

Inspection of Sticklepath Community Primary Academy

Woodville Estate, Barnstaple, Devon, EX31 2HH

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 November 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Parents say that their children thrive at this school. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their learning, whether in a music lesson, story time or in the forest school. Pupils love their time in forest school. It develops their character and confidence.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils. Leaders say they aim to develop pupils' professionalism. Pupils live up to leaders' expectations. Staff encourage pupils to reflect on the benefits of their positive attitudes. As a result, pupils are motivated to learn for themselves.

Pupils are happy and safe. They know they can talk to an adult if something is worrying them. On the rare occasions that bullying occurs, staff deal with it swiftly and effectively. Pupils behave well. Their good behaviour helps create a purposeful learning environment.

Pupils take on a range of leadership roles. For example, there are positions to champion the arts, sports and the environment. Pupils learn about democratic principles. For instance, school councillors use polling to seek the opinions of their peers.

A carefully-devised programme fosters pupils' love of reading. As a result, pupils enjoy reading at all ages. The programme includes books that develop pupils' understanding of diversity. This helps pupils learn that peoples' differences are to be celebrated.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum. The curriculum is well planned and sequenced. Leaders have identified carefully the most important knowledge that pupils should learn. Pupils learn about how to become experts in different subjects. For example, they learn how historians think, as well as gaining knowledge about history.

Leaders prioritise pupils' development of spoken language at all ages. In the early years, there is a sharp focus on developing children's communication skills and vocabulary. This helps prepare them for future learning, including learning to read. There is effective collaboration between nursery staff and those working in Reception. As a result, children make a successful transition.

Leaders have devised and implemented an effective early reading curriculum. Teachers assess pupils' progress with a high degree of precision. Leaders ensure that any pupil in need of support receives it quickly. As a result, pupils learn to read accurately and fluently. This, in turn, provides pupils with a firm foundation for learning across the curriculum.

Leaders have designed teaching approaches to build pupils' long-term memory. Teachers use these strategies consistently and effectively. Consequently, pupils recall knowledge readily. In most subjects, teachers use assessment effectively to check pupils' understanding. However, assessment is less well embedded in some areas of the foundation curriculum.

Leaders with responsibility for special educational needs and/or disabilities identify pupils' needs. Leaders ensure that teaching supports pupils to make progress through the curriculum.

Leaders have devised a personal development curriculum that promotes pupils' independence and resilience. Pupils learn about the moral reasons for positive behaviour choices. They learn about the importance of tolerance and respecting others. Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships.

Leaders promote good physical and mental health. When necessary, they adapt the curriculum to respond to risks, such as those arising from online trends. Pupils enjoy a range of extra-curricular clubs. Leaders monitor attendance to these clubs and help disadvantaged pupils take up wider opportunities.

Leaders' clear vision has driven improvement in the quality of education. Leaders have focused on improving teachers' subject knowledge and how best to teach this. However, professional development has not led to consistent improvement in some areas. Leaders are considerate of staff workload and well-being. Those newest to teaching are well supported.

Trustees hold school leaders to account for the quality of education. They ensure resources are well managed and that the school has a clear vision. Equally, trust leaders are focused on improving the quality of education. However, in some aspects of the school's work, leaders do not always have as rigorous an oversight as they could.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established strong systems for identifying pupils who are at risk. Leaders closely monitor these pupils and make referrals to safeguarding partners when necessary. Leaders escalate their concerns if sufficient support is not provided. They are relentless in their work to secure the help that children need.

Pupils learn about keeping themselves safe, including when online. The school has appropriate curriculum, policy and practice in relation to sexual harassment, online sexual abuse and sexual violence (including sexualised language) in and around the school.

There are effective arrangements for safe recruitment and the management of safeguarding concerns about adults.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some areas of the foundation curriculum, assessment is less well embedded. As a result, teaching is less well informed about the next steps in pupils' learning. Leaders should ensure that assessment is used effectively in all areas of the foundation curriculum.
- In some aspects of the school's work, leaders do not always have as rigorous an oversight as they could. As a result, leaders do not always identify trends and respond to these as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that there is sufficient insight into all aspects of the school's work.

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.

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	146095
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10241451
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	450
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Graham Cockell
Executive co-Headteachers	Samantha Warner and Richard Blunt
Website	www.sticklepathschool.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is well above average in size.
- The school has an on-site nursery, which admits children aged two to five years.
- The school is part of the Tarka Learning Partnership.
- Sticklepath Community Primary Academy converted to become an academy school in July 2018. When its predecessor school, Sticklepath Community School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 held discussions with the executive co-headteachers, members of the senior leadership team, curriculum leaders, trust leaders, the chair of the board of trustees and the chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics history and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spent time in the nursery and visited the forest school provision.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record of adults working in the school. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and examined the school's safeguarding records. Inspectors also spoke with a range of pupils and staff about safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and to Ofsted's online pupil survey.

Inspection team

James Oldham, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Steph Matthews	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Lees	Ofsted Inspector

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