

# Stephenson Studio School

Thornborough Road, Coalville, Leicestershire LE67 3TN

## Inspection dates

26–27 June 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	Inadequate

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good across the whole school.
- Average-ability pupils do not make as much progress as they should across a range of subjects. Not all teachers set these pupils work that is suitably challenging.
- Although improving, attainment in science remains too low.
- Not all pupils develop their communication skills, including reading and writing, rapidly enough.
- Senior leaders' regular checks on pupils' progress are not precise enough to identify in a timely manner those pupils who are not making as much progress as they should.
- Pupils do not consistently receive detailed feedback that enables them to improve on their learning.
- The proportion of pupils who are absent is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils excluded from school is above the national average.

### The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders know what they must do to improve the provision further. They are ambitious for their pupils.
- Achievement in Year 10 is improving. These pupils have benefited from better-quality teaching and support while at the school.
- Pupils achieve well in work-related subjects that match their abilities and interests well.
- Pupils' personal development is good due to the effective guidance and support that they receive from staff.
- The curriculum, enhanced by extra-curricular activities and weekly work experience, helps pupils to prepare well for their next steps.
- School leaders carefully review the effectiveness with which they use additional government funding to support eligible pupils.
- The 'Step Into' provision for students who continue at the school after Year 11 prepares them well for their next steps in further education and training.
- Safeguarding leaders work closely with parents and local agencies to ensure that pupils are safe and know how to keep themselves safe.
- Members of the governing body provide robust challenge and support.
- Through their engagement with external support, senior leaders have been able to develop their leadership skills well.

## Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

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

- Improve the impact of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - senior leaders' checks on pupils' progress across all subjects provide precise information to identify when pupils are not making as much progress as they should, so that these pupils receive timely and appropriate support
  - senior leaders' checks on the quality of teaching bring about the necessary improvements to ensure that all teaching is consistently good
  - strategies to improve pupils' communication skills enable them to become secure in reading and writing so that they can access increasingly challenging work and demonstrate their understanding in full.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils' achievement, particularly for those of average ability, continues to improve, including, but not exclusively, in science, by ensuring that all teachers:
  - plan activities that enable pupils to make good progress
  - carefully check that pupils are secure in their understanding before moving learning on
  - provide pupils with precise feedback, and the time to act on this feedback, so that they can improve on their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by ensuring that the proportions of pupils who are absent and those who are excluded from school continue to fall and are at least in line with the respective national average.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The improvements that senior leaders have brought about to the quality of teaching have yet to ensure that teaching is consistently good across the school. Because of this, while achievement is improving, not all pupils achieve as highly as they should. This applies particularly in science and to pupils of average ability.
- Senior leaders' regular checks on pupils' progress lack the necessary precision to identify in a timely manner the pupils who are not making rapid enough progress. As a result, not all pupils receive the support that they need to make at least the progress that they should across all subjects.
- The strategies that senior leaders have used to improve pupils' communication skills have not yet ensured that all pupils are able to read and write confidently. Pupils who are not secure in their communication skills do not achieve as highly as they should.
- Through introducing the 'Stephenson Way', senior leaders have raised their expectations about the quality of teaching that they expect from teachers. Frequent visits to lessons and checks on pupils' work enable senior leaders to identify when classroom practice is not appropriately challenging and provide appropriate support. Leaders rightly recognise that there is still more to do to ensure that all teaching is consistently good.
- Regular training on all aspects of teaching and assessment is enabling teachers to develop further their classroom practice. This training includes that which an external school provides, as well as opportunities for staff to meet with each other. This is helping to resolve the inconsistencies that exist in the quality of teaching.
- Senior leaders now work more closely with the schools at which pupils previously studied. This is enabling staff to identify at an early stage any additional needs that pupils may have and to provide timely support. Because of this, pupils' achievement across a range of subjects is now improving, particularly in Year 10.
- Senior leaders regularly review the effectiveness of their use of additional government funding to support disadvantaged pupils. Leaders know the individual circumstances that may prevent pupils from attending regularly and making rapid progress. They ensure that these pupils receive appropriate support through the pupil premium. The difference between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally is now beginning to diminish.
- The senior leader who oversees the progress and welfare of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities undertakes regular checks on the effectiveness of the support that they receive. The achievement of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is now improving because of the well-targeted support that they receive, including one-to-one support.
- Senior leaders have rightly revised the curriculum to ensure that it better matches pupils' abilities and prepares them for their next steps. The curriculum provides pupils with appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in

English, mathematics, science and business studies. Pupils are also able to study work-related subjects that enable them to deepen their understanding of the world of work.

- By making the curriculum more relevant to pupils' abilities, interests and aspirations, senior leaders have been able to bring about an improvement in pupils' engagement with their learning and their achievement, particularly in Year 10.
- Extra-curricular activities, including a range of educational visits, enrich the curriculum. Workshops and presentations from visiting speakers, and visits to the local community and businesses, provide pupils with opportunities to develop their understanding beyond the classroom.
- In keeping with the school's aim to develop pupils' employability skills, senior leaders have ensured that pupils receive regular opportunities to attend work experience placements. Senior leaders ensure that pupils receive effective support to prepare them for their placements so that they are able to gain the most from their experience. This includes applying in the workplace what they have learned in the classroom.
- Senior leaders have rightly reviewed the provision that they offer those students who remain at the school at the end of Year 11. The 'Step Into' programme enables students to develop their employability skills and to complete qualifications in English and mathematics that are at the appropriate level. The programme provides students with effective opportunities to prepare for their next steps in further education, employment with training, or an apprenticeship.
- The leader of mathematics has ensured that pupils receive regular opportunities to develop their numeracy skills across the curriculum. This is ensuring that pupils are becoming more confident in their use of numeracy in different subjects.
- Pupils receive appropriate opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Through their personal, social, health and economic education, their citizenship studies and assemblies, pupils learn about different beliefs and attitudes. For example, pupils learn about the dangers of different forms of extremism and radicalisation.
- Senior leaders have engaged well with external support to develop their own leadership skills. In so doing, they have ensured that they have the capacity as a leadership team to bring about further improvement.

### **Governance of the school**

- Members of the governing body understand their duties and responsibilities in relation to governance.
- Governors provide robust challenge to the senior leaders to hold them to account. They ask searching questions to ensure that senior leaders' actions to improve the provision are appropriate and have the necessary impact.
- To ensure the accuracy of the information that senior leaders provide them with, governors undertake their own visits to the school. They speak with staff, observe staff training and meet with pupils. Governors have a precise understanding of the quality of the school's provision and know how the provision must improve further.

- Governors have ensured that senior leaders have received appropriate external support to enable them to bring about the necessary improvements. Governors have rightly focused on ensuring that senior leaders develop their own leadership skills so that they can implement further improvements by themselves.
- Governors have a precise understanding of the effectiveness with which senior leaders use additional government funding to support the welfare and progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Governors know that the progress that these pupils make is now beginning to improve because of the support that they receive.
- Governors understand their duty to keep pupils safe. The governor responsible for safeguarding undertakes rigorous checks to ensure that the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe are effective.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding leaders take quick and effective action when they have a concern about the welfare of a pupil. In so doing, they work closely with parents and with local agencies. They are tenacious in ensuring that pupils receive the right level of support.
- Safeguarding leaders are aware of local issues that may affect their pupils' welfare. Staff receive training to identify whether these issues are affecting their pupils. Leaders also ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe in the local community.
- Staff receive regular training on how to keep pupils safe. They have received training on the different types of abuse and the signs to look for, as well as 'Prevent' training. Staff receive regular updates on the welfare of individual pupils and attend weekly meetings at which they discuss pupils' welfare. All staff know to share any concerns that they may have about a pupil's welfare immediately with the safeguarding leaders.
- Safeguarding leaders maintain detailed records of the actions that they take to support pupils about whose welfare they are concerned.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at the school, and that they have someone to whom they can talk if they have a concern. Pupils are confident that staff will take effective action to support them to help resolve their concern.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

## **Requires improvement**

- Teaching is not consistently good across the whole school. Where teaching is not good, pupils do not make as much progress as they should.
- Not all teachers check well enough that pupils fully understand what they have learned before moving learning on. This can lead to pupils not being secure in their learning.
- Pupils do not consistently receive advice and guidance that is precise enough to help them to improve their work.

- When teachers do provide precise feedback, they do not always provide pupils with the opportunity to act on this advice. On such occasions, pupils are unable to take the necessary action to improve their understanding.
- Not all teachers provide work that is appropriately challenging to enable pupils, particularly those of average ability, to make at least the progress that they should.
- Adults work well with teachers to provide support to pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. This support helps these pupils to become secure in their learning.
- Positive relationships between teachers and pupils ensure that most pupils engage well with their work and develop confidence in their approach to their learning. Pupils appreciate the positive relationships that they have with their teachers.
- Where learning is most effective, teachers have high expectations of their pupils. They set tasks that match pupils' abilities and provide encouragement to ensure that pupils engage well with the learning. In a mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher asked pupils to consider different words that they associated with the concept of probability. Pupils engaged well with the ensuing discussion that this task generated.
- Teachers carefully ask questions to check that all pupils understand what they are learning. Where they identify gaps in pupils' knowledge, they provide appropriate support. In a business studies lesson, for example, the teacher identified through careful questioning that not all pupils fully understood the difference between fixed and variable costs. In response, before moving the learning on, the teacher provided the necessary clarification so that all pupils understood the difference.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff provide well-targeted support to ensure that pupils are safe, know how to be safe and make good progress in their personal development. Pupils value this support. As one pupil said, 'The school actually believes in us.'
- Because of this well-targeted support, pupils grow in confidence and resilience. Most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning and are keen to do well.
- Pupils develop their social and employability skills well through the completion of work experience placements. Weekly assemblies on the world of work reinforce pupils' understanding of the skills and attributes of an effective employee.
- All pupils receive impartial careers advice and guidance. This includes detailed plans of action that provide comprehensive support to those pupils who require it. The advice and guidance that pupils receive enable them to prepare well for their next steps.
- Pupils learn how to be safe, including when online. Pupils receive regular presentations from other agencies, including the police, about risks that they may face, including knife crime, sexting, drugs and gang culture.
- Pupils know how to live healthy lives. They learn about making healthy choices, and about how to take care of their own mental health.

- Pupils learn about different types of bullying, including verbal, physical and online bullying. Pupils say that on the rare occasions that bullying occurs teachers take effective action. The school's records demonstrate that leaders are robust in their response to bullying and any discriminatory behaviour.
- Senior leaders work closely with organisations that provide pupils with education off site and with work experience placements. Senior leaders maintain regular contact to check on pupils' attendance, behaviour and welfare. Senior leaders also check on the progress that the pupils are making in these placements.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Many pupils join the school with a history of poor attendance at their previous school. Leaders have taken appropriate action to engage with pupils who struggle to attend school. As a result, the proportion of pupils who are absent from school is beginning to reduce. However, attendance remains below the national average.
- Exclusion levels, which previously have been high, are beginning to reduce. This is because pupils who struggle to manage their own behaviour now receive effective support. However, the proportion of pupils who receive an exclusion from school is above the national average.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school site, including during social times.
- In lessons, pupils maintain an appropriate focus on their work, even when the work that teachers have set them is not suitably challenging.
- Senior leaders have taken effective action to resolve concerns over pupils' punctuality to schools. The proportion of pupils who arrive at school late has significantly reduced.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- In 2017, attainment in science was well below the national average. Pupils attained on average more than one grade below pupils nationally. Although attainment is now increasing, it remains too low.
- Pupils of average ability, including disadvantaged pupils, do not achieve as highly as they should. They do not consistently receive appropriately challenging work.
- Achievement in Year 10 is now improving, including in English, mathematics and business studies. This is because these pupils have received support that has been both sharper and timelier than that which pupils received previously.
- In 2017, pupils in Year 11 made significantly less progress than that seen nationally in English. Current performance information and work in pupils' books indicate that the rate of progress is increasing in this subject and is now faster than that seen previously.
- Pupils in 2017 made average progress in mathematics. This was due to the well-targeted support that pupils received to become secure in their numeracy skills. Achievement continues to improve in this subject, particularly for pupils in Year 10.

- The difference between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally is beginning to diminish. This is due to the well-targeted support that disadvantaged pupils receive, particularly through the pupil premium.
- The achievement of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is now improving because of the effective support that they receive from those adults who work with them.
- Pupils achieve well in the work-related subjects, including construction and hair and beauty. These courses match pupils' aspirations and interests well.
- Pupils who are currently completing the 'Step Into' programme are making rapid progress in their English and mathematics qualifications.
- Almost all pupils who left the school in 2017 moved on to sustained places of further education or employment with training. This marked a significant improvement on the destinations of Year 11 pupils who left the school in 2016.



## School details

Unique reference number	137317
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10045211

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy studio school
Age range of pupils	14 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	93
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Leigh
Headteacher	Keith Hobbs
Telephone number	01530 519 099
Website	<a href="http://www.stephensonstudioschool.co.uk">www.stephensonstudioschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	info@stephensonstudioschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–23 September 2015

## Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The school is sponsored by Stephenson College.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. There are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, including those who have an education, health and care plan, is well above national average.
- The school uses one alternative provider: Teaching Educationally Creative Kids, based in Coalville.
- The school works with a range of employers who provide work experience placements that pupils attend weekly.

- The headteacher took up his post in September 2016. Two further senior leaders joined the school at the same time.
- Five of the seven teachers joined the school in September 2017.
- Between 2016 and 2017, the school discontinued its 16 to 19 provision for students who had completed their Year 11 in 2016. In September 2017, the very few students who continued their studies at the school beyond Year 11 commenced a new, one-year 'Step Into' programme. This provision, which meets the requirements of 16 to 19 study programmes, enables students to complete qualifications in English and mathematics where they have previously underachieved. Students also prepare for their next steps, either in further education, employment with training or in an apprenticeship. This programme has not yet completed its first full year.
- The school has received support from Babington Academy, which is part of the Learning Without Limits Academy Trust.
- In 2017, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards for pupils' achievement at the end of key stage 4.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in eleven lessons and one form period. The lead inspector visited five of these lessons jointly with the headteacher.
- During their visits to lessons, inspectors looked at pupils' books and spoke with pupils.
- Inspectors also looked at Year 10 pupils' books as a separate activity.
- Inspectors held meetings with school leaders, including: the headteacher; senior leaders; the special educational needs coordinator, who is also the leader with oversight of the pupil premium; six members of the governing body, including the chair of governors; the leader responsible for pupils' work experience placements; a selection of staff; and a selection of Year 10 pupils.
- The lead inspector spoke by telephone with the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust that provides the school with support.
- An inspector spoke with a representative of the alternative provision that the school uses. An inspector also spoke with three organisations that provide pupils with work experience placements.
- An inspector observed pupils' behaviour during breaktime and lunchtime, during which time she spoke with pupils.
- There were too few responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, for inspectors to take into account.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation relating to the school's provision, including: self-evaluation and improvement planning; the quality of teaching; achievement; behaviour and attendance; governance; external support for the school; and safeguarding.
- The lead inspector checked the school's single central register and the school's system for recruiting staff.

## Inspection team

Simon Hollingsworth, lead inspector

Nina Bee

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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