

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Stratford Upon Avon School

Alcester Road, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire CV37 9DH

Inspection dates:

20 and 21 May 2025

Outcome

Stratford Upon Avon School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection

The headteacher of this school is Neil Wallace. This school is part of Stratford Upon Avon School, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jane Price.

What is it like to attend this school?

There is a very strong sense of warmth and community at Stratford Upon Avon School. 'There is a lovely feel to the school' is a sentiment echoed by many. Pupils have access to a broad and ambitious curriculum. The school has high expectations of all pupils. Staff understand pupils' abilities and needs, supporting them well to meet these expectations.

Pupils behave well and consistently rise to the high standards set for their conduct. They interact positively with one another during social times and feel safe. They know there are trusted adults they can approach with any concerns. Many wear the badges they are awarded for demonstrating the school's values with great pride.

Parents and carers value the impressive and broad range of enrichment and leadership opportunities available beyond the classroom, including the scholar's programme and residential visits such as the French Exchange and Iceland trip, which many pupils participate in enthusiastically. Sixth-form students also take an active role as student presidents and in running clubs, and they make significant contributions to school events, including the school's 'culture festival'. These opportunities are successfully building pupils' independence and confidence.

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

The curriculum is well designed. It ensures that pupils acquire knowledge in clearly sequenced steps. This structured approach enables pupils to build a secure understanding before progressing to more complex concepts. Teachers demonstrate strong subject

expertise and typically present new material clearly and confidently. They frequently model responses and link new learning to what pupils already know. In many subjects, teachers check understanding effectively and offer timely, relevant feedback. For example, in English, pupils are routinely supported to refine and improve their work. However, this practice is not always consistent across the school. Occasionally, staff do not identify and address pupils' misconceptions precisely enough. This limits them in giving some pupils the help they need.

Pupils make progress through the curriculum over time. They remember their prior learning and build on it to deepen their knowledge. Sixth-form staff have reviewed the curriculum and put support in place to help students gain a more secure understanding of the subjects they study. Their work to address this is proving successful.

The school has effective systems in place to identify and support pupils who need additional help to learn well. The school works closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive tailored, high-quality support. Staff know their pupils well and adapt teaching to ensure that all can access the curriculum successfully.

Pupils who struggle with reading are quickly identified and provided with effective interventions that help them to gain fluency and confidence. This approach is making a positive difference. Pupils at the early stages of learning to read are supported well and soon build their fluency. This helps them access the curriculum in other subjects.

Expectations for behaviour are high across the school, and most pupils rise to meet them. They show self-discipline and motivation to learn, and they enjoy school. Where pupils find it more difficult to meet expectations, the school provides well considered, targeted support. Suspensions and exclusions are used as a last resort and have decreased in number over time.

The school manages attendance effectively. Leaders have identified that some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. They have established a well-developed approach for monitoring pupils' attendance. This includes the school identifying patterns and barriers that prevent pupils from attending regularly. This has helped the school to challenge and support families who need it. As a result, school attendance rates are now improving.

Pupils, including those in the sixth form, benefit from a well-planned personal development programme. In their 'SPHERE' lessons, they engage confidently with important themes such as mental health, diversity, relationships and life in modern Britain. The school makes sure the curriculum is responsive to current issues and equips pupils with the knowledge and skills to make informed, responsible choices. The school offers a vast range of extra-curricular activities, such as debate clubs, chess clubs, fundraising events and the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Pupils receive timely careers advice, which is embedded in the curriculum from Year 7. They use this to make informed decisions about their next steps in education, employment or training. However, opportunities for students to gain first-hand experiences of the workplace are still in their infancy.

Leadership at all levels is a significant strength of the school. Governors are clear on the school's priorities and act decisively in the best interests of pupils. They are deeply committed to ensuring that all pupils succeed. Staff speak positively about the school's approach to well-being and workload and are proud to be part of the school community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, teachers in some lessons do not use suitable strategies to identify and address misconceptions effectively. This means that some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge that are unaddressed. The school should ensure that these staff have the expertise they need so that pupils' understanding is checked consistently well.
- Currently, there are limited opportunities for all students to gain work experience, including those in the sixth form. As a result, some pupils do not have as many opportunities to learn about possible next steps in employment as they might. Leaders should ensure that they implement their plans to increase the range of work experience opportunities.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in March 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' 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	137236
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10343959
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,914
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	234
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jane Price
Headteacher	Neil Wallace
Website	www.stratforduponavonschool.com
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 November 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses 10 unregistered providers of alternative provision.
- 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

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have

taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents in their responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of staff to discuss the support that they receive from leaders.
- Inspectors spoke with some pupils about school life. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and spoke to pupils at social times.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, curriculum leaders and other members of staff. The lead inspector met with the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- 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.

Inspection team

Ed Leighton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sara Arkle	Ofsted Inspector
Patrick Amieli	Ofsted Inspector

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