

Stanley Park High School

Damson Way, Carshalton, SM5 4NS

Inspection dates 4–5 November 2015

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Outstanding |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| 16 to 19 study programmes | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher's vision has created an innovative and imaginative school where pupils are very successfully prepared for their future lives. His views on education are supported by senior leaders, governors and staff.
- Pupils achieve well in many work-related and academic subjects. In English, their progress is outstanding and in mathematics and science it is improving rapidly.
- Teaching was good at the time of the previous inspection and it has gathered momentum since then. Teachers pose questions which deepen pupils' understanding, encourage discussion and challenge them to aim for high standards.
- Parents have much confidence in the school's unique approach to 21st century education.
- The sixth form is increasingly popular. Relevant subjects and good teaching prepare pupils very well for work, apprenticeships or university.
- The provision for pupils on the autistic spectrum is outstanding. The high-quality leadership, teaching and facilities generate the best possible environment for them to learn.
- Staff could not do more to nurture pupils' personal development, welfare and safety. Pupils feel safe and secure because their health and happiness is the school's key priority.
- Pupils' outstanding behaviour and relationships with each other and with teachers underpin their enthusiasm and willingness to learn.
- The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 successfully blends creative learning with the development of key literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils learn how to carry out research and think for themselves.
- All staff enjoy working at the school, which contributes to its welcoming atmosphere.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, lessons slow down so pupils do not learn as much as they could, or homework is not set regularly and marked well enough to guide pupils to improve their work.
- Lower-attaining pupils do not make as much progress as others in mathematics. The success rate for pupils who re-take GCSE mathematics in the sixth form is low.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement by:
 - checking that the pace of learning does not slow down in any lessons
 - monitoring that all teachers set worthwhile homework regularly and, when marking work, they provide comments that help pupils to improve.
 - intensifying the support for lower-attaining pupils to make good progress in mathematics
 - sharpening the quality of teaching and learning and increasing the number of lessons for GCSE mathematics in the sixth form.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Practically all pupils respond to the school's motto of 'igniting a passion for learning'. This is done by blending positive relationships in small classes (human scale education) with an exciting curriculum which 'empowers pupils with skills such as empathy'. The headteacher has not wavered in his approach to education or in his determination that all pupils, whatever their interests and aptitudes, will be successful and thoughtful citizens in their future lives.
- The senior leadership team is very strong for pastoral and academic management. Its evaluation of the key areas for improvement is sharp and the right developments are planned. The new arrangements for assessment without using National Curriculum levels are well considered, with straightforward statements about pupils' progress towards their targets.
- Middle leaders contribute to the improving standards. The appointment of a new science leader generated better GCSE results and standards in other years in 2015. This leader and the mathematics leader are developing their relatively new teams very well. The school struggles to appoint specialist teachers in these subjects but has managed some more stability this year.
- The English department is well established and experienced; a key factor in pupils' outstanding learning in this subject. Some work-related courses in Years 10 to 13, such as childcare, are taught by specialists from a company which arranges useful and relevant work placements; this is a positive factor that contributes to the strong progress in these courses. Middle leadership and management are not yet outstanding because some pupils do not make good progress in mathematics and a few other subjects.
- Senior leaders use pupil premium and catch-up funds wisely and evaluate their effectiveness. Each year the gaps between the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and others have narrowed as leaders fine-tune the allocation of resources. Specialist literacy support has been most effective and other intervention strategies are increasingly successful.
- Equal opportunities and experiences permeate the school's work. For example, on occasion, boys and girls play netball and football together. They are encouraged to ignore stereotypes when choosing their options subjects, witnessed by the Year 11 mixed motor mechanics group. Whether disadvantaged or having disabilities or special educational needs, it is assumed that all pupils have high aspirations for their future.
- Professional development for all staff moved into a higher gear with the recent establishment of a 'Stanley Park Innovation and Research Academy' (SPIRA). Leaders encourage staff to study for Masters-level degrees, develop links with primary schools and carry out action research in school. Senior leaders accurately monitor the quality of teaching and provide challenge and coaching in a supportive manner; they help newly qualified teachers to hone their skills and gain confidence.
- The SPIRA base houses the pupils' and teachers' library and hosts visitors who want to see the school's curriculum and ethos in action. Staff use it for intensive training and planning days on key curriculum areas. All staff value the senior leaders' work and their responses to the questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive, reflecting their high morale. Many wrote comments such as: 'After seven weeks I can see myself staying here for a long time' or 'A fantastic team of people work here from the site staff to the headteacher.'
- The two distinctive and successful features of the curriculum are the 'Excellent Futures Curriculum' (EFC) projects in Years 7 and 8 and the sampling of option subjects in Year 9 (details of both are given under Information about the School). Many pupils enjoy the way they learn and prepare their half-hour, end-of-project presentations. The final one at the end of Year 8 is to parents, their form tutor and an outside adult. These projects are stimulating, relevant to the real world and capture pupils' imagination and interest. In addition to trips and visits, the extra-curricular activities, including numerous sports, range from chess to scrabble or journalism to aviation; they enhance and broaden pupils' enjoyment of school life.
- The EFC projects cover many aspects of British values, citizenship and social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness. These are given the same high profile in Years 9 to 11 and all pupils study religious education for these three years. For example, they feature strongly in tutor time, assemblies, fund-raising for charities, entertaining the local elderly community or supporting the pupil voice council.
- EFC project titles include Remembrance, A hero in my eyes, Around the world in six faiths, Listen with my eyes and paint with my words, and Our Bubble. The latter explores 'Britishness' and the developing world.

■ The governance of the school

- The Chair of the Governing Body is enthusiastic about the school’s vision of education. She is well supported by governors who bring considerable relevant and useful expertise to their discussions and successfully promote the school’s culture and progress.
- Minutes of meetings show how diligently governors explore the reasons for any low examination results, evaluate the contributory factors (often grade boundary and curriculum changes in recent years) and probe what is being done to address them. They visit the school regularly and have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and the difficulty in appointing staff for some subjects.
- Governors fully supported the headteacher’s firm stance on inadequate teaching in the past. They keep a careful eye on whether staff pay rises are justified by the standards their teaching generates.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Records are meticulous and fully meet statutory requirements. Child protection staff quickly report concerns over children’s welfare to the relevant professionals and are alert to identifying radicalisation should it occur. In all their work, senior leaders keep parents fully involved and informed. It is not surprising that very few of the parents’ written comments did not praise some element of the school’s provision.
- Parents’ comments noted that it is easy for them to contact their child’s form tutor and that they receive responses to emails within 24 hours. One wrote that, ‘I see the continued development of a fully rounded person who will have the skills to be a valuable part of the working population and society in general.’

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The unique elements of the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 generate successful learning. At the start of EFC projects, two or three classes often learn together. This means that they can share groups’ ideas, explore concepts such as creativity together, and benefit from several teachers posing challenging questions. Pupils talk about how these projects get them ready for the real world and how they learn skills which help them in all their work. Skills include examining the reliability of evidence to construct an argument, assessing the quality of their own or others’ work, and perseverance.
- Teachers plan and assess EFC projects carefully to check progression in the related subjects is secure. In Year 9, teachers clearly enjoy delivering the option subjects because pupils have chosen their subjects and are eager to learn. During the inspection, pupils’ motivation was high in most option subject lessons, especially psychology, horticulture, business studies and art.
- Occasionally, when classes work together or the atmosphere of a lesson is particularly relaxed, work slows down and a few pupils wait patiently to move on to the next task. They do not disturb others who are still working but do not make as much progress as they could.
- Nevertheless, many lessons make demands on all pupils by including work that matches groups of pupils’ different stages of understanding. Teachers encourage pupils to review their own and others’ work and help each other when possible. During the inspection pupils were heard to say ‘I nailed it’ or ‘Oh, I see it now’, after talking to a fellow pupil.
- Well-trained and often experienced learning assistants are an asset in many lessons, particularly for pupils in the autism units. They know when to step in and offer support or explanations (some have qualifications in the subjects they cover) but also when to step back and simply keep an eye on whether the pupil has mastered enough to carry on alone.
- Pupils’ writing and reading improves significantly in Years 7 and 8, particularly through redrafting work and receiving extra support when needed. Pupils spend time in the learning resource centre supported by the learning resource manager and teachers. During the inspection pupils were seen reading aloud confidently, reading intently and selecting books by considering their back covers.
- Despite the school’s focus on literacy teachers do not always correct misspellings of key words when marking work. Another aspect of learning that lacks consistency is homework. On occasion, no homework is set or it is simply to finish class work with no extension work for pupils who have completed it in the lesson.
- Teaching in mathematics has improved this year but senior leaders know that they need to drive numeracy skills with the same intensive actions that improved literacy. Plans are in place to support teachers in all subjects to promote confidence using numeracy skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare **is outstanding**

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is outstanding. Staff keep a constant and careful eye on all pupils, whether vulnerable or not, so that problems are sorted out quickly. For pupils on the autistic spectrum and others identified with disabilities or special educational needs, staff quickly arrange the correct support for their individual learning or personal needs; they employ external expertise as and when it can help.
- Pupils learn about e-safety and are fully alert to the potential dangers of social media sites. They are equally aware of how to lead healthy lives and consider risks. Both are promoted very well in subjects such as physical education or science or by assemblies on road or firework safety, for example.
- Recently some older pupils mentioned that they wanted more information about sex education and relationships. In response to their comments, a full-day programme was arranged to complement and extend the programme of personal development.
- The experienced heads of the small schools (see explanation in section on 'Information about this school' below) are well supported by inclusion assistants who greet pupils every morning, check they are ready for the day and provide instant practical and emotional support for those who need it. They work closely with family liaison officers, involving external support as necessary.
- As only a very small number of pupils attend off-site provision for one day, their personal development and welfare is supported by the school. Nevertheless, leaders check regularly that these pupils turn up, behave well and make the most of their training.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They move seamlessly between lessons and relax sensibly in the large, litter-free atrium during breaks. Their attendance is now average; many of them arrive very early in the morning and enjoy the quiet time before school begins. The number of persistent absentees has decreased since the last inspection but the school continues to tackle absence firmly.
- Pupils behave extremely well in lessons. They are attentive, keen to learn and work hard. Their self-confidence grows in Year 7. They quickly learn the importance of respectful, positive relationships with staff and make friends in their mini schools and with other pupils in their teaching groups.
- Tutor sessions, assemblies, EFC projects and many subjects cover sensitive topics skilfully. A Year 11 religious education lesson helped pupils to discuss homosexuality thoughtfully and to see why bullying related to homophobia or alternative family arrangements is unacceptable. Pupils and teachers say that bullying is very rare but dealt with immediately and effectively by the inclusion team.

Outcomes for pupils **are good**

- Pupils make at least good progress from well below average starting points in Year 7. Over half of them attained five A* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics in 2015, almost matching the national average. In all years, the majority of current pupils are on course to meet their targets and achieve well.
- After experiencing many of the option courses in Year 9, pupils rarely choose ones to study in Years 10 and 11 that do not interest them or match their long-term career plans. They are well prepared to decide what options they will take at the end of Year 11. An increasing number enter the school's sixth form and practically all others stay in education or move into training or employment.
- Since the previous inspection, progress in English between Years 7 and 11 has been well above national expectations; it moved closer to these expectations in mathematics and science in 2015. Accurate school information suggests that progress in these subjects, and science, continues to improve in all years. However, lower-attaining pupils, particularly girls and pupils who fall behind, do not make the same good progress as others in mathematics. This is already a key priority in the school's action plan.
- Since the last inspection, the gap has narrowed between disadvantaged pupils' progress in English and mathematics and that of others in the school. The gap between the percentage of these pupils attaining five A* to C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, and the percentage of other pupils doing so has also narrowed. Senior leaders monitored and supported disadvantaged pupils' work in 2015, which had a positive impact on their GCSE results.
- The relatively small number of the most-able pupils make good progress, particularly in project work in Years 7 and 8 where their research and evaluation skills give them scope to reach high standards. Their

progress continues to exceed national expectations in English and matches it in mathematics. Only a few of them attain the highest GCSE grades but intensive work on problem solving is improving their ability to tackle challenging questions. They are expected to take the three separate sciences and did reasonably well in 2015; their progress is better this year.

- Whether based in the mild or moderate autistic spectrum units, several of these pupils, all of whom have education, health and care plans, make outstanding progress in their academic work and all of them make great steps forward in their social development. They learn about relationships and gain confidence in their own abilities by acquiring skills to deal with society and the challenges they will face. A parent wrote that 'the staff are amazing'.
- Pupils with disabilities or special educational needs in the three other small schools, a few of whom have education, health and care plans, make generally similar progress to others in the school.
- Behaviour issues, home situations, late entry to the school or irregular attendance (the most significant factor), contribute to a few disadvantaged pupils and those with disabilities or special educational needs or low attainment, not achieving as well as their starting points would suggest. The school does everything possible to help them to cope with school life.
- Looked after children, represented in all the small schools, achieve better than the same pupils nationally. All in Year 11 in 2015 attained five A* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics and present pupils are continuing to make at least the same progress as others in the school.
- The very small number of pupils who attend the Skills Integrated Learning Centre in Mitcham for one day a week make consistently good progress and thoroughly enjoy experiencing practical work related to their career plans.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- Since the previous inspection the number of sixth form pupils has increased. Achievement has improved in several subjects and is improving fast in others. All pupils, including those eligible for pupil premium and who have disabilities or special educational needs, make above-average progress in work-related courses and broadly average progress in academic courses.
- In 2015, A-level pupils attained over 40% A* to B grades overall and high A* to C percentages in the three sciences, business studies and drama. Results in work-related courses were very strong in information technology and sports coaching.
- An extensive range of work-related courses, combined with academic ones, match pupils' abilities and aspirations very well; retention rates are high. Consequently, every pupil who left Years 12 or 13 in the last two years proceeded into employment, apprenticeship, training or university. In September 2013, the school introduced sporting academies and the extended project qualification to its offer, increasing its popularity with pupils from other schools.
- Pupils describe their careers advice as helpful and constructive; over 50% of them are applying to university this year. Strong careers advice and guidance contributes to them making wise decisions about their long-term ambitious, but realistic, goals. Regular, individual sessions with their pupils help tutors to identify any with work or social problems and take action before these can escalate. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good and very well organised.
- Teaching is good as it builds on the research and independent learning skills that pupils acquire in the main school. It increases pupils' subject-specific vocabulary and is structured so that they can understand concepts in a logical order. Inspectors saw several lessons when pupils received very helpful one-to-one feedback or useful analysis of examination answers.
- Most of the few pupils who need to re-take English GCSE in Year 12 are successful. Far more have to re-take mathematics and only a few of them passed in recent years. Too little time is allocated to their lessons and the quality of teaching is not strong enough to boost their confidence and fill gaps in their knowledge and understanding.
- Many pupils mentor younger ones and all of them do some volunteering in Year 12. Sixth formers lead the pupil voice council. Their behaviour is excellent and they are very good role models. They contribute to the school's personal development programme and follow a course which is geared to their futures, such as safe driving, healthy eating and pupil finance.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 103003 |
| Local authority | Sutton |
| Inspection number | 10006373 |

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 11–18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1,223 |
| Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes | 192 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Jane Pascoe |
| Headteacher | David Taylor |
| Telephone number | 020 8647 5842 |
| Website | stanleyparkhigh.org.uk |
| Email address | office@stanleyparkhigh.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 4–5 July 2013 |

Information about this school

- The school is slightly larger than the average-sized 11–18 school with a medium-sized sixth form.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium is just above the national average, particularly in Year 8. The pupil premium is funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for looked after children.
- Close to four out of five pupils are of White British heritage with small proportions of pupils from several minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for disabilities and special educational needs is well above average. This includes two opportunity bases for pupils aged 11–16 on the autistic spectrum. Over 50 pupils are catered for at present but the number may increase when sixth form pupils are accepted in September 2016. The Aqua base is for pupils with mild autism, the Ignis base for those with moderate autism. Both are within Horizon, one of the four small schools. All the Horizon pupils and a few in the three other small schools have education, health and care plans.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average and few of them are at the early stages of learning English.
- The school is a 'One School Pathfinder' under the Building Schools for the Future programme. The building opened in 2012 and its innovative design and facilities have won awards for how they support the school's vision for education.
- The school is a lead school for 'Human Scale Education', a charitable organisation emphasising the fundamental importance of relationships in human scale environments. In Year 7 to 11, pupils study in smaller than average classes within one of four small schools: Horizon (described above), Trade,

Performance and World.

- The school is one of ten in the country designated as a Changemaker school for Ashoka. This organisation is for 'innovative schools around the world that are empowering young people by equipping them with core skills such as empathy, teamwork, leadership and creative skills'.
- In Years 7 and 8, pupils spend a significant proportion of their time with their form tutors studying an 'Excellent Futures Curriculum' which includes the humanities, art and design, computing and personal development. In Year 9 pupils study English, mathematics, science, religious education and physical education and sample 12 out of the 26 'electives' (optional subjects). This helps them decide which ones to study in Years 10 and 11 to achieve GCSE and other qualifications. In Years 9 to 11, pupils are in vertical tutor groups.
- In March 2015 the school was declared a Centre of Excellence for Geography and achieved Global Learning Expert status.
- The school uses alternative educational provision at the Skills Integrated Learning Centre in Mitcham. Only a very small number of pupils attend for one day a week.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in over 50 part-lessons. A few lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders. Together with members of staff, inspectors looked at pupils' work in books outside of lessons.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and talked to others informally during breaktimes. Discussions were held with staff, including senior and middle pastoral and academic leaders. A meeting was held with a representative from the local authority and with the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors.
- Alongside other survey information provided by the school, inspectors took account of 105 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and over 40 comments written by parents; inspectors considered 103 questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents. These included the school's view of its performance and its action plans, standards and progress information, behaviour and attendance records and a range of policies.

Inspection team

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|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Clare Gillies, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Rosemarie McCarthy | Ofsted Inspector |
| Charles Rice | Ofsted Inspector |
| Janet Shadick | Ofsted Inspector |
| Jacques Szemalikowski | Ofsted Inspector |

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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