

Inspection of Stoke Damerel Primary School

Collingwood Road, Stoke, Plymouth, Devon PL1 5PA

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 September 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade **Good**

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is at the heart of its community. Leaders have made strong links with parents and carers, and with local clubs and activities. Pupils engage in festivals and celebrations, such as VE Day and Plymouth's 400-year anniversary, when COVID-19 (coronavirus) allows.

Pupils enjoyed returning to school following the national restrictions. Leaders made sure that they were safe and well cared for during the pandemic. The constant communication eased the transition back into school and continues today. The well-being of pupils is foremost in leaders' minds currently.

The headteacher is ambitious for staff and pupils. Since her appointment in April 2019, many changes for the better have taken place. Everyone – staff and pupils – know that there is a clear vision for the future.

Pupils, from Reception to Year 6, follow routines without undue fuss. The majority are polite and respectful. Staff help, with sensitivity, any pupils who struggle to conform. There is very little bullying and, on the rare occasions that it happens, staff deal with it well.

The school sits in extensive, grassed grounds with some neighbouring woodlands. Staff maximise the use of these for pupils' learning and exercise. This is a distinctive feature of the school.

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

Pupils' learning in reading, writing and mathematics is coming on well. This has been the focus for the past two years, with leaders giving clear curriculum guidance. Consequently, teaching is becoming stronger, and, in these subjects, pupils are learning and remembering more over time. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive teaching that matches their needs, and they are reaching their potential in English and mathematics.

Other subject curriculums are work in progress. The focus on remote learning during the pandemic, together with health and safety priorities, halted the pace of change. Subjects such as history, science, physical education (PE) and computing have more secure plans and it is clearer to see that the right things are being taught at the right time. The headteacher has been strategic and has timetabled plans to move on the planning in other subjects quickly.

Teachers check learning regularly, both informally and formally. Leaders make sure that teachers can manage their workload.

Reading is a strength of the school, especially for older pupils. Although staff provided remote learning in phonics for Reception and Years 1 and 2 during the national lockdowns, pupils are behind in their development of writing and reading.

Teaching of phonics is of a high quality and leaders have made sure that time for reading and writing is sufficient for pupils to catch up quickly. Pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 read books that match the sounds and vocabulary that they know and recognise. Children from Reception onwards listen to teachers read to them. Older pupils listen to novels and non-fiction works that provide wider knowledge that is of cultural and historical significance.

For many, writing does not reflect their abilities. This is because teachers' expectations are not high enough. They accept poor handwriting which, too often, is inaccurate.

Pupils are articulate and confident to discuss and debate. This becomes more sophisticated as pupils move through the school. Staff communicate well with pupils and encourage them to recount their learning. As a result, they can explain recent learning well. Even though Reception children are new to school, they speak fluently for their age.

In Reception, children have opportunities to engage in learning that supports counting, writing and the development of their physical and social skills. However, because children are given too much free choice in selecting activities, some children do not choose important aspects of learning. This hinders their progress in certain areas of the curriculum.

Pupils know how to behave. Older pupils show consideration for younger pupils and manage their behaviour accordingly. Pupils are at the heart of the school's ethos and have opportunities to take on positions of responsibility. They relish this aspect of school life. However, their motivation and pride in their learning are not always reflected in the work they produce. There is, though, no disruption to learning.

The deputy headteacher has planned personal, social, health and economic education carefully. It helps pupils to learn more about themselves and others. They understand the importance of accepting differences. Older pupils appreciate what they are learning about relationships and health.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated safeguarding leads work together to identify and care for vulnerable pupils. They work well with external agencies to maximise the protection required. In addition, they care for families as well as pupils when necessary.

Staff receive training on the latest safeguarding updates and understand what to do if any pupils share concerns.

There were some minor issues on staff recruitment checks, but these were remedied during the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some areas of the curriculum, subject leaders have not planned the content and sequencing of the curriculum with enough detail. Consequently, it is not clear what pupils should know and when. Leaders need to review the curriculum in these subjects to ensure that pupils learn more and remember more over time.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' writing and presentation are too low. This means that pupils do not always produce their best work. Leaders need to ensure that teachers raise their expectations of what pupils can achieve in writing.

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.

If you are the school and 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	144843
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10200915
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	401
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Marcus Agius
Headteacher	Samantha Smith
Website	www.sdps.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 and 14 September 2012

Information about this school

- Stoke Damerel Primary School became an academy in July 2017. It is a member of the Reach South Academy Trust.
- The headteacher was appointed in April 2019.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. The lead inspector met with the trust's director of education, the chair of governors and another governor. Inspectors had telephone calls with the school improvement partner and the trustee overseeing education.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked

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

- The lead inspector looked at recruitment practices and checks. In addition, the lead inspector spoke with the designated safeguarding lead and two deputy designated safeguarding leads. Inspectors spoke with staff about their training in safeguarding and to pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with the special educational needs coordinator, the head of early years and different groups of pupils to discuss personal development and behaviour management.

Inspection team

Kathy Maddocks, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Bradley Murray

Ofsted Inspector

Mark Lees

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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