

St Ivo School

High Leys, St Ives, PE27 6RR

Inspection dates 7–8 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs, together with students eligible for the pupil premium, do not make as much progress as other students in English and mathematics.
- Too few students attain the highest grades in GCSE English and mathematics because they do not make enough progress from their starting points in Year 7.
- In 2013, achievement in English and mathematics declined. This reduced the proportion of students who gained five A* to C grades in GCSE examinations that year.
- Teaching requires improvement because the most-able students or those in ability sets who find their work easy do not receive sufficient work that stretches them.
- Some teachers do not use marking and homework well enough so that it does not have sufficient impact on learning.

The school has the following strengths

- Dynamic leadership from the headteacher, ably supported by good governance and senior leaders, has reversed the decline in achievement very successfully.
- Effective leadership of teaching and achievement are strengthening teaching across the school, but particularly in the English department.
- Some departments such as history, geography, art and design have maintained good standards of achievement since the school became an academy.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Good behaviour and attitudes to learning are underpinned by very good promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- Students benefit from a good range of courses and subjects. They receive useful guidance on the next steps to take in their education or career.
- The sixth form is good. Students achieve well because teaching is effective.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 65 lessons to observe behaviour, teaching and learning.
- Inspectors met with students to discuss their behaviour and lessons, and reviewed their work.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, the headteacher and other leaders, staff, and students.
- Inspectors took account of 150 questionnaire responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View).
- Questionnaire responses from 123 staff were examined.
- They looked carefully at school data on students' attainment and progress, the school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, procedures for managing the performance of teachers, and the school's development plan.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined by inspectors.

Inspection team

Tim Bristow, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Pete Sewell	Seconded Inspector
Piers Ranger	Additional Inspector
Susan Hargadon	Additional Inspector
Bernadette Green	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The large majority of students come from White British backgrounds.
- The proportions of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are above average. The proportion supported through school action is below average.
- A smaller-than-average proportion of the students are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding in this school for students who are looked after by the local authority or known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' achievement.
- The school converted to become an academy school in August 2011. When its predecessor school, also St Ivo School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- A small group of students attend alternative provision arranged by Cambridge Local Authority.
- The headteacher was appointed last year and took up his post in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching to good and better by:
 - making sure that when planning lessons, all teachers use the knowledge gained from marking work more effectively so that pupils who demonstrate that they find the subject easy receive harder work
 - giving pupils better quality advice in their books and then allowing them the time to respond to it
 - making sure that the homework set for students is perceived to be relevant and is making a stronger contribution to learning.
- Raise achievement by:
 - accelerating the progress of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium so that the gap in standards is removed
 - ensuring that the improving provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs is having the desired impact on their progress from year to year
 - paying closer attention to the students who enter Year 7 with high standards in English and mathematics so that by Year 11 they are all well prepared to gain the highest grades in their GCSE examinations.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- The proportion of students gaining an A or A* GCSE grade in English is too low and in mathematics it is average. On entry to Year 7, approximately a third of the cohort starts school with standards in English and mathematics that are above average. Not enough of these students then go on to gain the highest grades.
- The progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is accelerating, but it is too variable from year to year. In some years, students who are supported by school action or school action plus make slower progress than other students, even though they receive extra help, whereas students who have a statement of special educational needs make good progress.
- In 2013, examination results show that standards in English and mathematics had declined and were average. This also resulted in the proportion of students gaining five A* to C grades including English and mathematics at GCSE declining to average. The decline was more marked in English because the progress of students was too slow. This year, English results have risen because of the determined response of school leaders and the English department. Already 75% of the students have gained an A* to C GCSE grade.
- The gap between the standards achieved by students eligible for the pupil premium funding and the others is too wide. Last year the gap was approximately one and a half GCSE grades. This is because they make slower progress from their starting points. For example, in mathematics the proportion of students overall who made better than expected progress was favourable when compared to national statistics, but too few of this group were students who were eligible for pupil premium funding.
- Much better use of the pupil premium funding this year has resulted in the gap narrowing considerably because the progress of students in English and mathematics is much faster. However, it still requires improvement because there remains an unacceptable gap.
- In mathematics, approximately a fifth of the students are entered early for their examinations. The mathematics department is careful to ensure that this does not affect students' preparation for taking higher qualifications. This year, unusually, all students were entered early for English as part of the department's strategy to reverse the decline in standards. This approach appears to have been successful, but the department is clear that this is an unusual step that they are unlikely to repeat.
- In the sixth form, above average standards have been maintained in a number of subjects. Achievement is not outstanding because, from above average starting points on entry, some Year 12 and 13 students could achieve even higher standards if they made more progress.
- In some subjects, the achievement of students is good and even outstanding. For example, in history and geography standards are high, and in art and design work of the highest quality is produced. Physical education courses are producing many students who are good at sports and enthusiastic in pursuing their interests outside lessons.
- Initiatives, such as the Year 7 Catch Up, are ensuring that students who enter school with literacy skills that are below average are making good progress and are catching up with others.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- In some departments, but particularly in English and mathematics, teaching has not been good enough to maintain the above average standards achieved in the past. Regardless of how well teachers perform in lessons, they have not ensured that enough students have made the necessary progress from year-to-year to maintain these standards.
- Often teachers produce the same work for all students in lessons. While this may be appropriate for the majority, not enough is expected from the students who find the work easy. This is not only the case for the most-able students but also for groups of students in other ability classes. Even though teachers regularly mark books, they do not use the knowledge gained from this to design activities in lessons that meet the needs of all abilities.
- Some teachers do not give good enough advice to students when marking their books. Students report that in some classes they do not get enough time to respond to marking.
- The homework that students receive is mixed in its quality. In some subjects and classes it is of superficial value because it is not linked to the work students do in lessons. In other subjects it plays an integral part in consolidating students' learning.
- This year, a concerted effort by school leaders and teachers has resulted in strengthening teaching overall. For example, past weaknesses in the English department have been addressed and, while some teaching still needs to improve to good, students benefit from better teaching than last year.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are also benefiting from better help and teaching, both within lessons and when taught individually or in small groups. Some teaching assistants give good specialist help to these students. The reason why some students still do not make good enough progress is because insufficient attention is paid to checking the impact of the different types of help on students' progress so that the help can be adapted to better meet students' needs.
- While marking still requires improvement, it has strengthened considerably as teachers have adopted the marking policy introduced this year.
- In the sixth form and in some subjects, students benefit from teaching that is nearly always good and often outstanding. Even in subjects where teaching requires improvement there are growing proportions of good teaching over time. For example, in a mathematics lesson the teacher expertly prepared activities to consolidate students' learning and to overcome misconceptions that she had identified from the marking of work. She then kept a close eye on the progress students made and altered the lesson's activities in response to their needs. Consequently, students demonstrated a growing confidence and fluency when solving equations.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. Most students and parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire and school questionnaires agree that behaviour is managed well and has strengthened considerably since September 2013. In consequence, in most lessons students demonstrate a good attitude to learning, and the atmosphere around the school is calm and orderly.
- Students report that the behaviour policies introduced this school year have had a very positive

impact. For example, low-level disruption in lessons has reduced a lot because of initiatives such as the Reflection Room, where students who have been naughty in lessons have to go to be taught for a short period of time. Students really appreciate the impact of this strategy on improving behaviour in lessons, even though most have never had to visit this room.

- Exclusion rates are below average and attendance is above average. School leaders are working intelligently to reduce the rate of exclusion of different groups, such as disabled students and those who have special educational needs and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, so that they are no higher than for other groups. For example, students who are supported by the Bridge initiative are very appreciative of the expert help they receive to maintain their attendance in school.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. This is particularly effective for students whose circumstances make them vulnerable, and also for disabled students and those who have special educational needs.
- Those students who attend alternative provision are well looked after. Not only is this keeping them safe, but it is ensuring that they make good progress.
- Students confirm that there is little bullying in the school. Teachers are not complacent about this and have ensured that all students, and in particular potentially vulnerable groups, are well prepared to deal with bullying if it should arise in the future. Students understand about different types of bullying and how it can arise, and the strategies they should employ to deal with it.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is resolute in his determination to achieve outstanding status for the school and he has communicated this vision very effectively to the whole school community. He has high expectations for school improvement and most adults in school are working hard to meet his demands.
- The headteacher, supported by school leaders and governors, has been successful in reversing the decline in achievement of all groups of pupils. While it still requires improvement overall, progress is accelerating rapidly and standards of all groups are rising. This is because students are subject to a sustained improvement in teaching from day to day.
- There are many examples where leadership is effective, such as in the sixth form, in high performing subject departments, in the pastoral care of students whose circumstances make them vulnerable and in behaviour management.
- School evaluation of performance is accurate and been used expertly to produce priorities for improvement that are the right ones required to get the school to good and better quickly.
- The headteacher and other leaders have strengthened the management systems that underpin good leadership. The procedures for keeping a track of students' progress are now much more accurate and useful than they were in the past. The management of teachers' performance is robust. It provides teachers with a good balance of training and challenge so that they strive to become better practitioners. Checks on teaching and middle leadership are regular and useful at identifying where improvements are required.
- Students of all abilities are able to choose from a good range of academic and vocational courses

and subjects. They benefit from timely advice when preparing for Key Stage 4 or the sixth form, so that they choose the subjects that will be of most use in preparation for their future. In the sixth form, they receive good advice on career and further education paths that they might want to consider. Consequently, all students leave school and go into appropriate training and work, or embark on higher academic qualifications that suit their requirements.

- Students benefit from a very good range of additional activities, such as in sport, the arts and the sciences, to help them with their subject work. There is also a wide range of very enriching activities such as the regular and varied opportunities to go on school trips abroad or within this country.
- Many activities and lessons promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. For example, a recent trip to South Africa to take part in voluntary work and regular visits to different places of religious worship broaden students' understanding of the difference beliefs and lives that people lead. Aspects of different beliefs and values are regularly built into lessons to broaden students' understanding of the diversity of society in the United Kingdom and abroad.
- This is a standalone academy and it is not linked formally to the support of an outside agency.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors recognised that they had to urgently reverse the decline in standards and have been successful in contributing to this. They demonstrate an astute understanding of students' performance and a strategic awareness of the steps that need to be taken to strengthen it. To this end, they have ensured that pupil premium funding is now having the desired impact on narrowing the gap so that these students are making faster progress. They also demand regular reports on the performance of all groups and hold the headteacher to account for achievement.
 - The personnel committee keeps a careful check on the performance management of teachers and is working effectively towards ensuring that all teachers are rewarded at the appropriate level for their performance.
 - Governors ensure that safeguarding procedures and the finances of the school are managed effectively.

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

Unique reference number	137305
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	444357

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
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	1810
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	330
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Campbell
Headteacher	Mark Patterson
Telephone number	01480 375400
Fax number	01480 375444
Email address	office@stivoschool.org

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