

# Stocksbridge High School

**Address:** Shay House Lane, Stocksbridge, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S36 1FD

**Unique reference number (URN):** 145274

## Inspection report: 12 May 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.

## ⊗ This school requires significant improvement

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.

### Needs attention ●

#### Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention ●

The recently enhanced curriculum is not fully embedded across the school. The curriculum is, however, well considered and meets the needs of pupils currently at the school. Lessons are taught increasingly effectively. For example, staff use different methods to demonstrate high-quality work and to model how to meet their expectations. Where these strategies are used well, pupils have higher aspirations of themselves and the work they produce. However, many pupils have significant gaps in their foundational knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. These gaps are not routinely well addressed by teachers. Support to address these gaps in pupils' knowledge have only begun very recently. Staff do not guide pupils clearly enough towards how to improve.

Staff typically consider different pupils' needs when they teach the curriculum. Some resources are adapted to support learning better than others. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are a priority. However, staff's understanding of how to meet these needs is underdeveloped. Partly, this is because information shared with them on pupils' barriers to learning is not as precise as it needs to be. The most appropriate strategies to support each pupil are not implemented consistently.

#### Inclusion

Needs attention ●

Disadvantaged pupils are now much better supported than they were in the past. Pupils' individual barriers to learning are understood by leaders. However, this information is not shared as effectively as it could be with staff. This limits the impact of support for pupils in the classroom. Additional support to help pupils to address specific gaps in learning are now in place. However, many are at an early stage. Leaders have been unable to fully evaluate the impact of these changes.

The curriculum now better reflects the range of pupils' needs than it did in the past. Leaders are ambitious that all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, will achieve their best. The pupil premium strategy sets out the barriers many disadvantaged pupils face. However, leaders' strategy and actions still lack precision and impact. Leaders' plans to direct support so that additional funding has the maximum effect are at an early stage of implementation.

Leaders skilfully navigate the specific vulnerabilities some pupils have, for example those who are looked after, so that these pupils develop a sense of belonging. Any pupils

accessing alternative provision do so in their best interests. Leaders regularly check on their progress and the impact each provision is having on their learning and/or wellbeing.

## **Leadership and governance**

**Needs attention** ●

In recent years, leadership at the school has been turbulent. The senior leadership team currently in post is new to the school. However, leaders have identified and begun to act upon the significant weaknesses facing the school in a short period of time. Due to leaders' strategic vision and rapid action, some aspects of the school have begun to improve. Other important aspects are developing more slowly due to the significant challenges that must be overcome. Leaders' plans, and their ability to achieve these, are still being strengthened. However, all decisions are made in pupils' best interests.

The governance of the school has been restructured and improved. The trust has ensured that clear lines of communication with local governors are developing. While there is some rigour in the questions governors ask of leaders, those responsible for governance have not always demonstrated the strategic insight required to secure sustained improvement. Governors and trustees recognise the need for improvement at the school and support this fully. They meet their statutory duties overall.

The quantity and pace of improvement at the school has been a challenge for staff. Regular changes in leadership and new initiatives have brought additional workload. Often, the positive impact of these changes on pupils' education has been minimal. More recently, however, stability has brought greater confidence in leadership. Workload has been more carefully managed. Professional learning is more precise and gives staff specific strategies to employ. Engagement with all stakeholders has improved. Parents and carers cite visible and receptive leaders as one of the most important changes to the school.

## **Personal development and wellbeing**

**Needs attention** ●

The personal, social and health education curriculum at the school has been significantly strengthened of late. Pupils access their full entitlement to relationships and sex education, as well as careers information. The current curriculum goes well beyond statutory requirements to ensure pupils become positive citizens with an appreciation and understanding of those who are different from themselves. At present, pupils' knowledge of this curriculum is underdeveloped. Leaders have allocated greater curriculum time to this going forwards, demonstrating their commitment to pupils' wider development.

Leadership opportunities help older pupils to be role models for younger ones. Clubs in school and educational visits out of school are increasingly popular. Leaders have carefully crafted the enrichment offer to appeal to many talents and interests. The school provides support for disadvantaged pupils to ensure they have full access to this offer. However, leaders' tracking of participation in clubs and enrichment is at an early stage. This is mainly because the current enrichment timetable is very recent. Leaders are committed to making enrichment fully inclusive. Pupils' views have shaped the current offer.

The school's careers programme is very well considered. It gives pupils an understanding of different careers they might follow. It supports pupils to take part in work experience and arranges 'mock' interviews to develop employability skills. All pupils have access to impartial

careers guidance, which helps them make informed and ambitious choices for their futures. Older pupils go on to a range of successful destinations upon leaving school.

The support and care given to pupils at the school is very effective. Pupils learn how to stay healthy, manage stress and keep themselves safe online. Pupils are taught to respect one another and talk openly about concerns they might have for a peer. There is a culture of mutual respect and support becoming embedded at the school.

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## **Urgent improvement** ●

### **Achievement**

**Urgent improvement** ●

Pupils, notably those who are disadvantaged or who face barriers to their learning, achieve significantly less well than they should. There has been a decline in pupils' achievement over time. Pupils' results in national tests and examinations have left the vast majority of disadvantaged pupils without the basic qualifications that they need to succeed in later life. Many pupils come to the school with the levels of attainment expected for their age but leave having achieved far less well than they should have. The progress disadvantaged pupils make is significantly below that of disadvantaged pupils nationally. New leaders are rightly concerned about this trend of serious underachievement.

Gaps in pupils' foundational knowledge and skills are beginning to be addressed. However, this work is at an early stage. Some positive steps can be seen in current pupils' work. This is especially the case for younger pupils, who have benefited from more effective teaching for a larger part of their secondary education. Some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are achieving more positively than before. Small steps are being taken towards better outcomes in future.

### **Attendance and behaviour**

**Urgent improvement** ●

Attendance has declined significantly over time. Leaders have begun to address this with urgency. However, this work is at an early stage and currently shows limited impact. For disadvantaged pupils especially, absence is unacceptably high. There is little sign that it is improving. There is an embedded culture of poor attendance among older pupils in particular. Where leaders have worked strategically and consistently with younger pupils, from the start of their time at school, attendance is more positive. Pupils who join the school with a history of very poor attendance significantly impact upon the school's ambition to reduce absence. These pupils receive the full support of all staff to change their attitude to education. This work is more successful for some pupils than others.

Incidents of poor behaviour, truancy and bullying have reduced of late. Pupils' resilience and focus in lessons has improved. Pupils now have greater confidence that staff will deal with disruption to learning. However, poor attitudes persist among a minority of pupils. Pupils state that learning time can still be lost to poor behaviour. Leaders are steadfast in their expectations. These are made clear to the whole school. The climate for learning is beginning to improve as a result.

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

Pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Pupils' achievement, particularly that of disadvantaged pupils, has declined significantly over time. While leaders have responded to this robustly, it is too early to see the fruits of those improvements.

The single biggest barrier to pupils achieving their potential is poor attendance. Over time, pupils' attendance has declined. For disadvantaged pupils, this decline has been significant. There is currently little evidence that pupils' attendance is improving consistently well. Leaders' strategies to improve pupils' attendance have not had the desired impact. A greater focus on attendance and improved pastoral support have helped to encourage some pupils back into education. Younger pupils attend much better than older ones. However, overall, pupils' attendance is too low. Too many disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are frequently absent and miss out on learning.

Pupils benefit from a more consistent educational experience than they once did. New leaders have brought increased stability, higher expectations and a clear understanding of what needs to improve. Pupils feel safe and are confident to report any concerns they might have. Bullying is rare and dealt with robustly when it does occur. Pupils learn the importance of tolerance and respect. This is creating an increasingly harmonious school community. Pupils appreciate the improvements they have seen at their school, including better behaviour, greater support for their learning and a wider range of clubs. However, pupils' experience is still too variable. Leaders' vision of a high-quality education and excellent standards of behaviour are not currently realised.

When pupils are in lessons, their conduct is better than it is around the school. Leaders know this is the case and have taken swift and effective action to address it. Greater supervision on corridors has reduced lesson truancy. Rewards for pupils have increased engagement in learning. However, many changes to the curriculum and how it is taught are new. Pupils experience teaching that varies in how effective it is. They do not learn as well as they should.

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## Next steps

- Leaders must ensure that their attendance strategy leads to increased rates of attendance and reduced persistent absence, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Leaders and those responsible for governance must ensure that highly effective action is taken to increase pupils' achievement and ensure that pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education, employment or training.
- Leaders must ensure that the curriculum is implemented effectively, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, so that gaps in foundational knowledge are addressed and pupils achieve well.
- Leaders should ensure that pupils' barriers to learning are identified precisely and that staff make effective use of information and strategies to support pupils' learning and adapt

their teaching.

- Leaders should ensure that staff consistently model and maintain high expectations for behaviour so that pupils develop the resilience and self-discipline to thrive.
  - Leaders should ensure that pupils have a secure understanding of the personal development curriculum, particularly knowledge of those who are different and of fundamental British values.
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## About this inspection

This school is part of Minerva Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Bev Matthews, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by John Doyle.

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, senior leaders, the designated safeguarding lead and special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector also spoke to those responsible for governance and the chief executive officer of the trust. One inspector spoke with the virtual headteacher and alternative provisions.

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 currently makes use of 6 alternative provisions, including 2 that are unregistered.

Headteacher : David Williams

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### Lead inspector:

John Linkins, His Majesty's Inspector

### Team inspectors:

Harkireet Sohel, Ofsted Inspector

Natasha Greenough, Ofsted Inspector

John O'Hara, 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 12 May 2026

## School and pupil context

### Total pupils

**790**

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

**900**

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: 1,154

### Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

**31.14%**

Close to 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

**3.67%**

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**

**12.66%**

Close to average

### **What does this mean?**

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

National average: 13.4%

### **Location deprivation**

**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 (final)	26.4%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	35.6%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	34.4%	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 (final)	39.5	46.1	Below
2023/24 (final)	41.6	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	42.5	46.3	Close to average

## 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)	-0.77	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.40	-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 (final)	8.5%	25.8%	Below
2023/24 (final)	16.3%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	12.2%	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 (final)	25.1	34.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	31.1	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	31.5	35.0	Close to average

### 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)	-1.16	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-1.07	-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 (final)	8.5%	53.1%	-44.6 pp
2023/24 (final)	16.3%	53.1%	-36.9 pp
2022/23 (final)	12.2%	52.4%	-40.2 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 (final)	25.1	50.4	-25.3
2023/24 (final)	31.1	50.0	-18.9
2022/23 (final)	31.5	50.3	-18.8

### 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)	-1.16	0.16	-1.32
2022/23 (final)	-1.07	0.17	-1.24

### 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).

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>2023 leavers (revised)</b>	91%	92%	Average
<b>2022 leavers (revised)</b>	91%	93%	Average
<b>2021 leavers (revised)</b>	96%	94%	Average

## **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.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>2024/25 (3 term)</b>	10.3%	8.4%	Above
<b>2023/24 (3 term)</b>	10.0%	8.9%	Close to average
<b>2022/23 (3 term)</b>	9.6%	9.0%	Close to average

### **Persistent absence**

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

<b>Year</b>	<b>This school</b>	<b>National average</b>	<b>Compared with national average</b>
<b>2024/25 (3 term)</b>	26.4%	23.4%	Close to average
<b>2023/24 (3 term)</b>	27.3%	25.6%	Close to average
<b>2022/23 (3 term)</b>	23.9%	26.5%	Close to average

## **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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