

# Inspection of a good school: St Stephen's Infant School

Hales Drive, St Stephen's, Canterbury, Kent CT2 7AB

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Inspection dates: 1–2 October 2019

## Outcome

St Stephen's Infant School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like attending St Stephen's. They arrive in the morning with smiles on their faces and their enthusiasm continues throughout the day. Pupils like their school very much and are happy. Parents appreciate the emphasis that the school puts on the happiness of its pupils.

All pupils are nurtured and encouraged to do the best they can. Pupils behave very well in their lessons, in the playground and around the school. Adults make sure that there is an atmosphere of mutual respect throughout the school. Pupils said that they feel safe in school and that there is no bullying. They trust adults and know that they can talk to them if they have a problem.

The school's commitment to outdoor learning is strongly appreciated by pupils and parents. Pupils especially enjoy and thrive in the forest school. Parents like the online information they receive about their children's experiences and achievements. They say that it keeps them up to date about 'what the children get up to in class'.

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

The executive headteacher and the head of school provide strong leadership. Leaders have designed an effective curriculum. It allows pupils to build up their knowledge and skills over time. This prepares them well for when they move to their next school. Pupils' learning is linked well across different subjects. Their writing is much better than it used to be. Inspiring topics motivate them to write about their experiences and learning.

Leaders are constantly checking to see if they can improve the strong curriculum even further. They are currently fine-tuning their plans for subjects other than English and mathematics. This is to make sure that all pupils achieve as well as they can. Teachers work positively as a team. They share their skills and expertise with each other well. Staff, as well as pupils, live up to the school motto of 'Together We Shine'.

Teachers know what to teach pupils and when. Teaching in all areas encourages pupils to be curious, creative and confident. For example, we saw pupils working out how to get conkers to drop from a tree and discovering what happens to ice when you bury it under a pile of leaves. Pupils also benefit from specialist teaching in some areas of the curriculum such as physical education and music.

Leaders and staff make sure that all pupils are included in every aspect of school life. Children settle quickly when they join the early years. They learn and play happily together and develop in confidence and independence. As they move up the school, pupils enjoy a wide range of additional activities, including clubs, visits and visitors to school. These extend pupils' development beyond their academic experiences. A parent expressed the views of many: 'My child is learning quickly about the immediate environment around her and the wider world, as well as learning to work independently and as a team.' Pupils are taught to be kind, caring and respectful.

All pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are very effectively supported. They learn well because staff have the skills and confidence to adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' needs. Staff forge very positive relationships with parents to ensure that pupils with SEND thrive at the school.

Reading is given high priority. Staff are trained and skilled in the teaching of phonics, which starts from the beginning of children's time in school. There is a clear structure and sequence for teaching in all classes. As a result, children quickly gain the skills and knowledge they need to be successful early readers. In the early years, children who need extra support, including those with SEND, are helped to catch up quickly. In key stage 1, pupils use their phonics skills well to read and write. Pupils regularly read to adults and teachers read to children every day, sharing favourite stories and introducing new authors and books. This helps pupils to develop a love of reading.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is an absolute priority for all staff. Staff are well trained to identify and report any concerns. Leaders are relentless in pursuing and securing timely and appropriate support for pupils. Records are well kept. Information is shared in a timely manner when appropriate. A new online safeguarding system ensures that information can be shared efficiently with outside agencies.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves healthy and safe. When learning outside, for example, pupils are encouraged to take risks but also to know the boundaries for safety. Parents, staff and pupils agree that the school keeps pupils safe.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The curriculum is broad and covers the early years curriculum and the national

curriculum for key stage 1. It is ambitious, well planned and sequenced. However, to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can, leaders know that progression in the foundation subjects from year to year needs to be even more clearly and precisely defined. This fine tuning is well under way but not yet fully embedded to ensure that all pupils attain as well as they could.

## 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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged St Stephen's Infant School to be good on 28 January 2016.

## 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118538
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10111254
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	269
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Ben MacPhee
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dean Jones (executive headteacher) Alice Edgington (head of school)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-stephens-infant.kent.sch.uk">www.st-stephens-infant.kent.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12 January 2016

## Information about this school

- Since June 2017, St Stephen's Infant School has been partnered with Chartham Primary School and there is a memorandum of understanding. Both schools are led by the executive headteacher.
- Since the last inspection, the previous headteacher has left. When that happened, the deputy headteacher became acting head for a time, and is now head of school.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, the assistant headteacher, curriculum leaders and staff. She also met with the chair of the governing body and two other governors. A telephone conversation was held with a local authority improvement adviser.
- The inspector looked closely at reading, writing and science across the school. She visited lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at pupils' work.
- The inspector spoke to pupils, parents and staff about the school's work to keep pupils safe. Records and documents related to safeguarding were considered as well as the school's single central record.

- The inspector looked at a range of school documents including: curriculum plans; the improvement plan; and leaders' own check on the school's performance.

### **Inspection team**

Margaret Coussins, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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