

Staindrop Academy

Cleatlam Lane, Staindrop, Darlington, County Durham DL2 3JU

Inspection dates

13–14 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of the teaching of English, mathematics and science is not consistently good enough.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can and should do are not consistently high enough.
- The checking of pupils' progress is not consistent across the school. As a result, teaching is not sufficiently focused on what pupils need to do next to improve.
- The recently introduced whole-school approach to reading is not yet embedded in the school.
- There is some low-level disruption and boisterous behaviour by pupils in the school. It is not consistently challenged by all staff.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not make the progress that they should.
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is not yet good enough.
- The presentation of pupils' work is not consistently good enough. There is too much variability in teachers' expectations of what constitutes neat work.

The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher leads the school well. She has put in place rigorous systems for checking progress and addressing the variability in the quality of teaching. These are having a very positive impact on the work of the school.
- Governors understand the school's weaknesses. They are increasingly skilled in holding leaders to account for their work.
- The leadership of the provision for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is increasingly focused and effective.
- Supported by the acting headteacher, middle leaders are increasingly skilled in holding their teams to account for the quality of their work.
- Teaching in many areas of the school is effective. Pupils welcome the challenge and pleasure they derive from this good practice.
- Pupils feel safe. Safeguarding systems are effective. Records are carefully kept and staff and governors are regularly trained to keep them up to date.
- The school knows its pupils well. It provides effective independent advice and guidance for pupils to help them make decisions about next steps.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that they are at least consistently good by:
 - ensuring that all staff have the highest expectations of what pupils can and should achieve
 - using assessment information about pupils' progress to plan learning effectively so that all groups of pupils are challenged to make rapid progress
 - providing pupils with opportunities to follow through ideas and develop resilience as independent learners, particularly the most able pupils
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to write at length in subjects other than English
 - ensuring that staff make sure pupils see how the learning tasks they are currently undertaking form part of their overall progress as learners
 - ensuring that there are more rigorous communication and recording systems in place to maximise the impact of teaching assistants
 - making sure of a more systematic sharing of staff expertise to raise the quality of teaching across the school
 - ensuring all staff have high expectations of neatness and the presentation of pupils' work.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring the school's plans for improvement set out precise and timely measures of the impact that development actions are expected to have
 - further developing the skills of governors so that they do not rely solely on information provided by senior leaders, and hold the school to account with rigour
 - further improving the quality of provision for disadvantaged pupils so that they make consistently good progress across all year groups
 - further developing the skills of middle leaders so that they are able to monitor and improve the quality of teaching in their areas of the school.
- Improve the behaviour and attitudes to learning of pupils by:
 - carefully identifying, sharing and agreeing what constitutes good and respectful behaviour across the school
 - making sure that disadvantaged pupils' attendance improves
 - ensuring that pupils take more responsibility for their own learning and progress
 - ensuring that pupils have more explicit opportunities to develop their understanding, exploration and experience of British values so that they are even better prepared for life in modern Britain.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this

aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced a long period of turbulence and instability in staffing, including leadership. This has had an adverse impact on the school's journey to becoming a good school. Over this time, leadership has not been strong enough to prevent a significant decline in both the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. In 2016, outcomes were weak. Although the school is now improving, there is still some way to go to ensure that pupils achieve well.
- The school's plans for improvement are not explicit or precise enough about the impact that development actions are expected to have, and in what timescales.
- The appointment of the acting headteacher has already resulted in significant improvements. She has brought vigour, clarity and a sense of purpose. Leaders and governors are now clear about what needs to be done to address the school's weaknesses. They have acted effectively to put in place the monitoring and performance management structures needed to address the inconsistencies in teaching. Although these systems are beginning to have a positive impact, insufficient time has passed to ensure that they are embedded. Teaching is not yet good.
- Leaders are not systematically checking on the impact of professional development. Leaders' quality assurance is not precise enough about which aspects of staff training are having a positive impact. This good practice is not being shared widely and systematically enough across the school.
- Historically, the pupil premium funding has not been used effectively. However, the newly appointed pupil premium leader has put in place effective structures and monitoring processes to ensure that disadvantaged pupils access the full range of opportunities at the school. Their progress in lessons is now checked more rigorously. Their attendance is also improving. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are making better progress. However, this progress is not sufficiently rapid because leaders do not precisely identify, and ensure that staff remove, the barriers to learning that disadvantaged pupils experience.
- The leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is also increasingly effective. The recently appointed leader is clear that all staff are teachers of special educational needs. Supported effectively by colleagues from Parkside Academy, she monitors pupils' progress carefully. Advice and training for teachers and teaching assistants is helping them to develop and improve their teaching. As a result, pupils are now making better progress. Additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is being used effectively.
- Parents and carers, although generally supportive, are concerned about the adverse impact that the turbulence and instability has had on the quality of teaching and pupils' behaviour. However, they also say that aspects of the school, including leadership, are now improving and that their children are happy and feel safe.
- The leadership of support for pupils' well-being and care is effective. The school has a clear focus on ensuring that every pupil is well looked after. The communication and recording systems are now stronger. The school's links with outside agencies are

effective.

- Middle leaders, supported by the acting headteacher, the local authority and Parkside Academy, are increasingly effective in monitoring and improving the quality of teaching in their areas. This is because they have worked with senior staff and others to put in place rigorous systems and training to improve teaching. The subject areas of English, mathematics and science which have, historically, performed poorly are now being led by newly appointed staff. These colleagues, working with their teams, are beginning to have a positive impact on outcomes at the school.
- The school's arrangements for checking staff's performance are generally appropriate. Leaders identify, support and challenge underperforming staff. Staff who spoke with inspectors supported the school's aims and said that staff training was effective.
- Leaders and governors work hard to promote equality of opportunity. They have ensured that all pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. This is supplemented by a range of extra-curricular activities, trips and sporting activities both after school and at lunchtime.
- School information shows that, overall, the use of Year 7 catch-up funding for those pupils who need extra support in English and mathematics is effective in helping pupils progress so that they can have fuller access to the school's curriculum.
- The school is receiving effective and well-focused support from Parkside Academy and from Durham local authority to support continued improvement in the quality of teaching and the development of leadership, especially of middle leaders.

Governance of the school

- Current governors are aware of the weaknesses at the school. They are realistic in their understanding of what needs to be done. However, in the past, governors have not ensured that senior leaders have moved promptly and effectively to address the key areas that needed improvement. This was because they relied too much on information from the headteacher in making their judgements about how well the school was doing.
- Although now developing, governors' links with leadership beyond the senior team are not yet rigorous enough. As a result, although supported effectively by Parkside Academy and the local authority, governors are still too reliant on information from the senior team when they make their judgements on how well the school is performing and what needs to be done to address key weaknesses.
- Governors take their responsibilities for ensuring that all members of the school community are safe very seriously. Working with senior leaders, governors foster and ensure a culture of safeguarding at the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a strong and growing culture of safeguarding at the school.
- Staff are very alert to their responsibilities and to the systems that the school has in place to support pupils and keep them safe.

- The school knows its pupils well. As a result, staff are able to move promptly and effectively to address any issues that affect pupils' well-being as they arise.
- The senior leader with responsibility for safeguarding is committed to securing pupils' safety and well-being.
- Senior leaders ensure that full and accurate records are kept about all aspects of safeguarding.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable, especially in English, mathematics and science. Although improving, pupils' attitudes to their learning are not consistently positive and off-task behaviour in some lessons hampers progress. Pupils told inspectors that their learning experience depended on the teacher they had. Leaders have not monitored the quality of teaching, including that of supply teachers, closely enough.
- The assessment by staff of how well pupils are doing, especially in key stage 3 classes, is inconsistent. Inspectors found in some subjects that very high proportions of pupils were meeting or exceeding their targets and in other subjects very low proportions were doing so. Despite the recently introduced system, teachers are not checking how well pupils are doing during lessons rigorously enough. As a result, some teachers are not clear that pupils are making progress. Leaders recognise that this new system needs further refining.
- In too many lessons expectations are not high enough and pupils do not engage with their learning with enthusiasm. When staff expectations are high in the school, pupils rise to the challenge and demonstrate eagerness to learn. In these lessons pupils show real pleasure in learning as they grapple with new ideas and tackle knotty problems.
- In weaker teaching there is a focus on completing a series of tasks rather than on the development and deepening of knowledge, understanding and skills. In the better lessons, teachers ensure that pupils know where their learning is going. In a Year 10 media class, for example, pupils knew where their current learning fitted into their programme of study. The teacher deftly drew on past learning and used it through challenging questioning to move pupils' learning on. Pupils reported that they relished this approach.
- Overall, the implementation of the school's own feedback policy is inconsistent. Too often pupils do not act on the feedback teachers give to them to help them take the next steps in learning. However, inspection evidence shows more effective practice in the humanities subjects. In this area of the curriculum pupils consistently refine and improve their work in response to feedback and commentary from their teachers.
- Leaders have introduced a whole-school spelling policy. However, inspection evidence showed too many instances where pupils had corrected their spellings yet they were still incorrect. Teachers did not always follow this up. In some cases pupils did not understand the meaning of key subject-specific words or the context in which they were used.
- The presentation of pupils' work is inconsistent across the school. When teachers set high standards, pupils follow this through in their work. Where expectations are unclear

or applied inconsistently, pupils' presentation is variable. As a result, pupils do not consistently take pride in their work.

- Pupils do not have enough opportunities, in subjects other than English, to write at length. Inspectors did see some evidence of writing at length, in religious education for example. However, this was not consistently the case. Pupils, especially the most able, do not have enough opportunities to deepen their thinking, explore their ideas and develop their stamina by writing more.
- Teaching assistants are generally well deployed to support individual pupils and groups of pupils. However, communication systems between teaching assistants and teachers are not robust or systematic enough to maximise the impact of this aspect of the school's work.
- In the most effective lessons teachers plan learning that encourages pupils to think more deeply about what they are learning and the skills they are developing. In these lessons, teachers probe pupils' understanding through effective questioning and, as a result of well-planned activities, pupils remain engaged in their learning. This was particularly the case in technology, history, geography and media lessons.
- Homework is regularly set. However, pupils reported that it was not regularly checked by teachers. They said that this was disappointing. Parents have also raised homework as an issue in their comments about the effectiveness of the school.
- Parents are given regular and useful information about the progress of their children.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils report that they are safe and feel safe. Pupils are confident that if they did have a problem they would tell an adult at the school. They reported that if they did this, they were confident that it would be dealt with promptly and well.
- The programme of sessions and activities to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well developed. Key areas such as e-safety, healthy eating, sexual exploitation, respect and tolerance are discussed in tutor time and during dedicated sessions.
- Bullying is rare and pupils are alert to the forms it can take, including cyber and homophobic bullying. This is because the school takes positive action to set clear and effective guidelines and opportunities to discuss personal safety.
- The school generally prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. There are some opportunities for pupils to take on roles of responsibility and to engage in a range of activities that encourage the development of confidence and insights into the wider world. However, pupils reported that more could be done to prepare them for life beyond Staindrop. Also, too many pupils, when spoken with by inspectors, were not clear what constituted British values and why it was important to understand what they were.
- The school keeps full and detailed records and logs of pupils' behaviour and welfare.

Staff use these to analyse patterns of behaviour and, where pupils need support, staff at the school move effectively to provide it. The school has close and robust links with outside support and welfare agencies. It draws on these promptly and effectively to support pupils and their families where this is needed.

- Pupils take pride in their appearance and are smart in their uniforms. This positive aspect of appearance is at odds with the general environment at the school. There is a considerable amount of litter on the school site.
- The school provides clear, regular and effective independent advice about careers and next steps in learning and training. This begins in detail from Year 9 where, for example, as well as regular timetabled sessions, a range of local companies visit the school. This event is open to both parents and pupils. They meet and discuss opportunities and gather information to help inform decisions about next steps. This outward-looking approach continues throughout pupils' time at the school. The school keeps careful and detailed records of pupils' destinations after they leave the school.
- Pupils are generally punctual both in the morning and as they move between lessons.
- The school has robust and effective systems in place to help ensure that pupils' arrival at and departure from the school by bus is safe and orderly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Although pupils were generally well behaved, incidents of low-level disruption were seen during the inspection within lessons. There was also some boisterousness in the grounds of the school. This was particularly evident at lunchtime.
- The school has a clear code of behaviour. Most members of the community are aware of, welcome and follow it. However, inspectors observed incidents where the code was not applied consistently. Inspectors saw some pupils using mobile phones inappropriately. They also heard examples of rough and inappropriate language. Pupils reported to inspectors that they had noticed that the school's rules were not applied consistently by staff.
- Where staff expectations are high pupils are confident, do well and are polite and aware of the needs of others. However, attitudes to learning, particularly of older pupils, are not good enough. This is exacerbated by weaker teaching where expectations are not high.
- Attendance is improving at the school and is currently above the national average. However, while the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is also improving, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils in Year 10 is not good enough. This rate of absence is having an adverse impact on the learning and progress of this group. Leaders are aware of this and are taking steps to address it.

Outcomes for pupils

Require improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because, overall, pupils' progress, although improving,

is not consistently strong across the school in English, mathematics and science.

- In summer 2016 Year 11 outcomes were disappointing. The results for all pupils, overall, were below what should be expected considering their starting points. In 2016, no disadvantaged pupils secured a grade C or above at GCSE level across the core of five academic subjects known as the English Baccalaureate (EBacc).
- Leaders have recently introduced more robust systems to track pupil progress. Although this tracking shows a slight improvement in the progress of disadvantaged pupils, pupils whose prior attainment was average and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, the progress of these groups of pupils particularly is not yet rapid enough.
- In English, mathematics and science, Year 11 pupils are not making progress in line with similar pupils nationally. However, these pupils are making stronger progress in art, design and technology, media, physical education and vocational subjects.
- Inspection evidence and the school's own tracking shows that Year 7 pupils make stronger progress across a wider range of subjects than other years in the school. This is because teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are higher in Year 7.
- The outcomes for the most able pupils at the school are not good enough. This is because there is not consistently enough challenge for the most able pupils. Additionally, leaders are not tracking the progress of the most able disadvantaged pupils as a distinct group. This means that the provision for this group of pupils is not as focused as it should be to help remove barriers to learning and success.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are now making better progress than they have historically. This is because the recently appointed leader is gathering and using information effectively to improve teaching and target support. For example, recent information gathered by the school shows that Year 7 and Year 9 pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making better progress than their peers from their starting points. Inspection evidence supports this view.
- A significant proportion (21%) of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey of parent views (Parent View) during the inspection said that they disagreed or strongly disagreed that their child makes good progress at Staindrop.
- Year 7 catch-up funding in mathematics is being used effectively to close gaps in learning. The impact of this funding used to support reading in Year 7 is more inconsistent.
- Evidence seen in pupils' books and folders during the inspection shows that progress over time is variable across the school. Pupils make the best progress in the subjects where, historically, outcomes have been stronger, such as the humanities and design technology. Progress is more variable in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- The school's recently introduced strategy to support and encourage a love of reading has not yet led to the development of a reading culture across the school.
- The school provides clear and impartial advice and guidance so that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. In 2016 all Year 11 pupils proceeded on to their chosen next steps in education or training.

Leaders maintain accurate and detailed information about the destinations of all of their pupils.

School details

Unique reference number	137234
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10032006

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	538
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Leech
Headteacher	Mrs A Carr
Telephone number	01833 660285
Website	http://www.staindropschool.com/
Email address	m.bostock@staindropschool.com
Date of previous inspection	June 2015

Information about this school

- The school is deemed by the Department for Education to be a coasting school. The definition of a coasting school is:
 - in 2014, fewer than 60% of pupils achieved five A* to C grades at GCSE (including English and mathematics), and the school has less than the national median percentage of pupils who achieved expected progress in English and in mathematics; and
 - in 2015, fewer than 60% of pupils achieved five A* to C grades at GCSE (including English and mathematics), and the school has less than the national median percentage of pupils who achieved expected progress in English and in mathematics; and
 - in 2016, the school has a Progress 8 score below -0.25 and the upper band of the 95% confidence interval is below zero.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum

standards for pupils' attainment and progress.

- The school is smaller than the average secondary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion with an education, health and care plan is similar to the national average.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about the curriculum or the impact of pupil premium spending.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum and the impact of pupil premium funding on its website.
- There have been significant changes to staffing, and the senior leadership team has been formed during the last few months. The acting headteacher has been in post since March 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 31 lessons in all years, apart from Year 11, across the school. Inspectors observed learning jointly with the acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher in Year 10.
- Inspectors talked with pupils in lessons and around the school. They also looked at a significant sample of their work. They listened to pupils read in Years 7 and 10. Inspectors also spoke more formally with pupils from Years 7, 9 and 10 to explore their attitudes to learning and safety.
- Inspectors met with the acting headteacher and deputy headteacher, six governors, the teacher responsible for supporting pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and a range of the school's middle leaders to discuss the school's progress and the welfare of its pupils.
- The lead inspector also met with an officer of Durham local authority and staff from Parkside Academy to discuss the impact of the support provided to the school.
- An inspector met with a group of newly and recently qualified teachers to discuss the support the school has offered them as they begin their careers.
- Inspectors took into account 74 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 32 open-text comments from parents. They also took account of 18 responses to a pupil questionnaire and 39 responses to a staff questionnaire undertaken during the inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents, including minutes of governing body meetings, the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, monitoring and assessment information, school policies, behaviour and safety records, safeguarding policies and procedures.

Inspection team

Mark Evans, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
John Downs	Ofsted Inspector
Michele Costello	Her Majesty's 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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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