

Inspection of Stansfield Academy

Falcon Road, Exeter EX2 7LB

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 January 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Stansfield Academy caters for pupils who have found it difficult to learn successfully prior to starting at the school. Staff aim to help pupils to address the reasons for this, so that they can re-engage positively with education.

Pupils feel happy and safe at the school. They learn in small groups and trust the adults around them. Pupils say that their behaviour has improved since attending the school because staff help them to address any conflicts with their peers. Any bullying is addressed effectively.

There is an emphasis on learning outside of the classroom. For example, some pupils are involved in a project to repair a set of bicycles. They are looking forward to cycling together in the woods. Some pupils reflected positively on what they had learned from a recent visit to a local museum. Through experiences such as these, pupils develop motivation and self-confidence.

For primary-aged pupils, there is a necessary focus on learning to read and developing the social skills needed to get along better with others. However, the secondary phase does not prepare pupils well enough for a return to mainstream education, or for success in their examinations at the end of key stage 4.

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

Leaders recognise that the curriculum offer has been too narrow. They have begun to address this. However, there is still some way to go before the curriculum provides pupils in each key stage with the range of knowledge that they need. For example, pupils do not learn how to use information technology, and some do not learn the full range of sciences.

Leaders have strengthened the teaching of early reading for the youngest pupils. Pupils in key stage 2 practise their reading every day. Their attitudes towards reading are improving as they gain confidence. Leaders have not prioritised reading to the same degree for older pupils. They have not yet implemented their plans to provide a phonics curriculum for those who need it in the secondary phase.

Pupils are further disadvantaged by weak curriculum planning in some subjects. For example, in English, pupils do not benefit from effective sequences of learning to help them to build up their knowledge and skills. Pupils are not well prepared for the examinations they are entered for in Year 11 because the curriculum does not ensure that they learn everything they need to know.

All of the pupils who attend the school have an identified special educational need and/or disability (SEND). However, leaders do not take a systematic approach to assessing pupils' needs when they first join the school. This causes unnecessary delay before the gaps in pupils' knowledge or personal development are addressed.

Many pupils have a history of poor attendance. In some cases, pupils' attendance has improved as a result of leaders' support and challenge. However, attendance remains low across the school. Leaders recognise this and are proactive in their response to absence.

The atmosphere in school is generally settled. However, there are examples of uncooperative, sometimes physical poor behaviour, which disrupts the learning of others. As a result of the school's work, some pupils make significant improvements to their behaviour.

Increasingly, leaders work with families and local leaders in education to reintegrate pupils into mainstream schools. The careers programme helps older pupils to secure further education places or apprenticeships. Leaders make connections with local employers, leading to valuable experiences for pupils. The school meets the requirements of the Baker clause.

In personal, social and health education (PSHE), pupils gain insights which will help them to develop healthy and respectful relationships. Pupils accept that everyone is different. However, they do not learn enough about different faiths. This limits their understanding of others and their opportunity to reflect on their own beliefs.

Leaders, including from the trust, recognise the ways in which the school could be more ambitious for pupils. They are taking steps to address the instability in staffing which has made it challenging for the school to make more rapid progress. Staff are motivated to improve the school. They report that leaders are mindful of their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have a good understanding of the complex challenges faced by some pupils and their families. They signpost useful services and arrange early help. Leaders work closely with safeguarding partners to keep pupils safe and resolve any conflicts in their lives.

Pupils feel safe in school. There are adults that they trust with their worries. They say that the school helps them to address their problems and any difficulties in their relationships with their peers. Staff meet regularly to discuss and review pupils' well-being. They readily share any concerns and these are followed up appropriately.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is too narrow in some respects. This means that the curriculum does not provide pupils with the breadth of knowledge that they need. Leaders should take steps to offer a sufficiently broad range of subjects.
- Leaders have not thought enough about the curriculum content choices and sequence of learning in some subjects. Where this is the case, pupils are not well prepared for examinations at the end of key stage 4. Leaders should provide a well-designed curriculum in each subject, which helps pupils to build up their knowledge.
- In the secondary phase, there is not a sharp focus on making sure that all pupils can read accurately and fluently. Leaders have not implemented their plans to provide a phonics curriculum for pupils in the early stages of reading. This limits the progress that pupils make. Leaders must ensure that secondary-aged pupils who have fallen behind with their reading catch up quickly.
- When pupils join the school, leaders' approach to assessing their needs is not systematic enough. Leaders do not precisely identify the gaps that exist in pupils' academic or personal development. Leaders should assess pupils' needs accurately to ensure that these are met consistently well.

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	146734
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10256580
Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Academy alternative provision sponsored
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	70
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Christian Jenkins
Principal	Tessa Claridge
Website	www.wavemat.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Stansfield Academy opened in November 2018 as part of the WAVE multi-academy trust. When its predecessor school, Schools Company Central Devon Academy, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- The school provides short-term placements for pupils who require further support to access education in mainstream school. In addition, the school caters for pupils who have been excluded from local schools. The school supports pupils to reintegrate into mainstream education, or progress on to further education or training.
- All of the pupils attending the school have an identified special educational need and/or disability.
- There are currently no pupils in the early years, or key stage 1 provision.
- The principal and executive principal both joined the school in 2022.
- The school uses four unregistered alternative providers.
- 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 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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, executive principal, the special educational needs coordinator and members of the school improvement team from the multi-academy trust. The lead inspector met with one trustee and a representative from the school's local monitoring hub. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority on the telephone.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject 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.
- In order to inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector scrutinised the single central record of adults working in the school and met with the principal, who is also the designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors spoke with pupils and staff about the culture of safeguarding in the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online surveys for parents and staff.

Inspection team

Lydia Pride, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tracy Hannon

Ofsted Inspector

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