

# Inspection of Stroud High School

Beards Lane, Cainscross Road, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL5 4HF

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Inspection dates: 7 and 8 November 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Outstanding**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Sixth-form provision

**Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Mark McShane. This school is part of Stroud High School trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is chaired by Dylan Davis and Geoff Marshall.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Stroud High School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Stroud High School to be outstanding, before it opened as an academy.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils thrive at this exceptional school. They relish their learning and the extensive opportunities they have for their personal development. The school is determined that pupils experience 'the exceptional every day', and they do. Parents value the high quality of education and care that their children receive.

There is a strong culture of respect and inclusion. Pupils celebrate each other's differences and play a positive role in creating a tolerant community. They cooperate exceptionally well and actively support each other's well-being. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. Their conduct is exemplary.

Pupils are highly active citizens. They make significant contributions to the school and the local community. Pupils organise events to promote diversity across the school, for example. Some pupils help in local primary schools, while others lead groups, such as the well-being committee. Pupils gain leadership skills and use these to make a positive contribution to society.

Pupils benefit from an extensive range of opportunities to inspire and foster their talents and interests. The school ensures that there are no barriers to pupils participating in these. For example, all pupils sing in the choir, play sport and participate in science, technology, engineering and maths activities when they join the school. The school tailors its programmes to nurture each pupil as an individual.

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

The school has a highly ambitious vision for its pupils. The curriculum is academically demanding. For example, all pupils study two modern foreign languages in Years 8 and 9 and many go on to study languages in key stage 4. In the sixth form, study programmes are tailored carefully to students' needs. The school has planned the curriculum with precision. Pupils consistently build new learning on secure foundations. As a result, they achieve exceptionally well. Sixth-form students are prepared exceptionally well for their future destinations.

The school ensures that the curriculum is taught well. Teachers have a firm and common understanding of what pupils should learn, and when. They present information clearly and ensure that pupils use subject-specific vocabulary well. Pupils acquire a detailed understanding of how each subject works. For example, pupils learn how scientific knowledge advances and how scientists put theory into practice. The school ensures that pupils read sophisticated texts. This extends their learning in each subject.

Pupils learn new ideas confidently. They acquire an impressive depth of knowledge and skills, which they apply fluently and independently. For instance, in art, pupils develop their skills in painting and photography. They combine these to produce powerful personal work. In all subjects, pupils' understanding is carefully checked.

The school accurately identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Both the curriculum and the teaching of it are adapted well to meet these needs. Consequently, pupils with SEND achieve highly.

Pupils behave very well, both inside and outside the classroom. There is a calm, purposeful atmosphere that pervades the school. Pupils understand and welcome the school's high expectations of their conduct. On the rare occasions that pupils' behaviour falls short of these expectations, staff take intelligent and effective action.

The personal development programme is planned and organised exceptionally well. It complements the academic curriculum, for example by developing pupils' resilience. In the sixth form, the programme extends students' independence and character. Pupils of all ages learn how to manage their well-being and about healthy relationships. The school keeps its personal, social and health curriculum under close review to ensure that pupils are prepared well for the future.

Pupils have a strong voice in the school. They are empowered to champion important causes, such as protecting the environment. Pupils learn how to discuss and debate ideas in considered ways. They contribute to national and international democratic events. Pupils learn how to serve others. For example, many sixth-form students are mentors to younger pupils.

Pupils, including students in the sixth form, receive very useful careers education. They consider unbiased information about potential next steps, including technical apprenticeships. The school evaluates its careers programme carefully and ensures that pupils have meaningful encounters with the world of work.

The school ensures that staff receive high-quality professional development. Teachers continue to refine their subject knowledge and teaching expertise. Leaders ensure that staff learn 'from and with' each other to further enhance the school's effectiveness. Trustees and leaders engage constructively with staff to manage workload. They are very considerate of staff well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136874
<b>Local authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10267903
<b>Type of school</b>	Grammar (selective)
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,098
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	276
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Dylan Davis and Geoff Marshall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark McShane
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stroudhigh.gloucs.sch.uk">www.stroudhigh.gloucs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- This is a grammar school for girls in Stroud. The admissions policy is selective. Boys are admitted in the sixth form only.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has changed its sixth-form arrangements. It no longer shares its sixth form with a neighbouring school.
- The school is a single academy trust.
- 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.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, art and design, and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some 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 culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to the online surveys for pupils and staff.

## Inspection team

James Oldham, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Helen Kerr	Ofsted Inspector
Jon Jones	Ofsted Inspector
Sandy Hayes	Ofsted Inspector

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