Inspection of a good school: Stalbridge Church of England Primary School

Duck Lane, Stalbridge, Dorset DT10 2LP

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 March 2023

Outcome

Stalbridge Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Stalbridge is a friendly school where new pupils feel welcome. The school's values of 'believe, discover, aspire' underpin the curriculum and school life. Leaders are ambitious for pupils. Pupils gain the knowledge and skills they need to be successful at their next school and later on in life.

Pupils are keen to learn new things and want to do well. Pupils are courteous and kind. They behave well in lessons and around school. Low-level disruption is not common. If it does happen, teachers address it well. Staff help the small number of pupils who do sometimes struggle to manage their behaviour to improve it. Pupils know what bullying is. They say it does not happen often. If it does, they know who to turn to, and they say it will get sorted out. Pupils say they feel safe in school. They attend school well.

Pupils take seriously their responsibilities, such as being school council members. They are proud of the contributions they make to school life, such as organising new toy boxes for each class on the playground. They raise money for charities, for example to support earthquake victims. Older pupils take pride in supporting younger pupils as playground 'buddies'.

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

Leaders have developed a well-sequenced curriculum. For example, pupils study history in chronological order. This helps pupils place their learning in historical time. The curriculum helps pupils make links with previous learning and develop their understanding. In computing, pupils in Year 3 learn how to select variables when creating a data base. This helps them in Year 6 when they write a code to create a simple game. However, leaders have not identified the essential components pupils should learn in every subject. This means it is harder for pupils to build on their knowledge over time.

Phonics teaching starts as soon as children enter Reception. Teachers carefully follow the structure of the phonics scheme. They model new sounds well. Children keep pace with

the scheme. They quickly learn to read and write. Regular assessment identifies any children at risk of falling behind. Staff help them to keep up. The books that they read allow them to become confident, successful readers. Pupils enjoy reading. Adults read aloud to pupils regularly from a range of texts which enhance their vocabulary.

In mathematics, teachers explain new learning well. From Reception onwards, children use correct mathematical vocabulary. Teachers use assessment to identify accurately pupils' starting points. Teaching breaks learning down into logical steps. Pupils regularly practise and revisit previous learning. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils are competent mathematicians who can explain their learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported and work alongside their peers. Pupils enjoy mathematics. Many say it is their favourite subject.

Pupils with SEND follow the same curriculum as their peers. Teaching breaks new learning down into smaller chunks so that pupils with SEND experience success and increase their understanding. Pupils with SEND play a full part in school life. There have been unavoidable changes to the leadership of SEND. At times, this has caused frustration for parents and school leaders.

Pupils behave well in school and in lessons. Leaders are in the process of adapting the school's approach to behaviour management. The new system supports pupils in a better way. However, leaders have not been clear enough about why changes are being made. Some staff and parents are not sure how the new approach works in practice. This is leading to worries for some parents and staff.

Pupils at Stalbridge develop into well-rounded, caring young people. The curriculum helps them learn how to stay healthy, fit and safe, including online. Pupils enjoy opportunities, such as sports coaching and having their own school swimming pool. Pupils talk about their school values. Older pupils already think about what they aspire to be in the future, such as astrophysicists and computer scientists.

Staff say that leaders have made adaptations that help them manage their workload better. Governors share in leaders' vision for the school, but they will challenge, as well as support. Leaders' work is effective in improving attendance. Pupils attend school well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that regular training for staff and governors means they have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding. Staff are vigilant. They report concerns swiftly. Leaders work closely with outside agencies to keep pupils safe. They are not afraid to challenge agencies to get the right outcomes for children.

Governors oversee the school's work well. Staff are recruited safely.

Leaders help raise parents' awareness of dangers such as sexual harassment and sexual violence. The school gives parents information to help them keep their children safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders have not identified the essential knowledge they want pupils to know and remember. This makes it harder for pupils to build on their previous learning. Leaders should complete their work swiftly to identify the key components pupils must know in the remaining foundation curriculums.
- Leaders have not made it clear to parents and staff why, or how, the school's approach to behaviour is changing. As a result, some parents and staff worry that the new approach is inconsistent. Leaders need to communicate clearly to staff and parents how the new policy will be implemented in practice.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2012.

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' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	113899
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10240201
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	189
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Judy Waite
Headteacher	Simon Elledge
Website	www.Stalbridge.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Stalbridge Church of England Primary School is in the Diocese of Salisbury.
- At its most recent section 48 inspection, in November 2019, the school was graded as excellent. The next section 48 inspection is due in 2025.
- The headteacher joined the school in January 2021.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and took that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with school leaders, members of the governing board, a representative of Dorset local authority and a representative of the Diocese of Salisbury.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and computing. During deep dives, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject

leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.

- The inspector met with the curriculum and history leaders and spoke with pupils about their learning in history.
- The inspector listened to some pupils, from Year 1 to Year 3, read.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour around the school. The inspector met with pupils to find out their views on learning and school life.
- The inspector considered how well the school keeps pupils safe. To gather this information, the inspector spoke to school leaders and governors and talked with some staff and pupils. The school's safeguarding documentation, including the single central record was examined.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. The inspector met with some parents at the start of the school day. Six emails from parents were received. The findings of the school's own annual parent survey were considered.
- The responses to the Ofsted survey for staff were considered. The inspector talked to teachers and other staff at the school.

Inspection team

Sarah O'Donnell, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector

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