

Inspection of South Stanley Junior School

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

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 February 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and well looked after by staff who care deeply about the school community. Pupils know how to be good citizens by caring for people. They have good manners and do not discriminate against those who are different.

Staff have high expectations for behaviour. Pupils know and follow the rules. Pupils say that adults deal quickly with any issues. Pupils say they feel safe because staff are approachable and fair. The school council wrote and reviewed the anti-bullying leaflet for pupils. Pupils understand what bullying is and what to do about it. Many pupils say that if bullying does happen, teachers are really good at resolving it.

Leaders aim for every pupil to 'enjoy learning and develop confidence, independence and a feeling of self-worth'. Although pupils enjoy lessons, some pupils do not learn a meaningful, ambitious curriculum. For some pupils, the way the curriculum is taught does not help them remember the knowledge and skills to achieve well. For example, some pupils who are not fluent readers said they do not know how to read new words without asking an adult. As a result, these pupils are given work that is very different to that given to the other pupils in their class. This is because there are different approaches to teaching pupils to read.

Many pupils take part in the range of clubs on offer. Basketball, gardening and football encourage pupils to develop new interests and talents. Pupils are proud of the social club, which was created by the school council for pupils in Years 5 and 6.

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

The headteacher has enlisted the support of the whole staff to create a culture of well-being for staff and pupils. Leaders have established systems to support pupils with identified social and emotional needs. This has ensured most pupils are calm, confident and ready to learn when they enter school in the morning.

Leaders are focusing on improving the teaching of reading, including phonics. All pupils say they enjoy reading and listening to adults in school read to them. Pupils are provided with a range of books to read. However, pupils who cannot read fluently have additional reading books that do not match the sounds and words that they know. Some pupils do not have the phonic knowledge to read these additional books when they come to an unfamiliar word. The effects of the pandemic and changes in staffing have disrupted leaders' implementation of the phonics programme. Some staff still need to be trained in the approach to teaching phonics, to prevent different approaches leaving some pupils with weak reading skills.

Pupils enjoy a broad range of curriculum subjects and value the opportunities they receive to learn about the local area. For example, in an English lesson, older pupils studied an anonymous poem, 'A Miner's Prayer'. Pupils talk proudly about their community as they learn about the mining operations that led to the development of their local area. Leaders have checked that curriculum plans cover the scope of the

national curriculum. The plans provide broad information about the subject content to be taught in each year group. In religious education, leaders have prioritised teaching pupils about religious diversity. Plans are well developed to support this. In science, teachers plan together so that pupils have similar experiences to ensure all will be ready for Year 6. However, leaders do not identify exactly what they want pupils to know and understand week by week and year on year. Leaders do not have a systematic way of checking how much pupils have remembered in some subjects, including history.

In mathematics, assessments are taken from a different scheme to the programme of study, so the questions pupils are asked do not always link to the work that they have studied. Therefore, assessment in mathematics does not assist teachers in plugging the gaps in pupils' learning. Leaders are developing an assessment system to check what pupils know and can do, so that teachers have enough information to help plan for future learning.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are provided with additional support. Pupils show strong relationships with the adults supporting them and they participate in lessons with enthusiasm. Where staff have strong subject knowledge, they provide pupils with SEND with effective support for their learning. For example, adults help pupils to understand the meaning of words in additional English sessions. Some pupils with SEND are provided with work that is much easier than that of their peers. Some leaders do not know the specific needs of pupils with SEND so they are unable to accurately track how well these pupils are learning.

Pupils' personal development is very effective. Much work has been done by leaders to develop pupils' confidence and sense of self-worth. This has been achieved by leaders designing a curriculum to develop responsible and respectful citizens prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils are encouraged to challenge themselves personally and to take roles of responsibility, such as 'house captains'. Pupils learn how to be aware of risks to their safety, including knife crime. Leaders provide a range of opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests, such as basketball, football and different musical instruments.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They said that leaders are always approachable and support them well. They value the help they get to keep a healthy work-life balance.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff make sure that keeping pupils safe is a priority. Staff know and understand the dangers pupils face in and out of school. Leaders ensure that the curriculum helps pupils to be more aware of risks to their safety and health. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Staff attend regular safeguarding training so they remain alert to the signs which indicate that a pupil may be at risk from harm, including sexual harassment. Staff know the procedures they must follow to report a concern about a pupil. Leaders take appropriate action if they have concerns about a child.

Leaders make sure the necessary checks are completed so all staff and visitors in school are safe to be around the pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The approach to teaching pupils to read is inconsistent. Pupils in the early stages of learning to read have a mix of reading books, where some do not match their phonic knowledge. Some staff do not have the necessary skills to teach reading and phonics. This means pupils who cannot read fluently are not getting the precise tuition and resources to help them catch up to their peers. Leaders should ensure that staff access high-quality training on phonics and early reading. They should also ensure that all pupils' reading books match their phonic knowledge. Leaders must check that the teaching of reading is consistent.
- Teachers are not setting work for some pupils, including those with SEND, that matches what pupils need to learn in different curriculum subjects. Some pupils do not remember detailed knowledge they have been taught previously. Leaders must make sure that work given to pupils is sequential and demanding and provides them with the crucial facts they need, term by term, to help them build on what they already know.
- In some subjects, including mathematics, the assessment system does not match the content or detail of the curriculum design. As a result, pupils' knowledge and understanding are not checked in enough detail. Teachers do not have the full picture of pupils' knowledge and skills across the curriculum subjects over time. Leaders should make sure that assessments check what pupils have remembered and how well they have understood the crucial pieces of knowledge identified in each subject.

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	145040
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10212088
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	166
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Catharine Harwood
Headteacher	Rachel Bell
Website	www.southstanley-jun.durham.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- A new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed since the school converted to an academy in 2017 and joined Stanley Learning Partnership. A new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) joined the school in September 2020. There is also a new chair of governors.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- There is an after-school club on the infant school site for pupils who attend the junior school.

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 received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science, religious education 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 also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum was also discussed with the PSHE subject leader.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the SENCo.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of Stanley Learning Partnership, three governors, including the chair of governors, a representative from the local authority and the independent education consultant who works across the schools in the trust.
- Inspectors spent time observing and speaking to pupils, including at breaktimes and lunchtime. The lead inspector also considered the 50 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- The lead inspector examined safeguarding records, including the single central record and recruitment checks on staff, and held a meeting with the designated safeguarding lead.
- Inspectors took account of the views expressed by 17 staff and 23 parents, including free-text comments, through Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Kathryn McDonald, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Cook	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tim Jenner	Her Majesty's Inspector

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