

Inspection of Staindrop Academy

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

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 October 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Staindrop Academy is a caring school. Pupils are proud to attend the school. They feel valued and respected by the staff. Relationships are at the core of the school's values. As one pupil said to an inspector, 'You can be friends with anyone really.' Pupils know that the staff have high expectations.

A calm and purposeful atmosphere in lessons allows pupils to focus on their work. Pupils can speak with confidence about what they are learning now and remember what has come before on their learning journey. One pupil described lessons to an inspector by saying, 'We are always learning something new.'

The positive environment in the school is reflected in how pupils behave and conduct themselves. Bullying is not tolerated in this school by staff or pupils. All the pupils spoken to feel they can approach and talk to any member of staff if they are worried or concerned about anything.

Pupils in this school are offered a broad range of opportunities that allow them to follow their interests and enjoy new experiences.

Staff invest time into every pupil's development to ensure they leave Staindrop well prepared for the next stage in their life.

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

Leaders and governors are focused on pupils. They have a clear drive to provide the best experience for all pupils. Leaders have put in place a curriculum which is broad and balanced. They have developed a curriculum that reflects the school values. The vast majority of leaders have planned and identified the knowledge they want pupils to learn over time. This helps pupils to learn in a supportive and well-ordered manner.

Leaders are fully aware that the subject of geography requires more attention to planning.

Teachers know their subjects in depth. They have a detailed understanding of the content and explain things well. Pupils trust the staff and understand that what is being taught is important. In some instances, pupils are moved on to more complex content too quickly.

Staff and leaders are supported through well-structured and comprehensive training. Leaders have ensured that all staff are aware of the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils' needs to plan activities that are accessible for every pupil in the class. The monitoring of the effectiveness of the plans to support the pupils in class is not yet fully developed. Teachers and support staff work closely together to support pupils.

Leaders and staff make their expectations for every pupil very clear. Clear behaviour policies mirror these high expectations. Pupils have real pride and a sense of belonging to the school. They see it as their school and take pride in the values and high level of care the school provides. Pupils believe that everyone in the school and society should be treated equally and with respect. In lessons, pupils listen attentively and engage with the teachers. Pupils are proud of their work and speak with detail about how they feel supported in their learning.

The school provides a vibrant range of wider opportunities for pupils to explore beyond their studies. Pupils enjoy the diverse clubs that are on offer. Leaders know which pupils have attended an activity. Pupils have a strong voice in the school. Leaders listen carefully to the pupils and work together to make the school better. Pupils deliver assemblies and provide support for each other.

Careers guidance is a strength of the school. The school ensures that all pupils receive well-informed, impartial advice that is guided by the 'Gatsby benchmarks'. Pupils have regular contact with a wide variety of education providers and are encouraged to make aspirational career choices. The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide students in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Pupils and staff feel supported. Leaders have created an environment that is built on collaboration. Leaders and governors do their best to ensure that staff feel supported and valued. Teachers appreciate the actions leaders take to allow them to focus on teaching by cutting out unnecessary extra workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive regular training and updates. The training helps staff to spot pupils that may be at risk of harm. All staff in the school are confident that they can always speak to leaders if they have any concerns. Pupils are confident that they can speak to any member of staff if they have any fears or worries.

Leaders follow up concerns and work with the relevant agencies in a timely manner to keep pupils safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In the vast majority of subjects, the curriculum is planned and sequenced in detail. However, in some instances, pupils are moved on to more complex concepts too quickly. Leaders need to ensure that teachers across all subject areas use assessment information consistently well to check how well pupils have learned the essential knowledge before moving on.

- Leaders and staff know the pupils very well. However, the overview of how the needs of specific groups of pupils are met in lessons and in additional opportunities the school offers does not provide the detail required for informing leaders' decisions. Leaders need to further refine the systems which track and monitor pupils both in lessons and when participating in additional activities.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 the school and 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	144991
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10200745
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	372
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Deller
Executive Headteacher	Kelvin Simpson
Website	www.staindropacademy.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The school is one of seven schools in the Advanced Learning Partnership Trust.
- The school currently uses one alternative provider, East Durham College.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, head of school and other members of the senior leadership team, subject leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. Inspectors also held meetings with leaders responsible for attendance, behaviour, personal development and careers, and the designated safeguarding lead.

- Meetings were held with the chair of the board of trustees and members of the local governing body. Inspectors also reviewed a sample of minutes from local governing body meetings.
- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: English, science, history and computing. They met with subject leaders, carried out lesson visits, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- An inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. The single central record was also scrutinised. Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding records.
- A range of documentation provided by the school was reviewed. This included the school improvement plan, curriculum documentation and school policies.
- Inspectors considered the views given in Ofsted's online surveys from 99 pupils and 25 members of staff. The 61 responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey were also considered. An inspector also met with three parents.

Inspection team

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