

Stalham High School

Brumstead Road, Stalham, Norwich, Norfolk NR12 9DG

Inspection dates

13–14 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school now has strong, stable leadership after a period of turbulence. The head of school, new in post last year, has demonstrated unwavering commitment to ensuring that the school provides a good standard of education for its pupils.
- The trust has provided well-judged support for the school, which has led to improved standards. The executive headteacher and the trustees have effectively challenged the leadership of the school to drive further improvements this year.
- Senior leaders and the trust have high aspirations for pupils. Staff share this aim and there is a common purpose in the school.
- Safeguarding is effective. Leaders ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to keep pupils safe.
- Leaders have raised expectations for pupils' behaviour. This has resulted in good conduct both in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. The use of additional funding is carefully targeted to meet their individual needs.
- The school knows its pupils well. The care given to pupils, especially the more vulnerable, is a strength of the school.
- The curriculum provides a good and varied range of experiences and offers opportunities for pupils to learn both academic and vocational subjects.
- Pupils enjoy school. The majority attend regularly. Procedures are in place to improve attendance. However, leaders do not analyse this in detail to evaluate fully the impact of this work.
- Results in 2016 show pupils' progress was at least in line with national averages in English, mathematics, and science. Results in 2017 in mathematics and English indicate that pupils have performed at least as well as in 2016, with some improvements made in English.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress across a wide range of subjects. Pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding is used effectively. However, leaders do not evaluate fully the impact of these activities to judge how effective they are.
- The leadership of teaching is very effective and as a result, teaching is typically good.
- A new policy for providing feedback to pupils is in place but is not applied consistently.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Use information more effectively to monitor and improve pupils' attendance.
- Monitor and evaluate the use of additional funding thoroughly, so that leaders can identify what has the biggest impact on raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, and those in Year 7 who need to catch up with others.
- Ensure that the school's feedback policy is consistently applied and teachers ask more searching questions.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The new head of school leads the school very well. With the support of the trust, and the executive headteacher, he has stabilised the school after a period of uncertainty and change.
- Leaders have an accurate and realistic understanding of the quality of education that the school provides. They have identified the right priorities for improvement. Frequent and systematic monitoring of the quality of teaching ensures that leaders are clear where less effective provision exists, and challenge this where necessary.
- The trust has provided significant support by sharing expertise and best practice, for example through the cross moderation of coursework and other assessments. Joint in-service training has also increased professional development opportunities for staff. A common system of key stage 3 assessment across the trust has brought both consistency and a collective understanding of how staff can support pupils' progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress broadly in line with others from similar starting points across all year groups. They are well supported through additional funding, which school leaders monitor for impact. Parental communication and excellent knowledge of each individual pupil is central to the school's approach to support. This ensures these pupils receive extra help when they need it.
- Middle leaders and those in charge of subjects are clear about their responsibilities and are passionate about the role they play in ensuring that pupils have the very best chance of achieving well.
- The trust's model of managing the work of teachers is now well established. The head monitors school targets, identified in the school development plan, to ensure that they drive improvements. Regular meetings to manage the performance of staff ensure that they progress towards reaching their personal targets and help to pinpoint any support they need.
- Leaders' actions to improve behaviour have been effective. The majority of parents, staff and pupils agree that behaviour has improved both around the school and in lessons.
- The curriculum provides a good range of academic and vocational subjects. A small minority of pupils attend alternative provision to study for qualifications in engineering, mechanics and childcare. All pupils study philosophy and ethics. This contributes well to their understanding and tolerance of different cultures and faiths. Opportunities to extend their understanding of the lives of others, for example through creative writing about 'living on a landfill site in Nigeria', promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school uses whole-day events such as 'no crime days' to address aspects of well-being and personal safety. Pupils say they understand fully the need to keep themselves safe online. They know how to stay healthy, including through the way they eat.

- Leaders have identified a small number Year 7 pupils who need to catch up with their reading and allocate funds to meet these needs. Consequently, many make accelerated progress. However, the impact of this work is not monitored with sufficient precision to identify which aspects of this additional support have the most impact on pupils' progress.

Governance of the school

- The trust provides strong support for the school. The executive headteacher, who is also the chief executive of the trust, provides 'hands-on' support and challenge for the leaders. Systematic monitoring confirms that all staff are aware of the high expectations that the trust has for improving the outcomes of pupils in the school.
- Trustees ensure that arrangements to monitor the performance of all staff, including the head of school, are carried out consistently and effectively.
- Senior leaders report to the trust on a regular basis. The minutes of these meetings are published on the school website to ensure complete transparency for staff and parents.
- The trust scrutinises safeguarding practices and carries out checks to assure itself that the school keeps pupils safe.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and pupils say they feel safe.
- The school is a small and caring community. Staff are clear about the importance of 'early-help' and use the 'nagging-doubt' form if they need to pass concerns to the designated safeguarding leader. School records of this work are clear and well organised as are the records of work with outside agencies.
- There is regular contact with the alternative provider that a small number of pupils attend, including visits made by the school and the sharing of attendance information.
- The single central record is accurate, up to date and meets statutory requirements for ensuring that staff are suitable to work in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching and learning has improved due to the determination of senior leaders to make this an area of continuous improvement. Leadership of teaching and learning is strong and established routines of lesson observations and book reviews have increased expectations of both leaders of subjects and teachers.
- There is a strong ethos of mutual support among the staff in the school and best practice is shared as a matter of course. This has resulted in pupils making better progress as teachers use 'what works best' to improve classroom practice.
- Shared professional development with the trust and the school's own professional development has helped middle leaders and teachers through a time of change in GCSE examinations. This has enabled teachers to deliver new courses with confidence. Early analysis of 2017 results indicates the positive impact of this work in mathematics and English.

- Teachers have strong subject knowledge and use this to plan learning activities to engage pupils' interest. For example, asking pupils to devise a virtual tourist attraction in the Thar Desert, which the teacher had studied and visited.
- Teachers use assessment information to plan their lessons and this ensures that almost all pupils make good progress. Teachers' questioning consolidates knowledge and picks up misconceptions. However, not enough teaching challenges pupils to go beyond their own expectations, so that they make deep gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Teachers provide feedback to pupils in line with the trust's marking policy, which allows for appropriate subject variation. Where feedback works best, pupils respond by improving their work and so make good gains in their learning. However, this is not yet consistent across the school.
- Support for less confident readers, including using phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) to sound out letters and sounds helps their confidence and enables them to read more fluently.
- Pupils are eager and willing to learn. They enjoy supportive, positive relationships with staff. Behaviour in lessons is managed effectively, enabling pupils to learn undisturbed by poor behaviour.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff promote positive relationships. Pupils are keen to help each other. Pupils say there is little bullying, and almost all agree that the school is quick to take effective action if it should occur. Behaviour logs kept by senior leaders show that the very small number of racist incidents are quickly resolved.
- Pupils are given a voice in the way the school is run through the election of form ambassadors. Leadership opportunities are available for house leaders, sports leaders and school colour holders.
- Sporting provision is plentiful and there is a wider range of extra-curricular provision available this year, although not all pupils choose to take advantage of these activities. A number of pupils take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.
- Leaders work closely with outside agencies and understand the need to be relentless in this work to secure support for the most vulnerable pupils in a timely manner.
- The school teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe. Pupils spoke about the dangers of physical threats and extremism, as well as sexual health and how to keep safe online. A group of older pupils said that 'sexting' had been an issue last year, but the school invited the local community police officer to come and speak to pupils and that this had now stopped.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils, staff and parents agree that behaviour in the school has improved. Leaders made this a priority last year and inspectors observed the high expectations set by the school. Pupils look smart in their uniforms and the atmosphere in the school is calm and orderly, including at lunchtimes. Although staff are 'on duty' during lunch breaks, pupils' behaviour is largely self-regulating.
- The school environment is litter-free, including the inviting outside spaces.
- Pupils are polite, helpful and welcoming to each other and visitors to the school. For example, pupils who had recently joined the school in key stage 4 said that they had soon settled and felt well supported.
- In lessons, routines are well established and pupils respond quickly to teachers' requests. They arrive on time, ready to work and focus well on learning in the classroom.
- Pupils say they are happy and enjoy school. This is reflected in the overall attendance figures last year, which are close to the national average and an improvement on 2016 figures. Persistent absence is also low because the school contacts absent pupils 'on the day' and acts to support families. Attendance of disadvantaged pupils is just below that of their classmates and improving, as are these figures for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2016, pupils in Year 11 entered the school with prior attainment that was below that of their peers nationally. From this low starting point, the overall attainment of pupils was broadly in line with national figures. Progress was good across a broad range of subjects and better than this for some English Baccalaureate subjects.
- Although national progress data is not yet available at this point, provisional information indicates that pupils who completed Year 11 in 2017 and took the reformed GCSE examinations in mathematics and English, attained within 'normal expectations' in mathematics and that attainment in English 'is improving'.
- Published data for 2016 shows that disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieved broadly in line with national figures. In 2017, information provided by the school indicates the most able disadvantaged pupils attained as well as their classmates.
- The school spends the additional funding received for disadvantaged pupils in a variety of ways including working with parents, extra careers advice and guidance, mentoring and counselling. However, leaders do not assess the impact of these activities in sufficient detail to guide the most effective use of future funding.
- School assessment information shows that in 2017 the majority of pupils across key stage 3, including those who are disadvantaged, made progress that is greater than or in line with schools' expectations from their starting points. Staff say that they understand how to use the new assessment procedures to meet the needs of pupils.

- Parent View shows most parents agree that they receive helpful information about the progress of their children.
- The school has improved the careers information, advice and guidance provided for pupils. Pupils are well supported and suitably prepared for the next stage of education, training or employment. All of those in Year 11 who left the school this year had known destinations that offered appropriate opportunities for further progression.

School details

Unique reference number	141395
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10036109

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	346
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Christine Candlish
Head of School	Martin Budgett
Telephone number	01692 580281
Website	www.stalhamhigh.co.uk
Email address	head@stalhamhigh.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school is a sponsor-led academy under the North Norfolk Academy Trust.
- This is a smaller-than-average-sized secondary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to the national average.

- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium additional funding is similar to the national average.
- A small number of pupils attend registered alternative provision at Ace.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors undertook learning walks and observations in 33 lessons. Some of these were observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also visited tutor time and an assembly. Inspectors undertook a work scrutiny jointly with senior leaders across a range of subjects and year groups.
- Inspectors held meetings with the head of school, the executive headteacher/chief executive officer of the trust, the chair of the trust, trustees, senior leaders, middle leaders and subject leaders.
- Inspectors met with pupils. They also spoke with them in lessons and at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of school documentation including that related to safeguarding, achievement, the school's own self-evaluation, attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors reviewed 89 parental responses on Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents during the inspection, including free-text comments. Inspectors also reviewed 122 pupil survey results and 31 staff survey results.
- Inspectors observed pupils' arrival to school, and their conduct at break and lunchtimes as well as in between lessons.

Inspection team

Kay Leach, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jenny Carpenter	Ofsted Inspector
John Wilson	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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