Catholic Values' lessons, assemblies and religious education. However, some areas of the curriculum do not have as much impact on pupils' academic progress in Years 7 to 11 because they are not taught as well as others.
- The local authority has offered support and challenged the school since the last inspection. They

recognise the many improvements that the headteacher has successfully brought about and the areas that the school needs to continue working on. Although the local authority has a clear overview of many aspects of the school's performance, some aspects, such as the need to improve outcomes for girls and pupils from White British backgrounds, have not received sufficient attention.

■ **The governance of the school**

- The governing body understands the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, they have not yet been fully successful in holding school leaders sufficiently to account for securing consistently good teaching and learning across subjects and for all groups of pupils in Years 7 to 11.
- The skills of the governing body have strengthened considerably since the last inspection. They have responded effectively to findings from an external review of the governing body and simplified the structure of the governing body. Governors continue to review their performance. The relatively new chair of the governing body has worked effectively to ensure that governors have good, complementary skills. He has made sure that governors benefit from appropriate training and induction. This aspect of the school's work has also been supported well by the local authority.
- Governors know where teaching is strong and where there are weaknesses. They also know about the progress that some of the different groups of pupils are making and they monitor the impact of the additional funding such as the pupil premium robustly. However, they have not been sufficiently focused on improving outcomes and teaching for all groups of pupils, such as girls and pupils from White British backgrounds, because school leaders have not highlighted these groups.
- Governors monitor the impact of leaders in relation to the school development plan well. Governors are attached to different areas of this plan and visit the school at appropriate points throughout the year so that they can meet with leaders and seek assurance that they are improving quality of teaching, pupils' progress and behaviour. They do this under guidance from teachers and leaders, which is appropriate. In addition, leaders ask increasingly probing questions during meetings to ensure that they can be confident in the information that they are presented with.
- The governing body has appropriate procedures for making decisions about whether teachers should receive pay rises in relation to meeting targets. They fulfil other aspects of their statutory duties such as management of the school's budget and safeguarding efficiently.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff are appropriately vetted and trained as required. Pupils in all year groups, including the sixth form, feel safe and they have many opportunities to learn about keeping safe through assemblies and visiting speakers, for example. There are robust procedures for reporting any concerns that staff have if a pupil may be showing signs of being at risk. Leaders have appropriate procedures in place for making sure that the small number of pupils who attend other institutions are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Although improving, teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement because pupils do not benefit from consistently effective teaching. As a result, there is variability in the rates of progress that pupils, and groups of pupils, make within and between subjects.
- Some teachers do not use assessment information well enough to plan activities which are well matched to the skills and abilities of pupils. This results in differences in the progress made by different groups of pupils because they are set work which is either too hard or too easy.
- Pupils are not regularly moved on to harder work as soon as they are ready. This is because some teachers do not check the progress that pupils are making in sufficient detail during lessons. This can also mean that some pupils' misconceptions are not picked up quickly enough, slowing some pupils' progress because they struggle.
- Teaching for pupils who have special educational needs or disability is not consistently well planned. This results in pupils sometimes making slow progress because they do not get the right support to meet their particular learning needs. The impact of teaching assistants on pupils' learning is also variable. Leaders have not yet given teachers enough training so that they are better able to meet the learning needs of this group of pupils.
- Some teachers are not following the school's policy on marking and so pupils are not improving their spelling, punctuation and grammar at a good speed. As a result, many pupils continue to make the same errors, including in English lessons in key stage 3.

- Pupils learn well in mathematics because teachers make sure that pupils are helped to understand the underlying mathematical concepts well. As a result, pupils successfully build on their knowledge, skills and understanding over time.
- Where learning is strong, it is characterised by teachers' high expectations and good subject knowledge that informs their planning of well-resourced activities that stimulate pupils' interests. Pupils respond well to their learning because of the positive relationships they share with their teachers. For example, in a Year 7 French lesson, pupils made quick progress because their teacher had instilled in them a desire to do well and they were provided with interesting tasks that motivated them to work with enthusiasm.
- Teaching for the most able pupils is improving because leaders have correctly made this a priority. In subjects such as the humanities subjects, questioning is skilfully used to check and extend pupils' learning. For example, Year 10 pupils offered thoughtful and considered responses when reflecting the changing role of women in society because their teacher asked them questions that made them think deeply. In addition, the teacher helped less-able pupils to extend their vocabulary and made sure that the most able pupils could access more challenging work. This meant that pupils of different abilities made good progress. However, the most able pupils can spend too long completing work that is too easy.
- Teaching is improving in English in key stage 4 and this is contributing to the better progress that current pupils are making. For instance, inspectors saw how Year 11 pupils developed their understanding of poetry successfully because their teachers ensured that they could apply a range of critical vocabulary well.
- Some pupils benefit from regular English and mathematics tutoring, which is taught in small groups, including for some pupils who are disadvantaged. Teaching in these sessions is having a good impact on pupils' progress, particularly in Year 11.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The majority of pupils place a high level of importance on their education and most are determined to do their best and succeed. Many pupils show a good level of personal responsibility when walking around the school and in lessons. Most also show that they understand the importance of taking responsibility for managing their own learning. These qualities are mirrored in the behaviour and attitudes of sixth-form students, many of whom show high levels of independence with respect to their learning.
- Pupils are predominantly happy and confident at school because they know that staff are available to provide a good level of personal and emotional support when it is required. Pupils told inspectors that they value this greatly, and one pupil summed this up well, stating that, 'You can talk to any member of staff about your problems.'
- Pupils know that physical and emotional well-being are important. This is because the school provides a wide range of sporting activities as well as opportunities for reflection in assemblies and in the 'Catholic Values' lessons.
- Pupils are helped by the school to develop self-confidence. Although only a relatively small proportion of girls from White British backgrounds attend 'Empower' sessions, those that did recently reported to governors that these sessions were helping them develop higher ambitions and self-belief. Almost all pupils who met inspectors spoke confidently.
- Pupils are taught about how to keep safe and they have a good understanding of the risks they may face, including how to stay safe when working online. Pupils understand the different forms in which bullying can occur and they are confident that bullying is always dealt with quickly and effectively by staff and that incidents are rare. Pupils are also aware of the risks associated with drugs and alcohol and they are taught about the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.
- Leaders make sure that suitable checks are made to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils who follow courses away from the school site.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The majority of pupils behave well in lessons and at social times. Most pupils have good attitudes to learning and try their best, even when teaching is not as good as it should be.

- The school's catholic ethos plays a significant part in promoting good behaviour and relationships. One pupil summed up the thoughts of many when speaking with an inspector: 'We are all one big family and we get on well and respect each other.'
- The vast majority of pupils are polite, courteous and well-mannered. Pupils conduct themselves well when moving around the school and several politely opened doors for inspectors, for example.
- Attendance is improving and it is above average. In the past, the attendance of some pupils who have special educational needs or disability has been far too low. However, leaders have succeeded in improving this and the attendance of this group of pupils is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils who regularly miss school has improved and this is below the national average.
- Exclusions have been too high in recent years. However, these are reducing during the current year, although the rate of improvement for some pupils who have special educational needs or disability is not as quick as it is for other pupils.
- The behaviour of pupils who attend alternative provision is good, and leaders check the attendance of these pupils daily. This provision is carefully chosen to meet the needs of different pupils in order that it helps to improve their behaviour and attitudes to study and learning.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Outcomes require improvement. Although pupils left Year 11 in 2015 with better results in their GCSE examinations than in the past, standards have not been high enough in some subjects. The progress of pupils currently in the school is improving, but is not yet good because it varies between and within subjects, and between some groups of pupils.
- For the past two years, girls and pupils from White British backgrounds who have completed Year 11 have made slow progress across a range of subjects. The school's records of the achievement of current pupils demonstrate that, although there are improvements, there remain inconsistencies between the progress of pupils from different backgrounds in some year groups. Gaps between girls and boys are generally closing and the achievement of girls is rising across the school.
- The most able pupils have not made the progress that they should. Too few have achieved the highest grades on leaving the school. Last year for example, in English, the proportion of pupils who entered the school with a Level 5 making expected or better than expected progress was below the national average. Improving the achievement of this group of pupils has been a prominent focus for the school this year. As a result, the progress of the most able pupils in key stage 4 in English is accelerating. Inspection evidence confirms the improving progress of the most able pupils in English. However, there remains variation in the progress of this group at key stage 3 and in their performance in some subjects.
- Some teachers have struggled to adapt to changes in courses. As a result, performance in media studies and drama last year was poor.
- Last year, the gaps between the proportion of disadvantaged pupils and others in the school and nationally who achieved five GCSE passes including English and mathematics widened. A key factor in this was the slow progress disadvantaged pupils made in English. This was in contrast to some good improvements that leaders had secured as a result of actions taken to raise the performance of this group in mathematics. In Year 11 in 2015, disadvantaged pupils achieved one grade lower than others nationally in mathematics, an improvement on the previous year. In English, the gap did narrow to two thirds of a grade lower than others nationally, but the gaps in school remained too wide.
- Although there is some variability in year groups, disadvantaged pupils who are currently in the school are catching up with others. For the current Year 11, progress rates are improving, including in English, and gaps between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and others are narrowing. This reflects the positive impact of leaders' work to secure improvements.
- The proportion of pupils attaining five A* to C grades in GCSE examinations has improved over the last three years and was slightly above average in 2014 and 2015. This is because pupils are achieving better across a range of subjects. For example, last year, the progress pupils made in modern foreign languages was in the top 10% of schools nationally. Performance has also improved in the humanities and in science, and the progress pupils made was in line with that of pupils nationally in these areas.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics. Last year, the proportions of pupils who made expected or better than expected progress from their different starting points was similar to that of other pupils

nationally. The school's records and inspection evidence shows that pupils currently in the school are continuing to make good progress in mathematics.

- The school uses the additional Year 7 catch-up premium well (this is additional funding given to schools to support those who join with attainment in English and mathematics below what is expected). Many lower-attaining pupils in Year 7 are catching up successfully in English and mathematics, although pupils are not improving the accuracy of their written English as quickly as they need to.
- Many pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress. However, as with other groups of pupils, there is some variability in their achievement across subjects.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is variable. Much depends on the skills of individual teachers. This means that these pupils do not benefit from having their basic literacy skills developed well enough, for example, which is a significant barrier to learning for many.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision make good progress because they follow a range of courses that are matched well to their different needs and abilities. Pupils benefit from the support they receive, which helps them to overcome any difficulties that they have in their learning. Leaders check the progress of these pupils closely and carefully.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- The leadership of 16 to 19 study programmes is good. The sixth form has improved considerably since the last inspection. Leaders have made sure that students are set appropriately aspirational targets and they monitor the progress of individuals in detail. As a result, any students who are falling behind are identified quickly and given additional support to catch up.
- Leaders have made sure that students benefit from a structured, impartial programme of careers information, advice and guidance before beginning their study programmes and during the two years that they spend in the sixth form. As a result, all students move on to higher education or employment with training.
- Retention rates are high. For example, in Year 13 currently, almost every student has remained in the sixth form and progressed from Year 12.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Teachers and students benefit from smaller group sizes than in the main school and this means that students receive bespoke, individualised attention in lessons. Teachers use assessment effectively to help students understand how to improve their work and students respond well to the advice given. Teachers have strong subject and examination specification knowledge which results in good questioning in lessons. This helps students to think deeply as well as to move the standard of their work incrementally to higher grades.
- Outcomes are good. Although progress in academic courses has been too slow for the past two years, this has improved considerably this year. Students currently in the sixth form are making good progress in academic and vocational courses. Although outcomes by the end of Year 13 have not been strong enough in the past, last year, students who completed Year 12 made progress which was above average. This group of students, who are now in Year 13, are currently on track to at least meet the highly aspirational targets which leaders have set for them. Students who are currently studying in Year 12 are making good progress, although it is not quite as impressive as it is in Year 13.
- Most students who need to retake GCSE English are making strong progress towards achieving at least a grade C. However, the progress that students are making in mathematics is much weaker, partly as a result of staffing difficulties. However, these are now resolved, although students have much ground to make up and many are lacking confidence in this subject.
- As in Years 7 to 11, the school's work to promote personal development and welfare is good in the sixth form. Students benefit from similar opportunities to younger pupils. In addition, they are important role models for younger pupils and they engage enthusiastically in organising charity and community events, for example. Some students take part in work experience, which helps those following vocational courses, particularly, to develop greater understanding of the sector that interests them. For others, it provides valuable experience to prepare them well for future employment. Many of these activities help the students to develop leadership and employability skills.
- The behaviour of sixth-form students is good. Almost all behave very well and show good attitudes to learning and are prepared well for the next stage of their lives. They have similarly good access to help and support to promote their positive personal development.

School details

Unique reference number	104020
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10002505

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	890
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	154
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sean McMulkin
Headteacher	Jeremy Harris
Telephone number	0121 556 1488
Website	www.stuart-bathurst.org.uk
Email address	admin@stuart-bathurst.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 November 2013

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Almost half of the pupils are of minority ethnic heritage, which is well above average.
- A fifth of pupils speak English as an additional language, which is above average. The vast majority of these pupils speak and write English fluently.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is average.
- The pupil premium, which is additional government funding given to schools for children who are looked after and those known to be eligible for free school meals, provides support for just over four in 10 pupils. This is much higher than the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision on a full-time or part-time basis. These pupils attend Sandwell Rise Community School, the Albion Foundation, Walsall College, Startright Training, Impact Education and Training Ltd, Sandwell Community Caring Trust and Nacro.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning and progress in 44 lessons, nine of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. The inspection team made several short visits to other lessons to check on the progress and behaviour of different groups of pupils. Inspectors also looked at a wide range of work in pupils' books.
- Meetings were held with seven groups of pupils from all year groups. Other meetings were held with members of the governing body and with senior leaders and staff, including those responsible for leading subjects. The lead inspector met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors analysed the 33 responses to Ofsted's online parental questionnaire, Parent View. They also analysed 84 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire as well as responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including those relating to the monitoring of teaching and the targets set for teachers to improve their work. They also looked at records relating to attendance, behaviour, bullying and safeguarding and the school's development plan. In addition, inspectors analysed a wide range of information on pupils' performance.
- Ofsted deemed that insufficient evidence had been collected about leadership and management, outcomes and quality of teaching during the initial two days of the inspection. This meant that two inspectors returned to the school to gather further evidence in these areas on 18 May 2016.

Inspection team

Richard Sutton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Peter Wilkes	Ofsted Inspector
Nigel Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector
Gwendoline Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Chapman	Her Majesty's Inspector

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