

Inspection of Stone Lodge School

Stone Lodge Road, Dartford DA2 6FY

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 October 2023

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

The headteacher of this school is Gavin Barnett. The school is part of Endeavour MAT, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Charlie Guthrie and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Suki Mattu.

What is it like to attend this school?

Stone Lodge is a highly inclusive school where pupils and sixth-form students thrive. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are happy and safe here. Pupils know that adults will always help them if they have a problem. Staff go the extra mile to support pupils' well-being. As one pupil said during the inspection, 'This school is like coming home'.

The school has high expectations of both pupils' behaviour and achievement. The school's mantra of 'warm and strict' is played out in daily life. Pupils respond well to well-established routines, high staff visibility and clear rules. As a result, behaviour is usually faultless. Pupils work hard in lessons and value their teachers. Skilled staff support pupils with SEND well and are ambitious that all pupils achieve highly.

Pupils enjoy attending a range of extra-curricular clubs and activities, such as art, sport and musical theatre. These help to develop pupils' talents well. As the school has expanded over recent years, so too have opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities. Roles such as student leaders and school council representatives are now making a positive impact in the school and in the wider community.

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

The school has an impressive determination to make sure that all pupils, irrespective of background, achieve well and succeed in life. Staff at all levels share this ambition and work tirelessly to make it a reality. Very high proportions of pupils study the English Baccalaureate at key stage 4. Trust staff and those responsible for governance support school leaders extremely well in managing the complexities of this rapidly growing school.

The school has prioritised creating a high-quality, ambitious and carefully sequenced curriculum in each subject. Leaders have thought carefully about how pupils should build on what they already know. In most subjects, pupils remember the important knowledge well. However, in just a couple of subjects, some pupils have not grasped the basics and do not recall the key learning. This means that they do not have firm foundations on which to build their learning further.

Most teachers have good subject knowledge. Where teachers are not subject specialists, school leaders support them with intensive training and coaching. This means that less experienced teachers quickly gain the necessary skills to teach effectively. Teachers are adept at asking skilful questions and explaining new ideas clearly. They check regularly and address any misconceptions that pupils may have. All pupils, including those with SEND feel confident to contribute during lessons. Pupils who struggle with reading are given extra help. This means they gain confidence and increased fluency. Students in the sixth form are well supported in

their courses. Their current achievement is strong. Students speak highly of their teachers and of the pastoral support they receive.

The school's personal development programme is well embedded in most areas. A few aspects are developing further, in line with the growth in pupil numbers. For example, while the school has plans to expand the sixth-form enrichment offer, it is currently relatively limited. Through the school's 'successful lives' programme, pupils are taught about healthy relationships, managing risk and staying safe, including when online. There is a focus on pupils' physical and mental well-being. Pupils understand the benefits of being active, of getting enough sleep and of eating healthily. Pupils and sixth-form students say that it is very rare to hear disrespectful language in the school. They are clear that people's differences should be accepted. The school offers appropriate careers information, advice and guidance, including a growing work experience offer. Pupils feel well-prepared for their next steps and for life in modern Britain.

Pupils' behaviour and attendance are strong, including in the sixth form. The school sets firm expectations about how pupils should conduct themselves around the building and in lessons. It is rare to see poor behaviour. When this happens, the school acts swiftly and staff will support the pupil to make better choices. Pupils enjoy warm, respectful relationships with their teachers who show them exactly what is expected by the school. In turn, pupils are polite, attentive and mature.

Leaders at all levels are unwavering in their drive for consistently high standards across all areas of the school. They engage exceptionally well with staff who are unanimously proud and pleased to work here. Staff appreciate that leaders are always approachable and are mindful of their workload and well-being. Staff place great value on the excellent training they receive, noting how much more confident it makes them in their roles.

Parents endorse the work of the school. Most feel that their child is happy, safe and learning well. One parent, summing up the views of many, commented, 'Staff have gone above and beyond in supporting my child, I would recommend this school to anyone.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a couple of subjects, the curriculum does not support pupils' retention of key knowledge. This means that some pupils do not have a firm base on which to incorporate more complex learning. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum in

these subjects supports pupils to remember and re-use the important knowledge so that they have firm foundations on which to build further.

- A few aspects of the personal development curriculum are not yet fully embedded because they have developed gradually as year groups have moved through the school. This means that some pupils and students may not receive a personal development programme that is as fulsome as it could be. Now that all year groups are in place, leaders should ensure that a full personal development curriculum offer is in place for all pupils and sixth-form students.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the definition of children in need of help and protection; pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's pupil premium funding (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	147059
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10296524
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive (non-selective)
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	937
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	29
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of local governing board	Sara Kemsley
Chair of trust	Suki Mattu
CEO of the trust	Charlie Guthrie
Headteacher	Gavin Barnett
Website	www.stonelodgeschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of Endeavour MAT (multi-academy trust.) The trust runs four primary and secondary schools in the Dartford area.
- The school opened in 2019 for Year 7 pupils and moved into its new building in 2022. The school has grown, taking on a further year group each year. There are now pupils from Year 7 to Year 11.
- The school currently has a very small number of Year 12 and Year 13 students in the sixth form. This number is planned to increase from 2024.

- The headteacher has been in post since 2019.
- The school currently uses two registered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the third routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with school leaders, including the headteacher, senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and subject leaders.
- The lead inspector spoke to the trust's chief executive officer.
- The lead inspector spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- The lead inspector met with three members of the local governing body and with a trustee.
- Deep dives were carried out in these subjects: English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, history, art and design and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils, and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive safeguarding culture that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors gathered evidence to explore the impact of pupils' behaviour and attendance, and the school's wider curriculum.
- An inspector spoke to the alternative provider used by the school.
- Inspectors talked to pupils and staff throughout the inspection to gain their views about the school. This included the views of pupils and staff submitted via Ofsted's confidential surveys.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents submitted via Ofsted's parent survey.

Inspection team

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