

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



13 February 2018

Jonathan Taylor
Executive Headteacher
Stradbroke High School
Wilby Road
Stradbroke
Eye
Suffolk
IP21 5JN

Dear Mr Taylor

Short inspection of Stradbroke High School

Following my visit to the school on 25 January 2018 with Duncan Cooper, 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 September 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

Leaders have built upon the improvements noted at the time of the last inspection and the school is now securely good. Recently, significant changes have been made to provide additional capacity to further improve the quality of provision and enable the school to reach its aspiration of becoming outstanding by the time of its next inspection.

In December 2017 the school joined the Sapientia Education Trust. Its new executive headteacher is also the headteacher of an outstanding local secondary school, and a national leader of education. Following the retirement of the previous headteacher, the senior leadership team is now ably led by a head of school. Plans are in place to appoint an additional member of the senior leadership team later this term.

Safeguarding is effective.

Policy and procedures to keep pupils safe are firmly established. The single central record is complete. A minor error in recording information noted during the inspection was quickly resolved. An assistant headteacher and two other designated lead teachers manage effectively any staff concerns about pupils' health, safety and well-being.

They act promptly when serious concerns are raised, and maintain detailed records of the actions taken to protect pupils from harm. Training for staff, including the 'Prevent' duty, is kept up to date. The school site is secure.

Inspection findings

- To determine whether the school remained good, we followed four lines of enquiry during the short inspection. These were based on the issues raised in the last inspection, the school's recent performance information and an analysis of the school's and the trust's websites. We focused on: the impact of the recent changes to the school's leadership, including governance; how effectively the pupil premium is spent to support disadvantaged pupils; the quality of teaching and the impact it has on enabling the most able pupils to achieve well; and whether the school is a safe, secure and stimulating place for pupils to be.
- Leaders and governors provide good leadership and articulate a clear vision for the next stage of the school's development. They have recognised that the school's very small size brings great benefits, but also presents some challenges. They know that in order to grow and flourish, the school needs to work in partnership with other schools within the new trust. These new arrangements are under way. A trust board provides a further tier of scrutiny, support and challenge for leaders, alongside the school's experienced and knowledgeable governors.
- The head of school knows the school well. He has the full support of the trust, governors and staff. His overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses is honest and accurate. For example, inspectors found that the key lines of enquiry identified prior to the inspection are already prioritised in the school's plans for improvement.
- A recently reorganised team of senior leaders carry out their duties effectively. They monitor and evaluate provision, and ensure that pupils receive high-quality pastoral care, are kept safe and engage fully in school life. This is clearly evident in the school's very positive ethos and culture of care and respect for one another.
- Senior leaders' sustained efforts to prioritise improving the leadership and teaching in English and mathematics have worked. Outcomes in these key subjects are high. Senior leaders acknowledge that the quality of middle leadership in some other subjects is much more variable. Observations by inspectors found that leaders in science and a small proportion of foundation subjects are not doing enough to match the quality of teaching and the outcomes achieved in English and mathematics, and also in humanities.
- Observations carried out jointly with senior leaders found that teaching, and its impact on the learning and progress of pupils, is inconsistent. Currently in both key stages, most pupils continue to do well in English and mathematics, but make slower progress in science, art, design technology (DT) and physical education (PE). Senior leaders are aware of this. Recently, they have raised the level of support and challenge for staff in these subjects. They are also forging new links with schools within the trust to help to gain from their good practice.

- Pupils say they like the three 100-minute lessons provided each day because it enables them to learn in depth and spend time consolidating their learning. Where teaching is most effective, teachers plan a range of different activities. Not all teachers use this time effectively. At times, progress slows because teachers have not planned enough work that inspires pupils, or is sufficiently challenging for the most able.
- Not all teachers use the information gained from their regular tests and assessments to plan learning suited to the different abilities of pupils. Inspectors found that pupils are not always expected to work hard on tasks that develop their thinking and give them the skills and understanding they need to attain the very highest grades.
- Outcomes in 2017 remained high. Pupils in Year 11 made good progress in GCSE English and in mathematics. The proportion of them attaining pass grades in both subjects was well above average. A much higher than average proportion of pupils also attained a higher grade 5 or above. However, these impressive headline figures mask some underachievement, particularly of the most able pupils. Variable teaching in science and poor advice to study three sciences rather than two awards led to a significant proportion of pupils not making the progress expected of them and attaining the very highest grades.
- Last year, the proportion of pupils entered for and achieving the English Baccalaureate (EB) was equal to that found nationally. Outcomes in English, mathematics, humanities and religious education were high. The school's agreed policy allows pupils to make their own choice about which GCSE courses they pursue. This approach is valued by pupils, parents and carers. However, as no disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, elected to study languages back in 2015, none of them attained the EB award in 2017.
- In general, leaders ensure that the pupil premium is spent effectively. Gaps in the performance of disadvantaged pupils and others have narrowed in recent years. Last year, disadvantaged pupils in Year 11 made similar progress to all pupils nationally with similar starting points. Inspectors noted that teachers use very few strategies in lessons to target support towards disadvantaged pupils, to engage them fully in learning, or promote their confidence and competence.
- Leaders monitor routinely their spending to gauge the impact of this funding on improving the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils in English and mathematics. Their review of last year's spending is restricted to these two subjects only. It does not report on how well funding was used to support disadvantaged pupils in all of their subjects.
- Meetings with pupils from both key stages, including 'VOSH', the Voice of Stradbroke High, confirmed that they find school safe and stimulating. The school's very small size means that pupils all know each other, and that they are known well by staff. They feel very safe, free from bullying and listened to. When asked what changes they would make to improve the school, almost all of them said they are satisfied with what it provides for them and would not change much at all.
- Inspectors found pupils to be respectful towards staff and each other. They wear

their uniforms, PE kit and badges of responsibility with pride. They appreciate the choice of subjects available to them and the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided during and after school. Music and drama, and off-site visits and trips are particularly popular with pupils.

- Pupils' enjoyment of school is shown in their regular attendance. Their behaviour and attitudes are exceptionally good. Inspectors found them to be pleasant, polite and well-mannered. This is a friendly, inclusive school that welcomes pupils from a range of different backgrounds, including a significant proportion of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. These pupils integrate well and engage fully in school life.
- The school's own records confirm that behaviour is good. All forms of bullying are rare. Very few pupils are excluded from school. Pupils told inspectors that the procedures used by teachers for managing misbehaviour in lessons are rarely used, as very few pupils disrupt the learning of others.
- Leaders do not fully analyse attendance and behaviour records. This prevents them from spotting patterns and trends, and taking action to improve them. Without this level of scrutiny, they are unable to illustrate clearly where they have made significant gains in improving the attendance and welfare of different groups of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching becomes more consistent and has a bigger impact on the progress made by all pupils, particularly the most able, and in all subjects, especially science
- current plans for the spending of the pupil premium include clear strategies to target additional resources towards disadvantaged pupils in day-to-day lessons, and they monitor the impact this has on pupils' learning and progress in all of their subjects
- analyse in detail the behaviour and attendance of different groups of pupils over time, to enable them to spot patterns and trends, intervene early and provide a clear overview of the impact they are having in making improvements.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local governing body, the chief executive of the Sapientia Education Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Suffolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we met with you, the head of school and three other senior leaders. We met with four members of the local governing body, and two groups of pupils. We spent time outside of lessons meeting with pupils informally at lunchtime, observing those participating in clubs, and chatting with some of them in their friendship groups. You and the head of school joined us to observe pupils at work in lessons. We reviewed your self-evaluation and improvement planning, safeguarding policy and procedures, including the single central record, and records of behaviour and attendance. We considered 78 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 19 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff and 38 responses from pupils.