

Inspection of a good school: Stalyhill Infant School

Stalyhill Drive, Stalybridge, Cheshire SK15 2TR

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 February 2022

Outcome

Stalyhill Infant School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils who spoke with the inspector explained that Stalyhill Infant School is a safe place to be. Pupils said that they enjoy coming to school. Pupils in key stage 1 and children in the early years play together in a friendly way in the playground. Pupils told the inspector that adults look after them well.

Pupils help leaders to set high expectations for behaviour. Pupils have devised 'promises' which leaders include in the school's behaviour policy. These show that pupils understand how they should behave. Most pupils live up to these promises well. Pupils explained that bullying is rare. Teachers successfully sort it out when it happens.

Pupils also know that leaders expect them to work hard and achieve well. Pupils in key stage 1 and children in the early years show high levels of concentration in their lessons. This helps them to do well in their learning.

Pupils have many opportunities to take part in a range of clubs or other extra activities. For example, they can have a go at pottery, take part in the singing club or show their creative talents by writing and illustrating their own comics. Pupils said that what they like most about their school is that everyone works as a team.

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

Leaders have designed the curriculum well. They have clearly set out what pupils will learn, and when they will learn it. The curriculum is broad and ambitious. It meets the needs of all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers have strong knowledge of the subjects that they teach. Leaders provide regular training and support for staff to ensure that they keep their subject knowledge up to date. Teachers use a wide range of typically effective strategies to assess whether pupils understand and remember what they have learned. For example, teachers frequently carry out quick checks on pupils' previous learning. Teachers use this information well to address misconceptions and to adapt their teaching.

Staff and pupils recognise the importance of reading. The curriculum for reading and phonics is effective. Children in the Reception Year begin to learn phonics and become familiar with stories as soon as they start school. Most children remember and use their knowledge of phonics well.

As they proceed through key stage 1, most pupils read fluently and with expression. Staff provide support, such as extra teaching sessions, to help pupils to keep up with their learning. However, a few pupils find that the reading books they have are too difficult. They are not secure in their phonics knowledge. This is because teachers have not found effective enough ways to help these pupils to be sure of the sounds that they are learning, before moving on to more challenging reading books. This stops them from reading fluently and confidently.

Leaders have ensured that there is a logical order to the content of the rest of the curriculum. In most aspects of the curriculum, pupils build their knowledge effectively. For example, children in the Reception Year learn how to add different pairs of numbers to make 10. They go on to deepen their understanding by learning how to work out whether a calculation is incorrect, and how to explain why. Most pupils across the school learn well, and retain the knowledge they have been taught. However, occasionally, some pupils do not remember all the knowledge that they need. This is because teachers have not fully made sure that pupils have securely understood their learning, before they move on to new concepts. This prevents pupils' knowledge from developing as well as it could.

Pupils show positive attitudes in their lessons. They behave well and there are no disturbances to their learning. Teachers manage behaviour effectively.

Leaders provide a wide range of activities to encourage pupils' interests and skills beyond the academic curriculum. There is a well-planned programme of visits which supports the topics that pupils learn. Leaders provide a range of opportunities to enable pupils to develop their resilience and sense of responsibility.

There are effective processes for identifying and supporting the needs of pupils with SEND. Pupils receive the help that they need in various ways. This support helps pupils with SEND to know and remember more as they progress through the curriculum.

Staff who spoke with the inspector said that they find leaders approachable. Leaders are considerate of the staff's workload and well-being. Governors are knowledgeable. They have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors hold leaders to account effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have suitable systems in place for staff to report and record any safeguarding worries that they may have about pupils. Staff receive thorough training and are knowledgeable about the signs and symptoms of different types of abuse. Leaders

respond promptly to concerns and make referrals to external support services when required.

Pupils receive useful information about how to keep themselves safe in various circumstances, such as when using the internet. Pupils said that they are confident about reporting their worries to adults. They know that adults will help them if they have any problems.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, some pupils are not able to remember and apply the knowledge that they have acquired as successfully as they should. This is because teachers have not ensured that pupils have embedded the knowledge that they need. Consequently, these pupils do not build up their learning securely enough before moving on to new learning. Leaders must ensure that teachers have effective strategies across the whole curriculum to enable pupils to retain what they learn and apply it more fluently.
- A few pupils in key stage 1 find that the books they read are too hard for them. This is because teachers have not ensured that these pupils have a secure enough understanding of the phonics that they have been learning, before moving them on to a more difficult reading book. As a result, these pupils do not develop fluency and accuracy in their reading as securely as possible. Leaders should develop more effective ways to ensure that these pupils know their phonics well, to enable them to become fluent and accurate readers.

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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2012.

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	106222
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	10204437
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Gemma Parkes
Headteacher	Lisa Lockett
Website	www.stalyhill-inf.tameside.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 December 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and other members of staff. He spoke with members of the governing body. He also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector conducted deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and computing. He spoke with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at a range of pupils' work and met with teachers and pupils. He heard pupils reading to familiar adults, and talked to pupils about their reading. The inspector also looked at curriculum documents, met with pupils and held discussions with leaders in relation to some other subjects.

- The inspector reviewed the school's website and a range of school documents. These included the school's self-evaluation document, its improvement plan, curriculum documents for a variety of subjects and records about behaviour, safeguarding and bullying.
- The inspector spoke to groups of pupils about their experiences in school.
- The inspector evaluated the responses to Ofsted Parent View. He also analysed the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Mark Quinn, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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