

# Sporting Stars Academy

Field Avenue, Baddeley Green, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST2 7AS

**Inspection dates** 28–30 April 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings

### This is an outstanding school

- Students make outstanding progress from their different starting points; their levels of attainment quickly improve. Students' achievement is outstanding.
- More-able students make rapid progress in their learning.
- All groups of students, including the less able achieve outstandingly.
- Teaching inspires students. Work is carefully matched to their skills so they benefit exceptionally well.
- Timely and appropriate responses from the staff give students every chance to behave even better. Behaviour dramatically improves.
- Students' attendance improves well. Levels rise to close to those expected nationally.
- School staff, parents and carers, placing authorities and students all agree that the school keeps students safe.
- The learning activities provide many excellent opportunities to increase students' skills and experiences. These include GCSEs in English, mathematics and external accreditation in science.
- Staff are passionate about engaging students in sport. Football activities significantly boost students' confidence, motivation and self-discipline, preparing them for their next steps.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The headteacher is highly conscientious and involved day to day running of the school, ensuring students succeed in their learning.
- Senior leaders, who are also the proprietors, have a deep and secure knowledge of the school's performance. Their ambitious actions have a strong impact on the quality of teaching and students' achievement.
- The school continues to meet the independent school standards.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed students' learning in school and at a local leisure centre. No observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher owing to her teaching commitments.
- He scrutinised samples of students' work in different subjects.
- Discussions took place with students and staff, including the headteacher, deputy headteacher and proprietors.
- The inspector spoke on the telephone to three parents and carers and two placing authority staff. There were not enough responses to the online Parent View survey for these to be analysed.
- A number of school policies and documents were examined to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards. These included the school's prospectus, information about students' progress and the school's own evaluation of its work and plans. Records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were also scrutinised. The inspector reviewed the school's policies and documents available on the school's website.
- The inspector took account of six staff questionnaire responses.

## Inspection team

Jonathan Woodyatt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school occupies a former church building located on the edge of a small suburban area near Stoke-on-Trent. The proprietors carried out a significant modernisation of the premises to create the classrooms, recreational spaces and facilities for the school.
- The school is registered to admit up to 36 students age 14-16. There are 42 students currently on roll.
- A local authority team places students at the school. Students join the school at different times of the year during Years 10 and 11. They are placed on part-time or full-time programmes depending on their levels of need.
- Students placed at the school typically have emotional and social difficulties. At the time of the inspection, no students had statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans. No student has a disability.
- The school is overseen by the headteacher, who is also a proprietor. There are two other proprietors that work at the school. The leadership team also includes the deputy headteacher. There are no middle leaders at the school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school was first registered in April 2014. This is the first full inspection of the school.

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

- Improve students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in order that they have the best opportunity to gain insight into the attitudes and values of others in multicultural Britain.
- Raise the level of attendance for the small minority of students for whom it is not as good as it should be.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- The experienced headteacher sets a high standard for the students and staff to aspire. She monitors every aspect of the work of the school ensuring she is very well placed to drive up standards of teaching, learning and behaviour.
- The headteacher shares the wide range of information she gathers with the proprietors, leaders and staff. Her well-thought-out plans and effective actions ensure the school is outstanding.
- The excellent facilities offer students opportunities to learn well, socialise with each other and take part in a wide range of activities. The off-site sport activity is carefully assessed for risk, confirming students' health and safety is a clear priority for the leaders.
- The headteacher keeps a close eye on the quality of teaching and provides support for staff in order to improve their skills. Evidence from regular checks carried out by leaders and staff from other schools confirms that, over time, teaching is outstanding.
- The excellent learning opportunities ensure that English, mathematics and science can be taken as GCSEs or vocational qualifications. Students can also study, for example, sport, citizenship, media, health and social care, independent living and enterprise through a variety of qualifications and awards.
- There is a strong and effective emphasis on the development of literacy and mathematical skills, including opportunities for students to regularly read and do homework.
- All groups of students, including those with, emotional and social difficulties make outstanding progress owing to the high quality teaching meeting their needs. More-able students rapidly move onto higher levels of attainment.
- Students who struggle with developing their skills or fall behind in their progress are provided with individual support and quickly catch up with others. Consequently, this ensures that the school provides equality of opportunity for all students.
- Students receive helpful guidance to consider their next steps from school staff and the local authority careers staff. Almost all Year 11 students leaving at the end of their placement successfully move on to further education or training.
- A wide variety of spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects are covered in the daily activities, though more can be done to deepen students' knowledge of diversity in wider society. Overall, the school fosters good relationships, tackles issues that lead to discrimination and prepares students well for life in modern Britain.
- In citizenship, students develop their knowledge and understanding about the role of parliament and the law. Planned activities ensure they learn how to keep themselves safe, including e-safety.
- Sport activities are used exceptionally well to raise students' motivation, participation and confidence, leading to excellent attitudes to learning and behaviour. Teamwork develops their cooperation, understanding and tolerance for each other.
- Comments made to the inspector by placing authority representatives and parents and carers confirmed how well students are doing with improving their skills, behaviour and attendance levels, though the attendance of a small minority of students requires action.
- Senior leaders have ensured that the school has continued to fully comply with the independent school standards since the last inspection.
- During the inspection, the proprietors agreed to apply promptly to the Department for Education to increase the number of students for which the school is registered.

#### ■ The governance of the school:

The proprietors have a hands-on role with the day-to-day education in the school and have clear insight into the quality of teaching and achievement. They ensure that the wide range of information they gather on how well students are learning is used to notable effect.

The headteacher quickly intervenes to tackle underperformance in teaching robustly. She routinely monitors the quality of teaching in order to reward excellence.

Proprietors, leaders and staff work exceptionally well together to ensure staff performance and skills are outstanding.

The proprietors ensure that finances are used very well to provide suitable numbers of staff to meet students' needs. Resources, such as minibuses, provide students transport to facilitate off-site sports activities and improve their attendance. Classrooms have up to date technology including electronic white boards and computer equipment.

The proprietors ensure that the school meets the required standards for safeguarding and provides these details on their website.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is outstanding.
- All students placed at the school have struggled with attendance and behaviour in their previous schools or placements. Staff have high expectations for their behaviour and students are supported well to settle quickly into the well-established routines.
- Detailed tracking systems help staff monitor behaviour and attendance of students every day. Staff provide students with plans for how to improve their behaviour.
- The school's system for managing behaviour meets the different needs of students exceptionally well because staff provide clear rules and challenge any misbehaviour. This has a marked impact on improving their attitudes to learning over even short periods of time.
- Students have very positive attitudes and are keen to learn. Evidence from the work in their folders and books reflects the pride that they typically take in the quality of their work.
- Sport provides important opportunities for students to be involved with other schools. Regular football matches ensure that students can act as representatives for the school and help foster community relationships.
- Students explained to the inspector how the small groups in the school and the positive relationships that they have with staff, help them to make improvements in their behaviour. Parents and carers unanimously praised how much their behaviour had improved at home, "up to 200 per cent" said one parent.
- School records confirm that there are very few incidents of serious misbehaviour, including bullying. The inspector observed students behaving exceptionally well around the school at break and lunchtime.
- Many students are transported safely in the school's minibuses to and from the school, which boosts their attendance and punctuality well. However, a very small number of students miss out on improving attendance further by not catching the buses or attending regularly enough.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Students, placing authority workers, staff, parents and carers state that students feel safe at the school.
- There are effective links to outside agencies which provide students with extra support for their different needs.
- The proprietors procure external advice to ensure their effective health and safety arrangements continue to meet the required standards.
- Arrangements to support students undertaking activity off-site are robust. Leaders ensure regular training for staff to make the necessary safety assessments, and records demonstrate staff carry out safe procedures.
- The school meets the required independent school standards in relation to behaviour and safety.

## The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Staff carry out accurate checks on students' progress shortly after joining the school. Along with information from regular routine checks, close monitoring of students' answers and marking of work, staff clearly know their progress.
- Staff plan activities that gain students' attention and engage them in learning very well. Students, such as those who are more able, benefit from the tasks provided by staff because they build rapidly on their skills.
- The academic achievement of students, demonstrated in their books and folders in writing and mathematics over time, is outstanding. Their work improves in neatness and tidiness clearly showing their increasingly positive attitudes. Students achieve outstandingly regarding reading as teachers frequently encourage students to read widely and often.
- Staff mark students' work regularly. Comments made in students' books and folders ensure that they are clear about where they have done well and extra tasks challenge them to do even better, for example in

mathematics.

- Students explained to the inspector that they also receive regular verbal feedback from staff in lessons. They said that staff provide them with very clear guidance on what they need to do to improve.
- Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning were exemplary in the lessons seen. They are keen to take part in group activities and cooperate fully to complete tasks or discuss their views.
- If students fall behind in their learning, staff provide appropriate activities that help quickly close any gaps in their skills compared to others, for example with individual tuition in mathematics.
- The school meets all the independent school standards fully in relation to teaching.

### **The achievement of pupils**

**is outstanding**

- Most students join the school with starting points that are below or well below those of others of similar ages. Typically this is due to missing too many lessons in previous schools.
- The proportions of students making or exceeding the progress expected of them from their different starting points are higher than those nationally in the key subjects English and mathematics. Almost all students by the end of 2014 gained awards or qualifications for the courses they completed.
- School records show that students' achievement is accelerating well owing to the outstanding teaching. Their attainment is rapidly rising and gaps are quickly closing with others nationally.
- Progress is outstanding for the most-able students because of the staff's high expectations and effective planning. They can quickly improve their grades and their achievement is enhanced by taking extra GCSE and vocational courses, such as in citizenship and sport.
- All groups of students achieve equally well including those with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties because the teaching is outstanding. Staff support fully meets their different needs, for example through the small class groups or individual support.
- Students are well prepared for the next steps in their learning once they leave the school. In conversations they spoke about how well staff boost their confidence and support them to make choices about what to do.
- Sport activity makes an exceptional contribution to ensuring students learn about respect for each other and following rules. Rigorous training develops their resilience and fitness which significantly boosts their health and welfare.
- Students' personal safety is improved by the school's work. Staff plan activities that help to make them aware of the dangers of, for example drugs and alcohol, and how to use the internet safely.
- In relation to students' academic and personal development, the school meets the independent school standards fully.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	141128
<b>Inspection number</b>	462985
<b>DfE registration number</b>	861/6012

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary day school
<b>School status</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	14–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	42
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	14
<b>Proprietor</b>	Sporting Stars Community Interest Company
<b>Chair</b>	Shane Tudor
<b>Headteacher</b>	Emma Tench
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£13,650
<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 248248
<b>Fax number</b>	Not applicable
<b>Email address</b>	admin@sportingstarsacademy.com



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