

Stuart Bathurst Catholic High School College of Performing Arts

Wood Green Road, Wednesbury, West Midlands WS10 9QS

Inspection dates

18–19 September 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders' actions to address the school's weaknesses lack urgency. Outcomes have declined since the previous inspection and leaders have failed to address the areas for improvement identified at that time.
- Governors have an overgenerous view of the school's effectiveness. They are unable to properly hold leaders to account because they lack sufficient educational expertise.
- Leaders at all levels do not evaluate their actions well. They are not clear about which improvement strategies are working and which are not. Consequently, improvement is too slow or not evident at all.
- GCSE outcomes have been poor for three years. Pupils throughout the school are underachieving in several subjects, including English and science.
- Disadvantaged pupils underachieve in several subjects. Leaders' actions to improve their outcomes have been ineffective.
- Leaders' recent changes to the curriculum have not been successful in providing well for all pupils at key stage 4.
- Some teaching has low expectations of the quantity and quality of work that pupils complete in lessons.
- Some teachers do not consistently consider pupils' abilities and needs when planning lessons. They do not check pupils' knowledge during lessons or use questions well to deepen their understanding.
- The sixth form requires improvement because students' outcomes on A-level courses are not consistently good. Leaders' checks on students' progress are not as effective as they should be.

The school has the following strengths

- Staff provide good support and care. Pupils feel safe in school.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons. The school is calm and orderly throughout the day.
- Teaching is now improving, and some is strong, especially in the sixth form.
- Attendance is above the national average for secondary schools.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, so that standards rise, especially in English and science, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - have high expectations of the amount and quality of work that pupils complete in lessons
 - make effective use of information about pupils' abilities and needs, including any special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, when planning lessons
 - provide pupils with sufficiently challenging work
 - ask questions which help to deepen pupils' understanding of their work
 - check pupils' understanding during lessons and provide extra help or challenge when appropriate.
- Improve leadership by ensuring that:
 - urgent action is taken to improve teaching and raise standards in English and science
 - leaders effectively evaluate the impact of strategies designed to improve pupils' outcomes
 - leaders devise a curriculum that motivates all pupils at key stage 4 to deepen their learning and make good progress in all subjects that they study
 - middle leaders have the skills and expertise to lead the improvement of teaching in their areas of responsibility
 - the governing board has sufficient expertise to properly hold leaders to account for the school's performance
 - the pupil premium is spent effectively, so that disadvantaged pupils' progress improves.
- Raise standards in those A-level subjects where students achieve less well, by ensuring that:
 - teachers and leaders carefully check students' progress during Years 12 and 13
 - students who begin to fall behind are quickly provided with extra support to help them catch up.

It is recommended that reviews of governance and the school's use of the pupil premium should be carried out in order to determine how these aspects of leadership might be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders have been too slow to recognise and address pupils' poor progress in several subjects in recent years. Many of their actions have been ineffective and, consequently, the school's performance has declined since its previous inspection. This lack of urgency is evident among governors, senior leaders and middle leaders.
- Many of the areas for improvement identified during the previous inspection remain as weaknesses. Leaders have not addressed them successfully. In particular, leaders do not effectively evaluate the impact that actions are having on intended improvements. For example, leaders use several strategies intended to raise standards of achievement for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have not evaluated which strategies are working and which are not. Consequently, these pupils continue to make weak progress, with little sign of improvement.
- Leaders' efforts to improve teaching have been hampered by difficulties in recruiting teachers in some subjects, including English and science. They have sought to recruit staff by building relationships with universities and there are some signs of success, for example in the science department, which is now fully staffed. Despite leaders' efforts to improve teaching, the weaknesses in teaching identified during this inspection are very similar to those identified during the previous inspection, over two years ago. However, some improvement is now evident, particularly in mathematics and, to a lesser extent, in history, geography and science.
- Leaders' use of assessment information is improving. Teachers make regular assessments of pupils' attainment and leaders use this information to identify pupils who they believe are beginning to fall behind with their work. These pupils are then provided with additional support. However, this approach has yet to show any great impact on pupils' progress. This is partly because some teachers' assessments are overgenerous, so data does not correctly identify pupils who need extra help. Additionally, leaders do not use assessment information well to spot patterns or trends for groups of pupils. Improvement actions are therefore not well targeted at addressing such issues, for example the underachievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders do not make effective use of the pupil premium. They do not evaluate or amend improvement strategies that are not working. Improving the progress of disadvantaged pupils does not have a sufficiently high profile across the school and teachers rarely make these pupils a priority when planning lessons. A recent change in leadership of this area has begun to yield evidence of some improvement. For example, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has improved over the last year.
- Some middle leaders lack the expertise to lead the improvement of teaching within their subjects. This issue was identified during the previous inspection and it has not been successfully addressed.
- Provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has improved since the previous inspection. Leaders now provide teachers with appropriate information about these pupils' needs. However, some teachers do not use this information when planning lessons. Consequently, teaching does not always support these pupils well and they

make less progress than they should. The school's small number of teaching assistants provide effective support in lessons.

- Leaders made significant changes to the school's curriculum a little over two years ago. Previously, pupils could choose from several options in key stage 4, including several practical and/or vocational subjects. These have now largely been replaced with academic GCSE subjects, and pupils have a more limited choice. The change was made with a view to maximising the school's 'progress 8' accountability measure. The consequences of this change include a considerable decline in the number of pupils taking creative subjects, leading to concerns about the future viability of these subjects in the sixth form. Additionally, some pupils say that their options are restricted by this narrower curriculum compared with the choices experienced by previous year groups. Some pupils study subjects in which they do not have an interest or enjoy and achieve less well as a result. The curriculum at key stage 4 does not provide well for some pupils. Leaders have recognised this fact and they are planning to make further changes.
- Over recent years, leaders have sought support from a number of external consultants. This has not been effective. More recently, leaders have sought support from local schools. They have very recently entered into an agreement to receive support from Lightwoods Teaching School Alliance. It is too early to judge the impact of this support.
- Pastoral systems in school are well led. Leaders have reviewed the school's procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour and this has seen their use of fixed-term exclusions fall considerably. Similarly, their review of attendance systems has seen pupils' attendance rise to above the national average for secondary schools.
- The school promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Consequently, pupils are respectful and tolerant. They understand their responsibilities as citizens in modern Britain.
- The school has a strong, caring ethos, which is evident with all staff. The headteacher demonstrates honesty, integrity and openness. Consequently, these attributes are present in senior leaders, middle leaders and other staff. The school is a diverse but cohesive community built on a clear, shared ethos. Staff told inspectors that they feel well supported in school and are happy to work there.
- Leaders should not appoint newly qualified teachers to the school.

Governance of the school

- Governors reflect on their own effectiveness. They audit their skills each year and are acutely aware of the lack of secondary educational expertise within the board. However, they have not successfully addressed this weakness. Consequently, governors are over-reliant on leaders to provide them with information on some aspects of the school, including its curriculum and published performance data. They are not able to hold leaders to account for these aspects of school life.
- At the time of inspection, governors held an overgenerous view of the school's effectiveness because they had not understood quite how weak outcomes were for some pupils and in some subjects.

- The governing board has some strengths. Governors are committed to the school and its ethos. They carry out their statutory duties and visit regularly to see, first hand, the school in operation. For example, governors regularly check that safeguarding arrangements are effective.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff understand their responsibility to keep pupils safe in school. Leaders ensure that staff are regularly and comprehensively trained in all aspects of safeguarding. Consequently, staff are vigilant in recognising the signs that pupils might need extra help or support. They readily pass on to leaders any concerns they have about pupils, confident in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and dealt with appropriately. Leaders work well with outside agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils receive the support they need.
- All safeguarding systems, policies and procedures are fit for purpose. Records relating to child protection are detailed, well organised and stored securely. Leaders ensure that staff are recruited safely. Governors keep a close eye on the school's safeguarding arrangements.
- The great majority of parents who responded to Parent View said that their children feel safe and well cared for in school. Almost all pupils who spoke with inspectors agreed, although small number of pupils in Year 7 said that they sometimes find the school's crowded corridors daunting.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies across the school. There is some effective teaching in all departments and some recent improvements in mathematics and science. However, there is still much that requires improvement.
- In several cases, teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils. They accept insufficient work or work of poor quality, rather than insisting on a better standard. Such low expectations mean that pupils sometimes complete tasks that are too easy for them and that simply occupy time rather than challenging them to learn.
- Teachers' planning has some shortcomings. Some staff fail to take account of pupils' abilities or needs when preparing lessons. Consequently, tasks are too easy or too hard. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities sometimes cannot attempt tasks because teachers have not considered their specific needs when planning activities.
- Similarly, some teachers do not check on pupils' understanding during lessons and so do not know when pupils need extra help or more challenging work. They do not use questions well to check on, or deepen, pupils' understanding of their work. They readily accept brief or cursory answers from pupils rather than expecting them to provide full and detailed responses.
- Since the previous inspection, the teaching of English has not improved. Pupils in all years make less progress than they should as a result. On the other hand, in science,

several new teachers have recently joined the department and there are early signs of improvement. Pupils told inspectors that science teaching has improved this year and inspection evidence confirmed this to be case.

- The teaching of mathematics is also improving, and pupils are making better progress as a result. Expectations are generally higher than in other subjects and practice is consistent across the department. Pupils know that they are expected to work hard in their mathematics lessons. Teaching in the humanities subjects of history and geography is also beginning to improve.
- In all subjects, there is some effective, and sometimes strong, teaching. This is characterised by high expectations, good levels of challenge, secure planning and effective use of questions. Relationships are positive across the school, even where teaching is less than good.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered. Most are articulate and confident. They show positive attitudes to learning and are eager to do well in school.
- Pupils are respectful to adults and to each other. They value each other's differences. Pupils told inspectors that bullying is rare in school and that the use of racist or homophobic language is very rare indeed.
- Staff provide high-quality care for pupils, especially those who are vulnerable or who need extra support. Pupils value this support and most told inspectors that they have confidence in staff to deal with any problems they might face in school.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe from a wide range of potential dangers, because they have been well taught about these threats. They know how to protect themselves when using the internet and social media. They understand the risks that might arise from people with extreme views.
- Leaders provide appropriate careers advice and guidance throughout the school. Consequently, pupils are able to make informed choices about their future studies and/or careers. Almost all pupils who left key stage 4 or the sixth form in 2018 moved to appropriate education, employment or training.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils generally behave well in lessons. They listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. They usually work hard and are keen to do well. Pupils told inspectors that disruption of lessons is rare.
- The school is calm and orderly at breaktime and lunchtime. Pupils move quickly and sensibly around the school between lessons, even through the school's narrow and

sometimes crowded corridors. They are punctual and usually well prepared to learn when they enter a classroom.

- Attendance, which has been close to the national average for secondary schools in recent years, improved considerably last year. Very few pupils fail to attend school regularly.
- Leaders' use of fixed-term exclusion, which had been high, has fallen considerably over the last 12 months. Leaders now increasingly use alternative sanctions, such as internal isolation. Exclusion is used appropriately, as a sanction of last resort. School records show that the number of pupils who are repeatedly excluded or isolated is falling.
- Behaviour in the sixth form is exemplary. Students' attendance is excellent, and they provide strong role models for younger pupils.
- In a small minority of lessons where teaching is weak, pupils do not behave well. Their attention drifts, they are inattentive, and they chat rather than getting on with their work. However, when this is the case, pupils rarely disrupt the learning of others and serious disruption is very rare indeed.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Since the previous inspection, outcomes at the end of key stage 4 have declined. Pupils made very weak progress, and therefore underachieved, in most subjects in both 2016 and 2017. Outcomes in the sixth form in some A-level subjects were weak in 2017. They have been stronger in vocational subjects, although unvalidated results for this year suggest a decline.
- Pupils underachieve in English. Published data shows that their progress has been very poor in recent years. Unvalidated GCSE results for 2018 suggest that attainment has declined further. Pupils currently in the school have considerable gaps in their knowledge. The attainment of most pupils currently in key stage 4 is behind where it ought to be and there is little evidence that teaching is helping them to catch up.
- Pupils have underachieved considerably in science in recent years. Weaknesses in teaching and a lack of stable staffing have contributed to this. Unvalidated GCSE results for 2018 suggest that recent improvements to teaching have led to some improvement, although not sufficient to represent acceptable progress. An improving picture for current pupils was confirmed by inspection evidence.
- Unvalidated GCSE results for 2018 suggest that there has been slight improvement in attainment in some subjects, including mathematics, science, computing, geography, history and religious education.
- Disadvantaged pupils make weak progress across most subjects. Leaders have employed a range of strategies, funded by the pupil premium, designed to raise standards. However, these have been largely ineffective. Some improvement is evident where teaching is more effective, for example in mathematics.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make slower progress than other pupils in school and nationally. Although there is some strong practice, teachers do not consistently take these pupils' needs into account when planning lessons.

- Pupils make good progress in languages. Their progress in mathematics is improving strongly, although it is not yet good. In both areas, pupils benefit from mostly effective teaching.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Outcomes in A-level subjects were strong in 2016 but fell in 2017. Students' progress was weak in English literature, biology and chemistry. Students' outcomes were better in other subjects. Unvalidated results for A levels in 2018 suggest a similar pattern to the previous year, with disappointing outcomes again in English literature, biology and chemistry. Outcomes in vocational subjects were consistently strong up to 2017. However, unvalidated results suggest that outcomes fell in 2018.
- Leaders' efforts to reverse the decline in academic outcomes have so far proved unsuccessful. Leaders do not make effective checks on students' progress during Year 12. Instead they rely on AS-level results at the end of Year 12 to identify students who are falling behind. This is too late for some students and they do not make up the lost ground during Year 13.
- Teaching in the sixth form is of a consistently higher standard than in key stages 3 and 4. Students benefit from teachers with strong subject knowledge. They are often taught in small classes and receive plenty of support. Students' relationships with their teachers are positive. However, teachers do not intervene quickly enough when students fall behind with their work.
- Students' behaviour is impeccable. Their attendance is excellent. They are punctual and set a fine example for younger pupils.
- All students who enter the sixth form without having secured GCSEs at grade 4 or C in English and mathematics study these subjects to improve their grade. They are taught well, and most are successful.
- Careers guidance is a strong feature of the sixth form. Pupils in Year 11 are guided onto appropriate courses and students in Years 12 and 13 are supported to make decisions about future study, training or employment. Consequently, almost all students who join the sixth form complete their courses. Almost all students who completed Year 13 in 2018 moved on to higher education or training. A small number returned to complete an additional year in school to improve their A-level grades.
- All requirements of the 16 to 19 student programmes are met. The sixth form provides a wide range of non-qualification activities, which students embrace enthusiastically. Several help younger pupils in lessons. Others coach younger pupils in sporting or performing arts activities. Students take part in residential visits to universities and placements with the National Citizen Service. All students complete work experience placements and these are well matched to students' interests and career aspirations. They contribute well to their decisions about future study and employment.
- Safeguarding is effective in the sixth form. As in key stages 3 and 4, students learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 104020 |
| Local authority | Sandwell |
| Inspection number | 10055202 |

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

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| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 894 |
| Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes | 175 |
| 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 | 20–21 April 2016 and 18 May 2016 |

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Just over a half of the pupils are of minority ethnic heritage, which is well above average.
- Approximately a fifth of pupils speak English as an additional language, which is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is average.
- The school has a higher than average proportion of disadvantaged pupils.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress by the end of Year 11.
- A very small number of pupils attend alternative provision at Whiteheath Education Centre and Blackwater Academy. No reference is made to them in this report because to do so would risk identifying them.
- The school has very recently entered into an arrangement to receive support from Lightwoods Teaching School Alliance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons, and some of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors met with five groups of pupils and talked to many others about their learning and their attitudes to, and opinions about, school. They observed pupils at breaktime and lunchtime and as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors visited an assembly and several morning registration periods.
- A wide range of documents were scrutinised, including information relating to governance, attendance, behaviour, safeguarding, pupils' progress and the checks made on the quality of teaching.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers and four governors including the chair and the vice-chair of the governing board.
- Inspectors met with a representative of the local authority. The lead inspector held a telephone call with a representative of the diocese.
- Inspectors took account of parents' views by considering the 30 responses to Parent View, including 19 'free-text' comments.
- No members of staff or pupils completed their respective Ofsted inspection questionnaires.

Inspection team

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|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Alun Williams, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Deborah Smith | Ofsted Inspector |
| David Hermitt | Ofsted Inspector |
| David Hughes | Ofsted Inspector |
| Bernice Astling | Ofsted 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.

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