

Inspection of Stanton Vale School

Thoresby Road, Long Eaton, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG10 3NP

Inspection dates:	4 and 5 February 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Emma Kehoe. This school is part of Esteem 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, Julian Scholefield, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mark Emly.

What is it like to attend this school?

Stanton Vale is a happy, welcoming, inclusive school. Pupils benefit enormously from the kind, compassionate and highly skilled staff. Pupils are treated with great humanity, dignity and respect throughout the day. Staff work closely with pupils, parents, carers and specialist external agencies to fulfil their roles with expertise and care.

The school has high expectations for all pupils. It has established these expectations through recent strengthening of the school's curriculum. Staff know and respond to pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. As a result, pupils make good gains in their learning and the school is a calm place. When receiving care, staff ensure, as far as possible, that pupils' medical needs do not detract from their time in lessons and with friends. This way, their needs are not a barrier to them enjoying school.

Pupils know that staff will help them with any worries or concerns they may have. This helps pupils to feel happy, safe and understood.

Pupils receive an exceptional personal development curriculum. They are able to explore the world around them both in school and out in the wider community. Carefully planned experiences enrich their lives such as visits from the emergency services, trips to the Sea Life Centre and an adaptive aquarium experience.

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

The ambitious curriculum clearly sets out what pupils are to learn in each of the school's five pathways. Each pathway is matched to pupils' broad developmental needs. Staff use these pathways flexibly and adapt their teaching to meet pupils' specific, and often significant, developmental needs. This flexibility and adaptability are key reasons for pupils' success, as pupils experience a truly personalised journey thorough the school. Physiotherapists, speech and language therapists and occupational therapists work alongside school staff to put the right help in place for pupils. This supports their health and well-being across the school.

Transition to Stanton Vale is carefully managed by the school. Staff swiftly identify any unmet needs. EHC plans are used by staff to create individual learning plans which have precise targets. The school tracks these plans carefully to ensure that it provides any interventions that are needed. Children who enter the school in the early years, follow the 'Discover' pathway. By the time 'Discover' children transition into the next curriculum pathway, they typically achieve their full potential in the early years foundation stage and are fully prepared for their next steps. They have the skills, knowledge, communication and confidence for future learning.

Staff have strong subject knowledge, present information clearly and check pupils' understanding systematically. They regularly provide helpful feedback to pupils. This ensures that pupils build on their knowledge successfully.

Communication is a strength and golden thread through the school. Across the school, pupils learn ways to communicate their needs and to ask for help. This strengthens and encourages pupils' independence and resilience. Where appropriate, there is a clear focus on teaching early reading. Staff teach the school's phonics programme skilfully. Where pupils' developmental needs allow, they become increasingly confident readers as they get older.

Staff are typically effective in supporting pupils to manage their behaviour. This gives pupils the best chance to achieve their potential. Classrooms are calm and positive spaces where learning is rarely interrupted, and routines are well established. Children in the early years learn and play alongside each other well. On occasions, teachers and in class support staff do not select and deliver tasks which challenge and extend pupils knowledge and skills. As a result, pupils can disengage from their learning.

The school consistently promotes the extensive personal development of all pupils. They are exceptionally well prepared for life beyond school. Through the 'independent living' curriculum, they develop the essential life skills needed for independence and community participation. Pupils access a wide set of coherently planned experiences that enrich the curriculum. Through these, pupils are encouraged to become healthy, responsible and active citizens. For example, pupils explore sustainability and complete research through participating in the 'Let's Go Zero' project. As a result, pupils are more aware of their impact on the world around them. Pupils enjoy cooking, trips to the shops and taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme involving 'camp outs'. They also take part in a range of clubs and musical performances. Pupils enjoy trampoline therapy and visits to the leisure centre. They engage in enterprise activities, for example making craft items to sell at a Christmas fair.

From the early years through to the sixth form, the school considers pupils' futures carefully. Students in the sixth form study towards meaningful qualifications, awards and accreditations. Pupils access valuable careers advice and support with their next steps and are given regular and meaningful opportunities to experience the world of work. They enjoy experiences of college. All students go on from Stanton Vale to meaningful destinations.

The trust and the local governing board support the school effectively. They have first-hand evidence of what the school does well and what needs to improve further. Leaders carefully consider workloads when making decisions and ensure that staff receive continuous professional development. As a result, staff typically feel valued and well supported, particularly in terms of their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasions, teachers and in class support staff do not select and deliver tasks which challenge and extend pupils' knowledge and skills. As a result, pupils can disengage from their learning. The school should support staff to select and deliver tasks which match the ambitious curriculum consistently well for pupils.

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	146054
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10324201
Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	121
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	25
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mark Emly
CEO of the trust	Julian Scholefield
Headteacher	Emma Kehoe
Website	www.stantonvale.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	29 and 30 March 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Stanton Vale School is a special school, catering for pupils aged 2 to 19 with severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, autism, and a range of other SEND. Many pupils require complex medical care. Some pupils have life-limiting conditions. All pupils have EHC plans. The range of special education and health needs within the school has become more complex and diverse since the last inspection.
- The school has further developed the structure of classes since the last inspection. The school has five pathways. The 'Discover' provision for the early years foundation stage, then four further pathways: 'Support', 'Explore', 'Nurture', and 'Aspire'. From key stage 4 and into the sixth form, the pathways flow into four 'avenues': 'Support', 'Explore', 'Nurture', and 'Aspire'. Therefore, children transition from the 'Discover' early years provision to a pathway, and then on to an avenue as they journey through the school.

- A new chair of governors took up her post in October 2024.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider and no registered providers.
- 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors held meetings with trust leaders, members of the governing body, the headteacher, senior leaders, other school leaders and staff
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading and communication, mathematics, physical development, and life skills including personal, social and health education (PSHE). 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.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including records linked to attendance and behaviour, school development plans, school self-evaluation documentation and records of governing board meetings.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at social times.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils to gather their views about school.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff, and discussions with staff. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Anne Maingay, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Nyree Parker

His Majesty's Inspector

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