

Inspection of a good school: Stratford Upon Avon School

Alcester Road, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire CV37 9DH

Inspection dates:

26–27 November 2019

Outcome

Stratford Upon Avon School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Everyone at Stratford Upon Avon School is committed to ensuring that pupils feel safe, happy and successful. This is achieved very well. All staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils understand these expectations and the vast majority of pupils meet them. This means that pupils learn successfully in a calm and positive environment.

There is a very inclusive culture across the school. Pupils are valued and cared for. Because of the positive relationships between pupils and staff, pupils trust staff and readily seek out help and support when needed. Pupils say that bullying is not tolerated and is dealt with effectively if it happens. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy the wide range of activities and clubs on offer.

The school's aim is to 'engage, enthuse and inspire pupils'. Staff have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Pupils are challenged in their work. Early on in key stage 3, pupils are taught about different careers and routes through education. This helps them make the best subject choices. Teachers help pupils become confident, well-informed young adults who can express ideas and opinions. This means pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education, employment and training.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Pupils study a wide variety of subjects. They benefit from a carefully planned and organised curriculum. Leaders' careful checks on what is happening mean that they know where learning is really strong and where there is still some work to be done.

Curriculum leaders have worked hard to improve what is taught in all key stages. This work has been particularly effective in English, science and history. Teachers work well together to plan and map out what pupils need to know and remember over time. Teachers have a detailed knowledge of their subjects. They use this knowledge to design effective resources and to provide clear explanations for pupils. In most subjects, teachers ensure that pupils are taught the things they need to know, in the right order, so they can

remember this new knowledge and build on their learning. But this is not yet consistent enough. In addition, in some subjects, such as Spanish and physical education (PE), the planned curriculum could be more ambitious for some pupils.

There has been an increase in the last three years in the number of pupils who study French and Spanish at GCSE. The proportion of pupils who study the full set of English Baccalaureate subjects is now close to the national average.

Sixth-form students are confident, articulate and proud of their school. Subject plans in the sixth form build on students' prior knowledge and deepen and extend their learning. Students in the sixth form say that teachers make the lessons interesting because of their strong subject knowledge. Leaders ensure that high-quality information and careers advice are available to all pupils and sixth-form students. The school has a successful history of ensuring that pupils and students go on to further study, employment or training.

Teachers understand how to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Most staff use personalised plans, extra resources or different teaching techniques to make sure that the curriculum and individual lessons meet pupils' needs. However, this approach is not consistent enough.

Leaders' actions to improve pupils' behaviour have been highly successful. Pupils understand and follow the rules and rarely need reminding of what to do. This means that lessons are seldom disrupted by poor behaviour. It also enables pupils to enjoy calm and relaxing social experiences during break and lunchtimes. When issues arise, leaders ensure that pupils understand what they have done wrong and then provide them with support to improve their behaviour.

The pastoral support for pupils is really strong. College leaders work closely with form tutors, teachers, families and specialist support services to ensure that all pupils receive the right help and support they need to be happy, successful and settled in school. Pupils know that there is always someone they can trust to share any concerns with. Pupils also benefit from structured form periods, which help them to feel part of the whole school community. These sessions also reinforce the importance of the school's values, such as respecting and appreciating others' viewpoints. Older students act as positive role models to their younger peers during these times.

Pupils have many opportunities to take part in a wide range of additional experiences and activities. Every week, the school puts on nearly 60 clubs and events outside of lesson times. Year 7 pupils recently completed outdoor activities at a residential centre. Older pupils have had the opportunity to go on work experience in France. There is an annual exchange visit with a French school and there many other trips abroad, including to the USA. All pupils have taken part in theatre experiences.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding has a high profile in the school. Leaders make sure that staff training is up to date. They keep staff and pupils aware of safeguarding issues. All staff know what to do if they have concerns about pupils. The school involves outside agencies when it needs to and keeps careful records. Parents and carers say that their children feel safe at school. Pupils know who to go to if they need help and feel confident that their concerns will be dealt with. Leaders make all the required checks to ensure that staff working at the school are suitable.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Curriculum planning is thoughtful and detailed across the school, for example in English, science and history. Some plans are not ambitious enough in some subjects and key stages. Consequently, pupils do not do as well as they could in these subjects. Leaders need to ensure that pupils have sufficient challenge in what they will know, remember and do, appropriate to their ability throughout the curriculum.
- Curriculum plans are not delivered as effectively in some subjects as they are in others. As a result, pupils do not progressively build on what they have learned before. Leaders need to ensure that schemes of learning are delivered sequentially by all teaching staff. Leaders need to ensure that every subject delivers its curriculum as consistently as the strongest.
- Teachers understand how to meet pupils' needs. They have put together many resources and adapted their teaching to meet these needs. However, these resources and techniques are not used consistently. Consequently, some pupils do not benefit from these approaches. Leaders need to ensure that, where appropriate, the adapted resources and teaching techniques benefit pupils, including those with SEND.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 8–9 March 2016.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	137236
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10111740
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,510
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	240
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jane Price
Headteacher	Neil Wallace
Website	www.stratforduponavonschool.com
Date of previous inspection	8–9 March 2016

Information about this school

- The school uses three alternative providers: Stratford College, Leamington Lamp and Leamington Vineyard.

Information about this inspection

- We met with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, assistant headteachers, subject leaders, teachers, pupils and trustees. We scrutinised school documents, including curriculum plans and school development plans.
- We checked the school's single central record and the procedures for the recruitment of staff. We met with the designated safeguarding lead and checked pupils' records. We spoke to staff and pupils to find out how pupils are kept safe.
- We looked in detail at five subject areas. These were English, science, modern foreign languages, history and PE. We spoke to subject leaders, teachers and pupils about

these subjects, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.

- After the initial two days of inspection, Ofsted decided that it was necessary to return to the school to gather further evidence to complete the inspection. This additional inspection day was undertaken by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Inspection team

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