

Inspection of a good school: Stalham Academy

Old Yarmouth Road, Stalham, Norwich, Norfolk NR12 9PS

Inspection dates:

29 and 30 November 2022

Outcome

Stalham Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel safe and are happy to come to school. They enjoy learning all the different subjects on offer to them, as well as taking part in extra activities like the Stalham Sixty, trips and having visitors into school. Every child is expected to take an active part in their learning, and they do. For instance, pupils use hand signals to show if they disagree or agree with a speaker. This encourages pupils to listen carefully. In lessons pupils behave well and show respect to each other.

Pupils say that bullying sometimes happens, but that when it does, it is dealt with quickly. They know who to speak to if they are worried about anything. Pupils say that the staff really care about them.

Pupils enjoy the extra responsibilities that leaders give them, such as being part of the school council, ambassadors or on the eco committee. Pupils say that this has given them confidence to speak in front of others when showing round visitors or making a speech. They feel they make a real difference in the local community, visiting the local care home or running charity events. Pupils enjoy taking part in lots of different clubs, including girls' football, quidditch and yoga.

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

Leaders have developed an effective and ambitious curriculum which is based on five key curriculum 'drivers'. These help teachers to plan what they are going to teach. This approach makes it clear what all pupils will have learned before they go to high school. In some subjects, leaders have not yet set out in enough detail the things that pupils are expected to know in each topic, so pupils do not always see the links between the different things they learn.

At the beginning of each lesson, pupils are asked to revisit and review what they learned before. This helps them to remember what they have been taught. During lessons, pupils are involved in different types of paired and group work, where they learn together and

share ideas. Discussions are used effectively in all subjects across the school and help pupils to share and talk about their learning with confidence.

Leaders intend for the curriculum to be adapted so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), get the chance to access the same learning. Leaders have ensured that this is in place and working well in some areas of the school, but this is not yet consistent in all subjects and across all classes. For example, in mathematics in some classes, pupils are still being given challenges which limit some pupils' learning.

When pupils enter the school, leaders check to make sure that they have the phonics skills that they need. Those that need extra help are supported effectively to catch up quickly, so they can read with confidence and fluency. All pupils take part in daily 'role, rotate, read' sessions which help to develop their reading skills. Teachers also read aloud to pupils daily and leaders have thought carefully about the range of books read to or by pupils. As a result, pupils have a real love of, and quickly gain skills and knowledge in, reading.

Leaders work hard to provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils' personal development. This is a strength of the school. Leaders give mental health and well-being support for all a high priority. For example, there is a play therapist and an emotional literacy support assistant who support pupils with the obstacles they may face in school and at home.

The school is well led and managed. Staff appreciate the way that leaders carefully consider their workload and well-being and that leaders are always available to support them. All staff are proud to be a member of the Stalham team.

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, know the school well and provide effective support and training for all staff, including those new to teaching.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that all the necessary pre-appointment checks are made on staff and carefully recorded. If any of the staff have a concern about a child they know how to share this with leaders, using an online system. Leaders routinely talk about the support that pupils and their families need. They use staff in school and from outside agencies to help them get this support quickly. Staff receive regular training and understand the risks in the local area.

As a result of effective teaching, pupils know how to keep themselves safe in the community and online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders have not set out sufficiently clearly the specific knowledge that pupils should learn as they progress through the curriculum. This limits teachers' ability to plan lessons that build on what pupils have learned before. Leaders should set out the important knowledge that pupils should be taught in all subjects and ensure that teachers help pupils to understand the connections between the different things that they learn.
- Although leaders have developed an approach to ensure that learning is adapted to meets the needs of all pupils, this is not yet consistently applied across all subjects and classes. As a result, there are some limits placed on learning for some pupils. Leaders should ensure that the agreed approach of scaffolding and adapting teaching is consistent, so that all pupils, where possible, reach the same curricular end points.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2016.

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](#)' 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.

School details

Unique reference number	140819
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10211039
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	243
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Anne Gibson
Headteacher	Glenn Russell
Website	www.stalhamacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 and 25 November 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The executive headteacher works across both Stalham Infant and Stalham Junior Schools, which are on the same site.
- Around 50% of the pupils that join the Stalham Junior school come from Stalham Infant school, while the other 50% come from other local infant schools.
- The school is part of the Broad Horizons Education Trust.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken this into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, staff, including subject leaders, and representatives from the trust and local governing body.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample

of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector scrutinised the school's single central record of recruitment and vetting checks and met with the designated safeguarding leader. She scrutinised safeguarding records and spoke with pupils and with staff. The inspector observed pupils at breaktime and at lunchtime.
- The inspector considered the views of pupils, staff and parents. There were 36 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. There were 74 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. There were 78 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. The inspector considered eight free-text responses from parents.

Inspection team

Heather Hann, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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