

Stafford Manor High School

Address: Wolverhampton Road, Stafford, Staffordshire, ST17 9DJ

Unique reference number (URN): 124467

Inspection report: 20 January 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 monitor pupils' attendance rigorously. Daily checks, contact with families and work with external organisations all help to make a positive difference. As a result of leaders' actions, from a low base, attendance is improving over time, including for specific pupil groups. Pupils in Year 11 and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) now come to school more often than previously. While attendance still remains below national averages, it is on an upward trend.

The school has clear systems in place to manage pupils' behaviour. Pupils know how they are expected to conduct themselves, including pupils with SEND. They enjoy positive relationships with each other and with staff. High expectations create a calm environment during lessons and social times. However, some low-level disruption remains. Leaders know which pupils need help to improve their conduct and ensure that they get close support. Restorative approaches give pupils the chance to modify their behaviour.

Pupils report that if bullying occurs, staff deal with it effectively. A recent rise in suspensions reflects the school's ambition for higher standards. In contrast, pupils are also being rewarded more, and this reflects how positive behaviour is becoming a routine part of everyday school life.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school personal development programme is well sequenced and reflects the school values of community, aspiration, resilience and endeavour. Personal, social and health education is delivered by specialist staff through social and emotional lessons. Key themes are reinforced through assemblies and tutor-time activities. External speakers teach pupils about being safe and promote debate and discussion about staying safe online and in the community.

Pupils know about fundamental British values and the protected characteristics. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is mapped out clearly across the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 7 learn about healthy lifestyles, before they explore the consumption of energy drinks in Year 8 and substance abuse in Year 9. Relationships and sex education is taught sensitively and age-appropriately. Pupils have a clear understanding of consent and healthy relationships. Pupils demonstrate how to treat others respectfully and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

The recently strengthened pastoral team works closely with the special educational needs and/or disabilities team (SEND) to ensure that vulnerable pupils get the support that they need.

The enrichment offer is broad and participation is rising. Activities including drama, yarn, tennis and football enhance pupils' experiences and strengthen the school community. Pupil leadership is strong. 'Student leaders' contribute to many of the school's priorities, including the school environment, rewards and pupil wellbeing. Tracking shows that disadvantaged

pupils and pupils with SEND engage well with enrichment activities and their participation continues to rise.

Careers education is effective and impartial. Pupils access independent careers information, advice and guidance. There are opportunities for all pupils to engage with employers, colleges and universities to prepare them for their next steps.

Needs attention

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Leaders generally hold an accurate view of the quality of teaching across their school. They have begun to identify weaknesses and provide teachers with professional learning to address those. Pupils now benefit from a broad and ambitious curriculum that includes the essential knowledge they should learn. However, there are variations in how well the curriculum is implemented across different subjects.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge and generally know their pupils well. However, they do not adapt their teaching to suit pupils' varying needs carefully enough. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are not supported effectively. Additionally, most-able pupils are not routinely encouraged to deepen their learning. While strategies to assess pupils' learning have improved, they are not embedded fully. Teachers sometimes miss when pupils do not understand the work or have gaps in their learning. As a result, pupils underachieve and do not make the progress of which they are capable.

The school's programme to support pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is not developed as well it could be. While reading is a whole-school priority, support for weaker readers lacks precision beyond key stage 3. Additionally, strategies to improve pupils' numeracy and handwriting skills are underdeveloped.

Inclusion

Needs attention 

The school accurately assesses and identifies needs that pupils may have. Staff receive helpful information about how to support disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) with their learning. However, this is not implemented consistently across the school. For example, teachers do not routinely make adaptations to learning to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. When this happens, some of these pupils do not learn new curriculum content as well as they should. Additionally, leaders' monitoring of the effectiveness of the provision is not precise enough to allow them to intervene quickly.

Leaders' ambition for inclusion is beginning to be realised. Pupils develop a sense of belonging through pastoral and house systems, while 'thrive' and 'time-out' passes support their wellbeing. The school has well-planned transition processes in place for pupils with SEND when they move into Year 7. It liaises effectively with parents and carers of vulnerable pupils to seek their views. While pupils' experiences in lessons are mixed, the school works well with external partners to support pupils' wellbeing.

Leaders make effective use of additional funding to support those pupils who are eligible. They use alternative provision in the interests of pupils who attend it and keep a close oversight on whether these pupils are safe.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Leaders and governors know the school well. Their work is focused on the right priorities to improve the school. However, the changes needed have not been swift enough in some areas. Variability in the planning and delivery of the curriculum persists. Interventions to close pupils' learning gaps lack precision. Pupils' outcomes have been below national averages for a sustained period and require rapid improvement.

Leaders check different aspects of the school routinely, in partnership with the trust. This level of professional challenge to staff, supported by appropriate staff training, is beginning to make a positive difference, including for vulnerable pupils. However, the impact of leaders' actions is not consistent across all areas of the school.

Governors understand their responsibilities, including for safeguarding. However, governors do not hold leaders to account with sufficient rigour. Recent training from the trust is too recent to determine its impact on governors' practices.

Leaders engage with parents and carers, and the wider community, effectively. The weekly 'Heads Up' bulletin and the governor-led community support hub ensure that the school is an integral part of the local area.

Staff morale is positive. Most staff are proud to work at the school. Leaders manage workload sensibly so that staff feel well supported.

Urgent improvement

Achievement

Urgent improvement 

Across the curriculum, pupils do not develop the foundational knowledge and skills they need to be successful. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). From their different starting points, pupils with SEND do not achieve well across the curriculum. Disadvantaged pupils' progress is consistently below that of other pupils nationally, and the gap is widening. Outcomes in some subjects have declined, for example in English and mathematics. While leaders have begun to raise expectations, their actions to improve pupils' outcomes have been too slow.

Pupils currently at the school do not secure the knowledge and skills that they need, including essential foundational knowledge. The work of too many pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, is of poor quality. Weaknesses in handwriting, grammar and presentation persist across the curriculum. On the whole, pupils do not learn

the intended curriculum well. As a result, they are ill-prepared for their next stages of education, employment or training.

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

Pupils do not achieve as well as their peers nationally. Academic expectations have been reset following a period of underachievement. Pupils understand what is expected of them. A clear whole-school lesson model helps most pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, learn well in some subjects. However, some pupils struggle because the curriculum is not adapted well enough to meet their particular needs. When this happens, these pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Pupils value reading and talk positively about the books they encounter. They benefit from regular tutor-time reading and targeted support, which help pupils make progress.

Pupils are safe, happy and known as individuals. An improved pastoral system creates a sense of care. Relationships between pupils and staff are polite and respectful. Lessons are generally calm and purposeful. Pupils are friendly towards one another.

Pupils' attendance at school has been prioritised. Staff support pupils who need extra help in coming to school, and a widening range of strategies is making a positive difference. Although attendance remains below the national average, more pupils now attend school more often than was previously the case.

Pupils experience an increasingly positive atmosphere in school. Clear routines and an encouraging rewards system help them to feel motivated. Pupils say that bullying rarely happens and, when it does, staff take it seriously. Some pupils still encounter low-level disruption in a few lessons.

The school supports pupils' personal development well. Pupils enjoy a range of clubs. They contribute positively to the school community through a variety of leadership teams. Through 'Social and Emotional Learning' lessons and tutor time, pupils explore British values and gain a respectful understanding of different religions. Pupils benefit from an aspirational careers education that supports their next steps in education, employment and training.

Next steps

- Leaders need to ensure that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, have the support they need to achieve their full potential and achieve the qualifications they need to move on to ambitious next steps.
- Leaders and governors need to focus their actions tightly on the key priorities and evaluate the impact of their work rigorously so improvements are sustained across the school.
- Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is adapted consistently well in all subjects and across all key stages to meet the needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that all pupils can be successful.

- Leaders need to strengthen pupils' foundational literacy by ensuring that teachers across the curriculum systematically identify and address weaknesses in pupils' handwriting, spelling and grammar.
 - Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is delivered effectively in each subject and across all key stages so that pupils know more and remember more over time.
 - Leaders need to ensure that work to improve pupils' attendance is maintained so that the improving trend is sustained.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Michelle Whiteman.

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 headteacher and other school leaders, a group of governors, a representative of the local authority, members of teaching and support staff and several groups of pupils.

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.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of 2 unregistered alternative provisions.

The school no longer offers post-16 provision.

Headteacher: Rhys Adams

Lead inspector:

Andrew Washbourne, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Nicola Walters, Ofsted Inspector

Paul Halcro, His Majesty's Inspector

Adele Mills, 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 20 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

449

Well 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

691

Well 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: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

48.11%

Well 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

2.45%

Close to 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

17.82%

Above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Well 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 (provisional)	24.7%	45.2%	Below
2023/24 (final)	22.9%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	23.2%	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 (provisional)	30.4	45.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	32.0	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	34.1	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)	-1.13	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.83	-0.03	Below

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 (provisional)	14.6%	25.6%	Below
2023/24 (final)	12.1%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	5.7%	25.2%	Below

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 (provisional)	24.6	34.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	24.8	34.6	Below
2022/23 (final)	26.8	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)	-1.56	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-1.02	-0.57	Below

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 (provisional)	14.6%	52.8%	-38.2 pp
2023/24 (final)	12.1%	53.1%	-41.0 pp
2022/23 (final)	5.7%	52.4%	-46.7 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 (provisional)	24.6	50.3	-25.7
2023/24 (final)	24.8	50.0	-25.2
2022/23 (final)	26.8	50.3	-23.5

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)	-1.56	0.16	-1.73
2022/23 (final)	-1.02	0.17	-1.18

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 (provisional)	87%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	84%	93%	Not available
2021 leavers (revised)	92%	94%	Not available

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	19.09	34.38	Below

A-level value added

A score showing students' progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (revised)	-0.8	0.0	Below

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 (2 term)	11.3%	8.1%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	12.8%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	13.7%	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 (2 term)	34.3%	21.9%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	34.9%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	41.6%	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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