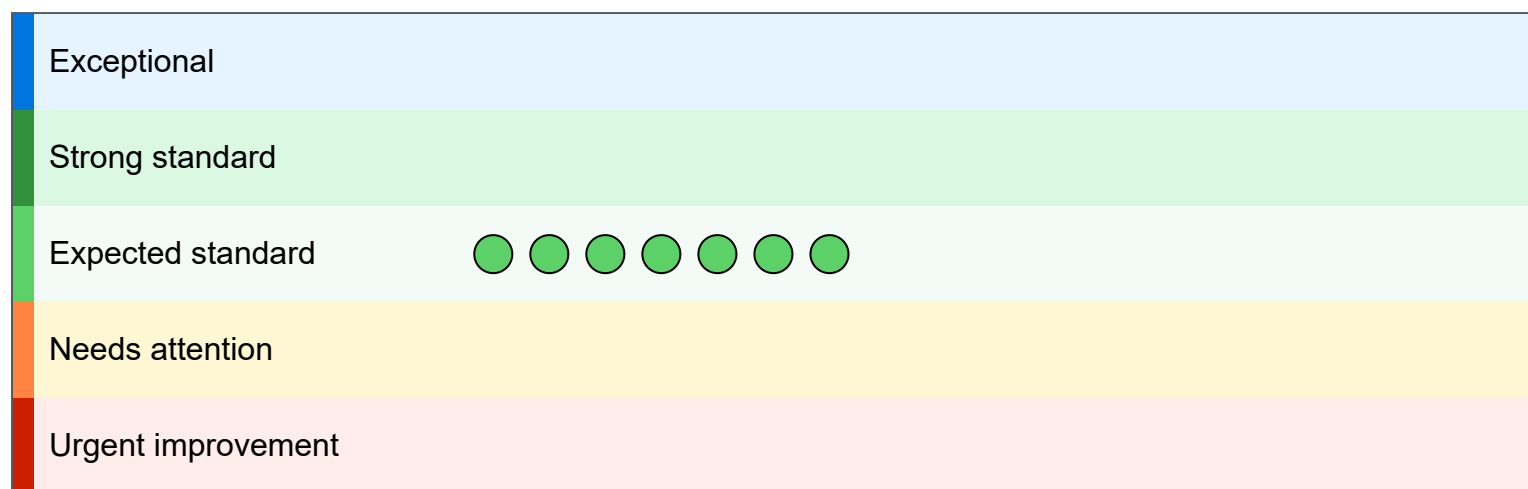


Stafford Hall School

Address: Cheltenham Place, Halifax, West Yorkshire, Halifax, West Yorkshire, HX3 0AW

Unique reference number (URN): 142324

Inspection report: 10 March 2026



✔ **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.
- **Insufficient evidence:** Inspectors were unable to gather sufficient evidence to judge whether safeguarding standards are met.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

On the whole, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well from their starting points. When pupils arrive at the school, leaders undertake many academic, social and emotional wellbeing checks. Pupils make suitable progress from these individual starting points. For some pupils, small steps of progress, such as making eye contact or making a choice, where appropriate, increase their readiness for adulthood.

The school is aspirational for pupils and offers a wealth of vocational and life skills qualifications. In 2025, all pupils achieved at least one entry level qualification, often in mathematics and/or English.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

The school has a compliant admissions and attendance register. Some pupils who join the school have not been in recent education. Pupils can join the school at any point during the year. Leaders ensure that pupils have a tailored transition period into the school. This impacts considerably on the school's overall attendance. Leaders have detailed knowledge of the individual reasons behind each pupil's attendance. The school has a process for following up on daily absence. For some pupils, the fresh start at this setting has improved their immediate engagement in education. However, for some pupils there is not a consistent pattern of improvement.

The school's behaviour policy sets the expectations for managing pupils' behaviour, including incidents of bullying and discrimination. Typically, pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to their learning. High supervision levels from staff who know pupils well ensure that the school is generally calm. There are reasonable adjustments for some pupils each morning. For example, some pupils use the swing to support their self-regulation before entering the building. Staff consistently apply the the school's behaviour expectations around 'effort and respect'. Pupils receive points for these aspects. They accumulate points to gain a reward, such as bowling or skating. This supports the purposeful learning atmosphere around the school. Leaders track behaviour and deal with incidents swiftly.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed a curriculum framework aligned with national curriculum expectations and the independent school standards. The curriculum is broad and ambitious for its pupils. Leaders have created 3 curriculum pathways to meet the personal needs of pupils. Pupils all have very different starting points. Staff personalise activities for pupils that closely match the targets on their education, health and care plans. For example, the explorer curriculum focuses on activities that promote engagement, exploration and persistence. The different pathways are generally taught well. Adults have secure subject knowledge.

The school ensures that pupils with limited communication skills can converse using tools, such as communication boards or sign language. There is positive communication between

staff and pupils. Some staff deliver phonics teaching to pupils. Some pupils remain at the early stages of learning to read and write. Leaders introduced a new phonics programme earlier this academic year. They recognise that more staff need professional learning in phonics, and to ensure consistency across all writing opportunities. The school matches reading books well to pupils' phonics attainment. Handwriting practice is evident in pupils' books. The school's approach to supporting pupils' handwriting is developing.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

All pupils at Stafford Hall have an education, health and care plan to support their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders break down each pupil's long-term goals into clear, short-term targets. This ensures that targets are easy to understand and measure. All staff are part of the review process to check pupils' progress against the targets.

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils. The school offers different curriculum pathways and qualifications. This means it inclusively meets the wide-ranging needs of pupils with SEND. The school effectively identifies and reduces barriers to learning. For example, staff use visual timetables, a tool that uses pictures to represent the sequence of activities for the day. This helps to reduce pupils' anxiety by providing a structure. Leaders work alongside staff from different external agencies, such as educational psychologists, and occupational and speech therapists.

Staff access professional learning on aspects of SEND, such as autism awareness and dyslexia. This ensures that they have the knowledge and skills to support pupils effectively. The school collaborates with the virtual school in several different local authorities. This close working relationship enhances the support for children in care.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

School leaders and the proprietor understand the school's context, strengths and areas for development. They have a clear rationale for their improvement priorities. Typically, they take appropriate action to drive improvement across all areas of the school's work. This academic year, leaders have refined some of the school's processes for assessment and phonics teaching. They recognise the need to embed these systems consistently. Leaders make decisions in the best interests of pupils. For example, a high ratio of staff to pupils ensures that pupils receive the support they need to engage successfully with their learning.

The governing body receives regular reports from the headteacher on school development. Governors share the school's vision and ethos. They have oversight of the school's policies and safeguarding procedures. The governors and proprietor provide challenge and feedback to the school leaders. This ensures that leaders are held to account.

Staff, at all levels, receive professional learning opportunities linked to the school's priorities and their own career development. Staff enjoy working at the school. Leaders are mindful of staff workload and wellbeing. Staff feel well-supported by leaders and the proprietor.

The school and the proprietor demonstrate secure skills and knowledge to ensure that the independent school standards are met consistently. The school complies with schedule 10

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school has a clear commitment to supporting pupils' personal development. Leaders take pupils' starting points into consideration when selecting the content for each unit. This ensures that there is coherent and appropriate programme for personal development. The programme covers important British values, protected characteristics and cultural diversity. Pupils understand democracy and know that adults vote to elect the prime minister. Pupils learn to use the words respect and tolerance in everyday situations. Pupils understand why we have rules and laws and have some understanding of right from wrong.

The school's 'Preparing for Adulthood' curriculum prepares pupils more widely for life post-16. This includes activities such as food preparation, financial management and budgeting. A further programme supplements this with opportunities for pupils to experience a range of life skills, sporting and cultural events. For example, pupils attend a concert and learn to swim. This helps them develop the skills they need to live confidently and positively in modern Britain.

The school has a relationships and sex education programme. Leaders ensure that the content matches pupils' stages of development. Typically, pupils know what makes a good friend. The curriculum supports pupils to manage online and offline risks. This ensures that pupils develop an understanding of healthy relationships.

To develop pupils' interests, the school provides opportunities like walks in the locality and singing at events with other schools. This brings together pupils from all backgrounds, creating a sense of unity and belonging. Adults build secure relationships with pupils. This means that staff can offer effective pastoral support when pupils need it.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils. They empower and inspire pupils with their careers programme. Pupils receive impartial careers guidance. This supports pupils to make informed decisions about post-16 employment or education.

Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed a post-16 curriculum that meets the very specific and complex needs of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This pathway helps to meet older students' academic, health and social needs. This links explicitly to the targets on students' education, health and care plans. Teaching is adapted to ensure that students can access learning. Skilled staff ensure that students are supported effectively to be successful. Students routinely revisit tasks to embed learning. As a result, students make progress over time.

Staff effectively support students to prepare for adulthood. For example, some students access lessons on self-care and food preparation. This helps them develop their understanding of healthy and unhealthy foods. Some students have opportunities to gain the confidence and skills to use public transport. This supports their independence. Staff sensitively support students' behaviour with gentle reminders. For example, staff use just a single word, 'looking', to help pupils maintain focus.

For some post-16 students, hand–eye coordination skills are weak. Staff provide practical tasks to develop students' hand muscles, such as using tweezers, to enhance their ability to begin to hold a pen accurately. Some students embark on vocational qualifications, such as those in hair and beauty. This helps to ensure that students have basic practical skills in readiness for the next stage of their education.

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

Staff at Stafford Hall School greet pupils warmly each morning. Clear lines of communication between staff and pupils' chaperones, taxi drivers and parents and carers help to ensure that pupils are safe.

All pupils at the school have an education, health and care plan. Pupils have various special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff effectively support and tailor the curriculum to pupils' learning needs. This allows pupils to enjoy their learning. Pupils make progress from their very individual starting points. These bespoke pathways support pupils to be ready for the next stage of their learning journey.

Positive relationships between pupils and staff are integral to ensuring that pupils have a sense of belonging. Lunchtime is a joyful experience. Staff and pupils eat alongside each other. Adults engage in purposeful conversation, using every opportunity to reinforce the school's behaviour expectations. Adults skilfully help pupils to manage their own behaviour. They intervene sensitively to support pupils to make suitable choices. The school provides pupils with a safe sensory space. For example, the environment has equipment such as soft crash mats, large inflatable exercise balls and textured materials. It effectively supports pupils to manage sensory overload, reduce anxiety and improve focus. Pupils understand the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and have adults they trust who they would talk to.

Most pupils attend regularly. They take an active role in shaping and improving the school environment. For example, pupils are planning to design an accessible garden area for use at social times. This begins to foster leadership and responsibility. Pupils enjoy using the library in the outdoor space. It contains books that appeal to all reading levels. For example, it includes picture books, current authors and non-fiction texts. This promotes pupils' love of reading.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to review and adapt their strategies to improve pupils' attendance.
- Leaders should further improve the implementation of their handwriting curriculum to ensure that all pupils write with increased accuracy.

- Leaders should continue their work to ensure that staff's expertise in phonics teaching develops, to further support pupils who are at the early stages of reading and writing.
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About this inspection

Inspectors carried out this standard inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, and checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

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 senior leaders, and representatives of the governing body and the proprietary body. Inspectors spoke to teaching and support staff. To support communication needs, adults were present when inspectors spoke to pupils.

The name of the proprietor is Young Foundations Limited. The chair of the proprietor body is Niall Kelly.

The fees currently charged are between £77,000 and £104,000.

The school's email address is: shsadmin@youngfoundations.com

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not use any alternative provision.

The school supports pupils with education, health and care plans. The school caters for pupils with autism, severe learning difficulties and speech, language and communication needs.

Headteacher: Adam Medlock

Independent school standards

Independent school standards are either met or not met for each category.

1. Quality of education provided

Standards met

All standards have been met.

2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Standards met

All standards have been met.

3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Standards met

All standards have been met.

4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Standards met

All standards have been met.

5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Standards met

All standards have been met.

6. Provision of information

Standards met

All standards have been met.

7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Standards met

All standards have been met.

8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Standards met

All standards have been met.

Lead inspector:

Alison Stephenson, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Lynda Florence, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

 This data is from 10 March 2026

Total pupils

19

School capacity

25

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

19

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

0

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.

Insufficient evidence

Inspectors were unable to gather reliable enough evidence to grade an evaluation area. This is rare and normally only happens if there are no pupils on roll at the school.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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