

Inspection of Stratton School

Eagle Farm Road, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire SG18 8JB

Inspection dates:	23 and 24 April 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The principal of this school is Sam Farmer. This school is part of Meridian Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Mark Woods, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Shirley Jamieson. There is also an executive principal, Andy Daly, who is responsible for this school and two other schools in the trust.

What is it like to attend this school?

At Stratton School, pupils can be sure that teachers are committed to ensuring they achieve the best possible outcomes. Pupils' learning is focused on securing strong foundations, making sure that the key areas within each subject are learned, understood and remembered.

Pupils display confidence in their lessons and feel like they are learning more. The school now has more subject specialists delivering lessons, which has ensured greater consistency and stability. Pupils can feel this change and speak positively about their education.

Pupils behave very well here. They appreciate and understand the changes and comment on being able to focus and learn as a result. They trust teachers and have good relationships with them, never being afraid to ask for help.

Pastoral support is strong, and pupils really value the school's 'hubs'. Here, staff have the expertise to guide pupils when they are struggling, and pupils take comfort in knowing there is always somewhere to go. This makes the pupils feel confident, safe and secure.

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

Stratton School has welcomed a brand new key stage to their school this year. New pupils join a school where the curriculum has been skilfully constructed to ensure that all year groups are receiving an education that supports their needs. Staff check pupils' knowledge carefully to identify any gaps or mistakes they may need to address. This ensures that pupils receive a breadth of study and make strong progress right from the start.

The school carefully reviews the curriculum plans, adapting them to the needs of pupils. They have now reached a point where the quality of teaching is of a similar standard across the board, and therefore every classroom experience is similar. However, in some lessons some pupils are not supported to move on as quickly as they could. Here, strategies to gauge pupils' progress are less developed.

The school's endeavours to support pupils who need extra help to develop their reading are clear and considered. There is appropriate individualised support for the weakest readers and steps to promote reading for pleasure among wider school community are progressing.

There is excellent support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school ensures that teachers understand the needs of these pupils. Staff make sure lessons are accessible to all. The school's 'ACE' provision is a shining example of the school's inclusive ethos. Here, staff have the expertise to ensure that pupils with autism can enjoy lessons alongside their peers but also have a base where their needs are supported. Pupils here thrive as a result and are confident and happy.

The school is working hard to improve the levels of attendance. It has a firm understanding of the causes of absence and has many strategies that are helping pupils to attend regularly and on time, and prepared for learning. The 'serenity suite' is one example that is helping pupils who struggle to attend make those steps towards improvement. Similarly, leaders have worked hard to improve behaviour across school. Pupils say that this is having a positive impact, and they feel they learn more as a result.

The wider curriculum provides opportunities to learn and think about others who are different from themselves. They have a respect for others around them and understand that discrimination is not tolerated. Pupils see this rarely. Bullying is rare, and dealt with by teachers.

The school implements the trust's 'PLEDGES programme', which encourages a focus on leadership, initiative and community among the pupils. This is not yet fully embedded and not always clear and meaningful to pupils. This limits their engagement in the programme. There are a range of clubs and opportunities provided for pupils, with a renewed vigour and interest especially in evidence among key stage 3 pupils.

The 'Matt King' sixth form offers an opportunity for students to further their studies with a curriculum offer that is broad and varied. Teachers are secure and confident in their subjects. The level of engagement is clear with students eager to ask questions and improve. Their onward journey is well considered and the school's advice on careers and next steps gives students information and guidance, across a range of progression routes.

The school is relentless in its approach to improve the outcomes for pupils at the Stratton School. It has made improvements across all areas and is determined to continue this. Those responsible for governance have provided high levels of support and are clear in the needs of the school. Staff are committed to school improvement and feel their workload and well-being is well considered and leadership at all levels is valued.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not always check pupils' understanding systematically to adapt and respond to the needs of pupils during lessons. As a result, some pupils are not progressing as quickly as they could. The school should strengthen staff's expertise in assessment so that teaching is adapted effectively.
- The school's 'PLEDGES' values are not fully understood by all pupils. As a result, pupils do not always take up all the opportunities offered and do not understand why it is important to them. The school should work to ensure the personal development programme is valued and understood by all pupils. This will ensure that pupils'

experiences are positive and that they are supported to develop their strength of character and stretch pupils' talents and interests.

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	137886
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10345329
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	989
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	134
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Shirley Jamieson
CEO of the trust	Mark Woods
Principal	Sam Farmer
Website	www.stratton.school
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 June 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Stratton School joined Meridian Trust in 2020.
- The school has a specialist resourced provision for pupils with autism for eight pupils.
- The school makes use of seven alternative provisions.
- 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, 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, science, English, and history. 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.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about pupils' behaviour, attendance, the school's curriculum and improvement planning.
- The inspectors held meetings with the chair of trustees; the chief executive officer; members of the academy council, including the chair; the executive principal; and the principal. They also met with other school leaders, teachers, staff members and pupils.
- The inspectors talked to pupils and staff to gather information about school life.
- The inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the free-text comments. The inspectors also considered the responses to the online Ofsted staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Louise Cooper, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Celano	Ofsted Inspector
Jason Howard	Ofsted Inspector
Caroline Dawes	Ofsted Inspector

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