

# Inspection of a good school: St Stephen's CofE Primary School

Hunters Chase, South Godstone, Godstone, Surrey RH9 8HR

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Inspection dates: 14 and 15 June 2022

## Outcome

St Stephen's CofE Primary School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive academically and emotionally at this extremely inclusive school. Leaders' high expectations and an acute eye for detail shine through every aspect of the school's work.

Pupils understand 'The St. Stephen's Way'. They use these expectations to help them behave and support others. Lessons are full of smiling pupils who try their best while learning. Teachers swiftly focus any pupil who needs a quiet reminder to stay on task. Friendships are strong. Pupils are respectful, celebrating difference and understanding each other.

Leaders look to enrich the ambitious curriculum with activities and trips that support the desired learning well. For example, during the inspection, Year 4 pupils dressed as evacuees. They visited a steam railway to experience being evacuated, showing great empathy to the children of that time.

Leaders have many systems in place that prevent bullying. They share their 'pathways of help' regularly with parents and pupils. Pupils learn about the different forms bullying may take and what to do if they see it. On the very rare occasion that bullying happens, leaders investigate thoroughly. They provide effective support for the victim, bully and families involved. Recently appointed anti-bullying ambassadors know exactly how to provide help when needed. Pupils feel safe.

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

Leaders and all staff share a determination to make sure that every pupil will love reading and become a fluent reader by the end of Year 1. Starting in Nursery, children, including two-year-olds, enjoy songs and rhymes. Staff help them listen for sounds. Children are ready for the rigorous phonics programme when they join Reception Year. Staff teach phonics well. Pupils receive regular practice to read the sounds they have learned during 'reading swamp' lessons and at home. Pupils who need extra support get just what they need to catch up. Pupils are enthusiastic about the books that they study, and staff read

to them. As a result, older pupils have a secure understanding of figurative language and author intent.

Pupils study a broad and, for the vast majority of subjects, well-sequenced curriculum from early years to Year 6. They build up knowledge and skills well. Teachers teach these subjects confidently, presenting subject matter clearly. They recap previous learning and clarify misconceptions. Teachers use assessment well to help them spot where and when pupils need additional support. They have carefully identified any gaps in learning because of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as telling the time, and sensibly adapted the curriculum so that pupils have more time to practise this element of mathematics. Pupils themselves reflect on what they need to get better at or practise more. For example, in physical education, pupils record which throws they need to practise, such as chest passes.

However, in a couple of subjects, key knowledge is not yet clearly defined. For example, in history, teachers do not understand well enough exactly what to teach. Tasks are sometimes more literacy based or activities that pupils will enjoy.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is exceptional. Children are quickly identified and their specific needs are accurately understood. Pupils with SEND learn well alongside their classmates. Every lesson is carefully constructed so that all pupils can attain. Trained staff provide pupils with exactly what they need to be successful. For example, pupils have access to Braille, screen-reading software, enlarged texts or brain breaks. Staff use each other's specialist knowledge to great effect. Staff are aspirational for pupils with SEND.

Pupils' wider development is a top priority. Pupils learn to be active and responsible citizens through a vast array of leadership opportunities available to them. For example, playground buddies and peer mediators ensure that playtimes run smoothly and children are happy. Pupils take these roles seriously. There is a wide range of well-attended extra-curricular clubs for pupils to enjoy.

Pupils behave well. Staff teach a wide range of strategies to help pupils manage their own behaviour and solve any issues with their friends. For example, in Reception, two children worked out how to share a toy kangaroo with no adult intervention. Pupils know that adults will help them when needed.

Staff go above and beyond. They support leaders' ambition to provide exceptional education for all pupils. Expectations of staff are high, yet, they feel very well supported by leaders, who they say are considerate of their workload and are solution-focused.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school, the adults who work there and the education it provides.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including governors and the trust, make sure that all safeguarding procedures are robust and well understood. Staff are well trained and reflective. They know what to look out for, quickly spotting any changes in behaviour or signs of possible abuse. Leaders' record-keeping is detailed, and actions are swift. They make sure that pupils and families get the support they need, using external agencies and charities well.

Leaders have developed a curriculum which ensures that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in a wide range of situations. For example, pupils understand how to stay safe online and have healthy relationships.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The precise content that leaders want teachers to teach and pupils to remember is not clear for all subjects. This means that teachers do not always plan lessons that focus on subject-specific learning. They do not know exactly what pupils have learned in the past and so cannot always build on what pupils know and can do. Leaders should specify, with absolute clarity, the knowledge that is most important in all subjects, so that teachers and subject leaders know exactly how well pupils are learning.

## 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/outstanding. 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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Stephen's CofE Primary School to be good in April 2015.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	144939
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	10227006
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	245
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Catharina Stibe Hickson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Amanda Blackburn
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ststephens.surrey.sch.uk">www.ststephens.surrey.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- St Stephen's CofE Primary School converted to become an academy school in February 2018. When its predecessor school, St Stephen's CofE Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is a member of the Southwark Diocese Board of Education Multi-Academy Trust (SDBE MAT).
- In September 2021, the headteacher become an executive headteacher of another school in the SDBE MAT.
- The deputy headteacher has been appointed head of school starting September 2022.
- There is a specially resourced provision for pupils with a visual impairment. Currently, 11 pupils attend.
- Since the last inspection, the school has opened a nursery. The nursery provides education for children between the ages of two and four years. At the time of this inspection, the school has four two-year-olds attending at any one time.
- This is a school with a religious character. The school is designated as a Church of England primary school. The school's last section 48 inspection took place in June 2016.

- The school does not currently use any 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 the evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with senior leaders, staff and pupils.
- The inspector carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, they met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work. The inspector heard some pupils read. They also looked at work and considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The inspector met with the chair of standards, the chief operating officer and the education partner of the SDBE MAT. They also met with four members of the local governing body, including the chair.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with the designated leaders for safeguarding. They reviewed a wide range of documents and records, including the school's record of recruitment checks and records of concerns. The inspector also spoke to staff, governors and pupils about safeguarding.
- The inspector met with a range of leaders, teachers and support staff to discuss the wider development of pupils, behaviour, professional development, well-being and workload.
- The inspector considered parents' responses to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, and parents' free-text comments. They also took into account the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.

## **Inspection team**

Lea Hannam, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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