

Stretford High School

Great Stone Road, Stretford, Manchester, M32 0XA

Inspection dates

7–8 June 2017

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils in 2016, including the most able pupils, did not make good progress from their starting points. Current pupils' progress varies across subjects and key stages because the quality of teaching is inconsistent.
- Teachers do not build well on pupils' prior knowledge, skills and understanding. As a result, the most able pupils are not stretched academically.
- Some staff do not have high enough expectations of what pupils should achieve.
- Some teachers do not check pupils' learning carefully in lessons before moving on to the next stage.
- Teachers do not regularly require pupils to think deeply. They do not ask pupils to explain or extend their answers to questions.
- Leaders do not have a good view of the impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and those in receipt of the catch-up premium on pupils' outcomes.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics and science has been below average, because of poor teaching over time. New subject leaders are beginning to take appropriate action, and progress is starting to accelerate in these subjects.
- Some subject leaders do not routinely use information from feeder primary schools to support their curriculum planning or build on pupils' literacy skills.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher sets a clear direction for the school. She has built a committed, determined and cohesive community. She has taken decisive action to improve the school.
- Pupils enjoy a curriculum which promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and equalities well.
- The school safeguards its pupils well. Staff have created a strong safeguarding culture in the school.
- The governing body has a clear understanding of what must be done to improve. They hold leaders to account.
- Pupils' conduct around school is calm and orderly. Pupils feel safe in school and free from bullying.
- Pupils make stronger progress in English due to good teaching.
- Pupils' attendance is above average.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in mathematics and science, to accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - developing teachers' understanding of pupils' prior knowledge, skills and understanding, including those at the end of primary school, so that they can build on them in lessons
 - sharpening teachers' questioning skills, so that they challenge pupils to explain their ideas and promote deeper thinking
 - strengthening pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum, particularly extended writing
 - ensuring that teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve, especially the most able.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by making sure that:
 - all subject leaders, including those new in post, have the skills needed to check and improve teaching and pupils' progress
 - the use of additional funding is further refined to have greater impact on pupils' outcomes.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The new headteacher wasted little time and quickly conducted an audit to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the school. She has a clear vision for improvement. This is well communicated and understood by staff. Staff morale is high.
- The culture she has established of aiming for higher standards is spreading across the school. The headteacher is ably supported by her senior team, who share her ambitious vision. There is a sense of urgency to make a difference to pupils' futures. Parents, and pupils, are complimentary about her leadership, and recognise and value the changes she is bringing about. They would recommend the school to other parents.
- The leadership's plans are well thought out and sharply focused. They identify the right things to bring about change. For example, a new behaviour management system has been introduced successfully. This has led to a marked improvement in pupils' behaviour and attitudes in lessons.
- The headteacher and her team display an honest candour in their evaluation of the quality of provision for pupils. They monitor regularly through observations of lessons, checks on pupils' work and information about pupils' outcomes. This enables them to identify quickly where improvements are needed.
- The headteacher has invested a significant amount of time recruiting an almost entirely new middle leadership team. Middle leaders are fully committed to improving the quality of teaching and learning and pupil outcomes in their subject areas. They value the support provided by senior and more experienced middle leaders.
- Leaders recognise that, over time, standards in the school have been too low. To improve progress, they have introduced new targets for pupils that align with their raised aspirations. These targets provide regular points for teachers to monitor and report on pupils' progress. Stronger leadership now uses this information to hold teachers and leaders to account for pupils' progress. Leaders have introduced strategies to provide pupils with specific and more-regular feedback on their work. The impact of these changes is that most pupils now make better progress than they have historically.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Leaders have recently made significant changes to the curriculum, to ensure that it meets pupils' needs and future aspirations. Pupils can now study a range of appropriate qualifications that prepares them for life in modern Britain. Pupils value the advice and guidance they are given and appreciate the subject choices now available.
- Currently, teachers and leaders are not yet routinely using all available information from feeder primary schools to support their lesson and curriculum planning. Consequently, pupils experience too much repetition of work they have previously studied and their progress is slowed.
- The curriculum is enriched through a range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils commemorate national events and raise money for charity, thus developing their social skills and contribution to life beyond the school.

- Leaders advance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural well-being. Pupils across all year groups recognise the importance of respecting one another, particularly those from different backgrounds. The school is a cohesive community. Pupils say that they would like to celebrate festivals from other religions and cultures, for example Diwali or Chinese New Year.
- The curriculum develops pupils' personal development well. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain and the wider world. They contribute extensively to the leadership of the school. For example, the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) group is collaborating with school leaders to develop a whole-school LGBT policy. Pupils understand democracy. For example, pupils in Year 9 learn about power and politics, and pupils across a range of year groups attended a local education question time.
- Systems for teachers' performance management and pay progression are clear and led effectively. Targets support the school's improvement plan and focus on teaching and pupil progress. Professional development is systematically aligned to whole-school priorities, for example formative assessment.
- Leaders have identified barriers to learning related to poor attendance or behaviour for those pupils in receipt of the pupil premium. Funding is used well to tailor support to help these pupils, who are improving as a result. Use of funding to raise attainment for disadvantaged pupils requires further refinement to target gaps in pupils' learning more precisely.
- Funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used well to provide identified pupils with effective and targeted support from teaching assistants. As a result, pupils are now making better progress, especially those in key stage 3.
- The catch-up funding, for Year 7 pupils who are below the expected standard in English and mathematics when they join the school, is used well for pupils who have weak literacy skills. However, it is not used well to support pupils to improve their numeracy skills.

Governance of the school

- Governors, in recent years, have not been strong enough and have not taken the action to halt poor standards and a sustained period of decline. Pupils' progress has historically been low, particularly in English and mathematics. Governors accept this, and now recognise the job that must be done to reverse this decline.
- Governors gather information from discussions with staff, holding parental events and reviewing surveys. They are more aware of pupils' outcomes because they analyse data more astutely. As a result, they are now acutely aware of, and very knowledgeable about, the relative strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are more robust in holding all school leaders to account for the school's performance.
- Governors are uncompromising in their expectations. They have responded to the new headteacher's expectations for improved standards across all aspects of the school. They have full confidence in her abilities. Together, they form a strong partnership and improvements are already evident.

- Governors monitor the impact of the funds that have been allocated to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. While some gains have been made in the outcomes for this group of pupils, governors recognise the need to accelerate improvements further.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders take their responsibilities extremely seriously, ensuring that a strong safeguarding culture exists throughout the school community. They use data intelligently, for example the analysis of the occurrence of accidents, to regularly improve safeguarding practices in the school.
- Staff receive training and regular updates linked to safeguarding. For example, staff were aware of the procedure in place in case of lockdown. Staff are alert to any cause for concern and how to respond, including those related to extremism or grooming.
- Leaders ensure that there are appropriate filtering systems in place to keep pupils safe online. Pupils are taught about online safety through the curriculum. They speak confidently about how to minimise risks of cyber bullying.
- Leaders ensure that risk assessments are complete and regularly reviewed to ensure that pupils are kept safe both in and out of school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning requires improvement because it is too variable in most subjects and does not enable all groups of pupils to make good or better progress, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Too often, teachers do not make effective use of assessment information. They do not identify precisely, or in a timely enough manner, when to move pupils or groups of pupils on in their learning. The result is that pupils' progress is not good.
- Some teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve across the curriculum are not high enough, and the challenge in lessons is too low. Teachers' planning does not build effectively on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding, including from primary school. It does not consider what pupils must do to secure more-rapid gains in their learning. This is a view also shared by some parents.
- Teachers' questioning is not consistently used to extend and deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. The most able pupils too frequently provide limited responses to questions. There is no expectation upon them to explain or extend their answers. This means that they make slower progress.
- Not all teachers check pupils' learning and progress carefully enough. As a result, there are missed opportunities to reshape tasks and intervene, so that misconceptions are tackled swiftly and do not persist into future learning.
- Leaders' work in checking assessment information is increasingly effective. This is because they provide teachers with information about pupils' progress. Teachers translate this information into diagrams. This enables them to identify clearly which

pupils, and groups of pupils, need to make faster progress. Pupils say that they are clear about their progress towards meeting their targets.

- The school has an informative, motivating and engaging learning environment in classrooms and corridors. For example, one classroom provided stimulating material about the forthcoming general election, accompanied by some thought-provoking questions.
- The teaching of reading is improving. Teachers follow the school's literacy strategy and the reading programme. These initiatives are beginning to show signs of improvement. However, literacy plans are at an early stage of implementation and not yet fully embedded fully across subjects.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. This supports pupils' progress. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. There are effective, established routines, so pupils know what to expect when they enter a classroom. Pupils engage well with each other and, when taught effectively, demonstrate an enthusiasm and resilience for learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- There is a strong culture of mutual respect that runs through the whole school. Pupils value and respect those from backgrounds different from their own. One parent said: 'This is a school that has a genuine interest in ethnic minorities.'
- Pupils have many opportunities to develop their leadership skills. For example, pupils have an anti-bullying team, and act as peer captains to support positive behaviour of the younger pupils and as prefects.
- The school's work on LGBT is highly effective. Pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of, for example, transgender and talk respectfully to one another about similar issues. Pupils take an active role in raising the profile of LGBT within the school.
- An effective curriculum makes a significant contribution to pupils' well-being. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe, including how to manage online risks. For example, they understand how to take steps to protect themselves from the dangers presented on the internet and social media.
- Pupils receive good careers guidance to help them make the right choices about the future. In addition to career advisers, the school organises work experience, careers fairs and support with job applications.
- Bullying is rare in the school. Pupils say that when incidences of bullying occur, they are dealt with quickly and effectively by staff. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. An overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View agree that the school is a safe place for their child to learn.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- Leaders have made considerable improvements to behaviour in lessons. The school's new behaviour policy is effective and is now embedded across the school. Pupils said that frequent disruptions to lessons had reduced since the arrival of the new headteacher. Parents say that staff ensure that pupils behave well.
- Despite restrictions on internal space, pupils behave well during social time to ensure a calm and orderly environment. Pupils are polite, courteous and demonstrate good manners. Staff make boundaries clear and pupils adhere to the motto of 'ready, respect, safe'.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They are punctual to lessons and ready to learn.
- Since expectations for behaviour have been raised, the number of pupils who received fixed-term or permanent exclusions has been above average. However, school data and other information relating to the number of incidents indicates a decline on previous years.
- Overall attendance is above the national average.
- Leaders communicate effectively with providers about the behaviour and progress of any pupils in alternative provision.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2016, GCSE results indicated that pupils made below average progress. The progress made by high-ability boys in Year 11 was weak. School leaders accepted that significant improvement was required.
- Current pupils' progress in key stage 3 varies too much, both within and between subjects, because of the variations in the quality of the teaching. While the pupils make stronger progress in some subjects, they do not do so consistently across the curriculum.
- Teaching does not always provide the most able pupils with sufficient challenge. In some cases, pupils are not given tasks that will enable them to make strong progress at GCSE. In some cases, the most able pupils are not always provided with the depth of knowledge and technical subject accuracy they require. Their progress requires improvement.
- Work in pupils' books and standards reached in lessons indicate that across a range of subjects, in both key stages, the progress of the most able pupils is not improving rapidly enough, particularly in mathematics and science. In subjects where there is better teaching, for example in English, the most able pupils make stronger progress.
- Currently, pupils in Year 11 who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making slow progress. However, leaders' own information about pupils in the current Year 10 shows that the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved rapidly.
- Currently, the most disadvantaged pupils are making progress that is at least in line with that of other pupils across a range of subjects and across all year groups.

- The proportion of pupils who go on to employment, further education and training has improved rapidly and is now above the national average. However, the standards achieved by some pupils limit their aspirations.

School details

Unique reference number	106370
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10032433

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	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	822
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	William Carey
Headteacher	Nicola Doward
Telephone number	0161 8761850
Website	http://stretfordhigh.com/
Email address	admin@stretfordhigh.com
Date of previous inspection	8–9 May 2013

Information about this school

- Stretford High School is a slightly smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2015.
- The proportion of pupils from an ethnic minority background is above average, as is the proportion of boys. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who require an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school has less than five pupils who access alternative provision.

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website
- In 2016, the school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The school is a coasting school because it meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 4 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a range of lessons and observed teaching and learning across a number of different subjects and with different ability groups. Some observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors observed form sessions, an assembly and a pupil election. They also listened to younger pupils read.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally at break and lunchtime. Discussions were held with pupils both formally in lessons and in small groups.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, teaching and support staff and members of the governing body. A phone call was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors undertook an in-depth analysis of pupils' work across a range of subjects taught in the school, some with leaders. They also looked closely at the most able pupils' work and that of disadvantaged pupils. In addition, inspectors looked at a range of pupils' work in lessons.
- Observations of pupils' behaviour were undertaken in and between lessons, during assembly, break and lunchtime and on arrival at the school.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school self-evaluation, improvement planning, external reports, records of staff training and the school's evaluation of teaching and learning. Attendance, behaviour and exclusion records were examined, in addition to governing body minutes. Inspectors also considered the school's own information about the performance of its current pupils. Safeguarding policies and procedures were examined.
- The lead inspector took account of 105 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, including 97 free-text responses, 53 questionnaire responses from staff and 197 responses from pupils.

Inspection team

Alyson Middlemass, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Mark Sibson	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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