

Stoke High School – Ormiston Academy

Maidenhall Approach, Ipswich, Suffolk IP2 8PL

Inspection dates

8–9 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
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

- Year 11 pupils in 2016 and 2017, including disadvantaged pupils, did not make enough progress from their starting points. Current Year 11 pupils are not making good progress in English.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are not being well supported to make the progress of which they are capable.
- The welfare support for some pupils is not effective in helping them to settle quickly and to learn well. This includes some pupils who join the school midway through the year.
- Teaching, learning and assessment remain variable. Key stage 4 pupils are not being challenged and supported well enough to catch up where there are gaps in their learning.
- Pupils are not being well enough encouraged to develop essential writing skills across subjects.
- Although improving, absence rates remain higher than the national average. Leaders' actions are not yet having enough impact on improving pupils' attendance.

The school has the following strengths

- Leadership and management are good. The trust has strengthened leadership across the school. Middle leadership is now strong.
- Leaders have created a well-thought-out curriculum, which engages pupils well with their learning. Pupils are effusive about the activities that they access, especially the extra-curricular opportunities.
- Leaders' work to raise standards in key stage 3 is ensuring that these pupils are now making good progress.
- Leaders have created a high-quality careers guidance programme. This fully engages pupils in decisions about their futures.
- All pupils in Year 11 last year went on to appropriate next steps in education, training or employment.
- Behaviour is good. Leaders have worked hard to establish a culture of positive behaviour. Pupils are proud to receive 'stokies' reward points and wear their school badges with pride.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in key stage 4 by:
 - improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in English, especially in Year 11
 - ensuring that all teachers use assessment to plan learning that supports pupils to make rapid progress from their varied starting points, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able
 - increasing pupils' opportunities to develop writing skills across subjects
 - improving the support and provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities so that they make good progress.
- Improve the quality of personal development and welfare by:
 - developing induction programmes for new pupils so that they are supported well to settle quickly
 - further enhancing support for the small core of pupils who struggle to self-regulate their behaviour
 - improving the attendance of pupils so that overall attendance at the school is at least in line with the national average.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leadership and management have improved since the previous inspection and are now good. The principal, ably supported by governors, the trust and other leaders, is raising standards in the school. In particular, behaviour in the school has improved considerably, and is now securely good.
- Leaders have created a curriculum which ensures that pupils study a range of subjects. Leaders have also created new provision within the curriculum to provide additional support to pupils in English and mathematics when they need it. Pupils access a wealth of extra-curricular opportunities, which they enjoy immensely.
- The careers curriculum is of a very high quality. Pupils access a range of activities, such as mock interviews, visiting local and national employers and 'speed-interviewing'. Leaders also increase pupils' understanding about the range of options open to them, such as girls' access to careers in engineering. Tuesday lunchtime sessions provide bespoke support to pupils who require additional careers mentoring. This curriculum is increasing pupils' aspirations about their potential future careers.
- Middle leadership is good. The deputy principal has worked diligently to ensure that middle leaders understand and work towards the urgent priorities in the school. Middle leaders have enthusiastically taken on this challenge and are bringing essential improvements to their respective areas. In particular, they have been very effective in raising standards in teaching, learning and assessment in key stage 3 at the school.
- The trust has supported leaders well since the previous inspection. The trust supports leaders to recruit effectively to vital teaching and leadership positions. It has invested in an additional external consultant principal. This support has been integral to the improvements in middle leadership. The trust has also worked collaboratively with the local authority and other schools to secure external expertise to improve teachers' accuracy in developing assessment.
- Standards in teaching, learning and assessment are starting to improve more rapidly. Leaders have created a team of 'lead practitioners', who are sharing their expertise and developing staff understanding of how to plan effective learning. Training for staff is individualised to their specific needs. Staff value this investment in their professional development. Teachers who are new to the profession are effusive about the support that they receive from their mentors.
- Leaders use the additional funding that they receive for Year 7 catch up, and disadvantaged pupils, effectively. Pupils are given targeted support through reading sessions using specialist software and other library resources to accelerate their reading. Disadvantaged pupils are supported as individuals, whether this be support to improve their attendance, additional tuition in specific subjects or provision of additional resources and equipment.
- Leaders, governors and the trust have a comprehensive and accurate understanding about the strengths and weaknesses of the school's provision. They do not shy away from identifying areas where they could improve. For example, they have identified that their work to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is not having enough

impact on these pupils' progress and attendance. They are currently undertaking an intensive review of this provision.

Governance of the school

- The local governing body, alongside the trust, provides a good basis of support and challenge to leaders. Governors exhibit a passion for the school and the pupils in the community. They visit regularly to assure themselves of the accuracy of the information provided by leaders. The strategic progress board has been effective in keeping a relentless focus on the school's key improvement priorities.
- Governors use their expertise well to hold leaders to account. This is most notable in their work around safeguarding, finances and school premises. In particular, they are very effective in checking on the effectiveness of the use of the additional funding that they receive, most notably for disadvantaged pupils. Governors have also been particularly effective in securing funding to maintain the high-quality sports centre for physical education and for the local community.
- Governors, and the trust, are working alongside school leaders to implement a review of the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, as they have identified that not enough is being done to support the learning of these young people.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are well trained and understand their responsibilities towards pupils' safety and well-being. They are vigilant with respect to pupils who may be vulnerable or at risk of harm.
- Leaders act promptly when a concern arises, working closely with external agencies to provide appropriate additional support to pupils and their families.
- Leaders make appropriate checks on adults working in the school and ensure that staff and governors receive regular and helpful training to keep their knowledge up to date.
- Leaders check extensively to make sure that their safeguarding work is effective and that they have sought appropriate advice, including advice from the designated local authority officer.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in key stage 4 remains too varied. While the quality of learning is improving in Years 7 and 8, too many pupils in the older year groups across a number of subjects receive less effective activities and support. Consequently, their progress is less rapid.
- Most notably, pupils in Year 11 are not well supported to develop their skills in English. Activities are not well matched to pupils' abilities. As a result, pupils' learning in English is slower than in their other subjects.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not make sufficiently

rapid progress in key stage 4. This is because teachers' expectations about what these pupils should be achieving are not consistently high enough. Too often, teachers accept low-level responses rather than challenging these pupils to develop their explanations.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are not making the consistently rapid progress of which they are capable. Teachers and other adults are not developing a precise enough understanding of their needs in order to plan effective activities for them.
- Writing is not yet well developed in all subject areas. While literacy and numeracy, more generally, are improving, teachers in different subjects do not have high enough expectations of what pupils should be achieving. As a result, pupils' writing skills in key stage 4 are not yet fully developed.
- Pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 do not routinely receive additional activities that help them to prepare appropriately for their examinations, including through homework activities. Year 11 pupils are not well supported to practise essential skills to consolidate their learning in lessons.
- Leaders are having more success in engaging pupils with reading. Reading is promoted well in Year 7, with most pupils reading fluently and demonstrating the skills and perseverance to tackle new words and texts with confidence. Pupils monitor their progress in reading via library lessons and through a formal system for assessing their current reading scores. They were able to reflect on improvement in their own reading, and that of their peers, within their reading lessons.
- Teachers are developing a better understanding of the subjects that they teach and the national expectations in the different key stages. Staff have worked with other schools in the trust on cross-school marking and moderation. This helps teachers to quality assure and check that their judgements about pupils' achievements are accurate and rigorous.
- Leaders have taken effective action to improve the quality of assessment of pupils' achievement across key stage 3. Teachers are now regularly reviewing whether pupils are on track and are amending their planning to support the specific needs of individual pupils. This is particularly improving the quality of work produced by pupils in Years 7 and 8.
- Learning experiences are very positive in design and technology, French and history. Here, teachers make use of the whole room as a learning resource, skilfully targeting a range of activities to different pupils. Teachers use questioning that is appropriate to both those pupils who need support and to those who need challenge. Pupils take a pride in their own work in these subjects. Pupils talk confidently about what they have learned and say they feel challenged.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.

- A high proportion of pupils arrive at the school part way through the year. The induction process for these pupils does not always ensure that they settle quickly and learn as effectively as possible.
- While behaviour is good, a small core of pupils are not being well enough supported to self-regulate their behaviour independently.
- Leaders' strategies to raise attendance have not been entirely successful for all groups of students. Consequently, overall attendance remains below the national average.
- The longer-term support for the most vulnerable pupils with complex social and emotional needs is effective. Leaders take great care with individual pupils by treating each pupil according to their individual needs.
- The day-to-day welfare provision for the wider school community is effective. Pupils and parents speak very highly of this support, particularly the work of the four college house teams.
- Pupils value the information they receive from the school. Year 8 and 9 pupils appreciate the personalised guidance they receive when taking their key stage 4 options. Pupils also value the guidance they receive about how to keep themselves safe in a multitude of circumstances, including education about online safety, healthy relationships, drugs awareness, human rights and healthy eating.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are courteous, confident and kind young people. They hold doors open, are willing to help visitors, and are able to express themselves articulately. Pupils are thoughtful to one another at break and lunchtime, waiting in queues patiently, and taking turns. Pupils interact well with one another out of lessons.
- Lessons start promptly and positively. Pupils engage in their learning and respond to staff instructions quickly and enthusiastically. Pupils agree that almost no lessons are disrupted by poor behaviour. They recognise how the principal, his leaders and the staff team have raised expectations about how pupils should behave.
- Pupils are proud to be members of the school community. Pupils in all year groups wear their 'stokies' reward points badges, or prefect badges, with pride. College assemblies have a culture of celebrating reward.
- Almost all pupils say that people appreciate and value the things that make them different. Leaders have worked hard on developing a community ethos in the school. Pupils say that the school is a caring place.
- The number of pupils requiring more serious actions in response to their behaviour, such as fixed-term exclusion, has reduced rapidly. The systems for dealing with pupils whose behaviour falls below expectations are clear and well managed. Pupils are taught about the consequences of their actions.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The progress of Year 11 pupils in both 2016 and 2017, including in English and mathematics, was weak. Although the school met the floor standards, the most able pupils, middle prior-attaining pupils, disadvantaged pupils, and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, did not make enough progress from their various starting points. Current Year 11 pupils are making better progress in most subjects, except in English, where their progress is still slower.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not currently achieve as well as they should. Monitoring and support is not precise in supporting pupils well enough to make the progress that they could. The attendance of a small core of these pupils also impacts negatively on their ability to achieve well.
- Disadvantaged pupils are starting to attain better standards in the school. Leaders are using the additional funding that they receive more precisely. Leaders have also increased staff training and their own monitoring of disadvantaged pupils' progress.
- Middle leaders' work to raise standards in teaching and learning is making a considerable difference to pupils' achievement in Years 7 and 8. These pupils are making more rapid progress across a range of subjects.
- Leaders use alternative provision carefully and successfully. A very few pupils each year access a local college, which meets their specific needs, interests and aspirations. Pupils attend and achieve well in the courses they complete.
- Despite lower achievement, pupils are well supported to move on to appropriate post-16 destinations in education, training or employment. Pupils receive personalised guidance about a range of options available to them, including university and apprenticeship opportunities. In 2017, almost all pupils went on to appropriate post-16 destinations.

School details

Unique reference number	140032
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10044760

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

Type of school	Other secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	683
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Elizabeth Combes
Principal	Glenn Mellor
Telephone number	01473 601252
Website	www.stokehs.suffolk.sch.uk/
Email address	admin@stokehigh.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 May 2016

Information about this school

- Stoke High School – Ormiston Academy opened in October 2013 as an academy within the Ormiston Academies Trust. The current principal started in September 2016.
- It is a smaller-than-average secondary school. The majority of pupils are White British. The school continues to have an increasing number of mid-year admissions of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English, having only recently arrived in the country.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- A very few pupils currently access off-site provision at a local college, Suffolk New College.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors undertook observations of learning or learning walks in 34 lessons, including some additional 'intervention' lessons. A number of these observations were undertaken jointly with school's senior leaders. Inspectors also visited tutor sessions, an assembly and the school's 'tea and toast' breakfast club.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, a number of nominated senior and middle leaders, governors, pupils and representatives of the Ormiston Academies Trust. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, planning documents, minutes of progress board meetings, external evaluations, safeguarding records, pupil progress information, and school policies and procedures.
- Inspectors also scrutinised work from science, mathematics, English, modern foreign languages and humanities.
- Inspectors reviewed 39 free-text responses from parents and 107 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also took account of 30 responses to staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors met formally with pupils during the inspection. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour as they arrived at school, during lunch and breaks and at the end of school.

Inspection team

Georgina Atkinson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Dominey	Ofsted Inspector
Carole Herman	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Whear	Ofsted Inspector

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M1 2WD

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