

Inspection of Stanborough School

Lemsford Lane, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire AL8 6YR

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 January 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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?

Pupils achieve well at Stanborough. Leaders have created a culture where the school's value of 'success for all' is what pupils experience in most subjects. Pupils, including those with special educational needs/and or disabilities (SEND), are prepared well for their next steps. This is because pupils meet the high ambitions expected of them to achieve well.

Pupils behave well. They know and understand what leaders expect of them. On occasions, a small number take the opportunity to behave less well when staff are not around. Pupils know staff will help if they have a worry or issue. They benefit from a range of effective support services, such as counselling and well-being support. Pupils receive help to resolve any issues of bullying when they do rarely occur. This helps pupils to feel happy and safe.

Difference is celebrated. Pupils recently participated in a cultural celebration day where they were able to celebrate their own cultural heritage. Pupils talk with pride about the role of both the ethnic minority and LGBT+ groups and the range of pupil leadership opportunities offered. Most pupils feel they have a voice through groups such as this. Groups that leaders listen to.

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

Leaders have redesigned the curriculum so that it is academically ambitious. This ambition is reflected in the fact that almost all pupils now enter the subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). These subjects support future study or employment in a range of fields. Pupils study a broad and balanced curriculum, which enables them to pursue their talents and interests. This includes the sixth form, where a consortium arrangement allows students to study a wide range of courses. Pupils' depth of knowledge is further developed through a programme of trips and visits, including to other countries.

Leaders have ensured that in many subjects, the curriculum is planned well to build pupils' knowledge over time. For example, in mathematics, pupils learn the basics of algebra before applying it in a more complex way to shape. In a small minority of subjects, pupils do not learn as well, because the curriculum taught does not connect and build pupils' knowledge as well.

Teachers present subject matter clearly, promoting appropriate discussion about what is being taught. They check what pupils know and adapt their teaching as necessary to meet pupils' needs. Pupils with SEND, have their needs accurately identified. Adaptations for these pupils are then recorded in SEND plans. Teachers follow these plans to support pupils to access the same curriculum. As a result, most pupils achieve well, including in the sixth form, where students often get more bespoke and tailored support with their studies.

Staff quickly identify pupils who struggle with reading. Pupils follow an effective programme that helps them catch up. Pupils learn the phonics and reading knowledge they need to become more confident, fluent readers.

Leaders have set clear and high expectations for behaviour. Pupils are clear that disruption or discriminatory behaviour will not be tolerated. As a result, pupils' learning is largely disruption free. However, a small number of pupils do not make the right behaviour choices on the rare occasions they are unsupervised.

Leaders ensure that there is a wide range of opportunities for positive personal development. Pupils value the range of pupil leadership opportunities, such as student council and 'form reps'. They appreciate the diverse range of extra-curricular opportunities. This includes robotics club, school teams and international trips. Pupils learn about values, such as mutual respect and tolerance, through a well-planned programme of life skills, assemblies and tutor time. Most pupils treat each other with tolerance and respect.

There is a coherent and well-planned programme of careers education from Year 7 to Year 13. This is enhanced by specific workshops and valuable work experience placements. Pupils get the individual careers guidance they need to make well-informed choices about their next steps, including support with university applications in the sixth form.

Leaders have taken clear and effective action to ensure that the school has improved since the last inspection. Governors now effectively challenge and support leaders. Staff feel that leaders listen to them with regard to workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have received appropriate training to be able to identify safeguarding needs.

Pupils can report concerns in a variety of ways. They have trusted adults who will act on concerns appropriately. Leaders work effectively with external agencies, such as social workers, to secure the support families need.

Pupils learn to identify risk and recognise harmful behaviours, such as sexual harassment, through a well-planned programme of life skills.

The single central record is diligently maintained. Effective safer recruitment procedures are in place as well as suitable procedures for dealing with allegations against staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have redeveloped the curriculum, to ensure that a series of lessons contribute well to delivering the planned curriculum intent. However, this is not fully consistent across all subjects. As a result, in a small number of subject areas, pupils do not secure key knowledge well enough or achieve as well as they might. Leaders need to ensure that across all subjects, the series of lessons contribute effectively to the delivery of the planned curriculum so that pupils retain important knowledge and achieve consistently well.
- Most pupils behave well and want to engage with learning. However, a small number of pupils do not manage their own behaviour well enough. This leads to some instances where pupils' behaviour falls below leaders' expectations, particularly where pupils are unsupervised. Leaders need to ensure that they continue to develop pupils' ability to manage their own behaviour so that they behave consistently well at all times.

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.

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	137847
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10255115
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	1129
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	158
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Guya Rabindra Persaud
Headteacher	Merry John
Website	www.stanborough.herts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	30 April and 1 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Stanborough school meets the requirements of the Baker clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, science, languages, history and art. For each deep dive, inspectors met with curriculum leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors conducted meetings with the headteacher, local governing body, a representative of the local authority and leaders of provision for pupils with SEND, behaviour and attendance, sixth form, personal development and safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss the use of alternative provision and the small number of pupils on part-time timetables. An inspector spoke to the registered alternative providers that pupils attend.
- Inspectors explored the school's safeguarding culture through viewing safeguarding records and procedures, meeting with a range of pupils and staff and talking to safeguarding leaders.
- Inspectors considered the 388 responses and 243 free-text responses made by parents to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered 85 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and 211 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

James Chester, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Peter Whear	Ofsted Inspector
Victoria Hearn	Ofsted Inspector
Cathy Barr	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Sutton	Ofsted Inspector

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