

Inspection of a good school: Stratford St Mary Primary School

Stratford St Mary, Colchester, Suffolk CO7 6YG

Inspection date:

20 January 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They experience a broad curriculum that develops their interests and their curiosity. Pupils are friendly, confident and eager to talk about their learning. Older pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils' behaviour is very good. They are respectful and kind. Pupils say that they are happy and feel safe in school. They include others in their games at breaktimes. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Pupils know that there is someone in school whom they can talk to if they have any worries or concerns. Pupils learn about bullying, but say that bullying is rare. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online.

Pupils regularly participate in sporting events and musical performances. They enjoy the trips and wider experiences that help make their learning memorable. Pupils discuss their views. They are well informed and have a strong sense of what is right.

Parents and carers are very supportive of the school. They appreciate the school's kind and caring ethos, and the well-rounded education their children receive.

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

Leaders have carefully planned the curriculum for pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 across a wide range of subjects. This curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. Leaders have identified what pupils should learn in each subject as they progress through the school. Subject leaders are knowledgeable and support staff well. However, some leaders have not checked as well as they could that the sequences of lessons are taught as they have intended. Leaders have looked at what they need to do to improve the quality of education. They know that further training is needed for staff to be confident to teach the full curriculum well.

Leaders provide effective support to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders work well with other agencies. Staff receive helpful guidance and support to work with pupils to help them overcome challenges. Pupils with SEND are helped to be successful in school.

Leaders promote reading. Pupils read widely and often. Teachers carefully select texts that extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world. Pupils enjoy talking about the books they read. Children in Reception and pupils in Year 1 take part in daily phonics sessions. However, in these sessions, pupils do not practise saying their sounds clearly enough to secure their phonics knowledge. A few pupils find it difficult to use their sounds well to help them read unfamiliar words in their reading books. Less confident readers are not developing their fluency and independence in reading as quickly as they could. Leaders have identified a new programme to support the systematic teaching of synthetic phonics and early reading, which they are planning to introduce over this year. This includes training and guidance for staff.

Leaders have considered the impact of the pandemic on pupils' learning. At the start of lessons, pupils revisit and review what they know and can remember from what they have learned before. This is helping pupils secure important knowledge before they move on to new learning. Leaders recognise that pupils have missed time with their peers. Leaders have ensured that younger pupils and children in Reception have additional opportunities to support their social and emotional development. This is proving successful.

Children in the early years foundation stage share resources, take turns and play well together. They respond well to adults and listen carefully to instructions. Children are developing their language well.

The provision for pupils' wider development is strong. Pupils develop their understanding of diversity and celebrate difference. Pupils learn about developing healthy relationships and friendships. They understand that people live in different kinds of families. Pupils have a well-developed sense of fairness and they challenge injustice.

Governors are clear about their statutory duties and coordinate their work effectively. They are knowledgeable and bring a range of relevant skills to their role, and seek external advice to inform their work. Governors ensure that leaders maintain a strong focus on safeguarding. They hold leaders to account for the outcomes that pupils achieve. Governors should also satisfy themselves that the quality of education that pupils receive fully reflects the ambition of the planned curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a positive culture of safeguarding. All staff receive regular and relevant training. This keeps safeguarding at the forefront of everyone's mind. Staff know how to recognise the potential signs of abuse. Staff are confident in the procedures for

recording and reporting safeguarding concerns. Pupils learn how to keep themselves and others safe.

Leaders carry out comprehensive pre-employment checks before new staff join the school. These checks are recorded in the school's single central record, which is kept up to date.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders plan to introduce a new programme to support the systematic teaching of synthetic phonics and early reading. Leaders should ensure that staff receive the guidance and training they need to implement the programme effectively, so that all children make a positive start in learning to read from the moment they join the Reception class.
- Some leaders have not been able to check the consistent implementation of their subject curriculum plans. Leaders should provide staff with the training needed to teach all subjects as intended.

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 a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2017.

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	124675
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10211208
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Matthew Carney
Headteacher	Karen Bilner
Website	www.stratfordstmaryprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The chair of governors was appointed in June 2019.
- There is a breakfast club for pupils that is run by a private provider.
- There is an independent pre-school that operates on the school site.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and with school staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of governors, the vice-chair of governors and two further members of the governing body.
- The lead inspector spoke with the school's standards and excellence officer from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. They carried out a range of activities, including meeting with subject leaders, visiting lessons, evaluating leaders' curriculum plans, speaking with pupils, considering work in pupils' books and meeting with teachers. The lead inspector observed pupils reading.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher to discuss the provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors reviewed the information available on the school's website, including information about the curriculum and school policies.
- The lead inspector met with the designated lead for safeguarding to discuss the school's arrangements for reporting and recording safeguarding concerns, and training for school staff.
- The lead inspector scrutinised the single central record of pre-employment checks.
- The lead inspector discussed with the headteacher how behavioural incidents are followed up. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during breaktimes.
- Inspectors considered the 54 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including 37 free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the 12 responses to the Ofsted staff survey. Inspectors spoke with pupils to gather their views of the school.

Inspection team

Katherine Douglas, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Isabel Davis

Her Majesty's Inspector

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