

Inspection of Stephenson Studio School

Thornborough Road, Coalville, Leicestershire LE67 3TN

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 May 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils start to attend this school in Year 10 and leave at the end of Year 11. A significant number of pupils join part-way through the two years. Teachers and staff get to know most pupils individually in this short time.

Many pupils have experienced difficulties at their previous schools. Leaders give pupils the care and support they require. This helps pupils to return to full-time education more successfully than in the past. Pupils enjoy coming to this school. Leaders and teachers work hard to prepare pupils for their next stages in education or employment. Pupils enjoy learning and achieve well in vocational qualifications. This is not the case in all areas of the curriculum.

Pupils said that they feel safe at this school, and many said that they can learn in most lessons. However, pupils also said that other pupils disrupt learning in some lessons, which means they do not learn as well. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of how pupils should behave.

Pupils say that bullying is rare and that teachers deal with it when it happens.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders ensure that all pupils receive a broad curriculum. All pupils study business studies and a technical subject, such as hair and beauty or construction. The curriculum is well structured in these subjects. However, in some subjects, such as science and mathematics, the curriculum is not as strong. Leaders have not identified the most important knowledge and vocabulary that they want pupils to know and remember. Not all teachers teach this important knowledge clearly and logically enough for pupils to remember it.

Leaders expect staff to use agreed teaching methods. They have trained staff in these approaches. For example, teachers know they must use 'modelling' to present information clearly to pupils. They also know they must use 'do now' activities to make sure that pupils are able to recall important knowledge. Some teachers do not use these strategies well. As a result, some pupils do not learn as well as they should.

Each pupil has an individual education plan (IEP). The IEP identifies a pupil's individual needs and sets out strategies that teachers should use to help pupils achieve. Teachers use IEPs to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to achieve as well as their peers.

Pupils read for 15 minutes every day in 'DEAR (drop everything and read) time'. This encourages pupils to develop a love for reading and helps them become better readers. Leaders recognise that some pupils who join the school have gaps in their reading knowledge. Leaders have not ensured there is an approach to fill these

gaps. Some pupils lack the confidence to engage well in 'DEAR time' and their reading ability does not improve.

Most pupils have good relationships with staff. Exclusions reduce over time. Although pupils and staff agree that pupils' behaviour tends to improve during their time at the school, there are still frequent incidents of low-level disruption in some lessons. Some teachers do not tackle this quickly and consistently.

Many pupils struggled to attend well in their previous schools. While attendance improves for some of these pupils, persistent absence is still too high for others. This has a negative impact on pupils' education.

All pupils can undertake an extended work placement. This helps pupils to develop employability skills. It helps to prepare pupils for their next steps in education or training. Pupils also benefit from age-appropriate relationships education. They understand well how to stay safe, including staying safe online. However, pupils said that there are limited opportunities for them to develop their talents and interests.

Trustees and leaders are committed to improving this school. They have pupils' best interests at the heart of the decisions they make. They are aware of areas which need to improve. They have the plans to address these areas. Staff report that leaders are considerate of their workload, and the majority enjoy working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are vigilant and report and record safeguarding concerns promptly. Leaders have trained staff well. Staff know how to recognise the signs that a pupil might be involved in county lines or if a pupil might be suffering from neglect.

Safeguarding leaders keep a close eye on pupils when concerns are raised. They work with external agencies to support pupils and families. At times, however, some of the safeguarding documentation is not as well organised as it should be.

Pupils know that there is an adult in school who will listen to their concerns and take action to safeguard them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not identified the important knowledge and vocabulary that pupils need to know in some subjects. Some teachers do not teach this explicitly. Some pupils do not learn important subject-specific vocabulary and knowledge. Leaders

must ensure that they identify the most important knowledge and vocabulary in all subjects and that teachers teach it explicitly.

- Leaders have developed a model of teaching which sets out how teachers should implement the curriculum. Teachers do not consistently use this. Some of the pedagogical approaches do not lead to pupils remembering and knowing more. Leaders should ensure that all teachers use effective teaching methods consistently, so pupils know and remember more over time.
- A significant number of pupils need to improve their reading ability. These pupils lack the confidence to read and find it difficult to achieve in some areas of the curriculum. Leaders should implement a reading strategy that enables those who are further behind in their reading ability to catch up with their peers.
- Leaders have a strategy to manage low-level disruption in lessons. Teachers do not consistently use this strategy. In some lessons, teachers do not challenge low-level disruption quickly enough and time for learning is lost. Leaders must ensure that all teachers follow the agreed steps to manage low-level disruption consistently.
- Too many pupils are persistently absent from school. This has a negative effect on their education. Leaders must ensure that attendance continues to improve and that they challenge those who are persistently absent more effectively.
- Leaders have not ensured that there is a wide range of activities for personal development. Pupils feel that the opportunities that are available do not stretch or develop their talents or cater for their interests. Leaders should ensure that there are a range of wider development opportunities available.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	137317
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10227298
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy studio school
Age range of pupils	14 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	78
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Robert Kelly
Headteacher	Keith Hobbs
Website	https://stephensonstudioschool.co.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Stephenson Studio School is part of the Stephenson Studio School Trust. This is a single academy trust.
- Stephenson Studio School is situated on the same college site as SMB Group's Stephenson Campus.
- The SMB Group sponsors Stephenson Studio School.
- The school uses two unregistered alternative providers to provide some education for a small number of pupils.
- A small number of pupils who are over the age of 16 receive their education in key stage 4 at Stephenson Studio School.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also visited a range of lessons in other subjects. For these subjects, they looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for: behaviour; personal development; the use of the pupil premium; and reading and the provision for pupils with SEND.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leaders to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. He reviewed a range of documents, including the school's single central record.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and subject improvement plans.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of trustees and representatives of the trust, including the school's sponsor.
- The lead inspector spoke with representatives of the alternative provisions which are attended by a small number of pupils at this school.
- Inspectors considered the results of the Ofsted staff and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Rakesh Patel, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jeremy Spencer

Ofsted Inspector

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