

Inspection of Stubbin Wood School

Common Lane, Shirebrook, Mansfield, Derbyshire NG20 8QF

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Early years provision	Good
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Sixth-form provision	Good
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Previous inspection grade

Ofsted has not previously inspected Stubbin Wood School as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel safe and are happy at Stubbin Wood School. They enjoy attending the school because of the strong relationships they have with the staff who care for them. One pupil said, 'Teachers are fabulous, and I don't know what we would do without them!'

Leaders have ensured that the school is a safe and caring environment for pupils with complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have high ambitions for all pupils. Leaders support all pupils to make a positive contribution to society. The 'kindness curriculum' promotes an attitude of thoughtfulness towards others. Other aspects of the curriculum are preparing pupils well for adult life and for employment.

Staff support pupils to communicate their needs in a variety of ways. They understand that some pupils may exhibit a range of behaviours associated with their additional needs. Staff respond well to occasions when pupils behave in ways that are not typical for them. This support helps to ensure that pupils feel well looked after. Most pupils said that behaviour is well managed by staff and that if there were any incidents of bullying, these would be dealt with effectively.

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

Leaders have structured the curriculum into three curriculum pathways. They have designed these to meet pupils' particular needs. Pupils who are able to access subjects from the national curriculum learn on the 'investigate' pathway. They develop their understanding of English and mathematics through a well-structured curriculum. The teaching of this newly planned curriculum has only recently begun. There is still work needed to ensure that the curriculum is consistently accessible for all the pupils.

The more informal curriculum, with 'engagement' and 'explore' pathways, provides good learning opportunities for pupils. This provision starts in early years and continues through to the sixth form. Pupils' sensory and communication needs are well provided for through these pathways.

The delivery of the curriculum enables pupils to build from their very early learning experiences. The school's early years foundation stage prepares children well for their next steps. Children in Nursery enjoy a welcoming and stimulating environment. Leaders have ensured that there is a rich range of learning opportunities available. The children enjoy learning about growing plants and about caring of animals, such as the snails, called Brian and Gary. As children move from Nursery into Reception, they are well supported to develop their understanding and skills across the early years curriculum.

Leaders have prioritised reading. Teachers use phonics to teach children to read when they first start at the school. Teachers use a structured programme of

teaching phonics for as long as is necessary. This ensures that pupils are supported to become confident readers as soon as they are able.

Pupils receive a lot of help to improve their language and communication. Staff are skilled at helping pupils to get better at explaining what they want and need. Pupils learn to do this by using objects or a picture exchange system. The support that pupils receive to communicate their needs helps to prevent them from becoming frustrated. This in turn helps them to remain calm and focused on their learning.

Leaders have focused on providing experiences that will have the greatest impact on pupils. Therapies such as those involving use of a trampoline or a hydrotherapy pool provide good opportunities to develop pupils' interaction, communication and physical health.

Students in the sixth form enjoy learning through a personal progress curriculum. They study functional skills, learn about employment and prepare for independent living. They enjoy visits to different shops, where they learn how to use money and bank cards. Some students benefit from a range of work-experience placements and supported internships. This helps to make them ready for their adult lives.

Leaders ensure that learning is not limited to the classroom. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the many different trips they had been on. These included local visits, as well as international travel to South Africa. They also talked about the responsibilities they have for decision-making in the school and the upcoming enterprise competition at the University of Derby.

There is an expanding range of lunchtime clubs for pupils, including for sport and dancing. These clubs broaden pupils' learning and support their physical development. Pupils also spoke about 'kindness keepers' and how they are encouraged to show kindness to others. The new 'identity' curriculum teaches pupils how to understand themselves and others. This curriculum also develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding and prepares them for life in Britain.

Staff appreciate the support that the school leaders give them. They say that leaders care about their well-being and are considerate of their workload. Senior leaders provide valuable support to staff to help them in their various roles.

Some parents and carers who responded to the survey and those who spoke to inspectors expressed a desire for more communication from leaders. Parents want more regular and detailed information about their child's progress at school, for example.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff understand their responsibility to use their knowledge of the pupils to identify any safeguarding concerns. They know to report any such concerns immediately. The close relationship that the school's early help team has with families enables them to provide comprehensive support. Those responsible for leading safeguarding are quick to act, involving other agencies when it is appropriate. They keep accurate records and have appropriate procedures in place to manage any allegations. There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Pupils are taught how to stay safe, including when online and when they are out in the local community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that the well-structured formal curriculum has been implemented by teachers in a way that all pupils can understand. In some lessons, pupils have not been taught the prior knowledge they need in order to understand new ideas. While leaders are ambitious for pupils, they have not fully considered the impact of teachers introducing concepts that pupils are not yet able to understand. Leaders need to ensure that teachers' implementation of the school's formal curriculum is accessible to all pupils who study it, to help them build up their knowledge over time.
- Some parents who expressed a view feel that leaders can do more to communicate effectively with them. These parents believe that a range of communication opportunities are lacking, and so feel disconnected from their child's learning experience. Leaders need to ensure that communication from the school ensures that parents have the opportunity to know how their child is progressing at the school.

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	147627
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10212003
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	216
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	25
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Elvio Gramignano
Principal	Sarah Baker (Executive Principal) Rachel Watson (Associate Principal)
Website	www.stubbinwood.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Stubbin Wood School is a special school for pupils aged two to 19 who have complex needs, including severe learning difficulties, autism spectrum disorder, visual impairment, multi-sensory impairment, and multiple and profound learning difficulties.
- Pupils study one of three curriculum pathways, depending on their needs.
- The school has increased in size since it converted to become an academy in 2020.
- The school uses one unregistered provider of alternative provision.

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 had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, communication, mathematics, science and physical development (including physical education). For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at individual pupils' education, health and care plans and checked these against the school's provision.
- Inspectors spoke to the leader of early years provision and visited the early years foundation stage area.
- Inspectors spoke to the leaders of the sixth form and visited the sixth-form area.
- Inspectors heard pupils in different year groups read books.
- Inspectors met with representatives of the governing body and the multi-academy trust and spoke to the school's improvement adviser.
- Inspectors considered a wide variety of school documents, including the school development plan.
- Inspectors took note of the responses received to Ofsted Parent View and considered the results of the Ofsted staff and pupil surveys. Inspectors met with several groups of pupils to gather their views.
- To judge the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors read the school's relevant policies, scrutinised the single central record, checked the school's procedures for the safe recruitment of staff and met with the safeguarding team. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils.

Inspection team

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