

Stalyhill Junior School

Hereford Way, Mottram Old Road, Stalybridge, Cheshire, SK15 2TD

Inspection dates 17–18 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school is well-led. Senior leadership is a strength. Governors know the school well and their support is extremely strong. Their work in holding staff to account is effective.
- Pupils' achievement is good. From their individual starting points, all groups of pupils, including the most able, make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is good and an increasing proportion is outstanding. This is because teachers know their pupils well and usually plan work which challenges pupils of different abilities to think for themselves.
- Well-presented work in pupils' books is of a high standard. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards that are above average and often well-above average
- The behaviour of pupils is good. A culture of high expectation abounds and the school motto: 'Only my best is good enough for me.' is fully evident.
- The school pays outstanding attention to safety. Pupils say they feel extremely safe in school and their parents agree. As a result, the school is a warm and harmonious community built around respect for each other and the environment.
- Teachers prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain through a highly imaginative and creative curriculum. Music and sports specialists, as well as the school's strong partnerships with other schools locally, are used extremely well to enrich pupils' experiences and life skills.
- The school continues to improve because leaders share a good understanding of what needs to be done to improve the school further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils of different abilities are not always set tasks that are at the correct level of difficulty. This sometimes slows their progress.
- Subject leaders are not always skilful enough in checking the quality of teaching and pupils' learning in their areas of the curriculum and so they are not fully effective.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning and teaching in lessons and part lessons.
- A scrutiny of work in pupils’ books, over time, was carried out jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, a representative of the local authority, a consultant providing support to the school, school staff and six governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors held discussions with parents and groups of pupils. Inspectors also spoke informally to pupils in lessons, during breaks and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors listened to a small number of pupils from Year 3 and Year 6 read.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at the latest school data on pupils’ achievement and the progress they are currently making.
- Other documentation scrutinised included strategic development planning, safeguarding information, behaviour logs, attendance records and minutes of recent meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of the 36 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the 96 responses to the questionnaire given to parents by the school on June 12 2015, as well as the 22 responses from staff to the inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

Clare Henderson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Willis

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is an average-sized junior school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well below the national average. The term disadvantaged pupils is used to describe those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority. These pupils receive additional support from pupil premium funding.
- The majority of pupils are White British. A small proportion is from various ethnic minorities.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school is part of a local cluster of schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve teaching and pupils' progress even further by making sure that teachers always set tasks that are at the correct level of difficulty for pupils of different abilities in order for them to achieve the best they can.
- Continue to support new subject leaders in their role of checking the quality of teaching and how well pupils learn in all subjects of the curriculum, in order to raise achievement further.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors, are ambitious for the school and are determined to ensure that pupils have the best possible opportunities to achieve their best in their time in the school. They have well-thought-out plans in place to ensure pupils' learning is accelerated further.
- Staff fully share these high expectations and aspirations, and their morale is high. There is a strong and clearly apparent culture of learning in the school, which the headteacher has fostered. This is built on a set of shared values that successfully promote good levels of pupils' achievement and behaviour.
- The leadership and management of teaching are good. Senior staff check teaching thoroughly. English and mathematics subject leaders are effective because they pinpoint precisely where teaching needs to be improved through their checks on the amount of learning taking place in lessons.
- Teachers new to subject leadership have learnt quickly from shadowing senior leaders. However, their work in checking on the quality of teaching and how well pupils are achieving in their subjects is at an early stage. As a result, their impact on improving these areas further is as yet limited. This is why leadership is not outstanding overall.
- Tolerance and respect for others are cornerstones of the school's values. No form of discrimination is tolerated and all pupils enjoy the same good opportunities to succeed. The school makes every effort to meet the needs of all pupils.
- The school's system for tracking the progress pupils are making generates a wealth of reliable information. This is carefully analysed by senior leaders to identify pupils who may need extra help, and then to ensure that these pupils receive the support they need.
- Subject leadership has improved well since the last inspection. The school's belief that, 'Only my best is good enough for me' is at the heart of a curriculum which promotes pupils' academic achievement and their personal development extremely well.
- The school has a strong focus on consolidating and extending pupils' above-average standards on arrival into Year 3 in English and mathematics.
- A topic-based approach enthuses pupils. They enjoy researching and creating artwork and writing about a wide variety of themes ranging from, for example, the Mayan culture and life in Britain during the First World War, to learning to develop codes in computing.
- The school also provides a wide range of experiences to enrich pupils' learning through musical tuition, residential trips, the speaking and writing of French, visits and visitors, and sports events, where everyone participates.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed well through assemblies, lessons, visits and the clear expectations that pupils will behave with kindness, tolerance and respect for each other, and take responsibility for their own actions.
- The school makes pupils well aware of British values, and prepares them well for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn the importance of equality, fairness and the rule of law through such things as their involvement in the school council and the ECO committee and by being lunchtime buddies to the younger pupils, or class prefects. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to begin to understand the principles of democracy.
- The school makes good use of the pupil premium funding to provide its few disadvantaged pupils with extra resources and support, both inside and outside the classroom. This ensures that these pupils can play a full part in the life of the school.
- The school makes good use of its primary physical education and sports funding to increase pupils' physical skills, extend the experiences available to them and provide teachers with coaching skills. Participation rates are high in a range of physical, mental and sporting activities, including chess, tennis, skipping and yoga in addition to the traditional competitive school sports.
- Parents are very supportive of the school, its staff, and its work. The large number who responded to the school's questionnaire was unanimous that their children are safe.
- Systems for safeguarding children's well-being fully meet all the latest requirements. Staff and visitors are properly checked and vetted and access to the school is carefully controlled. Policies and procedures are clear and comprehensive and fully reflect national guidance. All staff have up-to-date training and are well versed in how to recognise and deal with any concerns regarding pupils' safety.
- The school receives appropriate support from the local authority.
- The school benefits immensely from being part of a very strong cluster of local schools and from working alongside consultants.

■ The governance of the school:

- Members of the governing body bring a wealth of experience and professional knowledge to their work. They are very knowledgeable about the school and have a very clear picture of its strengths and weaknesses. They give a significant amount of time to carrying out their roles. They have supported the school well in securing good leadership and pupils' achievement.
- Governors understand very well how effective performance management brings about improvement and they make sure that only effective teaching, as measured by the progress pupils make, is rewarded. Because they hold learning to be central to the school's activities, governors receive regular updates about the overall performance of the school. They know how well the school is doing against other schools nationally and they are able to interpret data about pupils' achievement accurately. They are fully aware of the standards with which pupils join the school, the standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 6 and how these compare with other schools nationally.
- Governors are particularly vigilant and make regular checks to ensure pupils and staff are safe and secure in school. Together with the school bursar, governors manage the school's finances prudently and effectively. They are well placed to oversee the school's continuing improvement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are attentive in lessons. They try hard, especially when teaching is demanding and challenging. Their good behaviour makes a strong contribution to their good achievement.
- Pupils say that they enjoy school, and this is borne out in their consistently above-average attendance and laughter as, for instance, when Year 6 pupils waited eagerly for the coach to arrive to take them on their residential trip to Wales.
- Pupils take good care of their books and take pride in setting out their work neatly and tidily. This is especially the case in English and mathematics, where they understand the need to write legibly and to be precise when recording their way through a problem. Pupils usually focus fully on their learning; however, when work is too easy or too hard, their focus sometimes slips.
- Pupils' good conduct is reflected in the school's effective strategies to promote high standards of behaviour. Breaks and lunchtimes are orderly and the pupils move around the site well. They ensure that others are safe and enjoying themselves.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of different types of bullying. They know that, on the rare occasions when bullying occurs in school, it is quickly dealt with when they report it to adults. These instances are rare because the focus on respecting the views of others is central to the school curriculum.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel very safe and know who to go to if they have a concern.
- Parents who stated a view in the school questionnaire agree that their children are safe in school.
- Safeguarding requirements are implemented effectively. The school's records are complete and staff training is up-to-date. Governors monitor the school's arrangements and procedures for safeguarding pupils' well-being very closely.
- The school teaches pupils about the risks presented by a range of activities. Pupils are well aware of the risks on roads and know about the dangers associated with careless use of the internet.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good because teachers have good professional knowledge and skills, which enable them to spot and react quickly to any emerging misunderstandings by pupils. Pupils are thus confident in their learning as a result of their strong and positive relationships with adults.
- Good teaching consolidates pupils' above-average starting points. It secures good progress and above-average standards by the end of Year 6 in reading and writing and consistently well-above standards in mathematics. This ensures pupils are well prepared for their next stage of learning.
- The teaching of reading throughout the school is good. Reading records show that younger pupils are heard reading regularly. Older pupils read for pleasure during reading sessions guided by an adult, when

choosing books from the library or reading together from their class novel.

- The teaching of mathematics is a strength. The use of reasoning and logic to solve problems and daily mental mathematics activities are widespread. This has ensured pupils' consistently high levels of confidence and achievement in the subject.
- The teaching of writing is good. Pupils regularly complete extended pieces of high-quality descriptive or persuasive text. Their grammatical and punctuation skills, such as the use of the semi-colon or the understanding of subordinate clauses, are precise, and their spelling is accurate. Reading and writing skills are applied and extended well, for instance, when writing up science experiments.
- Teaching assistants contribute well to pupils' good achievement. They give good support and guidance in class and when working with individuals or small groups of pupils of different abilities.
- Teachers' written marking of pupils' work follows the school policy and often contains excellent advice. Teachers spend a great deal of time checking pupils' work. Besides celebrating good work, teachers regularly give extended guidance to pupils on what to do to get better. Pupils often assess each other's work. At these times, they look for strengths and areas to develop in their classmates' work.
- Work in pupils' books shows variations in the quality of teaching and the amount of learning taking place. Where learning is most effective, particularly in English and mathematics, the work set ensures that pupils of different abilities are appropriately and consistently challenged. At these times, the work captures pupils' imagination, motivates them to work hard and ensures they learn rapidly. This can be seen clearly in pupils' books where the most able pupils have more demanding work to complete. At these times, pupils learn well and make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress.
- Occasionally, pupils' books show that for some pupils of different abilities their work was incomplete and was sometimes too hard or too easy. In these cases, learning was slower than it might have been.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well because of the good and at times outstanding teaching throughout school.
- Most pupils start Year 3 with standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Through Year 3 to Year 6, pupils make good progress in their learning; this is reflected in the latest school data.
- Achievement is not outstanding because in some year groups some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. This is because at times work is too easy or too difficult for their ability and at these times pupils' progress slows. Furthermore, checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' learning have not yet been rigorously carried out by all subject leaders. Consequently, work in pupils' books shows that some pupils have not achieved as well as they could.
- Pupils' progress in 2014 was stronger in mathematics than in reading and writing by the end of Year 6. These differences have been addressed well by the school and the proportion of pupils predicted to attain Level 4 and Level 5 at the end of Year 6 has continued to rise in reading and writing as well as in mathematics because of the successful focus of school leaders on providing additional tuition as required.
- In 2014, there was a very small number of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 and it is not possible to make a reliable comparison with the attainment and progress of other pupils in school or nationally. Currently, there is a similarly small number of disadvantaged pupils in the school.
- The most able pupils achieve well. In 2014 at the end of Year 6, the most able pupils attained above-average standards in reading and writing, and well-above-average standards in mathematics. Challenging lessons such as in logic and problem-solving enable the most able pupils to extend their reasoning and thinking skills or to use their knowledge of punctuation and grammar to produce high-quality pieces of extended writing.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. The school supports them fully through work which is well tailored to meet their specific needs. This ensures that they make good progress.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	106189
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	461760

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Cochrane
Headteacher	Sue Kitchen
Date of previous school inspection	8 February 2012
Telephone number	0161 3384290
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	head@stalyhill-jun.tameside.sch.uk

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