

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mr J Scarrott
Principal
Stanground Academy
Peterborough Road
Peterborough
Cambridgeshire
PE7 3BY

Dear Mr Scarrott

Short inspection of Stanground Academy

Following my visit to the school on 4 April 2017 with John Craig, Ofsted inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in February 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

The senior leadership team's roles and responsibilities have been carefully considered in order to ensure that specific skills are used to best effect. Leaders at all levels have a very good understanding of what the school does well, and what it still needs to do in order to improve further. Equally, school improvement planning at all levels, including by subject leaders, has identified the most important key issues which currently stop the school from being outstanding. Improvement plans are in place and these plans are regularly monitored by key personnel. It is clear how the success of planned actions is to be measured, who is leading the actions and how often progress will be evaluated.

One parent who responded to Ofsted's online survey wrote: 'I have two children at this school and both are very happy there and have made excellent progress. They have both had excellent opportunities to develop skills in creative and expressive arts, as well as being pushed to deliver academic work to the best of their ability.' Many parents were equally positive, but some were less positive in their view of the school. While inspectors did not find convincing evidence to support these less positive views, it is important that the school's senior leaders address this perception by communicating more clearly and regularly with parents to convey the school's many positive features.

Pupils typically enter the school with levels of prior attainment which are significantly below the national average. They leave the school achieving levels which are broadly in line with the national average, which indicates that they make good progress overall. Lower-attaining pupils achieve well over time in your school. Some of the most able pupils could achieve at a higher level than at present, and the differences between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally need to diminish further, although these are improving. You have rightly identified that business studies in key stage 4 and in the sixth form has not been taught well. You have taken immediate action to address this matter by seeking out two specialists to teach this subject. You have also arranged additional sessions during the Easter break to bring pupils' standards closer to where they ought to be.

You monitor all aspects of the school's effectiveness in order to keep your self-evaluation summary document up to date. This document steers future actions well. When analysing data relating to behavioural incidents, you quickly realised that your on-call system was being used more often during the lunch hour. As a direct result of this sharp analysis, you reduced the time allocated to pupils' lunch by 10 minutes, in order to minimise the number of incidents and get pupils back to their learning in the classroom earlier. This has led to a decreased number of recorded incidents.

The modern school building is very well equipped, and is appreciated and respected by pupils. Pupils typically wear their uniform with pride and move around the school with purpose. A strong staff presence around the school ensures that time moving to and from lessons is not wasted, and that pupils behave sensibly. The proportion of fixed-term exclusions for all pupils indicates a downward trend. During this inspection, I witnessed pupils in Year 9 who had modelled the school's positive values being rewarded with a celebration breakfast organised by the school.

The academy advisory council acts effectively as a critical friend to the school's leaders, and the board of trustees holds you and your team to account through an appropriate degree of challenge and support. The trust has provided a high level of additional support to ensure that the school's safeguarding systems and procedures are suitably robust.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school's record of recruitment checks of the suitability of staff is fully compliant with current requirements. All staff have received up-to-date training in the safeguarding of children and any staff who join the school during the year receive an induction to the school's systems for keeping children safe. All staff have received and read the latest guidance 'Keeping children safe in education' (2016) and all have been trained in the government's 'Prevent' duty, which aims to deter young people from being drawn into terrorist activities.

Staff are very clear as to when they might make a child protection referral and the school's leaders have made clear to staff that any referral made will be taken seriously. The school recently increased the number of staff on the safeguarding

team.

Inspectors looked at a case study for a child missing in education. Scrutiny of the case in question shows that the school followed all of the required procedures until it was known that the child was located and known to be safe.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry was to look at how well the school's leaders promote pupils' well-being and safety. This was in relation to a serious incident involving a pupil which occurred outside of school. Inspectors considered the wider issues raised by this incident and implications for the school. Should a major incident occur, the school seeks support from the trust and the Cambridgeshire emergency response team. All staff have received additional training in how to respond to pupils who might self-harm or who might have suicidal thoughts. Safeguarding and the well-being of pupils is clearly a key priority for the school. An online system to record any child protection referrals ensures that progress with the referral can be regularly monitored and tracked, and records details of chronological events and actions taken, as well as any resolution. Inspectors' scrutiny of child protection records shows that these are well maintained, and appropriate use is made of external agencies when required.
- Bullying incidents are logged and data collected is analysed to identify any trends. You have also introduced a restorative justice approach towards resolving disagreements between pupils and you work productively with parents to engage them in supporting your efforts. Your sixth form anti-bullying ambassadors are also well regarded by pupils in the school, and pupils believe that members of staff listen to their concerns and will act on them.
- Pupils are taught very well about how to keep themselves safe. The school's tutorial programme and its personal, social, health and economic education programme covers all aspects of e-safety. Pupils have a very good understanding of the risks associated with the use of social networking sites. The school has enhanced this good understanding through its 'drop-down' days, when it has invited theatre groups into the school to run workshops with pupils on how to keep themselves safe.
- My second line of enquiry was to look at why pupils made poor progress in geography and science in 2016. You have rightly identified that the poor results achieved in 2016 in geography were due to the fact that you chose to enter a significant number of pupils for the incorrect tier of entry. Weaker pupils were entered for the higher tier and did not achieve well enough to secure a grade C at GCSE. You have learned from this mistake, and have judged more carefully at which level to enter pupils in 2017. You also acknowledge that the quality of teaching in geography has been 'mediocre' in the past. You have ensured that the geography department has received bespoke training and the specialist adviser from the trust has also worked with the subject team. As a result, the current Year 11 pupils are approaching the school's target for their rates of progress. I visited two geography lessons in which I observed pupils learning well. They also demonstrated a good understanding of how their work is

assessed, and how close they are getting towards achieving their targets.

- You explain the dip in science outcomes in 2016 by the transition from the vocational BTEC course to the GCSE qualification. You focused on the lower-attaining pupils and the most able triple scientists, at the expense of the large majority of middle-attaining pupils. You have now ensured that subject specialists in science rotate their teaching so that all pupils experience targeted teaching in biology, chemistry and physics. Looking ahead, you have adjusted the time allocated to the teaching of science for those Year 9 pupils embarking on their GCSEs next year by adding one additional lesson to their science studies. Your current analysis of pupils in Year 11 indicates that pupils are more closely in line with their targets.
- The next line of enquiry looked at why some of the most able students, including girls, experienced a dip in their performance at advanced level in 2016. You discussed individual case studies of six most-able female students, some of whose performance had extenuating circumstances which were beyond the school's control. You monitor the progress of students four times a year, in addition to the outcomes of their practice examinations. As a result of this analysis, teachers express their concerns in a more timely fashion so that any signs of underachievement can be identified quickly and acted upon. Students experience particularly strong teaching in the Extended Project Qualification and in philosophy. As is the case in key stage 4, you have identified that the impact of business studies teaching has been weak, but you have taken appropriate action to address this shortfall. Inspectors' discussions with students in the sixth form show that students find their teachers to be supportive and approachable. They also stated that the support they receive in preparing for the next stage of their educational career is 'amazing'.
- My final line of enquiry was to look at the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are eligible for free school meals, as the attendance of these pupils does not match that of their classmates. The overall attendance rate for all pupils from September to the date of this inspection is 93.6%, but is lower for these two key groups. You provided information relating to a small number of pupils who have health problems which means they attend school less regularly. However, you acknowledge that the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those eligible for free school meals still needs to improve. You have worked with the families of some of these pupils and hold weekly meetings as a school which involve key members of staff to look at individual pupils. Your efforts to date have not demonstrated marked impact, and it is essential that you maintain a strong focus on improving the attendance of these groups of pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they communicate more effectively with those parents whose perception of the school is less positive

- the strategies put in place to address the weaknesses in the teaching of geography, science and business studies demonstrate a positive impact on pupils' outcomes
- a greater proportion of most-able pupils make good progress from their starting points, and the differences in the progress made by disadvantaged pupils diminish further to bring them more closely in line with other pupils nationally
- the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who are eligible for free school meals improves.

I am copying this letter to the executive board, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Peterborough. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Daniell
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you and other senior leaders, as well as a group of subject leaders, to discuss progress since the previous inspection. My colleague met with your special educational needs coordinator to discuss how well pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve in the school. I met with a member of the academy advisory council and two representatives of the Greenwood Academies Trust to gain their views on the school. Together with my colleague, we scrutinised a variety of sources of information, including your self-evaluation summary document, the school's plans for improvement, and assessment information for all year groups. My colleague held a meeting to examine the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures, the records of checks leaders make on the suitability of staff to work with children, and information relating to attendance. We both undertook observations of learning across the school, viewed work in pupils' books, and spoke with pupils about their learning when visiting lessons. I took account of the views of 46 staff who responded to the online survey. I also considered the 93 responses by parents to Ofsted's online survey 'Parent View'.