

Stokesley School

Station Road, Stokesley, North Yorkshire TS9 5AL

Inspection dates

6–7 November 2018

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|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Overall effectiveness | Requires improvement |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Requires improvement |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Requires improvement |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Requires improvement |
| Outcomes for pupils | Requires improvement |
| 16 to 19 study programmes | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Over time, and in some instances currently, the progress, attainment and attendance of disadvantaged pupils lags behind other pupils in the school and nationally.
- Leaders, including governors, have not been strategic enough or used additional funding effectively to accelerate the progress and improve levels of attainment for disadvantaged pupils.
- There are weaknesses in the monitoring and recording of attendance and behaviour incidents. The recent increase in the use of fixed-term exclusions is of some concern.
- Middle leaders are passionate and know their subject areas well. Despite this, they are not contributing consistently well enough to iron out the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement because it is not consistently good. Teaching is variable across the school. Some teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are simply not high enough. As a result, outcomes for too many pupils are not high enough, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and boys.
- While there are some marginal improvements evident, attendance continues to be too low and persistent absence too high. The actions taken to improve attendance and reduce persistent absenteeism, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, have not brought about sufficient improvement. As a result, some pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should. This is having a negative impact on their achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher provides strong leadership that affords a firm ground for the school to improve.
- The chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust is resolutely determined to support school leaders and quickly bring about improvements.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They are respectful towards each other and visitors.
- Governors and trustees are well aware of their respective roles and responsibilities. They bring a wide set of skills. They are sincere in their approach to provide the best possible education for the young people who attend the school.
- Provision in the sixth form is good. Outcomes are a strength of the provision, and the teaching students receive is highly effective.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve and strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - continuing efforts to refine pupils' records and sharpening monitoring systems, especially those linked to behaviour and attendance
 - continuing to strengthen strategic improvement planning, particularly to improve disadvantaged pupils' outcomes and attendance, so that such planning leads to swifter, more demonstrable improvements in the quality of teaching, pupils' outcomes and attendance
 - ensuring that all middle leaders are suitably trained, so that they develop the skills necessary to improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning in their subject areas.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, so that it secures consistently good outcomes for pupils across the curriculum, especially for those pupils who are disadvantaged and boys, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have consistently high expectations of all pupils and what they are capable of achieving
 - ensuring that teachers use the information provided by pupil assessments and completed work to plan learning that challenges pupils sufficiently and tackles misunderstandings or errors swiftly
 - making sure that teachers use questioning skilfully and effectively to develop, extend and deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding and to tackle misconceptions routinely
 - providing further opportunities for teachers to improve their practice by learning from the stronger practice that exists in the school, among the trust and in wider partnerships.
- Continue the drive to improve the attendance and behaviour of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, by:
 - closely monitoring pupils' trends in behaviour and rates of absence
 - ensuring that all staff have a clear understanding of the barriers that the most vulnerable pupils face
 - evaluating existing strategies and changing or amending swiftly, as and when necessary.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken, in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Despite their ambitious vision of improving pupils' educational experiences and their high expectations, leaders' actions have not brought about sufficient improvement in some areas of the school. This is especially the case for disadvantaged pupils' outcomes and the attendance and outcomes for boys.
- Leaders and governors do not shy away from their responsibilities. As a result, they acknowledge that additional funding, even after the previous inspection, is not being used strategically or effectively enough. The use of funding has failed to bring about the rapid improvements needed to secure better outcomes and attendance for disadvantaged pupils. While current pupils are showing some signs of improvement, the overall progress made by this group of pupils in the school remains low.
- The approaches implemented by leaders to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils are too variable. This is because strategies lack coherence and sufficient focus to bring about the acceleration needed in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, particularly of those who are persistently absent.
- At the previous inspection, it was identified that further work was necessary to improve the attendance and reduce persistent absenteeism of pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged. Although some strategies are having an impact, the leadership of attendance is inconsistent. Some of the identified approaches to improving attendance are not having the desired impact. This is because strategies lack clarity and actions are not precisely linked to improving pupils' attendance based on their individual barriers.
- Leaders have implemented a plan to address the underachievement, especially of boys, in particular year groups. Staff have also accessed training to provide them with appropriate strategies to use in their teaching. While there is some evidence that teachers are using different strategies to secure better outcomes for boys, the use is inconsistent. Current assessment information for boys within the school supports this view, as it also demonstrates inconsistencies.
- Since the previous inspection, there are evident inconsistencies and variabilities in the quality of teaching across the school. The extent to which the quality of teaching secures good progress now varies between subject areas.
- Senior leaders are taking a more logical approach to reviewing the quality of teaching and, as a result, have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses across the school. For example, during the inspection the vast majority of observations were conducted jointly with a senior leader. All were accurate in pinpointing the strengths and weaknesses in teaching observed. However, senior and middle leaders are not evaluating sufficiently the impact of teaching and learning over time, particularly on the progress of identified underachieving groups of pupils.
- The actions of leaders to improve outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are leading to variable outcomes, particularly for those pupils who require additional support. Although systems are in place, there is a lack of

rigour in relation to the quality assurance of these systems. The extent to which planned support meets pupils' needs is, therefore, inconsistent.

- The extent to which middle leaders are having an impact on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes is variable. As a result, pupils' experiences across and within subjects is inconsistent. Although enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their roles and responsibilities, middle leaders are not demonstrating the skills they have consistently well enough. They are not yet securing the necessary improvements in teaching. Consequently, they are not successful in facilitating consistently good progress for pupils over time, especially those who are disadvantaged.
- The curriculum throughout key stage 4 provides breadth. Leaders have a clear rationale about the curriculum. However, in some instances, some pupils' curriculum choices limit the number of subjects they can study. Notwithstanding this, those of the minority of pupils spoken to during the inspection who access alternative provision placements spoke proudly of their achievements and how the provision was developing their personal, social and moral skills.
- Pupils throughout key stage 3 are benefiting from a curriculum that is developing their skills of independence and problem solving. As a result, pupils demonstrate how they are inquisitive and curious across a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils across all year groups benefit from a well-planned careers, information, advice and guidance programme. This is enhancing the community ethos that permeates the school, and aids pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development well.
- The headteacher understands the strengths and weaknesses of the school. As a result, her morally principled and child-centred leadership is providing a firm foundation for future improvements. Staff fully support the headteacher and her drive to improve standards.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school well and provide effective support and challenge to the headteacher and other leaders. As a result, they are well aware of areas of the school that continue to be strengths. However, governors fully acknowledge that some areas of the school, particularly disadvantaged pupils' outcomes and attendance, have not improved with rapidity since the previous inspection.
- Governors' skills of 'drilling down' into the 'specifics' at meetings have improved since the previous inspection. They demand more of leaders. For example, they are now analysing other year and pupil groups in the school, not just Years 11 and 13. However, they are yet to have the desired impact on ensuring that leaders fully evaluate the effect of the strategies they implement and actions they take. This is particularly the case when assessing the effectiveness of the use of pupil premium funding and strategies to improve pupils' attendance.
- The CEO is highly ambitious and aspirational. The CEO has a formidable determination to support the school and use resources within the trust so that standards can improve with rapidity. She is a leader of integrity and credibility.
- Trustees have a wide and impressive set of skills. They use these adeptly to ensure that there is appropriate strategic and operational support for the governing body and

the headteacher. Together, the CEO and trustees are visionary about how the school can improve, and they articulate clearly what they need to do to provide appropriate levels of support.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's single central record and recruitment processes are thorough. Regular training for staff ensures that they know what to do if they have a concern about a child.
- The designated safeguarding lead is tenacious and helps to provide a firm foundation so that pupils in the school have a safe environment to learn and socialise in.
- Governors are involved in checking the school's safeguarding policy and practices. This provides leaders with a clear overview and greater understanding of school procedures.
- Leaders and staff have a clear understanding of how important safeguarding is and the importance of monitoring pupils' behaviour. As a result, they are refining processes so that record-keeping and monitoring, particularly of more vulnerable pupils, have a more systematic approach and higher level of detail.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The high standards in teaching, learning and assessment observed at the time of the previous inspection have not been maintained. The quality of teaching and learning across the school requires improvement, because it is variable and inconsistent within subject areas and across year groups.
- Teachers' expectations of what different groups of pupils can achieve are variable. In some instances, they are too low. As a result, teachers do not provide pupils with learning activities that challenge them sufficiently, and this limits the progress pupils make.
- The use of questioning is inconsistent. Where it is used effectively, teachers have high expectations of how pupils should respond. In these instances, they develop, extend and deepen pupils' ideas and understanding. For example, this is evident in drama and in some English, mathematics and science classrooms. Equally, where questioning is used effectively, pupils rise to the challenge, and it further develops their inquisitive and curious natures. However, some teachers do not use questioning well enough to challenge and probe pupils' ideas and understanding. As a result, some pupils' misconceptions are not tackled swiftly enough. Consequently their knowledge gaps widen, and some pupils do not consistently make the progress of which they are capable. This is particularly the case for boys and disadvantaged pupils.
- Teachers do not always check or assess pupils' work in line with leaders' expectations. Consequently, the feedback pupils receive is sparse and inconsistent. As a result, some teachers do not have an accurate view of where pupils are in their learning journey. They do not provide opportunities for pupils to address errors or misunderstandings. In addition, not all teachers insist on the highest standards of presentation and some pupils' work is unfinished.

- Teachers do not routinely use pupils' assessment information or pupils' previous work to plan learning or set activities that match their varying needs. Therefore, the development and consolidation of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, over time, are inconsistent within subjects.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge. However, they do not use this consistently well enough to plan learning that challenges pupils or questions them effectively.
- Pupils' use of technical vocabulary in and across different subject areas is of a high standard. Pupils, in the main, can fluently use and apply different subject-specific vocabulary and concepts very well. This was particularly evident in English, drama, music and physical education.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They are confident and self-assured, dress smartly and are eager to do well.
- Pupils at the school feel safe and they feel valued. Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe and can speak confidently about the work of the school. This helps them to have a suitable level of knowledge and understanding of how to stay safe and self-regulate. Pupils told inspectors that, if they had a concern, there was an adult in school they could turn to. They recognised that these adults were there to help them and offer them appropriate advice and support.
- Relationships between pupils and between pupils and their teachers are a strength of the school. As a result of this, conducive learning environments are evident, and warm and respectful relationships are created. Pupils are courteous and friendly to each other, staff and visitors. There is an ethos of mutual respect and tolerance throughout the school community.
- Pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training through an appropriate careers programme, visits and visiting speakers.
- There is a wide variety of clubs and extra-curricular activities that pupils can access, for example in music and drama. The clubs pupils access further develop and enhance their confidence and social skills.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. This is because leaders' work to improve pupils' attendance and reduce persistent absenteeism has not been wholly successful.
- Pupils' attendance, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, remains a concern and an urgent priority for governors, the headteacher and leaders. Since the previous inspection, strategies implemented have had some success in reducing rates of absence for some pupils. However, for some pupils, their absence and persistent absence remains far too high and they do not attend school as regularly as they could.

As a result, they do not achieve what they are capable of. The system in place to monitor, intervene and subsequently improve pupils' attendance is applied inconsistently.

- Over time, the proportion of pupils excluded from the school on a fixed-term basis has been below the national averages. However, it has steadily increased and currently too many pupils are being excluded on a fixed-term basis. As a result, leaders are using in-school provision in order to intervene with pupils and also provide them with some form of curriculum continuity.
- The school is a calm and welcoming place. Pupils move about the school site and to and from lessons with little fuss and show, in the main, mature attitudes.
- A small group of pupils attend alternative provision placements. Pupils enjoy and benefit from this, because it is providing them with the skills they need to be successful in the future, alongside developing their personal, social and moral skills.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Despite historic outcomes being well above the national average overall, they now require improvement. Disadvantaged pupils have not achieved as well as they should have, over time.
- Currently, in some areas of the school, pupils are achieving well over time. However, teaching is inconsistent and, consequently, current pupils' rates of progress are inconsistent, particularly those of disadvantaged pupils and boys.
- The provisional outcomes for 2018 show that pupils' progress overall, in their best eight subjects, is below the national average. This is because, in a number of subjects that were historically stronger pupils performed less well than expected.
- Over time, disadvantaged pupils' progress and attainment have been below those of other pupils nationally and in the school. This is because teaching does not consider the needs and barriers of these pupils. The curriculum for some of these pupils has not been well thought out.
- Current pupil assessment information and work in pupils' books show some improvement for disadvantaged pupils. However, this remains inconsistent and the progress and attainment of this group of pupils continue to lag behind those of other pupils.
- In some subject areas, teachers' expectations of what disadvantaged pupils can achieve are not high enough. Some teachers do not have a clear understanding of the barriers these pupils face. Therefore, some lack an awareness of what they can and should do to support these pupils in their learning.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make variable progress. Inspection evidence indicates that, while teachers are aware of who these pupils are, they do not consistently provide appropriate support and guidance to promote good progress. For example, some pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to complete their work.
- The proportion of pupils who gain placements in education or go on to employment or training is well above the national average.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Students can access a wide range of courses in the sixth form. Outcomes in the sixth form, both historically and for current students, are good. This is because teaching in this phase of the school increasingly meets students' needs.
- Students benefit from a greater level of consistency in the quality of teaching across subjects in the sixth form than in the main school. Students' work in books and folders is often of good quality. Students demonstrate how they can make notes and act upon their mistakes quickly and with resilience.
- The leadership of the sixth form is exceptionally strong. The vice-principal with overall responsibility for the 16 to 19 study programmes has an excellent knowledge and understanding of the provision and the students that attend this phase of the school. She is fastidious in her approach to ensuring that students benefit from a high-quality educational and pastoral experience.
- Relationships are strong in the sixth form. Staff have high expectations of the students they teach and care for. Such high expectations benefit students, as they motivate them to be their very best and aspire to leave the sixth form to be makers of change in society.
- Students are confident and self-assured. They take responsibility for their learning and fully appreciate the support they receive from staff. Students have exemplary attitudes and use these to contribute to the wider life of the school, for example getting involved in leadership opportunities to develop their personal, social and moral skills. They use their position in the school to be positive role models for younger pupils. As a result, a large proportion of pupils in the main school aspire to be part of the solid educational experience students receive in the sixth form.
- Students benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, for example working with pupils in the main school as mentors, getting involved in sports teams, drama performances and local community events. They are appreciative of work experience opportunities, and students spoken to can talk at length about how such experiences are preparing them for their next steps.
- A high proportion of students access university, with all students successfully accessing education, employment or further training when they leave the provision.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 141930 |
| Local authority | North Yorkshire |
| Inspection number | 10053771 |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| Type of school | Secondary Comprehensive |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1167 |
| Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes | 163 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair | Mr Paul Bartlett (Chair of Trustees) Revd Paul Hutchinson (Chair of Governors) |
| Headteacher | Mrs Hannah Millett |
| Telephone number | 01642710050 |
| Website | http://www.stokesleyschool.org |
| Email address | office@stokesleyschool.org |
| Date of previous inspection | 1 February 2018 |

Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average-sized secondary school.
- The school is the founding school of the Areté Learning Trust.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is well below that found nationally.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British. A very low proportion of pupils do not speak English as their first language.

- The proportion of pupils who have support for SEN and/or disabilities requiring additional support is higher than that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is below average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a wide range of lessons across a range of subjects and year groups, both in the main school and in the sixth form.
- A large number of observations were completed jointly with members of the school's senior leadership team. Inspectors also observed pupils' conduct at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors held various discussions with senior leaders, other leaders and class teachers. The lead inspector met with a group of governors, including the chair, and with the CEO and three trust directors.
- Inspectors also met with seven groups of pupils, ranging from Years 7 to 13. Inspectors spoke with a number of pupils informally and in lessons.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in classrooms and they also completed an analysis of pupils' work in other subjects. Discrete checks took place to evaluate work in the sixth form, and for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Inspectors considered a wide range of information provided by school leaders regarding the achievement of current pupils in the school.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation provided by the school. This included a wide range of documents relating to safeguarding and child protection processes, procedures and records, including the single central record, and behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors took into account the 66 responses to the questionnaire for staff and the 202 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View, including the 40 comments made using the free-text service. 13 pupils completed the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Darren Stewart, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Garry Stout | Ofsted Inspector |
| Paul Welford | Ofsted Inspector |
| Sara Crawshaw | Ofsted Inspector |
| Alexandra Hook | Ofsted Inspector |

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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