

Stoke High School - Ormiston Academy

Address: Maidenhall Approach, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP2 8PL

Unique reference number (URN): 140032

Inspection report: 2 June 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have implemented effective systems to improve attendance. They have a clear understanding of the barriers that some pupils face in this area. They work closely with families to reduce these and monitor attendance precisely. This provides appropriate support and guidance where necessary, which is successfully driving improvement in attendance rates. Leaders have established a warm, consistent and caring culture. This has resulted in pupils prioritising their attendance.

Leaders have established clear routines and systems in order to improve behaviour. As a result, behaviour across the school is calm and orderly. Where a pupil's behaviour needs modifying, pastoral staff work closely with the pupil to overcome this. This support includes targeted support for mental health and wellbeing, close work with parents and mentoring.

Pupils are confident that any bullying is dealt with swiftly and taken seriously. Discriminatory or unkind behaviour is not tolerated. Leaders have taken effective steps to ensure that these incidents continue to rapidly decline. Staff implement appropriate adjustments for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This results in an environment where these pupils are supported with their attendance and behaviour fully through internal and external support, such as the internal 'elevate' hub and effective liaison with specialist partners.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The curriculum is broad, balanced and well considered for the school's context. It allows pupils to develop secure knowledge and skills. Leaders have devised a consistent whole-school teaching strategy. This means that pupils systematically recall prior learning and know what to expect in lessons. Pupils progress through the curriculum in a supportive and purposeful environment. This has a positive impact on pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge, and this allows them to provide detailed explanations to pupils. They also typically adapt their practice for those who need additional help in overcoming barriers to learning.

On the whole, questioning is used effectively. It allows pupils to deliver considered and well-structured responses. Teachers make use of mini-whiteboards to assess pupils' understanding and progress in lessons. Where this is used most efficiently, it helps pupils to address misconceptions in their learning and develop it further.

Leaders and the trust ensure that staff are provided with a comprehensive programme of professional development. This ensures that staff are developed on a continual basis around effective teaching techniques tailored to their cohort. Leaders have developed strategies to ensure that areas for improvement continue to embed with the teaching staff.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have created an inclusive culture at this school where pupils are well known. Weekly communication between key staff ensures that pupils are supported to overcome their barriers to learning, with appropriate individuals and agencies consulted where necessary. Robust plans are then put into place to support pupils who need additional support. These plans are reviewed on a termly basis. This ensures that they continue to meet the emerging and changing needs of pupils.

Students within the school's 'elevate' provision benefit from a calm environment. This ensures that they are provided with the gradual support required to be successful at school. Leaders are clear about the importance of additional support to ensure that these pupils follow the full curriculum.

The school has an above-average-sized cohort of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Leaders have devised an effective screening system for these pupils, which ensures that they receive the additional support required to settle into school life well and adapt quickly.

Disadvantaged pupils achieve close to national averages. Leaders track their overall progress and intervene where necessary. This approach ensures that learning gaps are addressed by subject specialists.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils. These expectations, alongside the support offered by the Ormiston Academy Trust, ensure that the work of leaders is sustainable and achievable. Both local governors and the chair of trustees have a close working knowledge of the school's context and areas for improvement. They continually build strong relationships with the school's local community.

Leaders have a clear vision and are committed to delivering this for their pupils. Their leadership is based on clear values and a strong moral purpose. They have an in-depth knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development. This is demonstrated by the improvements that have been made to improve pupils' experience within the classroom and around attendance and behaviour. They are aware of the need to improve outcomes and have robust plans and support in place to do so.

Staff share leaders' visions for the school and are committed to its improvement. They appreciate the approachability of the principal and senior leadership team. Staff training is tailored to the school's and trust's improvement priorities. This means that staff are developed well through a meticulously planned programme of professional development.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders' work in personal development and wellbeing has led to pupils benefiting from a comprehensive curriculum. Through it, they learn about staying safe in the local area, relationships, life skills, careers options and the importance of making sensible decisions.

Pupils enjoy learning about other cultures and religions. The school works closely with pupils and their families to ensure that cultural diversity is respected. This includes providing pupils with opportunities to reflect on their own beliefs and those of others. In doing so, pupils celebrate diversity and are welcoming. This is further supported by the 'Stoke Spirit' programme, which aims to develop pupils in areas such as culture, sports, local and national politics and the arts. Additionally, the 'Stoke parliament' elects a Prime Minister annually.

Leaders further promote pupils' personal development and wellbeing through a range of clubs and creative opportunities. These include a jewellery making workshop, a sports leaders' club and an on-site farm. Leaders ensure that all pupils benefit from these opportunities.

Pupils appreciate the innovative reward systems on offer. These include 'big breakfasts', celebration assemblies and the exchanging of reward points, known as 'Stokies' for items such as stationery. This creates a sense of belonging, while celebrating everybody's successes and achievements.

Staff provide high-quality pastoral support. Pupils report that this makes them feel safe, and they trust staff to help them. Leaders ensure that this support is easily accessible. The school works closely with a range of external specialist support to promote the mental health and wellbeing of its pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive bespoke and tailored support that helps them navigate key transition points.

Pupils receive effective careers education. This includes clear advice and guidance, as well as visits from employers. As a result, they are well prepared for their future education, employment or training.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Examination results remain below national averages. Pupils' progress is not yet in line with their peers nationally. However, this is not the case for disadvantaged pupils, who perform close to national averages. Leaders continue to take action to improve the achievement of pupils and the quality of their work. However, these improvements are at an early stage and have yet to translate into better outcomes in national examinations.

Students are supported to develop their reading skills through targeted testing and intervention. This allows them to be able to overcome this barrier to learning and access the curriculum fully.

Pupils benefit from a redeveloped curriculum. The trust has assisted the school with its work in this area. This has resulted in a clearly planned and coherent curriculum. The trust also provides regular specialist support to accelerate the school's work. Consequently, leaders' actions are beginning to have an impact on pupils' achievement.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils are proud to attend Stoke High School. They have a deep sense of belonging. Pupils muster at the beginning and end of every day. This sends positivity and celebrates successes. Pupils benefit from warm and approachable relationships with staff. This means pupils feel valued and 'at home'.

The school plays an active role in the local community. Pupils value the diversity among the school's population. They are proud to share their heritage and feel that it is celebrated. This celebration includes a map that shares the origins of staff and pupils, as well as international dancing on the playground. This results in pupils being part of a vibrant community where everybody is welcomed and valued.

Pupils appreciate the open relationships that they have with leaders. This means that they feel consulted when making suggestions about the school and its future.

Pupils understand that their achievements are celebrated through the use of a popular rewards system called 'Stokies' and celebration assemblies. They talk fondly about the relationships and ethos that these initiatives continually build.

Pupils behave with maturity and kindness. They display the school's core values of 'respect, inspire and achieve'. Older students demonstrate these core values by supporting younger pupils with their reading through the 'blank page' mentor scheme.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of mechanisms to support them to be successful in their learning. They feel that these make a positive difference to the structure and accessibility of learning. This includes a 'set up for success' initiative, which ensures that pupils who need extra support can receive it discreetly and quickly. While this positive experience is not yet translated into published examination results, leaders are aware of this and are making progress to ensure that pupils achieve in line with national averages.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue their targeted work on attendance to ensure that this continues to embed fully and have an impact on all groups of pupils.
- Leaders should monitor the quality of work produced by students to ensure that it consistently demonstrates the development of newly acquired learning.
- Leaders should ensure that their actions to improve achievement translate into improved outcomes in external tests and examinations.

About this inspection

This school is part of the Ormiston Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer,

Tom Rees, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Professor Julius Weinberg.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the governance professional, the director of secondary education, the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and pupils during the inspection. Inspectors reviewed the findings of Ofsted's online surveys for pupils, parents and staff.

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 inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The headteacher took up their position in January 2023. Since the last inspection, there have also been significant changes to other members of the senior leadership team.

The school currently makes use of 6 registered and 5 unregistered alternative provisions.

Principal: Karen Baldwin

Lead inspector:

Ross Marks, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Duncan Ramsey, Ofsted Inspector

Robert James, Ofsted Inspector

Tom Sparks, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 2 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

790

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

860

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

40.63%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

4.68%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

11.14%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	21.5%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	20.1%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	22.6%	45.3%	Below

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	34.3	46.1	Below
2023/24 (final)	32.7	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	36.7	46.3	Below

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.41	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	0.07	-0.03	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	15.3%	25.8%	Below
2023/24 (final)	9.3%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	16.3%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	29.7	34.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	26.9	34.6	Below
2022/23 (final)	29.3	35.0	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.79	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.40	-0.57	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	15.3%	53.1%	-37.9 pp
2023/24 (final)	9.3%	53.1%	-43.9 pp
2022/23 (final)	16.3%	52.4%	-36.1 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	29.7	50.4	-20.8
2023/24 (final)	26.9	50.0	-23.1
2022/23 (final)	29.3	50.3	-21.0

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.79	0.16	-0.96
2022/23 (final)	-0.40	0.17	-0.56

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (revised)	85%	92%	Below
2022 leavers (revised)	90%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	90%	94%	Average

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	11.3%	8.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	12.2%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	11.5%	9.0%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	29.2%	23.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	34.1%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	33.5%	26.5%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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