

# Inspection of Stoke Minster CofE Primary Academy

Boothan Old Road, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 4EE

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Inspection dates: 25 and 26 May 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5  
of the Education Act 2005.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Leaders at Stoke Minster Church of England Primary Academy do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Despite very recent improvements to the curriculum, many subjects are still not taught in a way that helps all pupils to read well or to know more and remember more over time. Too many pupils do not read as expected for their age.

Leaders have recently set clear expectations of pupils' behaviour. Where these expectations are met, pupils are calm and orderly. However, sometimes, when the work does not meet their needs, pupils do not pay enough attention in class. At social times, pupils play well together and develop positive relationships. They have fun playing with the new outdoor equipment. When bullying happens, leaders deal with it effectively.

Pupils are happy and feel safe. They enjoy attending the school's breakfast club. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their talents and interests beyond lessons. Trips and visits have not been reinstated following the COVID-19 pandemic. Pupils miss attending competitive sports events.

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

Leaders have not paid enough attention to providing a broad and balanced curriculum offer for pupils. The curriculum lacks structure and sequence. This means that pupils are unable to develop an in-depth knowledge and understanding of each subject. On occasion, some subjects, such as French and music, are not taught. As a result, pupils do not deepen their learning over time and they do not remember key information. In addition, there are inconsistencies in the way that staff teach reading and mathematics, which means pupils do not read or apply mathematics well.

Many subject leaders are new to leadership. They have not been effectively supported to enable them to ensure that teachers have the subject knowledge they need to teach each subject well. This means that teachers are not clear about what to teach and how to teach it. They do not set work that is matched to the needs of pupils. Teachers' checks on pupil's learning are not as effective as they should be. As a result, teachers do not always pick up when pupils are struggling or need to move on.

Leaders have made recent improvements to the reading curriculum. Leaders now prioritise reading and books match the sounds that most pupils are learning. However, practice across the school is too variable. There is further work to do to raise expectations in reading for all pupils. Early reading is not taught effectively. Some staff do not follow the school's approach to sounding out letters. This means that pupils do not develop the fluency they need to be able to read well.

The curriculum does not meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Support varies across the school, which means some pupils with SEND are not effectively supported in class. Staff do not always have the right training or the right information. Sometimes, learning becomes disrupted because pupils' needs are not being met.

Children do not get off to a strong start in the early years because leaders have not clearly set out what it is they want children to know. Children are well cared for and staff develop positive relationships with children and their parents. Speaking and communication has been prioritised. Staff talk to children in a way that helps them know more words or how to use them in their daily conversations. However, opportunities for learning outdoors are limited, particularly opportunities to develop physical skills.

Leaders have not ensured that pupils have sufficient access to activities beyond the academic curriculum. This means that opportunities for personal development are restricted. Special jobs, such as lunchtime monitors and school councillors, allow some pupils to take on responsibilities. Pupils learn about other cultures and religions. The school rules help pupils develop an understanding of right and wrong. However, pupils have few opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities, such as clubs, visits, and trips. This limits their opportunities to develop their talents and interests and deepen their learning.

Leaders know the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. However, improvements have been implemented poorly or too slowly. Specific funds, such as COVID-19 catch-up and pupil premium funding, have not been used effectively. As a result, pupils are not receiving an acceptable standard of education.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff understand their role in keeping pupils safe. Staff record and report any concerns to safeguarding leaders. This includes domestic abuse, neglect and sexual harassment. Leaders ensure that pupils in need of help get the support they need. This includes support from external agencies as appropriate.

Pupils learn about how to maintain healthy relationships and keep safe when online.

Leaders ensure that the appropriate checks on staff are undertaken before they start working at the school.

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

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

- The curriculum is poorly structured and sequenced, with unclear end points. This means teachers do not know what they should be teaching or how to teach it. Some subjects are not taught regularly. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is clearly sequenced for all subjects, so that teachers are clear about what they should be teaching and how to teach it.
- Teachers do not use assessment well to identify accurate next steps for pupils. This means teaching is not well matched to what pupils can already do and pupils' attitudes to learning decline. Leaders should ensure that teachers use the information they have about pupils to plan carefully what comes next, so that pupils are suitably challenged, engage positively in their learning and achieve well.
- Most subject leaders are new to subject leadership. They need guidance to develop their subjects and to monitor and support staff effectively. Leaders should support subject leaders to ensure they fully understand their roles and what is expected of them.
- Staff do not teach reading well enough. This limits pupils' learning and they do not read sufficiently well for their age. Leaders should develop staff's subject knowledge and expertise, so that they teach phonics and early reading more effectively, so that all pupils learn to read well.
- Staff have not received the training they need to support pupils with SEND well enough. This means that pupils do not get the help and support they need to be successful learners. Leaders should ensure that staff receive the training and information they need to identify and support all pupils effectively.
- Early years provision is not effective. Leaders have not yet identified the key knowledge they expect children to gain in the early years. The outdoor learning environment does not support children's learning effectively. Leaders should ensure an effective early years curriculum, and a supportive learning environment are put in place, so that the youngest children are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils have access to a wide range of opportunities. This means that pupils do not develop their skills and talents as effectively as they should. Leaders should review their extra-curricular offer to all pupils and encourage participation, so that all pupils, particularly disadvantaged and pupils with SEND, benefit as much as possible.
- Having considered the evidence, I strongly recommend that leaders and those responsible for governance do not seek to appoint early career teachers.

## 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>	144592
<b>Local authority</b>	Stoke-on-Trent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10227745
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	385
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Paul Mitchell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Maxine Rizk
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stokeminster.stoke.sch.uk/">www.stokeminster.stoke.sch.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school has been part of St Chad's Academy Trust since 2018.

## Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- 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 art, computing, reading and mathematics. These included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, examining curriculum

guidance and talking with pupils and staff. They also looked at work from a sample of other subjects.

- Inspectors listened to pupils read and reviewed reading resources.
- The lead inspector looked at a range of documentation on the school's website.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding arrangements. This included examining the record of employment checks on school staff.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times during the day.
- During the inspection, inspectors had formal meetings with the executive principal, vice principal, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, the designated safeguarding leader, the early years leader and trust representatives.
- Inspectors took account of responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, the pupils' survey and the staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Lorraine Lord, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
John Rowe	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Ray	Ofsted Inspector

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