

Stokesley School

Station Road, Stokesley, North Yorkshire, TS9 5AL

Inspection dates

10–11 March 2015

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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- From their different starting points, most students in Key Stages 3 and 4, including disabled students and those with special educational needs, make good progress. The proportion of students achieving five good GCSE grades, including in English and mathematics, is significantly above average.
- The quality of teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. The teaching of mathematics and humanities subjects is very strong; the needs of different students are catered for particularly well. The teaching of English across the school is improving.
- Students' behaviour is outstanding, both in lessons and around school. They enjoy excellent relationships with all adults who work with them and are proud to be members of Stokesley School.
- Exemplary attention to safety procedures ensures that all students are kept very safe. Students enjoy school and attendance is above average.
- The headteacher, her senior team and governors know their school very well. They take effective action to improve teaching and students' achievement.
- Governors hold the leadership team effectively to account. They have a well-defined strategic plan to secure the school's future success.
- Sixth-form students achieve well as a result of good provision. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Interesting tasks enthuse the students to learn independently.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement by the end of Year 11 in English, while improving, over time is not as good as it is in mathematics and other subjects. Fewer students reach the highest grades in English Language at GCSE.
- The progress of the very small minority of disadvantaged students is not consistently good. While gaps in the progress of these students compared to other students in the school and nationally are narrowing, they remain too wide, particularly in English.
- Information from assessing students' knowledge and understanding is not used consistently well by teachers in Key Stage 3.
- Sixth-form students do not always reach their full potential because the work provided in some subjects sometimes lacks challenge.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of a wide range of lessons. Ten lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher and senior leaders.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and senior leaders. They also talked informally to students in lessons and formally to four groups of students. They held discussions with governors and with a senior advisor from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of students' written work in conjunction with the headteacher and a senior leader. They also examined the school's own evaluation of its work and plans for improvement, data from assessments and school records relating to behaviour, teaching, the curriculum and safeguarding.
- The responses of 36 staff to the inspection questionnaire were considered along with the 147 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Timothy Gartside, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Nigel Drew	Additional Inspector
Anne McAvan	Additional Inspector
John Paddick	Additional Inspector
Georgiana Sale	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Stokesley School is a little larger than most secondary schools and caters for students from the market town of Stokesley and surrounding villages and areas in Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland.
- Most students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is well-below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students, those supported by the pupil premium, is well-below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- Alternative provision is provided, part-time, off site for a small number of students by the North Yorkshire Fire Service and through work experience links with many local employers.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations of students' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher is a local leader of education and is currently supporting another school.
- School governors have applied to the Department for Education to secure academy status.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching in order to raise students' achievement even further, particularly in English and in Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form, by making sure that:
 - information from assessing students' knowledge and understanding is used consistently well by teachers in Key Stage 3 to provide work that meets students' varying needs and abilities
 - the skills and knowledge gained in lessons by students is always checked thoroughly so that learning is quickly adapted when students do not understand their work
 - disadvantaged students are provided with the support needed, especially in English, so that the remaining gaps in their progress compared to others in the school and nationally, close
 - sixth-form students are provided with work that is consistently challenging so that the proportion of students reaching the highest grades improves even further.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders at all levels, including governors, are ambitious for the school's development. They set high expectations for staff and students. The school is well regarded within its community.
- The headteacher and her senior team provide very effective leadership. The headteacher describes herself as 'the most severe critic of every aspect of the school's performance'. She and other senior leaders are honest and accurate in their judgements of the school's strengths and improvement priorities. Their efforts to improve students' achievement and the teaching of English, for example, are paying dividends. The impact of their work is evident in lessons observed by inspectors, work in students' books and school data.
- The leadership of teaching is good. Regular observations of teaching in lessons, along with professional development training and challenging performance management targets, are used to good effect to improve the quality of teaching. This has resulted in a greater consistency in the standard of teaching and is driving up levels of achievement, especially at Key Stage 4. Leaders know that some inconsistencies remain in Key Stage 3, notably in how well teachers use information from assessing students.
- Middle leaders, such as faculty leaders and 'heads of houses', provide effective leadership support. They understand their roles well. They adopt a consistent approach to checking the work of teachers and students.
- Senior and middle leaders work hard to ensure that additional government funding is used to best effect. The pupil premium is now used more effectively in order to close the previously wide gaps in achievement between disadvantaged students and others. This demonstrates leaders' commitment to ensuring that students achieve equally well. Even so, although the progress of disadvantaged students is improving, leaders are yet to ensure the support they receive enables them to make consistently good progress.
- Leaders effectively check the attendance, progress and behaviour of the small number of students who attend part-time alternative provision at the North Yorkshire Fire Service and who participate in work experience at local businesses and other employers.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the students' needs well, including those who attend alternative provision. The emphasis placed upon academic subjects provides a strong foundation for all students to progress to A-level or equivalent Level 3 qualifications. An extensive range of extra-curricular opportunities is on offer, many through the school's 'house system', which students particularly enjoy. They especially relish the competition involved in accruing 'house points'.
- An extensive programme of careers education and guidance prepares students well for the next phase of their education. At the end of Year 11, almost two thirds of students choose to remain at Stokesley School to study A-level courses, while others progress to the local colleges. All students are placed in education, training or employment on leaving the school.
- The school's promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural values is outstanding. The school's 'heads of house' provide strong leadership in this aspect. Engaging assemblies reinforce British values, tolerance and respect, as well as an impressive understanding of social issues and of cultures worldwide. Wall displays and examples of students' artwork fill the corridors and reinforce the positive ethos. Discrimination of any kind is neither tolerated nor evident. Students' exemplary behaviour, their high levels of respect for staff and others and the way in which students of all ages learn harmoniously together reflect the school's success in fostering good relationships.
- Parents' views are positive. They recognise the school's work to ensure the happiness, excellent behaviour and good progress of their children. They recommend this school to others.
- Child protection and safeguarding procedures are exemplary. They meet statutory requirements and make a very strong contribution to ensuring students are kept safe.
- The local authority provides effective support. Termly meetings provide challenge to school leaders and assist in setting an agenda for further improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. Governors demonstrate a good understanding of how well the school is doing and they know where further improvements are still necessary. They ensure that their skills and knowledge are kept up to date by attending regular training on a full range of governance issues.
 - Governors hold the headteacher and leadership team effectively to account. They provide challenge in many areas, including in the school's financial expenditure. Their analysis of school data, as well as results in GCSE and A-Level examinations, along with their knowledge of the quality of teaching in the school, ensures that decisions to award increases in teachers' salary closely reflect both teacher and student performance.
 - Governors monitor the performance of disadvantaged students. They are well aware that their progress

is not yet consistently good but know that it is improving. They regularly check how the pupil premium is spent to ensure that its effect is positive.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. Students' attitudes to learning are consistently positive in all subjects and with all staff. In lessons, students are always keen to follow instructions from adults and always try their very best. In practical subjects, students need little direction. They are self-motivated and work very well in teams as well as on their own.
- Students behave extremely well beyond lessons. They show high levels of respect to their teachers and other adults. They wear their school uniform and house ties smartly and with pride. In the dining hall and the learning resources centre, students of all ages mix together well with little need for any adult supervision. Students of different ages support each other very well.
- The number of permanent exclusions is very low and the number of fixed-term exclusions has declined over time. The school's inclusion room is used effectively to support the few students who find behaving well difficult.
- Those students attending alternative off-site provision behave appropriately in their different learning environments.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Exemplary policies and procedures are in place for the safeguarding of students, which are closely and regularly monitored by senior leaders and governors.
- Students report that they feel very safe. Parents and staff agree that students are kept safe.
- Standards of supervision before and after school when the many buses arrive and depart are very good.
- Incidents of bullying are rare and are dealt with very effectively. Students are very clear about the procedures they are to follow should it occur. They show an excellent understanding of different forms of bullying, such as racist bullying, and other forms of anti-social behaviour, and know why they are unacceptable. Through the school's 'focus days', students are able to explore, in depth, issues such as e-safety and equality of opportunity.
- Attendance, over time, is above average and is continuing to improve. Very effective systems are in place to work with parents of the few students who are regularly absent.
- The school ensures that students attending alternative provision off site are kept very safe.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Good, and sometimes outstanding, teaching means that most students make good progress. Students' work in their exercise books shows that teaching over time has a positive impact on their progress in all subjects.
- Teachers plan lessons well. Carefully devised seating plans ensure students are seated in the best place to make the most of group work or one-to-one discussions with their peers.
- Students achieve particularly well in mathematics and humanities as a result of very effective teaching. Lower-ability students make at least good, and sometimes outstanding, progress in mathematics because teachers' explanations are very clear and learning moves forward at just the right pace. Teaching, including from support staff, offers both effective challenge and support. As a result lower-ability students grow in confidence and achieve well.
- The teaching of literacy is increasingly effective. Teachers place a good emphasis on making sure students use correct spelling, punctuation and grammar and know the key words specific to their subject. Teachers are conscientious in asking students to correct spelling errors, such as by re-writing misspelt words, and students usually do so. Students are now making better progress in English as a result.
- In Key Stage 4, consistently good use is made of information collected from assessing students' knowledge and understanding in order to ensure that work provided closely meets the varying needs and abilities of different groups of students. However, in some cases in Key Stage 3, assessment information, which shows how well different groups of students are achieving, such as the disadvantaged students, is not always used to good effect by all teachers.
- Staff question most students effectively in lessons in order to test their understanding of the tasks and to

tease out a deeper meaning and understanding of learning. However, occasionally, students' progress in lessons is not always checked as thoroughly. This means that learning is not always quickly adapted when students do not understand their work.

- The most able students are well taught overall. Students thrive on the good levels of challenge presented in lessons, which move at a brisk pace and enable them to think about difficult concepts. Expectations of what they are capable of achieving are high in many subjects, including in science and languages. Teachers provide regular feedback to students, offering guidance on how to improve their work. Students are encouraged to reflect upon their work and the comments made by their teachers. This has a positive impact on the progress they make.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Overall, students join the school with above-average levels of attainment in English and mathematics. From their individual starting points, most students make good progress in Key Stages 3 and 4. The proportion of students achieving five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including in English and mathematics, at the end of Year 11 has been significantly above average for the last three years and is on a rising trend.
- Students make particularly good progress in mathematics. In Year 11 in 2014, the proportion of students making the expected rate of progress and the proportion doing better than this was much higher than the proportion that did so nationally. A well-above average proportion of students reached A* and A grades in GCSE examinations.
- The school enters a small number of students early for GCSE examinations in mathematics. Students who entered their GCSE mathematics examination in Year 10 in 2013 went on to study mathematics at a higher level in Year 11 and these students achieved well.
- In English in Year 11 in 2014, the proportion of students making expected or better than expected progress was slightly above average. Although the proportion of students achieving a GCSE grade A* to C in English Language was above average, the proportion reaching A* and A grades was average. The school has already identified improving achievement in English as a priority for development and their actions are already paying dividends. Changes in leadership and improvements in the teaching of English and literacy skills are helping to speed up students' progress. School data, validated by observations of lessons and scrutiny of students' work by inspectors, show that progress in English currently through the school is generally good and indicates that standards are rising.
- Additional funding to support Year 7 students who enter the school with below average skills in literacy and numeracy is used well. These students make good improvement to catch-up with their peers.
- The most able students achieve well overall as reflected in the significantly above average proportion of students reaching the highest grades in GCSE examinations in several subjects, including in languages, sciences and humanities. Large numbers of students choose separate sciences at GCSE because they enjoy the more challenging work in these courses.
- The achievement of the very small minority of disadvantaged students is improving but their progress, over time, is not consistently good. Progress gaps between these students and others at the school and nationally have narrowed from the wide gaps evident in 2013. However, the proportion making the expected rate of progress or doing better than this in the Year 11 examinations in 2014 was still below that of other students in the school and nationally in English and, to a lesser extent, in mathematics.
- The attainment of disadvantaged students in mathematics in the 2014 Year 11 examinations was less than a third of a GCSE grade behind non-disadvantaged students nationally. In relation to other students at the school it was about a grade behind, because the other students attained highly in this subject. In English, disadvantaged students' attainment was just under a grade behind non-disadvantaged students nationally. It was about one and a third of a grade behind other students at the school because the other students made much better progress in English and attained above-average results.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs achieve well as a result of good teaching and effective specialist support.
- The achievement of the small number of students who attend alternative provision is good because they are monitored and supported well by their link teachers.

The sixth form provision**is good**

- Many students enter the sixth form with levels of attainment that are well-above average. From their individual starting points, the vast majority make at least the expected level of progress and many do better than this. The proportion of students achieving A-levels at grades A* to B is much higher than average.
- Teaching is good and, in some cases, outstanding. Teachers' good subject knowledge ensures that students develop their understanding of topics to the depth required to achieve the higher grades at AS and A-level. Good opportunities for independent study and research, such as in the sixth-form centre, helps to prepare students well with the skills they need for sixth-form study, and for their future success.
- Teachers generally have high expectations of what students are capable of achieving. As a result students are eager to do their best. Teachers know their students well and plan lessons to meet students' varying needs. Even so, in some subjects, students do not always reach the very highest grades in examinations of which they are capable. There is still scope to challenge students even further.
- Students have consistently good attitudes to learning. They work well collaboratively and support each other. Through their high standards of behaviour around the school, they provide excellent role models for younger students.
- Provision for students' broader education is good. There are many opportunities for charitable and community activities, and students eagerly contribute to the wider school community through supporting house activities and acting as mentors to younger students.
- Effective support, advice and guidance enable students to make informed choices about their next steps. They are encouraged to secure the best possible destination at the end of Year 13. Students receive good support when completing their applications either for university or employment. Many students are ambitious to progress to prestigious universities and other competitive courses.
- Leadership is good. A recent change in leadership has brought about an increased rigour in the checks made on students' progress. As a result any students who start to fall behind with their work are quickly identified and provided with additional support to enable them to catch up. More attention is now given to making sure that when students enter Year 12, they are placed on appropriate study programmes. As a result the proportion of students staying on from Year 12 and into Year 13 has increased.
- Leaders ensure that students are kept very safe. Students feel safe.

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	121669
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	449646

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
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	1,141
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Boal
Headteacher	Catherine Brooker
Date of previous school inspection	20 January 2010
Telephone number	01642 710050
Fax number	01642 710836
Email address	office@stokesleyschool.org

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