

Inspection of Stokesley School

Station Road, Stokesley, North Yorkshire TS9 5AL

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 June 2022

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

What is it like to attend this school?

High expectations from leaders and all staff are the norm at Stokesley School. These are reflected simply in the school's motto: 'Being the best we can be'. Pupils know that this is the minimum expectation of them. They behave well and are attentive in lessons. There is a respectful warmth between teachers and pupils. Post-16 students refer to the positive relationships that they have with their subject teachers. This influences students' decisions to stay on for sixth form.

Pupils benefit from excellent pastoral care. They are safe and attend well. The 'Lighthouse' provides exceptional support for those pupils who need it. Bullying is rare. Pupils who are anti-bullying ambassadors work with leaders to tackle bullying. However, a small minority of pupils are not always comfortable reporting bullying when it occurs. Some victims of bullying would like better support.

Opportunities to get involved in wider school life are plentiful. The student leadership group regularly organises fundraising activities. Sixth-form mentors support younger pupils in school. Pupils are particularly excited about their upcoming performance in 'We will rock you'. The debate club, the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme and the gender equality group are just a handful of the wide range of extra-curricular clubs on offer.

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

Leaders, with the support of the trust, have improved the school. Senior leadership has strengthened as a result of shrewd professional development. Leaders have been upskilled. They undertake their roles effectively. The local governing body helps to keep leaders focused on the most important matters. Together, they have prioritised pupils' well-being and strengthening the curriculum. Leaders have maintained their ambitious vision for the school through the COVID-19 pandemic. Their effective leadership is bearing fruit. Pupils receive a good education.

Senior leaders have worked with subject leaders to design an effective curriculum. Pupils' knowledge builds sequentially over time. Teachers set high standards. They have excellent subject knowledge and push their pupils academically. For example, pupils are challenged to use subject-specific vocabulary accurately. Sometimes, teachers do not consistently emphasise and revisit the most important knowledge in lessons. When this is the case, some pupils do not remember this knowledge.

Assessment is well used by teachers. They pick up when pupils have misunderstood something. Teachers adapt their teaching to address any gaps in pupils' knowledge. However, subject leaders are not consistently making good use of assessment information to help them identify where the curriculum is having a positive impact on pupils' learning, and where it could be improved.

Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is strong. Pupils with SEND are swiftly identified. Teachers get meaningful information from leaders about pupils' needs, so that they can support them effectively. Some pupils arrive in Year 7 unable to read fluently. They are quickly given the right support to help them to catch up rapidly. As a result, pupils grow in confidence with reading.

Behaviour rarely interrupts learning. When it does, it is swiftly tackled. Leaders have effective systems to track individual pupils' behaviour and attendance. This helps leaders to get pupils the support that they need to attend regularly and behave well.

Leaders place a high priority on pastoral care. The pastoral team has been expanded to ensure that pupils get effective support. Pupils value the efforts of staff. The school's 'Lighthouse' provision is particularly impressive. Expertly trained staff provide high levels of bespoke support to pupils. This has contributed to improvements in pupils' mental health and well-being.

A wide range of extra-curricular activities nurture pupils' talents and interests effectively. There is a strong offer for those with an interest in science or engineering. The 'LIFE' curriculum helps to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. They have meaningful opportunities to debate important ethical dilemmas. Pupils get valuable advice on their future career options.

Sixth-form students are well informed about their university choices. Some students would like more information on other options, such as apprenticeships. All students can access support to help them enhance their applications for future study. For example, there is a well-established group which helps students who want to study medicine when they leave school. Most students go on to study at Russell Group universities.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the support of senior leaders, who give genuine consideration to staff workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are vigilant. They spot when pupils might need help and protection. Safeguarding leaders ensure that pupils who might be at risk of harm are given the right support. This includes engaging with external agencies as required. Actions taken by safeguarding leaders are timely and effective.

Governors place a high emphasis on safeguarding. They keep leaders sharply focused on this priority. Careful analysis by leaders identifies emerging contextual safeguarding issues. Leaders use this to adapt the LIFE curriculum to inform pupils about the risks that they may face in the community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not consistently emphasise and revisit the most important knowledge that pupils need to know and remember. As a result, some pupils do not have secure knowledge over time of some subject content. Leaders should ensure that teachers consistently support pupils to embed important knowledge in their long-term memory.
- Some leaders are not consistently making good use of assessment information to review the effectiveness of the curriculum in their subjects. In some cases, this limits their effectiveness in refining and strengthening the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that assessment information is used consistently across subjects to further develop the curriculum.

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	141930
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10229099
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	1144
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	162
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Marc Mason
Headteacher	Hannah Millett
Website	www.stokesleyschool.org
Date of previous inspection	6 and 7 November 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is one of three schools in the Areté Learning Trust.
- A very small number of pupils access home-hospital tuition.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders over the course of the inspection. The lead inspector held a meeting with the chief executive officer (CEO) and deputy CEO of the trust.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with the chair of the board of trustees and one other trustee. He also met with the chair of the local governing body and four other governors, as well as reviewing documentation relating to governance, including minutes from local governing body meetings.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, geography, science, physical education and design technology. 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 met with other senior and faculty leaders to discuss the curriculum. They considered curriculum plans and other planning documentation in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors visited a sample of sixth-form lessons accompanied by a senior leader.
- An inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator and visited lessons and the Lighthouse provision to look at the support given to pupils with SEND.
- To inspect the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, the lead inspector met with the headteacher and the designated safeguarding lead. He reviewed safeguarding records and the school's single central record. Inspectors spoke with staff and pupils about their safeguarding knowledge.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for personal development and visited tutor sessions.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and students formally throughout the inspection and spoke with them informally at social times and in lessons.
- An inspector held telephone conversations with staff from two local authorities about home-hospital tuition.
- A range of school documents were reviewed, including the school's self-evaluation and the school improvement plan.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, parents and staff given through Ofsted's questionnaires.

Inspection team

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