

Inspection of a good school: South Stanley Infant and Nursery School

Tyne Road, South Stanley, Stanley, County Durham DH9 6PZ

Inspection dates: 19–20 November 2019

Outcome

South Stanley Infant and Nursery School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The headteacher treats everyone with kindness and consideration. Adults and pupils feel valued. They are proud of their cheerful school. The environment is positive and orderly.

Pupils are happy and friendly. They say 'please', 'thank you' and 'excuse me', most politely. Behaviour is good. Pupils' emotional health and well-being are important to staff. Any rare matters of bullying are taken seriously. Most pupils attend regularly and on time. Parents and carers are confident that their child is safe and well looked after. Parents describe teachers as 'approachable' and say communication is 'brilliant'.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils. Pupils thrive. They have exciting, memorable learning experiences in most subjects. Pupils show appreciation, and a sense of awe and wonder about the world around them. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Occasionally, some pupils' work is too easy.

Reading is prioritised. Books are everywhere. Teachers read to pupils with enthusiasm. Most pupils read fluently by the end of Year 2. Some staff are still grappling with the new phonics programme. Sometimes books do not match pupils' phonics knowledge closely.

Children do well in early years. Staff focus on the correct priorities. Children learn about reading, numbers and writing straight away. Early years staff are kind. Children are treated with dignity.

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

The headteacher makes sure that pupils come first. Her expectations are suitably high. She treats staff, pupils and parents with respect, making everyone feel welcome. The 'laughing and learning together' school motto can be felt all around. Pupils thrive, growing in confidence and independence, as they move through school.

Pupils behave well in and around school. They listen politely to adults and each other.

They are quick to hold doors open, help friends and offer encouragement to others. One or two pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) need extra support. Adults are kind, patient and understanding. They treat pupils fairly and firmly. Most pupils come to school every day and on time. A few do not. The attendance and welfare officer is helping to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality.

Leaders want every child to be a reader. They know the importance of reading for pupils' success across the curriculum. Teachers inspire a love of reading among pupils. Displays and eye-catching reading areas promote an interest in books and authors. Pupils delight in joining in with their favourite stories and poems. Phonics teaching starts in Nursery and takes place every day. Pupils' phonics, reading and writing outcomes are good over time.

Leaders have high aspirations. They feel teaching and learning in phonics could be even better. They have introduced a new phonics programme. All staff are trained. Most teach phonics well. A few adults still lack confidence using the new resources and terminology. Not all pupils read books that closely match their phonics knowledge.

Teachers are quick to spot pupils who need extra help. Those who enter school with speech and communication difficulties get extra, daily support. With help, pupils pronounce sounds and words more clearly. Their vocabulary increases. This helps pupils, including those with SEND, to catch up. Most pupils succeed across the wider curriculum.

During reading, writing and mathematics tasks, some of the most able pupils wait while other pupils catch up. Occasionally, teachers do not demand enough from this group of pupils. Some support staff do not notice when pupils need further direction or challenge.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum excites and interests pupils. Most subjects, including mathematics, are well planned. Pupils' knowledge increases year on year. Nursery children have great fun counting accurately with adults. Reception children write number sentences neatly and confidently. Year 1 pupils describe three-dimensional shapes using precise mathematical vocabulary. Most pupils by the end of Year 2 are ready for the demands of the Year 3 curriculum.

Teachers' subject knowledge is secure. They use scientific vocabulary correctly and encourage pupils to do so too. Year 2 identify and name fish, reptiles, amphibians and mammals correctly. They know about carnivores and nocturnal animals. Pupils' science books are well presented and show science happens regularly. Leaders are now making sure that all subjects are sequenced as effectively as English, mathematics and science.

Children in the early years are well looked after by caring staff. They listen to stories and work with numbers every day. There are lots of opportunities for children to count, write and read books. Most children catch up quickly with other children nationally. Occasionally, some of the most able children could do more. Challenge is sometimes lacking. However, most children are well prepared for the key stage 1 curriculum.

Teachers know leaders value their hard work and commitment. Leaders are considerate of their well-being. Where possible, issues of workload are reduced and made manageable.

The work of leaders is enhanced effectively through the trust. Governors and trustees bring much expertise to the school. They recognise its strengths and know what could be even better. Pupils are the ones who benefit from this positive partnership.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The protection of pupils is high on everyone's agenda. Staff know how to report concerns. They get regular safeguarding training. Staff know what to look out for to keep pupils free from harm. They understand the risks associated with county lines.

Pupils feel safe. Parents agree their child is kept safe. Leaders offer lots of helpful links and information about using technology and staying safe online, on the website.

The headteacher has strong links with other professionals. She seeks external advice and challenges others when needed. This helps pupils and families to get the support they need, when they need it.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Senior leaders know the importance of good attendance for pupils' future success. The attendance and welfare officer supports pupils and their families well. His persistence has helped to secure better attendance for many pupils. However, the attendance of a few pupils is not good. Some still arrive late to school. Leaders should make sure that all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, attend well and on time.
- Leaders and teachers make reading a priority. Most pupils by the end of Year 2 read fluently and with good understanding. Leaders should ensure that the new phonics programme is well embedded, and all teaching staff are confident in its delivery. Teachers need to match books precisely to pupils' phonics knowledge.
- Pupils do well in South Stanley. Most are well prepared for the key stage 2 curriculum. A few of the most able pupils could do more. Teachers should ensure that the work they offer is suitably demanding. Leaders should check that all support staff are making a positive contribution to pupils' work and learning.
- Leaders offer an exciting, full curriculum. It is successfully adapted to meet the needs of most pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. Most subjects are coherently planned and sequenced. Leaders now need to check that pupils' knowledge and skills build cumulatively in each subject.

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 the predecessor school, South Stanley Infant and Nursery School, to be good on 13–14 March 2013.

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

Unique reference number	143584
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10110751
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	150
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Christine Weightman
Headteacher	Louise Thompson
Website	www.southstanley-inf.durham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- There have been significant changes to staffing since the predecessor school's inspection. Most leaders and several members of staff are relatively new to post. The headteacher took up post in September 2018.
- The school became an academy in January 2017. It is part of the Stanley Learning Partnership. Greenland Primary, South Stanley Juniors and Bloemfontein Primary are partner schools in the trust.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher, the chief executive officer of the trust, senior leaders, subject leaders, staff and pupils. I also held telephone calls with a local authority representative and the chair of the local governing body.
- Reading, mathematics and science were looked at closely as part of this inspection. This involved visiting lessons, listening to pupils reading, meeting with senior and subject leaders, looking at pupils' work with leaders and talking with teachers and pupils about their work and learning. I also looked at documentation for each subject, including planning documents.

- I looked at pupils' work in books and during visits to classrooms. I listened to pupils reading and observed their behaviour in classes and outside. I met formally with groups of pupils to gather their views and spoke with pupils informally across the two days. No pupils responded to Ofsted's survey for pupils.
- I considered the views of staff through Ofsted's survey and in face-to-face discussions.
- I took the views of parents who responded to Parent View and free-text into account.
- The school's website and documentation were examined, including curriculum planning, policies, SEND files, safeguarding information and behaviour and attendance logs.

Inspection team

Fiona Manuel, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019