

Stretford Grammar School

Granby Road, Stretford, Manchester, Greater Manchester, M32 8JB

Inspection dates 22–23 April 2015

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Sixth form provision | | Requires improvement | 3 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students achieve well. They make good progress and their attainment at the age of 16 is well above average in all subjects.
- All groups of students in Key Stages 3 and 4 make good progress. Disadvantaged students reach the same well above average standards as other students in the school and much higher than other students nationally.
- Students show exceptional attitudes towards their learning and are highly motivated.
- Students learn well because in most classes knowledgeable, skilled and sometimes inspirational teaching secures their interest and makes sure they make fast gains in their knowledge and understanding.
- Students' behaviour is exemplary. They are mature and sensible in lessons and at social times. They have excellent relationships with each other. They feel extremely safe and secure within the school. Their attendance is high.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Many opportunities are provided for students to consider a wide range of ethical and topical issues. As a result, they develop well-considered, reasoned views which they express articulately and sensitively.
- The headteacher provides caring, committed and clear leadership based on striving for the very best for all students. He is supported well by the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. The systems they have introduced have ensured that middle leaders have become increasingly effective.
- The actions taken have continued to improve the school. Teaching is stronger than it was and achievement has risen for students in Key Stages 3 and 4.
- The governing body is extremely supportive of the school, holds leaders to account and is actively involved in steps to improve it further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is still some inconsistency in the effectiveness of teaching across the school and this means that there are variations in the quality of students' learning. In some lessons, activities do not fully engage students in their learning or challenge them enough and this slows the progress that they make. Students are not always given sufficient, specific guidance on how to improve their work.
- The intensive and successful focus on improving the provision and outcomes for students in Key Stages 3 and 4 has not been applied to the sixth form to the same degree. As a result, the sixth form requires improvement as post-16 students do not make consistently good progress across all subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 33 parts of lessons during the inspection and they made seventeen further visits to classrooms to look at students' work.
- Inspectors had meetings with school leaders and had discussions with other staff. They also had meetings with several governors and with two representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors had meetings with three groups of students and spoke to other students in lessons and around the school at break and during lunchtimes.
- Inspectors took account of the views of the 78 parents who had completed the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), the additional information from the parents who made their views known to the team and information collected by the school about parents' views. Forty-five questionnaires returned by staff were also considered.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including information relating to students' achievement and attendance, safeguarding, the monitoring of teaching, performance management and governance.

Inspection team

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Joan McKenna, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Derek Barnes | Additional Inspector |
| Kevin Harrison | Additional Inspector |
| Michael Loveland | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- Stretford Grammar School is a selective school with Foundation status for students aged between 11 and 18 years. It is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic heritages and who speak English as an additional language is much higher than average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students is below average. These students receive support through the pupil premium funding which supports those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of a local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress at the end of Year 11.
- Currently, the school does not use any alternative provision for its students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to the standard of the best, including in the sixth form, so that all students learn equally well in all classes by:
 - ensuring that all teachers make the most effective use of information and data about students' prior learning to plan tasks and activities to provide sufficient challenge for all and to meet their different needs
 - ensuring that students' enjoyment of learning is fostered more consistently
 - providing regular, specific feedback on how students can improve their work and ensuring that they act upon comments made.
- Improve the effectiveness of the sixth form by:
 - ensuring that leaders have a clear, comprehensive and accurate view of the current effectiveness of the sixth form and, based on this, that they identify and implement a coherent strategy for tackling its weaker aspects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is deeply committed to ensuring that students achieve of their very best, both academically and personally. He has ensured that this is central to the school's ethos.
- Well supported by the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders, he has put in place well-organised and systematic procedures and processes which have promoted greater consistency of practice and have secured improvements to the school, especially in Key Stages 3 and 4.
- Middle leaders have increased their involvement in key activities, such as checking on the effectiveness of their areas for responsibility and analysing students' progress in their subjects. They are contributing to improving the school through the actions they are taking with good, albeit varying, degrees of impact.
- There is a wealth of information resulting from the monitoring of the school and the tracking of students' progress. This is used well to draw up plans to promote further improvement, although it is not always summarised in a way that enables key messages to be identified easily. Nevertheless, overall, the school's strengths and weaknesses are well known. Many effective actions are being taken to tackle the latter. The sixth form has not improved as much as the rest of the school.
- Expectations of leaders and teachers have been clarified and heightened, and accountability has been strengthened. Their performance is monitored and they are set appropriately challenging targets to meet. A wide range of professional development opportunities and support is provided for staff. As a result, teaching and the impact it is having are improving, although variations remain.
- The school provides an academic curriculum which meets the needs of the students within the school. Good quality options and careers advice is available for students.
- An extensive range of opportunities is provided for students to develop their understanding and skills beyond their academic learning, and participation in these is very high. Sensitive, important and topical issues, such as racism and homophobia and the dangers of extremism and radicalisation, are tackled head on. Understanding democracy is promoted well and students show a high level of interest in the forthcoming general election, helped by Year 10 students running a parallel 'mock-election' within school.
- A majority of students are involved in charity work and volunteer both within and beyond the school. Students are given a wide range of cultural experiences. Students' involvement in these and other activities make a strong contribution to them being caring, sensitive and confident young people.
- Through both the academic and pastoral provision, the school promotes equality of opportunity, fosters excellent relationships and tackles discrimination very actively and successfully. The effectiveness of the spending of pupil premium funding is shown in the fact that disadvantaged students perform as well as their peers.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Procedures are rigorous, with regular training for staff and others, such as on safer recruitment for governors.
- The school is open to and values external input. The local authority regards this as an effective school and so has very light touch involvement with it. The school has engaged a consultant to act as a school improvement partner to provide external evaluations of its effectiveness.
- Parents' views are also sought and welcomed. Virtually all of the parents who made their views known to inspectors were fully supportive of the school. This is mirrored in the school's own surveys of parents' views.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. Members of the governing body are very committed to the students and to the school. They understand their responsibilities in ensuring that the school is as effective as it can be. Governors are knowledgeable about the school. They receive clear information about it, including about the quality of teaching, the performance of staff, how students are achieving (including those eligible for pupil premium funding), and about finance. They examine it in detail and they question and challenge leaders appropriately. In a few cases, their probing has not been as deep as it is in most areas, such as in relation to sixth form outcomes.
 - The governing body is very involved in supporting and improving the school. For example, a governor is the chair of the parent-teacher association, which spearheaded fundraising to refurbish the school library, raising a very large sum of money to do so.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. They identify strongly with the school, are proud to be its students and are excellent ambassadors for it.
- As students are so keen to learn, almost full attention is paid in most lessons. Virtually all students relish, appreciate and take full advantage of the opportunities presented to them. They show excellent attitudes towards all aspects of their schooling.
- Relationships between students and with staff are strong and respectful. Students of all backgrounds and heritages get on well together and there is a very harmonious atmosphere. This is typified in Year 7 students saying that they were made to feel very comfortable joining the school and students joining the sixth form from other schools saying that they were made to feel very welcome.
- Students of all ages act as excellent role models for others, both through their conduct and the contribution they make to school and the support they provide for others. Among many other examples, students from each year group go into the tutor periods of the year below to help the younger students. Peer mentors actively support others. Sixth formers volunteer in primary schools. Others do so in the local community and some undertake charity work abroad. The school council takes its responsibilities seriously.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Students are taught about a range of dangers and have a very good awareness of how to keep themselves safe.
- Students have an excellent knowledge of bullying and how to avoid and deal with it. Students and parents report that there is very little bullying within the school and any that does occur is well dealt with.
- The care provided for students, and especially those who are vulnerable in any way, is very strong. The school provided inspectors with detailed examples of the actions taken to support specific students. The positive impact of this work was confirmed by some of the students concerned. Virtually all parents who made their views known to inspectors confirm that the school looks after students well and that their children feel safe in school.
- The attendance of all groups of students is consistently high and there are rigorous procedures for following up on absence.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have high expectations of students and want them to do well. The very large majority also want students to enjoy their learning and they use their strong subject knowledge to promote high levels of enthusiasm. Students respond in kind and their commitment to their own learning is very apparent in almost all lessons.
- Teachers know what students need to learn and most explain this very clearly. They usually plan appropriate work that stretches and challenges them. Most teachers check carefully on students' understanding as lessons proceed. They question students skilfully to consolidate and develop their understanding, clarifying points and making adjustments where necessary to help all students keep up.
- Good attention is paid to developing students' skills progressively and quickly. For example, early in Key Stage 3 students are taught how to analyse literary texts in English. These skills become more highly developed during Key Stages 4 and 5 as they apply them to increasingly sophisticated texts.
- Students' literacy, reading and mathematical skills are developed well. They have extensive opportunities to read a wide range of materials and to write at length for different purposes and audiences across different subjects. Students' oracy skills are also promoted well as they are encouraged to explain their thinking clearly and confidently.
- Just occasionally, students' learning is less positive than it is in the majority of lessons. Sometimes the pace of students' learning slows. This is because activities do not fully engage students' interest and commitment, or because they are not gaining a deep enough understanding of the concepts being studied, as seen in some mathematics lessons. Teachers do not always use the information available to them about students' prior attainment and learning to ensure that all are fully challenged or that their different needs are met. As a result, there is some variability in students' outcomes, especially in the sixth form.
- There is a structured programme for setting homework. The many purposeful activities set, which include

extended writing, problem-solving and research tasks, complement the work undertaken within school.

- There is some exemplary marking of students' work, such as in English, where students are given regular, specific and detailed information on what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work. This is acted upon by students and results in demonstrable gains in understanding and skills. However, not all marking is of this quality.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students progress well from their well above average starting points and results in GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11 are also well above average across all subjects. Overall results rose in 2014 in comparison with the previous year, which was counter to the national trend. The proportion of students making more than expected progress in English and mathematics was much higher than the proportion that did so nationally.
- All groups of students achieve well, including both girls and boys, those from all minority ethnic groups, those who are disabled or have special educational needs, and those who are disadvantaged.
- Disadvantaged students make good progress. They attain as well as other students in the school and much better than other students nationally. They attain about one and a quarter grades higher than other students nationally in English and about one and three-quarters of a grade higher in mathematics.
- The school makes good provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs and, as a result, almost all make good progress and attain well above average results.
- The school has a high proportion of more-able students and they make good progress, as seen in the well above average results overall and in particular in the proportion of GCSE grades attained at A or A*. These students are challenged very well in most lessons and are pushed to develop the higher order thinking and reasoning skills of which they are capable. In a few cases, although students attain very good examination results, these advanced skills are not fully promoted.
- Early entry for examinations is used rarely and only in exceptional cases when individuals' abilities merit it. This does not limit students' attainment; rather it enables it to be demonstrated.

The sixth form provision

requires improvement

- Students make expected progress in most subjects in the sixth form and better than that expected in a just a small number. Attainment across subjects is mixed, but is broadly in line with national figures overall. Achievement in the sixth form, therefore, requires improvement. Attainment and progress in the compulsory general studies course is less good than in most other courses, and so it is to be made optional as part of a wider enrichment programme.
- The reason for the sixth form being less effective than the rest of the school is that the concerted, strategic and successful approach adopted to improve Key Stages 3 and 4 has not been applied to the same degree in the sixth form.
- Much teaching of sixth form students has the same positive features as it has for younger students. Some is inspirational and results in high quality learning. However, this is not consistently the case so the overall impact of teaching in the sixth form requires improvement.
- The monitoring of students' progress takes place through subject departments and through a focus by sixth form leaders on individual students and some specific groups. There are shortcomings in the overall strategic oversight of the sixth form and in the evaluation of its effectiveness. Consequently, leadership and management of the sixth form require improvement.
- There are strengths to the sixth form. Students' attitudes and behaviour are as outstanding as they are elsewhere in the school. They are very proud to be students at Stretford and are extremely committed to it and to their own learning. They are excellent role models for younger students and are first-rate ambassadors for the school more widely through their involvement in the local community and beyond.
- Relationships between students are extremely positive, with all groups mixing well together and those joining Year 12 from other schools being integrated very well.
- Pastoral oversight is good. Students are well known as individuals and they receive helpful advice, support and guidance on a wide range of academic and personal issues. This includes extra tutoring and support to help prepare students for entry to prestigious universities.
- The sixth form provides an academic curriculum which is suited to students' needs. There is a very rich range of extra-curricular activities.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | Grade | Judgement | Description |
|--------|---------|----------------------|--|
| | Grade 1 | Outstanding | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| | Grade 2 | Good | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| | Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection. |
| | Grade 4 | Inadequate | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

School details

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| Unique reference number | 106368 |
| Local authority | Trafford |
| Inspection number | 461783 |

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 | Foundation |
| Age range of pupils | 11–18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 814 |
| Of which, number on roll in sixth form | 160 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Harry Almond |
| Headteacher | Michael Mullins |
| Date of previous school inspection | 22 March 2012 |
| Telephone number | 0161 865 2293 |
| Fax number | 0161 866 9938 |
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