

# Inspection of a good school: Stanwix School

Church Street, Stanwix, Carlisle, Cumbria CA3 9DW

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Inspection dates:

13 and 14 March 2023

## **Outcome**

Stanwix School continues to be a good school.

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

Pupils benefit from the strong community spirit that leaders have established at the school. Pupils are friendly and polite, and they provide a warm welcome to new pupils that join the school. Pupils, including children in the early years, flourish due to the respectful relationships that they enjoy with their teachers.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), respond well to the high expectations that leaders and teachers have of their behaviour and achievement. Pupils said that they can speak to any of their teachers when they have worries or concerns and that this helps them to feel safe. Leaders deal effectively with any incidents of bullying that occur.

Pupils aspire to the many leadership roles available to them. These include reading buddies and house captains. School council members make a positive contribution to the life of the school, such as when they introduced play boxes at breaktime.

Pupils take part in a wide range of activities that develop their talents and interests. For instance, gymnastics club, art club and science club. Pupils enjoy trips to museums, the theatre and to other places of interest where they learn about notable people such as Beatrix Potter.

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

Leaders are ambitious for the achievement of all pupils, including pupils with SEND. The subject curriculums have been carefully sequenced so that they build on the inspiring start that pupils enjoy in the early years. Most pupils develop and achieve well so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

In a small number of subjects, leaders have not set out the key knowledge that pupils should learn. In these subjects, teachers are not clear about the key information that they should prioritise in lessons. This means that some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge in these subjects. As a result, these pupils are not as well prepared as they could be to

tackle the demands of the wider curriculum.

Teachers use their subject knowledge effectively to deliver the curriculum well. They present information clearly, and they design activities that help pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding successfully across the wider curriculum. In the early years, the skilful interactions that adults have with children make a strong contribution to their development.

Teachers make regular checks on what pupils know and remember. They use this information diligently to address any misconceptions that pupils may have about their learning. In the early years, leaders have a detailed understanding of each child's stage of development. Staff use this information expertly to ensure that children build on their knowledge over time.

Pupils with SEND are well supported so that they can access the curriculum alongside their classmates. Leaders accurately identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND, and they secure timely and appropriate support for these pupils so that they achieve well.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading which begins as soon children join the school in the Reception Year. Staff deliver the phonics programme effectively so that most pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Leaders make checks on pupils' phonic knowledge, and they ensure that less confident readers receive the support that they need to catch up quickly. Leaders have ensured that the books pupils read are well matched to the sounds that they learn. This helps most pupils to become confident, fluent readers.

Pupils read widely and often. Pupils enjoy the books that their teachers read to them which cover a wide range of themes such as bullying, friendship and different cultures.

Throughout the school, including in the early years, pupils behave well. They demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. As a result, lessons are rarely disrupted.

Leaders have put in place a wide range of experiences that support pupils' personal development. Pupils know how to look after their own physical and mental health. They have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships. Pupils display a strong sense of empathy towards others. This is because leaders provide opportunities for pupils to learn about the challenges faced by others, such as refugees.

Governors know their school and community well. They provide appropriate support and challenge to leaders so that areas for improvement are acted on swiftly. Staff appreciate the consideration that leaders give to their well-being and workload when making decisions about policies and procedures. Staff are proud to work at this school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff receive the training that they need to identify pupils who may

be at risk of harm. Staff promptly report any concerns that they may have. Leaders respond to these concerns in a timely manner to ensure that pupils and families receive the support that they need. Leaders work effectively with other agencies when necessary.

Pupils said that they feel confident to speak to staff if they have worries or concerns. They know how to stay safe online.

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

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

- In a small number of subjects, curriculum leaders have not set out the key knowledge that pupils should learn. As a result, some pupils develop gaps in their learning in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that in this small number of subjects, curriculum leaders receive the support that they need to set out the key knowledge that pupils should learn so that teachers can prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education.

## **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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2018.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	141623
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268778
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	405
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Elizabeth Mallinson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kuldip McMullan
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stanwix.cumbria.sch.uk">www.stanwix.cumbria.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of 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 carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics and history. The inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work and spoke with staff and pupils.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- The inspector held meetings with the school adviser, the school improvement partner and members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector met with leaders to discuss reading, SEND, the curriculum, pupils' behaviour and attendance and the provision for pupils' wider development.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspector took account of the responses from staff and pupils to

Ofsted's online surveys and gathered the views of staff and pupils throughout the inspection.

- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with leaders, staff and pupils. The inspector checked a sample of leaders' safeguarding records and reviewed the recruitment checks made on staff.
- The inspector spoke with pupils about their experiences of school life and their views of behaviour and bullying. The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspector spoke to staff about their workload and well-being.

### **Inspection team**

Andy Cunningham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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