

Stanborough Primary School

Appletree Walk, Watford, Hertfordshire WD25 0DQ

Inspection dates

6–8 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders do not rigorously monitor and address the effectiveness of the school's work. Although they have identified weaker teaching, they have been too slow to act upon it and have not focused enough on improving the progress pupils make from their starting points.
- Assessment systems for checking the progress of pupils throughout the year are not yet well developed. Leaders are not yet able to closely check and accelerate pupils' progress.
- Expectations of pupils are too low. Although pupils appear to attain well, they do not achieve the highest standards of which they are capable. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils.
- Not all teachers use the information about pupils' current abilities or the gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding to plan activities suitable to pupils' learning needs.
- When teaching does not meet pupils' needs, pupils' behaviour interrupts learning for themselves and others. As a result, not all pupils make sufficient progress.
- Teachers provide too few opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in English, or within different subjects.
- Some teachers do not check that pupils understand the work in lessons sufficiently well. Some misconceptions are not addressed, meaning that pupils make less progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Arrangements to keep pupils safe are rigorous and effective. Training for safeguarding is firmly embedded. Pupils are well cared for.
- Children in Nursery and Reception make a good start to their primary education.
- Staff appreciate the support they receive from leaders and enjoy working at the school.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. British values are promoted well through the curriculum.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to raise the achievement of pupils by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have consistently high expectations of behaviour, teaching and learning so that pupils make the progress they are capable of
 - making good use of information about what pupils know, can do and understand so that they make good progress, particularly the most able pupils
 - ensuring that teachers check whether pupils are making fast enough progress in lessons, including whether they need new or more challenging work or extra help to consolidate their learning, so that progress accelerates
 - making sure that teachers plan work that enables pupils to make good progress in their writing skills in other subjects, as well as in English, and to use their mathematical skills to reason and solve problems well.
- Strengthen leadership and governance by:
 - ensuring that self-evaluation is based on an up-to-date review of the strengths and weaknesses of the school
 - sharpening the school's plan for improvement so that it focuses on relevant information that allows leaders to assess the impact of their actions
 - making sure that leaders regularly and rigorously check the progress made by all pupils and tackle any underachievement
 - regularly monitoring the quality of teaching precisely so that the information can be used to raise standards in teaching, learning and assessment
 - supporting teachers to manage pupils' behaviour effectively
 - arranging appropriate training and external support for new leaders to be effective in their respective areas of responsibility.

The school must meet the following independent school standards

- The proprietor must ensure that teaching:
 - enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught
 - involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time
 - shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons
 - demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and uses information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress (paragraphs 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(d), 3(g)).
- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to

their roles and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are consistently met (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b)).

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The members of school's senior leadership team are all new to their roles. Although leaders are committed to bringing about improvements, there are gaps in their knowledge and understanding that have meant that not all of the independent school standards have been met.
- Leaders, including governors, do not have a process for self-evaluation in place to help them to accurately identify the school's strengths and weaknesses. Improvement plans are not sharp enough to bring about timely improvements in securing high-quality teaching, learning and assessment. Consequently, pupils are not making the good progress or achieving the standards of which they are capable.
- Leaders identify that the new assessment system in place is in its infancy. Leaders acknowledge that they do not yet have enough information about the performance of specific groups of pupils.
- Teachers and leaders check systematically throughout the school how well pupils are working towards achieving their age-related expectations for attainment. The attainment of pupils has been the main focus of monitoring activities. However, there is not enough close consideration and rigorous checking of pupils' progress from their starting points. Additionally, the information that leaders gather from this monitoring is not used precisely enough to ensure that swift and rigorous action is taken to manage staff performance effectively. Therefore, teaching is not ensuring that pupils are making the good progress they should.
- While leaders know where the strengths and weaknesses are in teaching across the school, the feedback leaders give to teachers about their practice focuses overly on the strengths. Consequently, leaders' feedback is not incisive enough about teachers' areas for development and teachers are not clear about what they need to do to improve. This results in teachers, though being supported, being unable to sustain high-quality teaching. This is most notable in key stage 1.
- Leaders have implemented a whole-school behaviour and discipline policy. However, leaders have not checked whether this is consistently used by all staff. Inspection evidence shows that some teachers are not implementing the agreed stages of the policy when pupils' behaviour becomes challenging. This leads to low expectations and weak behaviour management in some areas of the school. The behaviour of some pupils interrupts teaching and learning, which leads to pupils not making progress.
- The inclusion leader has a clear understanding of her role. The pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified quickly and support is given. However, because the assessment process is focused on pupils' attainment and not precisely on pupils' starting points and the progress they make, the inclusion leader acknowledges that the school finds it challenging to help pupils with more acute needs. This is resulting in the pupils not making the progress they should and could make.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is too small to report upon without identifying individual pupils. However, the school ensures that all pupils are supported effectively

through adult support that meets their academic and specific personal, social and emotional needs.

- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is thought out so that there is potential for the progression of skills, knowledge and understanding throughout all subject areas. Pupils are excited and stimulated through a range of activities and subjects. Where the teaching of the curriculum is effective, pupils are interested in learning. For example, Year 6 pupils were very keen and enthusiastic about presenting their election manifestos, based on their research and own views and opinions, to the school.
- Pupils value the opportunity to participate in a wide range of activities, including visits to the theatre and museums, and the chance to perform in their own concerts. These experiences serve to enhance pupils' learning experiences.
- School leaders work hard to ensure that there is a caring ethos and clear moral purpose to the school. This results in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development being well promoted.
- Assemblies and personal, social and health education lessons teach children about the differences between right and wrong. The school's Christian ethos is evident and dominant throughout the work of the school. Leaders, staff and governors are deeply committed to making sure that pupils understand and 'live' their faith in their daily life.
- Pupils learn to respect the beliefs of other people. The school's chosen values of 'acceptance, respect, excellence, self-control, independence, curiosity, cooperation and resilience' contribute well to pupils' understanding of moral issues, including valuing diversity.
- Leaders are committed to promoting British values. Pupils learn about elections. For example, Year 6 pupils ran a mock election alongside the recent general election to emphasise the importance of democracy and the rule of law. Pupils know about different faiths and cultures and are respectful of other people's beliefs. The school prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- Overall, parents are positive about the work of the school. For example, one parent said: 'This is a good school. It teaches children to be balanced and well-rounded individuals.' Another summarised many parents' view, saying: 'The school is well led and staff are always available and supportive to both parents and children alike. Overall, a happy experience for both parents and their children.'

Governance

- The governing body has not ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards.
- Governors want the very best for all children and pupils. They visit the school regularly, undertake various monitoring activities and receive detailed headteacher reports. Governors know, for example, where teaching is best and what the school's priorities are. However, while this is the case, they have not provided enough precise challenge in their work to ensure that leaders are accurately focusing on the aspects that will make the most difference to pupils' progress. As a result, pupils are not making the progress they should and, consequently, leaders are not making the necessary improvements to ensure

that all the independent school standards are met.

- Governors provide effective support for the headteacher and ensure that there are suitable arrangements in place for the management of staff performance and appraisal. However, while staff are very well supported, there is a lack of decisive action to ensure that underperformance is managed quickly so that it does not impact upon pupils' achievement. Consequently, some teaching remains weak and this is resulting in some pupils' progress from their starting points not being good enough.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a suitable safeguarding policy in place, which takes into account the most up-to-date statutory guidance. This is published on the school's website.
- All staff have received recent training on safeguarding, based on current guidance. They know about the appropriate action to take if they have any concerns about pupils' safety, including those who may be at risk of abuse, neglect or sexual exploitation. They have a secure understanding of the 'Prevent' duty. Staff know that they can share any concerns they may have about pupils' safety and well-being, and are meticulous in doing so.
- Leaders ensure that all the risk assessments are completed for all activities, both in school and for school visits, and that procedures for administering any medication are securely in place.
- Checks on the suitability of staff to work with pupils are thorough. Leaders record and review information fully and regularly.
- Leaders ensure that processes and procedures for safeguarding pupils are implemented well to create a safe, caring culture in the school.
- Staff give much attention to making sure that the school premises are secure. The site manager, who is shared with the neighbouring secondary school, is keen to ensure that his work meets the independent school standards and, consequently, it does.
- Parents have no safeguarding concerns and stated that their children are kept safe by the school. A parent spoke for many, saying: 'The school responds to any worries we have quickly. Children are so well looked after, we can rest knowing they are safe.'

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent across year groups and within subjects.
- Teachers do not use the assessment information effectively to meet the learning needs of pupils. Not enough close attention is being given to ensure that pupils make good progress from their different starting points. Consequently, the work that is set is not sufficiently challenging for pupils to extend their thinking and deepen their knowledge across the curriculum, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Teachers' use of questioning varies in quality between classes. Where teaching has the strongest impact, questions are posed that enable pupils to think deeply in order to build upon their understanding. Where questioning is weaker, it is often limited and it does not

encourage pupils to think for themselves and develop their responses based upon their knowledge and understanding.

- The impact of the support that the pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive is inconsistent and, consequently, their progress is too variable. Nevertheless, in a few classes, particularly early years and some key stage 2 year groups, adults work well with individual pupils to support their learning. For example, inspectors observed an adult effectively helping individual pupils to use their sounds to read words.
- The most able pupils are not challenged enough through the tasks they complete. There were instances where pupils completed their activity easily and quickly, then waited a long time for further instruction, only to receive more of the same.
- Inspection scrutiny of pupils' work showed that too many pupils did not move on rapidly enough to the next steps in their learning. Instead, they repeated work and concepts at similar levels, rather than extend their knowledge and understanding further to learn something new or apply what they had learned.
- When the teaching is not effective, a small number of pupils do not pay sufficient attention or engage fully in their learning. Low-level chatter and inappropriate behaviour by individual pupils sometimes prevent other pupils from making the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers provide pupils with too few opportunities to practise and develop their writing skills in longer pieces of writing and in different subjects. In addition, not all teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve in their written work. As a result, although attainment in writing appears positive, pupils' progress is not as good as it could be.
- Pupils receive regular teaching in reading and phonics. Pupils' records across the school show that pupils read frequently. Younger pupils are able to use their phonics to help them spell accurately. Pupils use a variety of taught strategies to sound out words and use them correctly for their meaning. For example, a Year 2 pupil told an inspector how he spelt unfamiliar words by 'breaking the word up into its sounds. But you have to remember that sometimes sounds have two or three letters that make one sound'.
- Mathematics teaching focuses largely on systematically teaching basic skills of calculation. Opportunities for pupils to use and apply these skills for reasoning and problem-solving are evident in some classes. However, this is not consistent and, in some classes, the work lacks challenge, is repeated and does not build on pupils' prior learning.
- Staff celebrate pupils' learning positively in school displays. The environment supports pupils' learning effectively, with many prompts available for pupils to access and use when they are working.
- Where teaching is consistently effective, teachers have high expectations, review teaching within lessons, correct pupils' misconceptions and respond well to their varying abilities. In these cases, teachers plan effectively to meet the needs of the range of abilities within the class and use questioning to strengthen pupils' learning. This leads to pupils making good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school provides a caring, nurturing environment for its pupils, in which their personal development and welfare are at the heart of its Christian, caring ethos.
- Pupils were unanimous in saying that staff respond well to any rare instances of bullying and that there is no racism among pupils. Pupils say that they 'feel safe and equal' at school.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe and have a strong awareness of the importance of being safe online, for example through the E-cadets group that has been set up to promote greater internet safety through online courses. Additionally, all pupils are aware of the school's acronym rule 'SMART' – 'Safe, Meet, Accept, Reliable, Tell'. They described this in detail and were able to explain the potential risks of the internet.
- Staff listen to and take on board pupils' opinions. Pupils told inspectors: 'The school has pupil voice. This is when we can report areas where we have concerns and the school acts upon these.' One younger pupil said: 'Teachers really care about us, they always try to improve things for us.' Consequently, pupils feel valued and know that their feelings and thoughts matter and that they are listened to.
- The teaching within areas of the curriculum ensures that pupils have a well-informed understanding of their democratic right to disagree respectfully with other people. For example, pupils talked knowledgeably about the main issues arising from the recent general election. The older pupils shared their work on this with younger pupils during an assembly. All pupils demonstrated an awareness of what was going on and how to make an informed choice about voting.
- Parents are positive about their children's school experience and how well their children develop. Parent views received are summarised well by one who said: 'The school promotes a well-balanced approach to learning, not only intellectually, physically and socially, but also spiritually, which I believe is an essential part in the growth of a child's life. It is good that the school emphasises Christian values which can be beneficial, not only to the family, but to the community as a whole.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils lose interest when teaching does not motivate, challenge or inspire them. As a result, occasionally pupils stop contributing or listening, which slows their progress and that of others.
- There are occasional instances of poor behaviour in classrooms. Where this is the case, teachers are very calm, patient and tolerant. However, they do not consistently use the behaviour policy to manage challenging situations and, therefore, pupils' behaviour disrupts the learning of others.
- When walking around the school, or meeting visitors such as school inspectors, pupils

conduct themselves proudly and confidently. Older pupils show care and consideration towards younger pupils.

- Whole-school attendance is currently just below the national average. However, leaders are thorough and meticulous in the work that they undertake to ensure pupils' safety and they work diligently with external services and agencies to improve pupils' attendance.
- Leaders ensure that parents know the benefits of good attendance and they have a rigorous policy in place that monitors pupils' attendance well. When necessary, the school provides effective personalised support for families to ensure that pupils get the help they need. This results in better attendance and reduced instances of late arrivals.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The school's own assessment information provided to inspectors reports that a high proportion of pupils are not making the good progress they should in reading, writing and mathematics. This means that, although pupils may be attaining in line with pupils of the same age group, they are not making enough progress to achieve as well as they could.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in combined reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 was above the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining both the expected and higher standard in English, grammar, punctuation and spelling was also above the national average.
- In key stage 1 in 2016, attainment was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Additionally, the proportion of key stage 1 pupils attaining a greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average.
- The progress that current pupils make is variable across the school. Where teaching, learning and assessment are stronger, progress is quicker. However, this inconsistent picture throughout the school is not securing good progress over time for pupils. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils. Current school information and pupils' books show evidence of some good progress being made. However, this is not consistent across the school, particularly where the teaching is not as strong.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their skills, particularly in writing, across the curriculum or to deepen their knowledge and understanding. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils. Too few of the most able pupils are making better-than-expected progress from their starting points. This means that, although when considering their attainment, pupils are being prepared for the next stages of their education, there are some pupils leaving Year 6 who are not as well prepared for secondary school as they could be.
- Some groups of pupils are too small to comment on their performance because individual pupils can be identified. However, school leaders ensure that they provide detailed and appropriate support for disadvantaged pupils so that they reach the same standards as all pupils nationally.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported effectively to make progress in line with other pupils nationally with the same starting points.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years provision, both in Nursery and Reception, is a strength of the school.
- Leadership of the Nursery and Reception classes is good. Both leaders are passionate early years practitioners. They work collaboratively together and know the strengths and weaknesses of the provision well and are eager to continue to improve it.
- Both leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective and welfare requirements are met. The Nursery and Reception classrooms provide a safe, exciting environment. Children are involved in everything, including their own safety. For example, children in Reception were carrying out a risk assessment about books that were on the floor. They were writing a plan to avoid and highlight the risks to other children. This results in children taking responsibility for their areas and caring about others within it.
- Children in both the Nursery and the Reception Years make at least good, and in many cases better, progress from their different starting points. Most begin school with the skills and knowledge which are either typical for or better than children of the same age.
- Children quickly settle, learn and adhere to rules and routines. They are keen and eager to learn. Inspectors observed excited children accessing their 'insect hotel', wanting to share their puppet theatre show and showing inspectors how they can spell their names correctly using different methods, such as writing in the sand or using the lollipop sticks to create letters. Children did this with an infectious enthusiasm.
- Teaching in the early years is securely good. Both the Nursery and Reception classrooms are well organised so that children are easily able to choose from and access a range of learning activities.
- The success of the early years provision lies in the variety of opportunities children receive that build upon their prior learning, and the chances children are given to explore, investigate and find out for themselves. Additionally, a strength is in the adults' questions, which effectively elicit children's understanding, for example 'What's going to happen?', 'How can we get through this?' and 'Tell me about this.'
- Teachers and teaching assistants carry out detailed observations and assessments of learning, and these are then well used to identify individual children's learning needs. This is particularly noteworthy in Nursery, where the purposeful recording of children's learning demonstrates how much progress children make from their starting points. For example, writing shows good phonics development and letter-formation work, and in mathematics, examples of their single-digit addition work.
- Strong relationships between children and adults give children the confidence to want to 'have a go' at everything. This develops their imagination, inquisitiveness and eagerness to learn. No child is overlooked and all are cared for equally.
- Relationships between home and school are positive throughout the school, and are especially strong in the early years. Parents are able to comment upon and contribute to regular assessments. They say that they appreciate the work that staff do in caring for and teaching their children.

School details

Unique reference number	135596
DfE registration number	919/6261
Inspection number	10026071

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	116
Proprietor	British Union Conference of Seventh Day Adventists
Chair	Ian Sweeney
Headteacher	Angelika Horwood
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,106–£5,301
Telephone number	01923 673 291
Website	www.stanboroughprimary.org.uk
Email address	info@stanboroughprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 January 2012

Information about this school

- Stanborough Primary School is one of a group of schools run by the British Union Conference of Seventh Day Adventists.
- The school is on the same site as a sister secondary school and an international residential school and shares some of its maintenance and teaching staff with these schools.
- Pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds, with the largest groups being Black Caribbean, Black African or mixed European heritages.
- The school has fewer than five disadvantaged pupils. Therefore, these are not reported on separately.

- No pupils currently on roll have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The previous standard inspection of Stanborough Primary School took place in January 2012. At the time of the January 2012 inspection, two of the independent school standards were not met and the accessibility plan did not meet requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out over two and a half days by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher during the first half-day of the inspection to discuss the independent school standards and to look at a variety of the school's policies, including safeguarding, health and safety, curriculum, admissions, attendance and inclusion.
- The inspectors observed learning in lessons in all of the classes. Some of these were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- A meeting was held with pupils to discuss their learning and views about the school. The school's own recent pupil survey was also taken into account. Inspectors listened to pupils read when they went into classrooms and discussed their reading and other work with them. Inspectors also scrutinised a wide range of children's and pupils' books and the work on display.
- A range of leadership documents were examined, such as the single central register of employment checks on staff, pupils' attendance and behaviour records, the school improvement plan and leaders' monitoring and evaluation documents.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff members, parents and governors.
- The inspection team considered the 15 responses to the online survey, Parent View. They also considered 16 comments provided by parents via text message and spoke to parents during the inspection. Inspectors also took into account 14 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Tracy Fielding, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

John Randall

Her Majesty's Inspector

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