

Inspection of a good school: St Stephen's Infant School

Lansdown Road, Kingswood, Bristol BS15 1XD

Inspection dates:

1 and 2 December 2022

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

St Stephen's Infants is a friendly and welcoming school. Pupils are happy and say that everyone is kind. They understand how the school's 'Elli' characters help them to feel proud, be curious and undertake challenges.

Staff have high expectations of pupil's behaviour and conduct. Pupils are polite and well mannered. They follow the school rules of 'ready, respectful and safe' well. They understand how these rules make the school a safe place to be. This starts in the early years. Children listen carefully, show high levels of independence and play well together.

Pupils feel safe. Parents agree. Pupils value the positive relationships they have with staff. They know that adults will listen when they need to share their worries. Pupils understand what bullying is. They say it is rare. If it were to happen, they are confident that adults would deal with it quickly.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of clubs, such as gymnastics, gardening, football, baking and sewing. They are proud of their roles as 'light', 'fruit' and 'tidy up' monitors. All parents that responded to the Ofsted survey would recommend the school. They talk positively about the visibility of the headteacher and the high levels of care that staff show to their children.

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

Leaders and staff are ambitious for what all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), can achieve. With the help of the local authority, they have improved the way in which staff teach mathematics and created a curriculum that is designed well.

Leaders prioritise reading. They ensure that pupils listen to and read a wide range of texts. Pupils enjoy reading. They understand why it is important and say that it helps their brains to 'grow'. As they move through the school, pupils read with increasing fluency and

accuracy. Staff benefit from the training they receive to teach phonics and reading well. Children learn to read as soon as they start school. Staff in the early years have high expectations and model language effectively. Children learn sounds and develop their language skills well because of this. Books match the sounds that pupils are learning, which helps them to gain confidence. Staff regularly check if pupils are keeping up with the reading programme. If pupils fall behind, they receive the support they need to help them to catch up quickly.

Leaders have put in place a well-structured mathematics curriculum. This starts in the early years. Children use their knowledge of early number and shape to create and describe number patterns. Teachers build on this in Years 1 and 2. They develop and deepen pupils' understanding of number well. Pupils use their mathematical knowledge well when solving subtraction problems.

In many wider curriculum subjects, leaders have ensured that the curriculum is designed well. In subjects such as art and science, they have thought carefully about the important knowledge that pupils need to learn. Children in the early years talk confidently about printing and colour mixing and the differences in the seasons. However, some older pupils struggle to explain techniques such as sketching or use their previous learning to build their understanding of what a prediction is in science. This is because some teachers do not make clear what they want pupils to learn or routinely check on what pupils know well enough before moving on to new learning. This slows the progress that some pupils make.

Leaders are ambitious for what pupils with SEND can achieve. They quickly identify pupils' individual needs. Leaders work well with a range of external agencies to ensure that pupils get the academic and emotional help they need. As a result, pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers.

Pupils show positive attitudes towards their learning. They behave well in lessons and during social times. Low-level disruption is rare. As a result, the school is calm and orderly.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Leaders ensure that the personal development curriculum is well planned and linked closely to the school's values. Pupils understand that a friend has to be kind, caring and helpful to others. They talk confidently about the right to vote and why it is important for people to stand up for their rights.

Governors have high expectations for the school. They understand the school's strengths and have appropriate plans to help it improve further. Staff enjoy working at the school. They value the time that leaders give them to carry out their roles. Staff feel well supported and appreciate the way in which leaders consider their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility. They know their vulnerable pupils and families well. Staff use the training they receive to spot pupils who are at risk quickly. Leaders work well with a range of professionals and other agencies. This ensures that vulnerable pupils and their families receive the help they need.

Pupils know how to keep safe in the real and online world. They understand the importance of not sharing personal information.

Leaders make the right safeguarding checks during recruitment. However, they do not make sure that they record these checks with accuracy on the single central record.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, learning does not consistently build on what pupils have previously been taught. Teachers do not make clear what they want pupils to know or check well enough what pupils remember. As a result, some pupils struggle to recall important knowledge or make links to previous learning. This slows the progress they make. Leaders need to ensure that teachers check what pupils know and remember across all subjects and use this to inform future 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. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in December 2016.

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	109046
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10211078
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	235
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Chris Bowden
Headteacher	Tim Ruck
Website	www.ststephensinf.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 December 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not 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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, groups of staff, the governing body and representatives from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, looked at samples of work and spoke to pupils about their learning.
- The inspector spoke with pupils and leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The inspector listened to pupils in Years 1 and 2 read to an adult.

- The inspector considered how well the school protects pupils and keeps them safe. He met with the designated safeguarding lead to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding. The inspector also scrutinised the school's single central record.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Additionally, he spoke to pupils to discuss their views about the school.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. He also took into consideration the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Ben Jordan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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