

Inspection of Stalham High School

Brumstead Road, Stalham, Norwich, Norfolk NR12 9DG

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 June 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The executive headteacher of this school is Alastair Ogle. This school is part of Synergy Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Louise Lee, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Natasha Hutcheson.

What is it like to attend this school?

There is a real sense of community within the school. Pupils are articulate and confident. They interact positively with staff. They demonstrate pride in their school and the part they play in supporting each other. Through roles such as anti-bullying ambassadors and autism ambassadors, pupils show respect for one another and genuinely want to ensure an inclusive school community. The ambassadors are role models for their peers, and they are clearly committed to the school.

The expectations of pupils at Stalham High School are high. The school is increasingly establishing routines which the pupils follow. This results in a community where pupils work hard and see the value in their achievements.

During unstructured times, pupils enjoy playing football and chatting with each other. They take pride in their environment and ensure the school field is tidy when they leave it. They show respect to supervising adults.

Activities such as the Year 8 camping trip support the strengthening of relationships across the school. They also provide the opportunity to develop independence. Pupils enjoy rewards visits. They are valued because they recognise pupils' progress.

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

The quality of education in the school has improved since the last inspection. The school has focused significant resources on developing the curriculum across the school to ensure that historical gaps in knowledge and skills are closed. In some subjects, this has had a substantial effect. Subject content is now delivered effectively by subject specialists. While pupil outcomes in public examinations are not yet where the school wants them to be, they have improved between 2022 and 2023. In a smaller number of subjects, curriculum planning is at a much earlier stage and has yet to ensure that pupils' understanding is detailed.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is now clearly defined. Inclusive practice is at the centre of what the school does. The school's specially resourced provision for pupils with autism, 'The PAD', has a significant and positive impact on the learning of the pupils that attend this resource. Skilful and effective support from adults ensures pupils achieve well. Teachers have a thorough understanding of the needs of pupils with SEND and make appropriate adaptations to lessons.

Pupils at Stalham enjoy reading. There is a large and effective staff team responsible for ensuring pupils who struggle to read are identified and supported to catch up quickly. The school library is well resourced and well used by pupils. 'Rallo' the reading dog is on hand to offer support where pupils lack confidence in their reading.

The atmosphere in the school is calm and purposeful. The overwhelming majority of pupils behave well, particularly younger pupils. They understand classroom routines well. However, too many pupils do not attend school frequently enough. As a result, they miss out on both learning and social activities provided by the school. The school's systems for addressing behaviour are now more rigorous.

Pupils talk very positively about the relationships between themselves and staff. They feel listened to and respected. Pupils describe the school as an inclusive environment in which they thrive. Pupils can take on leadership roles, such as form ambassadors and eco-councillors. They have access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Pupils' personal, social, health and economic education curriculum provides them with opportunities to strengthen their understanding of positive relationships, mental and physical health, as well as the world of work. Pupils engage in work experience and appreciate this is an important experience for them. The careers programme is highly effective.

Leaders at all levels have implemented and sustained rapid improvements since the previous inspection. These changes have resulted in a higher standard of education for pupils. Leaders evaluate accurately the strengths and areas for development of the school. The systems and structures they have implemented are robust. Over this period of change, staff have been, and continue to be, on board with the direction of the school. There is a shared aspiration among the school community for pupils to achieve their very best. Appropriate and effective development opportunities are available to staff to ensure increasingly consistent practice.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils do not yet achieve as highly as they could. This is because the curriculum in some subjects is not yet sufficiently well established to provide them with the knowledge and skills they require to learn and achieve well. The school should ensure that the existing curriculum development model applied in some subjects is used to strengthen practice in those subjects where progress is less developed.
- Not all pupils attend school as often as they should. Pupils missing school mean they cannot benefit from the quality of education provided, reducing the opportunities for them to achieve well. Pupils also do not experience the routines of school life as a result. The school should ensure that it promotes robustly the importance of regular attendance through its existing structures and processes.

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	141395
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10323743
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	499
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Natasha Hutcheson
CEO of the trust	Louise Lee
Headteacher	Alastair Ogle
Website	www.stalhamhigh.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 May 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The executive headteacher has been in post since September 2022.
- The school uses two unregistered alternative education provisions.
- 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

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and

have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors met with the school's senior leaders, governors and the CEO.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in English, geography, modern foreign languages and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- The inspection team considered the views of parents through responses to Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors gathered the views of pupils and staff through Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys, as well as interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Jonathan Rockey, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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