

Inspection of Sporting Stars Academy

Field Avenue, Baddeley Green, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST2 7AS

Inspection dates: 1 to 3 July 2025

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

At Sporting Stars there is an unwavering commitment to getting to know and understand the individual needs of each and every pupil. Staff inspire a passion for learning in pupils who have had challenging educational experiences previously. There is a drive in school to ensure all pupils can unlock their potential and, as their motto says, 'achieve a brighter future'. Pupils make tremendous gains, both academically and socially.

There is consistency and security in the school routines. These help pupils settle into school life. Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils who feel dysregulated are supported by skilled staff to de-escalate and reflect together. Pupils learn to form positive friendships in school and on the sports field. The staff team are effective in building positive, supportive relationships.

Staff in school have a sharp focus on pupils developing skills for life. The 'student council' show pride in representing their peers. The school offers high-quality enrichment programmes to develop a wide range of skills. Pupils develop pride in their achievements and build their self-worth. The school's work in igniting an ambition for the future for each pupil is exemplary. This means pupils leave Sporting Stars well prepared for their next steps.

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

The school's ambitious curriculum is sequenced to account expertly for the individual needs of pupils. Pupils attending the school have a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff are skilled and have strong subject knowledge. The carefully crafted curriculum offers academic and vocational routes. Staff are adept in breaking down learning into clear and logical bite-sized pieces of learning, helping pupils to make connections in learning. As a result, pupils, including those in the sixth form, achieve exceptionally well from their starting points.

The proprietor body and leaders ensure that staff benefit from continuous professional development and staff value the opportunities provided. Of note is the way staff identify gaps in pupils' learning meticulously. Through well-planned adaptations to the delivery of the curriculum, pupils are able to successfully access learning. Pupils have many opportunities to revisit prior learning. Staff get to know the specific approaches that work for each pupil. This helps pupils to secure the key knowledge they need for future learning.

The school has established a strong culture of reading and oracy. The school implements a carefully thought out approach to teaching phonics. Pupils who are at the earliest stage of reading get highly effective support. The school is resolute in its ambition to introduce pupils to new authors and broaden their reading experiences. This work is highly successful. Staff have a sharp focus on teaching and checking understanding of what they read to develop a rich and broad vocabulary. This helps

pupils when they come across subject-specific language in other subjects. The daily reading routines help pupils value reading time. A love of reading is promoted throughout the school. As a result, over time pupils gain confidence as readers.

The school prioritises the way that they prepare pupils for adulthood. Teaching pupils about personal development is at the heart of what the school does. Pupils, including those in the sixth form, access opportunities to volunteer and work placements. For example, path clearing at a local National Trust, or working at a local hedgehog sanctuary. Pupils are well supported in accessing these experiences. All benefit from the individualised careers advice. For students in the sixth form, the school also arranges visits to local colleges and the opportunity to meet with local employers.

The school helps pupils to improve their attendance. Systems to manage attendance are clear, staff work closely with pupils, families and carers to break down barriers pupils may have. For example, staff offer coffee catch ups with families to help refocus on improving pupil attendance.

The school's systems to manage behaviour are equally as effective. The school uses information it receives to track and analyse behaviours, recognise triggers and support pupils in learning to self-regulate. Pupils' attitudes in lessons are impressive. Pupils flourish in this calm and purposeful environment.

The proprietor body has a clear vision for the school. They provide strong oversight of the school's work. Senior leaders use continuing professional development and quality assurance to provide detailed information to the proprietor body, enabling leaders and staff to thrive in their roles. Staff are very well supported to manage their workload and well-being. In addition, this helps the school to meet the independent school standards consistently and securely. The site is impeccably maintained. The school is accessible for pupils with SEND. The school meets schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Staff are very proud to be a member of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	141128
DfE registration number	861/6012
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10391769
Type of school	Other Independent School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	14 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	50
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	21
Number of part-time pupils	21
Proprietor	Sporting Stars Community Interest Company
Chair	Shane Anthony Tudor
Headteacher	Katie Jackson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£22,230 to £96,900
Telephone number	01782 248248
Website	https://sportingstarsacademy.com
Email address	emma.tench@sportingstarsacademy.com
Date of previous inspection	24 to 26 October 2023

Information about this school

- The school operates from one site located at Field Avenue, Baddeley Green, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST 7AS.
- The proprietor is Sporting Stars Community Interest Company.
- There have been changes to leadership since the previous inspection. The current headteacher took up post in January 2024, in addition to two deputy headteachers joining the school.
- Most pupils have had significant periods of disruption to their formal education prior to joining the school.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- Many pupils have an education, health and care plan (EHCP).
- The last standard inspection took place on 24 to 26 October 2023.
- The school is registered to accept 62 pupils between the ages of 14 to 19.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteachers and other senior leaders.
- The lead inspector met with three representatives of the proprietor body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work from other curriculum subjects.
- Inspectors visited off-site sports and volunteering.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of the school, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and honest culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- School policies and other documents were examined to check compliance with the independent school standards and to provide other inspection evidence. These included the school's evaluation of performance and its development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils and staff. Inspectors also met with staff throughout the inspection to gather their views. There were no responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey.
- As part of the checks on the school's compliance with the independent school standards, inspectors made a tour of the school premises accompanied by the headteacher and a director.

Inspection team

Pamela Matty, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Antony Edkins

Ofsted Inspector

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