

Inspection of Stone Lodge Academy

Stone Lodge Lane West, Ipswich, Suffolk IP2 9HW

Inspection dates:	28 and 30 January 2025
The quality of education	Inadequate
Behaviour and attitudes	Inadequate
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Inadequate
Previous inspection grade	Good

The head of school is Claire Brickley. This school is part of Eastern Education Group 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), Nikos Savvas, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Elton D'Souza. There is also an executive headteacher, Graham Alcock, who is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

While most pupils enjoy school, weaknesses in the quality of education limit many pupils' progress through the curriculum. Some pupils struggle to access the curriculum because it is not well matched to their needs. For others, expectations are too low, and many pupils do not achieve as highly as they should.

Too many pupils regularly miss school, and the school does not take effective action to help these pupils attend school as often as they should. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and social times is generally calm, and they form positive relationships with their peers. They are polite and show respect for each other. Pupils appreciate the strong relationships they build with the adults in school. They feel well cared for and know they have someone to talk to if they are worried. Many pupils enjoy opportunities to take part in enrichment activities, such as sports, which help to build their confidence.

Safeguarding is not effective. Some pupils are at risk of not being properly protected. This is because the school has not made sure that staff follow government guidance on dealing with harmful sexual behaviour between pupils and providing timely support.

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

Stone Lodge Academy joined Eastern Education Group Trust in September 2024. The trust recognised that the school needed significant improvement and has begun to act. However, these changes are too recent to have had a positive impact.

Pupils at the school have moderate learning difficulties, with some having additional needs such as autism or social, emotional and mental health difficulties. The curriculum is not well developed to meet the needs of all pupils. In too many subjects, it lacks clear sequencing and does not set out precisely what pupils should know at each stage. As a result, learning is not always well matched to pupils' abilities. Some pupils find the work too easy, while others struggle to access it successfully.

In some subjects, such as physical education, the curriculum is more ambitious. Here, learning is carefully planned, and staff adapt teaching well to meet pupils' needs. Where this happens, pupils progress through the curriculum well. However, while there are notable areas of strength, this strong practice is not consistent across the school.

Across the curriculum, assessment is inconsistent. In the primary phase, pupils have individual learning plans (ILPs) based on their education, health and care (EHC) plans. From Year 7, the school introduces additional targets for mathematics and English. However, the way staff check pupils' progress against these targets often lacks precision. Staff do not always know how to build on what pupils have already learned. In some cases, pupils continue to work on the same target repeatedly without the right adaptations to help them succeed.

Pupils do not achieve well enough in reading. The reading curriculum is not matched well enough to the pupils' needs. Not all staff have the knowledge and expertise required to

teach reading well. Consequently, pupils do not receive the right level of support to help them become fluent, confident readers.

Most pupils behave well in school. Learning is rarely disrupted. Staff apply clear expectations for behaviour. Pupils are polite, respectful and engage well in lessons. The school has not taken effective action to improve attendance for the high number of pupils who are persistently absent. The school's oversight of attendance and strategy for improving pupils' attendance have not been effective. These pupils miss important learning, which affects their well-being and future opportunities.

The personal development programme is effective for many pupils. Those in Year 9 and above enjoy taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and developing horticultural and drama skills. They gain confidence through trips, including a residential visit to Wales. While the programme meets the needs of some pupils, it does not meet the needs of others sufficiently well. Some parts of the programme are not matched well to pupils' levels of understanding. As a result, some pupils miss opportunities to develop important skills, knowledge and confidence that would better prepare them for their wider life experiences. The school provides appropriate careers education, advice and guidance to help pupils prepare for their next steps.

Governance is ineffective. While the new trust has plans to strengthen governance, these are not yet in place. As a result, those responsible for governance are not holding the school to account effectively for the quality of education pupils receive. They are failing to meet statutory safeguarding responsibilities, including ensuring effective oversight of pupils' attendance. Staff and parents and carers are broadly positive about the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The school has failed to establish adequate processes to ensure that safeguarding is effective. Those responsible for governance do not provide appropriate support or challenge to the school, and systems are not reviewed regularly. As a result, staff are not consistently equipped to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.

Some processes around child protection procedures are weak. The school has not ensured that vulnerable pupils, including those who are persistently absent, are identified and supported in a timely manner.

When safeguarding concerns arise, particularly regarding harmful sexual behaviours, the school does not always act with the urgency required to secure the help pupils need. The school must take immediate action to implement robust safeguarding procedures and ensure that all staff are well supported to develop their expertise in keeping pupils safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Safeguarding is not effective. The school has failed to ensure that there are robust systems to keep pupils safe. Weak oversight means the school does not always identify risks or support vulnerable pupils quickly enough. Staff are not equipped to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities, and concerns are not always addressed appropriately. The school should strengthen safeguarding procedures and ensure that staff are supported to protect pupils effectively.
- The curriculum is not consistently well planned. In too many subjects, it lacks clarity and detail, meaning pupils do not secure the essential knowledge and skills they need. Weak links between the primary and secondary phases create gaps in pupils' learning. Activities are not always well matched to pupils' needs, so many struggle to achieve well. The school should ensure that the curriculum is well sequenced, clearly defined and that teachers know how to adapt learning, so all pupils achieve well.
- The school has not ensured that all staff have the expertise to provide effective support for pupils who need to catch up with their reading. Inconsistencies in phonics teaching prevent some pupils from developing fluency in reading as quickly or securely as they should. The school should ensure that all staff develop their knowledge and expertise so that pupils are taught to read consistently well.
- Assessment is not used effectively across the school. Often, teachers do not have a clear understanding of what pupils know and can do. This results in work that is too easy or too difficult. The school has not established effective assessment strategies to check pupils' understanding or to inform teaching. As a result, too many pupils do not make the progress they should from their starting points. The school should develop a coherent and consistent approach to assessment that enables teachers to accurately identify pupils' starting points, assess their progress through the curriculum and adapt teaching accordingly.
- The school does not have a clear strategy to improve attendance for pupils who are persistently absent. Too many pupils miss significant learning, which negatively affects their achievement and well-being. The school does not analyse attendance patterns closely or intervene quickly when concerns arise. The school should take action to improve attendance so that more pupils attend school regularly and benefit from their education.
- The trust has failed to provide the necessary oversight, challenge and support to ensure that the school meets its core responsibilities. The trust needs to strengthen its strategic oversight and ensure that the school implements the necessary improvements.

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	141407
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10345399
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Elton D'Souza
CEO of the trust	Nikos Savvas
Headteacher	Graham Alcock (executive headteacher) Claire Brickley (head of school)
Website	www.sendat.academy/stonelodge
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 July 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new executive headteacher has been appointed.
- In September, the school became part of a newly formed trust, Eastern Education Group Trust.
- Places are offered for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Many pupils have wider, complex needs, such as social, emotional and mental health needs, autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and speech and language difficulties.
- The school does not currently make use of alternative providers.

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.

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.

- 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.
- Inspectors met with the CEO and other trust staff, including those with responsibility for the quality of education and safeguarding.
- Inspectors met with two executive headteachers and the head of school.
- The inspectors met with trustees and governors. They also spoke to a number of representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents relating to: trust quality assurance and governance, behaviour and attendance, the personal, social, health and economic programme and pupils with SEND. They also held meetings with staff with responsibilities in these areas.
- Inspectors reviewed samples of pupils' EHC plans as well as samples of the school's ILPs.
- Inspectors reviewed evidence of assessment and pupils' work on the school's assessment monitoring platform.
- Inspectors reviewed Ofsted's parent and staff survey. They also spoke to groups of pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, early reading, food technology, history and physical education. 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 also reviewed curriculum documents and sampled some pupils' work for design and technology, art and science.
- 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.

Inspection team

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